

This article was downloaded by: [CDL Journals Account]

On: 18 May 2009

Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 785022367]

Publisher Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Development in Practice

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713412875>

Accountability Politics: Power and Voice in Rural Mexico

Tim Trench^a

^a Universidad Autónoma Chapingo, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Mexico

Online Publication Date: 01 April 2009

To cite this Article Trench, Tim(2009)'Accountability Politics: Power and Voice in Rural Mexico',Development in Practice,19:2,277 — 279

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689725

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09614520802689725>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Development in Practice 19 (2009)

DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689600

Benjamin N. Schiff

Building the International Criminal Court
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
2008, ISBN: 978-0-521-69472-8, 304 pp.

In *Building the International Criminal Court*, Oberlin College Professor of Politics Benjamin N. Schiff presents a highly readable and perceptive analysis. The International Criminal Court (ICC) began its work on 1 July 2002, as the first permanent international criminal court in history. In his stocktaking, Schiff demonstrates a particular knack of amalgamating all the political and juridical dimensions that challenge this unparalleled institution. The study conveys a vivid sense of the ICC as 'work-in-progress', a battlefield of differing 'normative commitments, legal understandings, political interests, diplomatic bargains and organization dynamics' (p. 3). However, despite all its legal dilemmas and its political fragility, Schiff also shows how the ICC has already managed to develop a sustainable *modus operandi*. Thus his in-depth case studies and interviews allow for a positive interpretation: the ICC has made a first step towards becoming a working global institution.

This conclusion is embedded in detailed investigations concerning the origin, architecture, and policy of the ICC. Schiff generally takes the constitution of the Court to be the result of an historic current of norms intended to prosecute heinous crimes and end impunity through transnational jurisdiction (Chapter 1). More specifically, he presents the ICC Statute as the direct consequence of former experiences with tribunals dealing with crimes against humanity, such as the Nuremberg trials, or genocide, like the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Chapters 2 and 3). In order to evaluate the organisational structure of the ICC, Schiff analyses its first operations in considerable detail (Chapter 4). He then focuses on its policy by examining the influence of NGOs (Chapter 5) and the relations between the

Court and its member states (Chapter 6). Finally he delves deeper into the Court's role-finding process by scrutinising the four 'situations' in which the ICC was engaged by mid-2007.

Taken together, Schiff's analyses culminate in four dilemmas, each of which tends to obstruct the ICC's work from the beginning, but each of which has proved to be negotiable in practice. First, the allocation of competences and procedures within the ICC has turned out to be unclear, which has led to considerable internal tensions. In the cases of Sudan and the Central Republic of Africa, questions of authority between the Chief Prosecutor and the Pre-Trial-Chamber have contributed to delays in the proceedings. However, these early experiences with the ICC's unprecedented architecture have already intensified efforts to attune its organs to its overall task.

Second, the ICC seems to be trapped in the dilemma of having to choose between judicial neutrality and political partiality. Since its prosecution depends on the co-operation of the state in question, the ICC is vulnerable to instrumentalisation by particular political parties, as was the case in Uganda and Sudan. These difficulties experienced by the young institution do not, however, disqualify its work as such. They lead us instead to rethink its role as a freestanding judicial court. The lesson to be learned is that the ICC must consider itself a political player, an institution which has to balance neutrality against prosecution interests.

Third, Schiff addresses the dilemma that the ICC attracts neither the support of the only superpower (USA) nor that of other big players (such as China or Russia). In light of this, the ICC faces serious problems, ranging from doubts about its legitimacy to its impotence to actually enforce sanctions. The only way out of this dilemma would be a close collaboration between the UN and the ICC, such as in fact took place in the Security Council's referral of the Sudan situation to the ICC in 2005. As Schiff points out, this co-operation even 'demonstrated limits

to U.S. opposition to the Court' (p. 246). Thus, under the condition that all veto powers of the Security Council had reason to accept the ICC as a useful tool, both its legitimacy and its enforcing power could be much better guaranteed.

Finally and most fundamentally, the ICC is associated with the dilemma of having to choose between justice and peace. Whereas it primarily focuses on bringing criminal perpetrators to justice, this very aim often adds fuel to on-going conflicts. Making individual warlords or dictators responsible 'will rigidify their resistance' (p. 35) and ultimately impede urgent options such as negotiating ceasefires and peace treaties. Here, too, Schiff shows that the ICC is required to accept its political role and to strike an appropriate balance between its prosecuting purpose and its reconciling tactics.

To sum up, it can be said that Schiff's book not only provides its reader with internal insights into the origin, architecture, and policy of the youngest and probably most ambitious global institution: it also develops an implicit vision of its role as a global political player. Despite an enormous density of information, Schiff manages to tell a fascinating story about diplomatic entanglements, power interests, and international co-operation during the emergence of a new global institution. As such this is a highly readable book for humanitarian practitioners and academics, as well as for readers with a general interest in the subject.

Let me conclude by saying that I generally esteem Schiff's strict discipline in maintaining a balanced stance towards the achievements and the potentialities of the ICC. His scientific reserve, however, is also the weak point of the book. Schiff deliberately leaves open the question of whether the ICC is to be seen as a landmark in global governance, an international institution on the brink of gaining momentum, a mere instrument of national interests, or just another toothless goodwill project. He evades the need to take a theoretical as well as a moral position concerning the prospective role of the ICC.

Considering Schiff's expertise, I would have preferred to hear a stronger prognosis. But maybe he is right, and there really is none.

Henning Hahn

Department of Philosophy, University of Kassel

Development in Practice 19 (2009)

DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689618

N. Pachova, M. Nakayama, and L. Jansky (eds.)

International Water Security: Domestic Threats and Opportunities

Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2008, ISBN: 978-92-808-1150-6, 313 pp.

The United Nations University (UNU) Press has released a wide-ranging collection of essays focusing on domestic problems in reaching international water agreements. There is much rhetoric but little research in this particular area of development and international relations (IR). It represents a classic transnational problem. Water drains into catchment basins whose reach is oblivious to state or other human boundaries. Indeed, states have traditionally entrenched the transnationality of water by using rivers and lakes as border markers. Hence the relevant level of analysis is the interstate basin, and the book's chapters are case studies of disputed basins. Like global warming, transboundary water thus requires international co-operation for sustainable management. Well-known problems of public-goods problems, such as over-exploitation, plague its co-ordination. Enjoining states, plus domestic stakeholders and international organisations (IOs), to collaborate in sustainable, co-ordinated management is what drives the research presented here.

The editors suggest 'integrated water resources management' (IWRM) as the theoretical framework to capture this needed administrative transnationalism. IWRM inverts traditional IR approaches to

co-operation. IR would broadly begin from the states and diverge towards a regime of sharing and division, based on a mix of power considerations, border lines, and other political factors. IWRM works up from the basin as an integrated natural space, over which the border grid of states has been arbitrarily laid. Instead of state elites squabbling in a zero-sum game over relative gains, the contributors to this book envisage epistemic communities (communities of scientists) developing renewable water management in accord with natural factors such as rainfall levels and geography, as well as demography and economic development. State usage would be dictated by the science – with no formal allotment by treaty of precise volumes of water, which would not reflect the changing physical realities of the water system. As such, the proper political entity to manage the basin is a transnational, technocratic basin committee, usually supplemented by IO technical assistance and monitoring. As one author says, properly using the basin is not simply a division of volume by a percentage formula. For example, upstream states cannot act without threatening downstream ones, no matter the prestige or national power of the various riparian states. The tenor of the essays is strongly scientific and internationalist. Neo-liberal institutionalists and environmentalists will generally feel at home in the analyses and prescriptions suggested by this UNU volume.

Of course, most of the cases provided hardly demonstrate such co-operation; IR realists will not be surprised. The authors generally find states, in a manner reminiscent of the poor co-operation over global warming, treating water as strategically as anything else. The states do in fact abuse their water systems with an eye to political goals and purposes, changing usually in response to political or economic calculus, rather than physical or scientific criteria. For as much as the contributors dislike the ‘logic of collective action’, its well-known problems – such as cheating or poor

information – are abundant in the case work. As with global warming, states hardly perceive the management of water as a pressing crisis, so they rather easily defect and otherwise mismanage. As a result, many of the contributors openly call for the ‘securitisation’ of the water ‘discourse’ in order to raise the alarm and generate crisis-driven compromise. Hence the book title.

The book’s contributors focus primarily on domestic obstacles to co-operation. This seems justified insofar as they (surprisingly) did not uncover any inter-state ‘water wars’. Domestic political divisions drive international conflict over water allotment; the dependent variable lies within the state. The chosen cases usually include developing countries and middle-income countries, in which assumptions of unitary state action quickly collapse. On unpacking the identity of the state, they find a maelstrom of ethnic/tribal/religious groups, provincial leaders, military elites, NGOs, riparian local populations, firms (construction companies usually), and other domestic actors vying to control the state’s foreign policy on water-related issues. To this, they frequently add the pressure of external INGOs. This welter of conflicting pressures, when not aggravated by a functioning state and policy process, creates foreign-policy paralysis. Indeed, one of the theoretical weaknesses of the volume is the long list of ‘stakeholders’ seemingly involved in holistic IWRM. It is hard to uncover generalities about the domestic process towards water-conflict resolution when there are so many potential actors. Nevertheless, the argument seems to be that unstable states (Chad on Lake Chad, Cambodia on the Mekong, Sudan on the Nile) cannot reliably negotiate reasonable (technocratically defined) usage, and in lieu of their participation the other states will simply go their own way. This is ironic, insofar as the liberal, transnationalist bent of the book favours supra-state management, yet the case literature suggests that the strongest cause of unilateral exploitation is failed states. Most of

the authors find hope in the democratisation and globalisation of recent decades. The inclusion of new voices, specifically affected populations and scientists, should reduce the predatory behavior of elites. Globalisation should empower these forces further through the spotlight of international attention, raised transnational consciousness, and reinforcement by interested external parties – namely IOs and INGOs. (This was termed ‘the boomerang pattern’ by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in *Activists Without Borders*, published in 1998 by Cornell University Press. Strangely, no one mentions this fact in the UNU volume.)

Obviously, this book is for specialists, specifically those familiar with the science of water management and measurement, plus IR co-operation theory. General readers will be put off by its dense prose and the assumption of deep previous knowledge. Social scientists will track the language of game theory and domestic politics but may find the case depth daunting. But the general drift of the analysis and problems will be familiar. States clash over a resource that they would probably overexploit and ruin if not for the resistance of epistemic communities and increasingly of civil society. (The frightening shrinkage of the Aral Sea and Lake Chad suggests the intelligence of this attitude.)

Theoretically and methodologically, the volume is somewhat disappointing. The case studies do not use cross-comparable indices and measures. Each was written independently – the Mekong is treated three times – so cumulation is low, and the editors’ too-short concluding theoretical chapter does not pull the work together sufficiently well. Nonetheless, for readers interested in the tortuous domestic politics inhibiting scientific water-basin co-operation, this book is a solid start.

Robert E. Kelly
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and Diplomacy, Pusan National University, Korea

Development in Practice 19 (2009)

DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689642

François Polet (ed.)

The State Of Resistance: Popular Struggles In The Global South
New York/London: Zed Books, 2007,
ISBN: 978-1-84277-868-5, 208 pp.

Following in the footsteps of *Globalizing Resistance: The State of Struggle* (François Polet and CETRI, 2004, Pluto Press), this recent addition to the burgeoning literature on social movements/struggles is a welcome, necessary, and succinct introductory guide to ‘popular struggles in the *global South*’. This highly readable four-part volume covers the regions of Latin America (nine chapters), the Near East and the Maghreb (seven chapters), sub-Saharan Africa (nine chapters), and Asia (nine chapters). The case studies in this compilation illustrate the multiple, and increasingly inter-connected, social resistances (counter-hegemonic and anti-hegemonic) to neo-liberal globalisation or the globalisation of capitalism.

Contributors to this book demonstrate a recurring concern to understand the emergence of social movements in the South in relation to three particular phenomena. First, the increasing Euro-American insistence on ‘the need for democracy’ and the requirement for full co-operation in the ‘war on terror’, with little concern for the ‘internal management of human rights’ and the terrorising of ‘those who threaten the stability of political hegemony’ in the post-9/11 scenario; and the concomitant and misplaced applause for electoral democratic institutionalisation as indicative of successful political change, while unemployment, inequality, and insecurity continue to grow.

Second, the increasing integration of the South into the capitalist world economy on exploitative terms, as the corresponding ‘reform of reforms’ rhetoric, including Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and ‘good governance’ agendas, contributes to building the long-term viability of the

core structural-adjustment measures and marketisation, by suggesting that the poor are the victims not so much of Structural Adjustment Programmes but of ‘the incapacity of rulers to manage the institutional environment conducive to these reforms’. In other words, the contemporary international consensus against poverty, rallying around MDGs and PRSPs, continues to ‘help to hide unequal relationships between nations and within them, rather than softening the policies that create inequality and poverty’ (p. 4).

Third, the ‘need for democracy’ and ‘reform of reforms’ marketisation shape the dislocations created by privatisation of public services and the removal of subsidies for basic household commodities such as oil and bread, or the dispossession of rural communities by infrastructure-based and corporate state-led development projects (for example in the mining sector), which, taken together, engender the conditions for Southern mobilisations.

The political efficacy of these social movements depends on and is influenced by two factors: (a) the ability of movements to address the challenges of what Polet refers to as ‘convergences’ between social actors (as with the Thai Assembly of the Poor (p. 160) or the Kifaya movement in Egypt (p. 72)), and the relationship between civil and political society; and (b) the ability to continue the work of politicisation that aims to build structured contestation from social dissatisfaction, despite the de-politicising tendencies of the rhetoric of ‘helping people to help themselves’, or the fatiguing impacts of the daily struggle for survival, not to mention the debilitating consequences of political cultures of subordination (fear of public authority, and the authoritarian control of necessary dissent).

The impact of resistance, as observed by Polet, differs from country to country and region to region, but there is a proliferation of such social movements opposed to neo-liberal policies, as is most evident in the case of Latin America. However, he points

out that this ‘should not encourage us to minimize the actions of social movements in other regions of the South’ (p. 12), as popular resistance in the South has ‘rendered complicated’ (p. 12) the implementation of anti-social reforms led by the international financial institutions, while many local victories against transnational company projects to exploit natural resources or large infrastructure projects have enabled the rights of people to triumph over the interests of business. In the end, quoting Polet, ‘Where the representativity of institutions remains problematic, the longevity of social and democratic gains in politics therefore depends on the ability of social movements to maintain a minimal degree of mobilization over a long period of time’ (p. 13).

The contributors to this volume are primarily scholars and policy makers. Admittedly they quote insights from activists whom they have interviewed, but the book might have benefited from the deliberate inclusion of complete chapters written from the perspective of grounded activists – perhaps a point for consideration in subsequent collections.

The book’s emphasis on regional and global movements and on the initiatives of the network related to the Social Forum (the dominant representation of ‘civil society’), while projecting the combined strength of such movements, unwittingly marginalises the multiple ‘un-civil’ struggles that disrupt the very process of capitalist production/exploitation through direct action in the trenches on a more local level, as in the numerous anti-mining movements of subaltern social actors (movements of indigenous peoples, tribals, nomads, pastoralists, and rural horticulturalists). It can be argued that such movements are partly or completely outside the ambit of privileged conceptions of ‘modern civil society’ – subaltern social groups who are deemed to be in the way of development and neo-liberal globalisation and are politically engaged and provoked through neo-liberal market–state processes of accumulation by dispossession. Their perspectives need to be included in the on-going

process of mapping the contours of a rapidly growing 'state of resistance in the global South', a project that will continue to build on the foundations of scholar-activist initiatives such as this book.

Dip Kapoor

*Associate Professor, International Education,
University of Alberta, Canada*

Development in Practice 19 (2009)

DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689667

Barbara Rugendyke (ed.)

*NGOs as Advocates for Development in a
Globalising World*

London: Routledge, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-415-39531-1, 260 pp.

This book analyses the history, rationale, efficacy, and operations of Northern development NGOs in their use of advocacy as a strategy to address and ultimately eradicate the root causes of poverty in the developing world. It is a heavy read, presenting a survey of how international NGOs have interacted with governments, civil society, and the corporate sector. A recurrent theme running through the edited volume relates to the failure of NGOs to evaluate their advocacy, a matter which NGOs would do well to consider.

The book appears to be aimed at a tertiary audience and is therefore a bit too academic for the ordinary grassroots and hands-on advocacy campaigner. All the same, it is a useful and welcome tool (amply referenced and well indexed) for researchers, students, and lecturers in the field of development practice. It may also be equally useful for development practitioners who wish to anchor their practice in sound empirical evidence and theory. It is a good example of how learning takes place, and how the lessons learned can be replicated elsewhere. The analyses are supplemented by case studies from Australia, Britain, and South-East Asia. Oxfam International's work on advocacy is amply treated in two chapters by

Ian Anderson: 'Global action: international NGOs and advocacy' and 'Oxfam, the World Bank and heavily indebted countries' (pp. 70–124), which are representative of the research that has informed the volume.

The editor, Barbara Rugendyke, has published widely on environmental and development issues. Her 1994 doctoral thesis, 'Compassion and Compromise: The Policies and Practices of Australian Non-Government Development Assistance Agencies', is reflected in her contribution, entitled 'Charity to advocacy: changing agendas of Australian NGOs'. The present book succeeds in its aim of bringing together recent empirical research on the advocacy activities of NGOs in pursuit of their mission to reduce poverty. As an edited work, the chapters can be read independently, while being united around a common theme.

If the reader chooses to dip in and out of the book, it may be useful first to read Barbara Rugendyke's chapter 'Lilliputians or leviathans? NGOs as advocates', which sets out the book's epistemological underpinnings. Rugendyke poses a far-reaching question, the answer to which remains to be seen: whether NGOs will remain Lilliputians or whether, through their global alliances, they will become Leviathans on the world stage. I also liked her concluding chapter, 'Making poverty history?', where she argues that although advocacy still counts for a small percentage of total aid expenditure, more recent data suggest a growing financial commitment to advocacy, matched by NGOs' increasingly developed and articulated advocacy strategies. These two chapters serve as the bread of the sandwich.

I found Chapter 8, 'Advocacy, civil society and the state in the Mekong Region', by Philip Hirsch, Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Sydney, to be the most appealing from a developing-world perspective. Hirsch explores developing-country advocacy within South-East Asia, with particular reference to Thailand. He argues that a higher level of examination of civil society, advocacy, and development within

developing countries is needed in order to understand advocacy beyond global and first-world organisational experience.

This volume presents a compendium of empirical research which provides the basis for answering the question: just how effective is NGO advocacy in achieving changes which contribute to improved quality of life in the world's poorer nations? However, on the editor's own admission there is a regrettable absence of any Southern perspective in the book, focusing as it does on Northern views about the work of Northern organisations. Perhaps one of the contributors or another author might take up the challenge of producing a sequel that redresses this imbalance.

I have another reservation, which is that I would have liked to know whether this book on development practice and advocacy was printed on recycled paper and is therefore eco-friendly.

Tarcisius Mukuka
Visiting lecturer, St Mary's University
College, Twickenham, UK

Development in Practice 19 (2009)
DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689675

George Klay Kieh, Jr (ed.)
Africa and the New Globalization
Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008, ISBN: 978-0-7546-7138-1, 192 pp.

This book is written by a group of scholars from various US universities with special interests in African and African-American Studies, and in political science. The book has nine chapters. Kieh's introduction describes new globalisation as a new phenomenon which 'emerged in the 1990s replacing the old globalization' (p. 6). He describes it as a far-reaching and ubiquitous process which stimulates territorial and sectoral expansion, as well as bringing state and non-state actors together into the global capitalist fold. In Chapter Two, Kieh extends his arguments by looking at new globalisation as the most expansive phase of

the international capitalist system. He considers various dynamics of new globalisation and argues that the dividends from these processes are disproportionately reaped by the metropolis, and that African economies are the greatest casualties of the globalised world economy.

A similar concern is raised by Mbaku in Chapter Three, which tackles the issue of debt. In a seemingly heartfelt argument, he presents the 'dying-Africa version' of the continent, in which he calls for attention to be paid to its debilitating woes. Mbaku brings into focus the roles of the IMF and the World Bank, together with the package of Structural Adjustment programmes, the programme for Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), and debt forgiveness. He observes that these are not working properly and have no meaningful impact, owing to the deficiencies of democratic practice within the IFIs and the collaborating African states.

In Chapter Four, Idogu draws attention to the foundations of human-rights charters, declarations, covenants, and conferences, both in Africa and internationally. Maintaining the same thread of argument as Mbaku, he considers various aspects of globalisation: international and local, universal and particular, individual and communal. He draws attention to the human-rights crisis in the continent and calls for more education. In Chapter Five, Idahosa laments the negative impact of new globalisation on the relationship between the African states and NGOs. He argues that NGOs as 'saviours' often become foot-soldiers who promote the neo-liberalism that shapes the global discourse and who become consonant with the shifting balance of power.

In Chapter Six, Mangala considers different forms of sovereignty. He identifies the influence of the IMF, the World Bank, and their conditionalities, and the intervention of some countries or inter-government bodies in the affairs of African countries (for example, the UN in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo), as factors impeding the sovereignty

of African states. In Chapter Seven, Mbaku once again considers the legacy of colonial environmental management. While he traces environmental mismanagement back to imperialist exploitation, he concedes that the post-colonial African ruling class gave insufficient attention to environmental issues. He argues that there is a need to design effective policies, good property-rights regimes, and environmental regulations to curb the 'mad rush' of exploitation of resources by multinationals.

In Chapter Eight, Patterson argues that new globalisation, while contributing to the spread of HIV and AIDs (through migration labour practices, the negative effect of structural adjustment programmes on health-care provision, and the high costs of anti-retroviral treatment due to the WTO's TRIPS agreements), also facilitates the curbing of the disease. The last chapter weaves together the themes of the various chapters by advocating regional integration, the development of a pan-Africanist agenda, and the rethinking of 'Third World Solidarity' which will protect, defend, and promote the interests of people of the Third World.

This book tells the familiar story of a victimised continent, using facts and figures to justify it. Throughout its narratives, it presents a thematic grid into which can be slotted all the explanations for Africa's failures. Writing in a casual but polemical mode, fraught with sermon-like repetition, the authors harp on points of concern which offer little hope or measure of redemption. The book gets into the heart of the devastating impact of colonialism and globalisation. It screams of carnage and unwavering pessimism in the face of daunting odds. It points to the basic need for an ethical imperative – to treat persons as persons in Africa.

As a criticism, it is fair to state that the metaphor of 'new globalisation' has the potential to add a new depth to our understanding of Africa's development, but the authors did not take full advantage of it. They seem to allow themselves an element of personal indulgence by overstating the

case for old globalisation, while the central theme is focused on new globalisation. All the chapters, except the eighth, weigh more in favour of old globalisation. The feeling of duplication is inevitable, as the book is overcrowded with detailed historical information about the continuity of old globalisation, which could have been avoided. Such overcrowding often leads to simplistic observations; some of the assertions are not well argued and remain emotive at best.

Another disappointing aspect of the book is its poor editing. There are too many typographic errors. A glaring example is found on page 2, where the editor states that the "'Victorian globalization" started in 1960 and declined in 1914'. There are many similar mistakes elsewhere. But these are surpassed by more than 40 references that are missing, misrepresented, or not properly acknowledged (especially in the chapter about NGOs). Furthermore, there are far too many repetitions which could have been easily avoided with judicious cross-referencing. Nevertheless, the book is accessible not only to students of development, but also to the general reader. Policy makers, foreign missions to Africa, and NGOs will find that it casts new light on the agenda to pursue Africa's unending struggle for development.

Mfaniseni Fana Sihlongonyane
School of Architecture and Planning, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

Development in Practice 19 (2009)
DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689691

Tom Porteous

Britain in Africa

Zed Books / KwaZulu Natal Press, 2008,
ISBN: 978-1-84277-976-7 and University
of KwaZulu-Natal Press, ISBN: 978-1-
86914-149-3, 158 pp.

Britain in Africa is a must for anyone interested in African development. In this refreshing, non-partisan analysis, published in the

African Arguments series, Tom Porteous traces the development of New Labour's policy in Africa. *African Arguments* is a series of short books about Africa today, aimed at students and general readers who want to know more about the continent. *Britain in Africa* clearly meets those criteria. As the author points out, it is very unlikely that anyone could have foreseen in May 1997 that Tony Blair would pay more attention to Africa than any British Prime Minister since Harold Macmillan. Although Tony Blair's Christian faith was famously dismissed by Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's Director of Communications and Strategy from 1997 to 2003, in the famous quip 'We don't do God' (p. 40), Tom Porteous argues that there was strong evidence to show that religion increasingly influenced Blair's foreign-policy decision making, including 'his tendency to see complex international issues in stark Manichean terms' (p. 40). In this sense Tony Blair was motivated by something more than considerations of political expediency. As he himself said in a speech in May 2007 in South Africa, he wanted to forge a new partnership with African leaders and countries, a relationship based on common values of justice, democracy, and human rights – a partnership of trust and equality.

In four chapters entitled 'The players', 'The policy', 'The limits of leverage', and 'Futures', Tom Porteous has managed to capture the essence of New Labour's relationship with Africa. According to the author, four main elements of the UK policy stand out: the idea of 'enhanced partnership' with African governments committed to good governance, conflict prevention, and poverty reduction; the big push for a massive increase in aid, debt relief, trade, and investment as the primary means of stimulating economic development; the deliberate effort to strengthen the UK's international networking and relations with state and non-state actors, including celebrities, as a crucial means of increasing the UK's leverage to effect change in Africa; and the continuing empha-

sis on protecting and promoting the UK's national interests in Africa.

In the chapter entitled 'Limits of leverage', Porteous argues that the tools of leverage – military, economic, and diplomatic – were a blunt, unwieldy, and ineffective means of getting both foes and allies in Africa to do what the UK thought necessary in order to achieve development. The Department for International Development (DFID) became the motor that drove the UK policy in Africa from 1997 onwards. In the chapter entitled 'Futures', Porteous points out that the signs are that Africa will remain an important foreign-policy priority under Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and that UK policy on Africa will (at least in the short term) remain the same. In the medium term some kind of course correction in UK policy towards Africa is probably unavoidable. The long-term prognosis is somewhat more uncertain and is linked with the probable downturn in economic growth in the West. If there were to be a recession, as indications continue to show, Africa would be particularly vulnerable.

The late Robin Cook (Foreign Secretary) and Clare Short (former Secretary for International Development) are singled out for their significant contributions to the development of the relationship with Africa in the New Labour period. Apart from the decision to create a Department for International Development independent of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, one of the most formative decisions was Robin Cook's announcement that the Labour government would pursue a foreign policy with a distinctively 'ethical dimension'. Cook, as Tom Porteous notes, was keen to make his and the UK's mark on a number of international cross-cutting issues that were of direct relevance to Africa, which included control of arms exports, landmines, small-arms proliferation, human rights, environmental protection, international peace keeping, and conflict prevention. Clare Short's tenure was associated with DFID's overarching goal of poverty reduction.

Britain in Africa presents a clear analysis of the issues arising from Britain's involvement in Africa. Tom Porteous examines the somewhat overweening Blairite policies in the continent since 1997, and the balance sheet that he draws up is sobering. Porteous has done the UK tax payer a favour. The Labour government put economic development at the heart of its African policy and made available millions of pounds in the form of aid to several African countries during the decade that Tony Blair served as Prime Minister of the UK. Tax payers have a right to know what good their hard-earned taxes did or did not do for Africa.

Britain in Africa is not a eulogy for the Blair government and its policies. Porteous is quick to point out the vicissitudes that were attendant on Britain's engagement in Africa. And he does not deny that in spite of the immense quantities of aid pumped into Africa during the Blairite decade, poverty, disease, violent conflict, abuses of human rights, and corruption remain serious and unresolved problems in many parts of Africa. Despite all that, Porteous concedes that the UK can take some of the credit for the significant progress that has been made in resolving and managing African conflicts, particularly from 2000 onwards. British aid to Africa during the Blair years helped to build the continent's capacity to co-operate with the international community. The UK's role in Sierra Leone is cited as a shining example of British success in Africa.

Tom Porteous is well placed to write about New Labour's involvement in Africa. He is currently the London Director of Human Rights Watch. As a journalist he has covered many of the events that gave rise to the issues that he analyses. He is a syndicated columnist, writer, and analyst who has worked for the BBC and the *Guardian* and travelled extensively in Africa, both as a journalist and as a UN peace-keeping official and UK diplomat working for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

For all its wealth of analysis and coverage, I felt that *Britain in Africa* could have given

more space to success stories such as Zambia's progress in its fight against corruption and HIV and AIDS, for which DFID could rightly claim some of the credit. And only two lines are devoted to Botswana, Africa's economic and political success story.

Tarcisius Mukuka

Visiting lecturer at St Mary's University College, Twickenham, UK

Development in Practice 19 (2009)

DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689709

Anil Hira

An East Asian Model for Latin American Success: The New Path

Aldershot UK/ Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-7546-7108-4, 210 pp.

As the title of this book suggests, Anil Hira sets out to demonstrate how and why Latin American governments should adopt key elements of East Asian economic and political thinking. Seemingly at ease with the magnitude of this task, Hira optimistically states that his book will provide a 'clear, readily accessible plan ... apt for any developing economy' (pp. ix, x). Made aware of no obstacles or challenges that might confront such an ambitious goal, complicate the collection of the vast amount of data that this would require, or limit the significance of its findings in any way, this reader proceeded with caution.

Chapter 1 argues that policy makers and analysts of Latin American development have relied for too long on 'scientific', mathematically based economic models that lack awareness of historical context, cultural considerations, and ideas. A tour through Latin American economic history shows the influence of ideas and ideology in shaping key junctures of transformation (from colonialism to eighteenth-century republicanism and nineteenth-century liberalism, from twentieth-century populist dictatorships to import substitution, and from the debt crisis to neo-liberalism).

Developing the argument that the Latin American state has always been (and still is) the primary agent of change, Chapter 2 maps out the areas in which industrial policy and 'purposeful state regulation' can correct market failures, kick-start local industries and nurture them into national champions, stimulate spill-over effects in aerospace and other civilian industries through investment in the military, build up specific areas of human-capital advancement, and promote equitable regional development.

Chapter 3 outlines how Latin American import substitution pursued unrealistic ambitions of building entire industries that ultimately became dependent on the importing of foreign intermediate inputs. By contrast, East Asian governments strategically steered foreign investment towards middle industries and associated human-capital development. At odds with the assessment of the World Bank, Hira argues that truly free markets have never existed anywhere, as the cases of Japanese economic planning and US government support for the aerospace and semi-conductor industries attest (not to mention more recent US government intervention in the financial sector). The chapter concludes that there is nothing undemocratic about active, state-led industrial policy, and that there is no reason to associate it with authoritarian governance.

Chapter 4 examines the case of China to show 'the kind of developmentalist state that Latin America should adopt' (p. 88). Among the specific 'lessons' discussed are the sharing of risk between public and private actors, the integration of FDI into a coherent state-led national development strategy, long-term competitiveness, gradual state withdrawal from successful sectors, and 'sneaky, tricky and innovative' methods for avoiding criticism from neo-liberal economists and institutions (p. 101).

Chapter 5 focuses on the micro-economics of sectoral policy, noting that in contrast to East Asia's advancement through electronics manufacturing, Latin America remains dependent on agricultural and resource exports;

indeed, the little industrial manufacturing that it does possess is dominated by foreign interests. The chapter describes how political in-fighting and a lack of national loyalty among Latin American elites have inhibited the consolidation of functional public-private alliances that could move the region up the value-added chain.

To avoid ending on a 'dour note', the sixth and final chapter cites as beacons of hope the cases of the Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer and the Costa Rican semi-conductor industry. State guidance and support enabled both to become global successes, demonstrating what could be achieved by effective industrial policy across the region. The chapter assesses the existing literature on state-owned enterprises around the world, noting that although their short-term profitability has typically lagged behind private companies, they harbour the crucial capacities to train large labour forces, create linkages between domestic industries, and ultimately promote long-term national interests – as they did until recently in the European energy sector. Hira argues that the current rise of centre-left governments in Latin America and an attendant animosity towards foreign 'imperialism' are consolidating national and regional solidarity, thereby creating the necessary socio-cultural environment for East Asian-style industrial policies. 'The fate of the region', he concludes, 'is in its own hands' (p. 158).

Hira's arguments are thought-provoking, and in most cases backed up with detailed evidence, but in his own words 'there are surprisingly very limited data from consistent sources ... we also acknowledge that any conclusions must be limited' (pp. 72–3). Appearing half way through the book, this caveat might have been better placed alongside the ambitious statements of the preface. Stylistically, frequent grammatical errors make for tiresome reading at times, although in general the book provides a valuable and detailed survey of economic and political development in East Asia and Latin America, the ways in which these processes

compare with each other, and the lessons that such comparisons might hold. The book makes useful suggestions for further research, clearly demarcating the gaps in the existing literature on industrial-policy challenges for the global era.

As for the book's thesis that Latin American governments should adopt East Asian development models, it would be useful to consider the economic and environmental feasibility of such strategies in light of the emergence of China. Not only is Latin America currently profiting enormously from commodity exports to China, but those countries that have prioritised their manufacturing industries, such as Mexico, are experiencing devastating competition with China in precisely these sectors. Strategic industrial posturing, facilitated by East Asian-style state planning bureaux and 'pilot agencies', could indeed help Latin American governments to identify key emerging markets and regional approaches to environmental protection. Judging by his prolific record of publications, it may not be long before we are reading Hira's assessment of Sino-Latin American industrial collaboration, its capacity to create jobs in emerging sectors, and its role in further diffusing the lessons of East Asian industrial policies.

Adrian H. Hearn

Research Fellow, Sociology and Social Policy, The University of Sydney

Development in Practice 19 (2009)

DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689725

Jonathan Fox

Accountability Politics: Power and Voice in Rural Mexico

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-19-920885-2, 438 pp.

In this dense but rewarding book by Jonathan Fox – political scientist and Mexico specialist – we are presented with the fruits of more than 15 years of scholarship on rural politics and democratisation in the second most

populous country in Latin America. It is a collection of 11 articles, some from the 1990s, but for the most part more recent studies, which address in different ways and at different levels a central question: 'How can the seeds of accountability ever grow in authoritarian environments?' (p. 1). The author categorises Mexico as a 'post-authoritarian state', in reference to what many analysts considered to be the 'perfect dictatorship', of the Revolutionary Institutional Party (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional* – PRI) until the elections in 2000, which witnessed the first change in the ruling political party in almost 80 years. Many of the more recently written chapters are thus enquiries into the extent to which political practices have actually changed in Mexico since this watershed date. However, the general conclusions that are reached through these diverse studies of the mechanics of evolving democratic processes in rural Mexico are that there has been more continuity than change in political practices over the period covered by the book.

The volume presents a number of fine-grained studies as well as theoretical contributions on the way in which different levels of democracy, participation, and accountability are won (or sometimes lost) in the different regional ambits by rural actors. The focus, as the title of the book suggests, is *accountability politics*, defined as the 'arena of conflict over whether and how those in power are held publicly responsible for their decisions' (p. 2), and this idea provides the conceptual lens through which the author analyses power and voice in rural Mexico. The methodology, as the author makes explicit, is based on the importance of first recognising sub-national variables (Mexico is a large and heterogeneous nation) to avoid the 'whole-nation bias' (p. 21) that can characterise more simplistic analyses. Second, the book similarly acknowledges the diversity within public institutions and social organisations and takes an ethnographic approach to its analysis of these collective actors, not automatically assuming that actors respond

similarly within apparently identical structures. Third, the book argues that scaled-up collective identities require explanation that goes beyond simple Marxist-style narratives that assume, for example, common 'objective' interests among class groups.

The final methodological position is the attention paid to qualitative indicators to question whether, for example, policy packages promoting social 'participation' actually do what they are purportedly designed to do. Rural actors may well participate in the numerous councils that have been set up since the mid-1990s to ensure participation, but only by taking into account a number of qualitative variables is it possible to discern the breadth, depth, and authenticity of this participation.

The book is largely true to these methodological intentions and, in the studies of Regional Rural Development Councils (Chapter 8), and social-accountability reforms (Chapter 9), it becomes clear that many of Mexico's apparent transitions to democracy are indeed simulations (a word that curiously the author does not use with frequency). Indeed, political relationships in rural Mexico continue to be vertical, opaque, and authoritarian for the most part, although the author is keen to point out the few exceptions to the rule, because these 'cracks' in the system matter as they can provide opportunities for leverage and the winning of important political territory that can encourage the 'thickening of civil society' (Chapter 3).

Other chapters deal with electoral choices in rural Mexico (Chapter 5), theory and practice in the World Bank's application of the theory of social capital in Mexico (Chapter 6), the issue of decentralisation (Chapter 7), and the role of Mexico's migrants in the strengthening of civil society (Chapter 10). All the chapters ask important questions about these political transitions that transcend the particularities of the Mexican case, such as why does democracy defeat oligarchy at some points and not at others (p. 84); what is the relationship between trust and social

capital (p. 172); where does the state leave off and society begin (p. 177); and how to distinguish the shades between citizenship and clientelism (p. 99). The answers that the author gives are never simple and are almost always nuanced, cautious, and provisional, signalling the 'greyness' of the debate and the absence of facile solutions.

The tone of the work is always scholarly, and many observations and reflections are backed up by plentiful footnotes, which often introduce a welcome comparative perspective in a book essentially aimed at Mexico specialists. But the lessons to be learned from the author's years of study in Mexico are applicable to other cases: the important difference between electoral democracy and accountability, the positive relationship between a free and vigorous media and political transparency, and the processes of co-optation and political compromise that occur when autonomous organisations are absorbed by the state.

The book makes an unquestionable and important contribution on current debates in this area of study and conveniently offers one scholar's efforts to analyse this complex scenario in one volume. The style is accessible and sometimes pleasingly rhetorical (anticipating the reader's questions), but the arguments are dense and finely expressed. The work's relevance to development practice is obvious, although I suspect that most international development consultants seldom acquire the profound knowledge of national or regional political contexts necessary to truly engage with the richness of the discussions presented in the book. Most 'development' in Mexico is carried out by government ministries, not international agencies, so it is perhaps a pity that no Spanish translation of this work is yet available.

A criticism of the book would be that although it purports to be 'ethnographic' in its methodology, in this reviewer's (and anthropologist's) opinion, there is a certain absence of the voice of the actors. Perhaps as a political scientist, Jonathan Fox does

not employ a political-culture approach, which might have enriched the study, putting emphasis – as it does – on the *symbolic* aspects of power relations and the ways in which expectations about what is politically possible are conditioned by cultural and regional factors. A truly ethnographic approach would also provide a more intimate feel to the analyses, although one inherently loses scope and sometimes comparative possibilities (due to the intensely qualitative nature of the research material gathered). Nevertheless, I fully recommend this book to Mexican scholars and those involved in the design of new policy packages and development interventions in politically complex, heterogeneous, and transitional national spaces.

Tim Trench

Universidad Autónoma Chapingo, San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico

Development in Practice 19 (2009)

DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689733

Christopher M. Bacon, V. Ernesto Méndez, Stephen R. Gliessman, David Goodman, and Jonathan A. Fox (eds.)
Confronting the Coffee Crisis: Fair Trade, Sustainable Livelihoods and Ecosystems in Mexico and Central America

The MIT Press, 2008, ISBN: 978-0-262-52480-3, xii+390 pp.

The world market for certified rural products (organic, fair trade, sustainable, green, etc.) has already reached the 50-billion-dollar-a-year mark and continues to grow fast. No wonder that many in the social and environmental community are looking at certification as a promising opportunity to mainstream environmental conservation into primary production and to bring new sources of jobs and income to rural communities.

Coffee seems ideally suited for social and environmental certification. It is produced in developing countries, but its largest market is in rich countries, where motivated

consumers can afford to pay more for a quality product. In addition, approximately 70 per cent of the world's coffee is grown by small farmers in tropical and sub-tropical areas of developing countries, where a modest price premium for certified coffee may represent a significant amount for farmers, and may leverage sustainable agriculture practices. Furthermore, since the early 1990s two opposing trends have come together to increase the appeal of coffee certification, both to producers and consumers.

Following the demise of the International Coffee Agreement (ICA), producer countries' capacity to influence coffee's production level and price has waned, while the market power of large international coffee buyers has increased; as a result, international coffee prices plummeted, low-cost producers (Brazil and Vietnam) increased their share of the market, and elsewhere coffee crises engulfed small and medium-size producers, including those of Central America and Mexico that are the focus of this book.

While the world price for green coffee was taking a dive, US and European markets soared, witnessing the growth of the market for high-quality, high-priced coffee brands. The so-called 'Starbucks effect', fostered by massive publicity from specialty coffee roasters and coffee chains, coincided with the growth of demand from discerning consumers and social activists, all in all making coffee the world's food commodity with the largest high-end segment (for example, 17 per cent of the volume and 40 per cent of the value of the coffee sold in the USA at the beginning of the decade, according to C. M. Bacon in Chapter 7, p. 158 of this book), with one of the largest percentages of certified production (but still a very modest 2–4 per cent of the international coffee market).

This is the world that the authors of *Confronting the Coffee Crisis* analyse in detail, focusing on Mexican and Central American experiences of social and environmental certification (which now includes a variety of fair-trade, organic, and shade-grown labels).

The book follows the usual tripartite structure of collective works: introduction, case studies, and conclusions. The book's first section, 'Context and Analytical Framework', introduces and summarises its contributions (Chapter 1), and puts forward two frameworks. Chapter 2 spells out the tenets of agro-ecology, and Chapter 3 enumerates the many challenges faced by small coffee producers.

The middle section (Chapters 4 to 9) – 'Ecological and Social Dimension of Producers' Responses' – presents six case studies of coffee smallholders, three in Mexico, two in Nicaragua, and one in El Salvador. Half the case studies are contributed by Latin American researchers and the other half by Northern-based researchers.

The last section (Chapters 10 to 14) – 'Alternative South–North Networks and Markets' – is more of a mixed bag. Two chapters continue in the case-study line: Chapter 11 discusses tensions between the roles of inspector and adviser in certification processes; and Chapter 13 presents the case of the Community Agro-ecology Network (CAN) – an initiative which brings together academics and students from US universities and five farmer communities in Mexico and Central America, with the purpose of creating 'an alternative trade and knowledge network'. The other three chapters in this section discuss lessons learned: Chapter 12 compares half a dozen certification schemes and certification networks, and Chapters 10 and 15 analyse the potentials and limitations of coffee certification to improve livelihoods and protect rural environments.

The book has a strong unity, due to the fact that the majority of the authors work, or have worked, with the University of California at Santa Cruz core team, and they share the same conceptual frameworks – political ecology and agro-ecology – and the same research approaches: participatory and action research (see Chapter 9 by V. Ernesto Mendez and Chapter 2 by David Gliessman). These commonalities give the book a coherence that is lacking in many

such collective works, and, at their best, they deliver clear analyses and conclusions (one of my favourites is Chapter 5 by Maria E. Martínez Torres). At their worst, they saddle some chapters with repetitions and academic jargon for its own sake (for example, a fascination with definitions and typologies).

However, the overall balance is clearly positive, and the book's authors review and discuss many facts and findings that will interest practitioners and academics alike in the fields of social development, rural development, and environmental conservation. I mentioned some at the beginning of this review; others that caught my attention include the following:

- The discussion of different certification schemes, some created by social-activist groups, others by environmental NGOs, others resulting from government standards or industry-based standards, and even some that are no more than individual companies' 'self certification'. Given such variety, tensions are to be expected, and what some see as desirable scaling-up, others consider the selling-out of certification's original purposes (Chapters 2 and 13).
- The finding that in all cases strong farmer organisations and other forms of social capital are preconditions to enable small farmers to participate in certification schemes (Chapters 5 and 10).
- The need for a landscape approach to judge the environmental impact of certification, since the environmental gains of a certified coffee plot may be negated by the agricultural practices of the same farmer in an adjacent plot.
- The fact that the real constraint to certification is not the lack of willing producers, but rather the lack of willing buyers (Chapter 7).
- The finding that a price premium is just one of the benefits that farmers see in certification (Chapter 10).

As for the book's overall findings, the editors give a good summary of them: 'The field-based evidence available so far does not

support hopes that these certified coffee markets will be a “magic bullet” cure for structural poverty and crisis. However some of these programmes, notably Fair Trade and organic networks, have played important roles in supporting smallholders’ organizations, biodiversity conservation, reducing vulnerability to the coffee crisis, increasing international awareness of the social and environmental costs of the current coffee system, and creating a savvy group of smallholder coffee producers, now actors on the international stage. The constraints include price volatility, North–South power imbalances, declining and in some cases non-existing price premium received at the farm gate, the many certification costs the producers pay, and a general lack of efforts to seek support from the state’ (from Chapter 14 by Bacon *et al.*, p. 362).

Even a satisfied reader will miss something in any book. In my case I regret that the authors did not attempt to compare coffee certification with other commodity-certification schemes, so as to put their findings in a broader context and address this reader’s nagging question: are the book’s findings common to most certification schemes, or just specific to coffee certification?

Pablo Gutman

Senior Economist, WWF – Macroeconomics for Sustainable Development Program

Development in Practice 19 (2009)

DOI: 10.1080/09614520802689766

Alan Thomas and Giles Mohan (eds.)

Research Skills for Policy and Development: How To Find Out Fast

Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications and The Open University, 2007, ISBN: 978-1-4129-4563-9, 363 pp.

World Bank / International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Tools for Institutional, Political, and Social Analysis of Policy Reform: A Sourcebook

for Development Practitioners
Washington, DC: World Bank, 2007,
ISBN: 0-8213-6890-7, 267 pp.

Research Skills for Policy and Development is an updated version of *How To Find Out Fast*, edited by Alan Thomas, Joanna Chataway, and Marc Wuyts, published in 1998. It is aimed at managers and people involved in the multiple forms of public action required to inform development interventions. This new version takes account of the recent explosion of interest in evidence-based policy (EBP). It is designed to provide people working in community groups, NGOs, social movements, and central and local governments with the necessary skills to collect the best evidence available to inform rational decision making. Although development policy is part of the context, this book is concerned with methods for practical investigation, rather than with the policy process itself. It both explains and critically reviews the use of a variety of methods, and demonstrates that the appropriateness of each is related to the specific needs of different contexts.

The introduction by Alan Thomas, first author of the previous edition, includes four contemporary examples of policy research and development management. Some of these provide material for more detailed case studies in later chapters. These case studies illustrate commonalities between different aspects of the conceptual foundations of research in economic development, as well as the pitfalls and dangers inherent in a policy-research approach. The book successively deals with the overall problem of conceptualising policy-related research (Part 1); the use of documents (Part 2) and of people (Part 3) as sources of information; and the best ways to exploit the data collected (Part 4).

For Thomas and Mohan, policy-oriented research is definitely a multi-step process. The overall conceptual framework of the policy within which enquiry takes place shapes the design and process of a piece of

research. They illustrate how drawing boundaries and thinking about systems is crucial to understanding complex situations. Journalists, for example, have developed their own techniques to 'find out fast', and the pragmatic way in which they collect information is considered later in the book, when investigative methods are considered from a more theoretical perspective. However, the world of policy change is, by definition, highly political, and technical arguments do not have such a great impact on policy decisions. This explains why the whole process is frequently iterative, and why re-conceptualising the issues under investigation frequently highlights misunderstandings.

In terms of research methods, of the two main approaches considered, the chapters dealing with the subject 'thinking with people' (Part 3) are most enlightening for the reader who is interested in development management. In an attempt to describe methodologies aiming at *finding out from people*, Philip Woodhouse gradually lays bare the essential feature of a participatory approach, which consists of the interaction between researchers and informants. In addition to many comparative analyses of a relatively wide range of technical research methods, this book contains many references to participatory methods of enquiry (PLA: Participatory Learning and Action; PPA: Participatory Poverty Assessment) and a rather subtle analysis of their impact on the perception of those who are researched.

The presumed relationship between 'empowerment' and a participatory approach is also addressed. The term 'empowerment' is a contested concept, used in different ways by individuals and organisations. This specific aspect is more thoroughly analysed by Linda Mayoux and Hazel Johnson, who focus on thinking with people, where the incidence of power relations generated by research and action is illustrated by several experiences of participatory enquiry. The authors address all the ethical issues arising from communicating to third parties sensitive information collected during research

processes, and the high level of social responsibility required of those who initiate and support research.

The final section of *Research Skills for Policy and Development* reviews problems encountered during the collation of data. It echoes the previous two sections and argues that in all cases it is necessary to analyse primary or secondary quantitative data. After considering several challenging examples, Alan Thomas and Joanna Chataway conclude by commenting on the belief that there is an underlying reality that research can find out, and the contrasting view that different pictures of reality are simultaneously possible, based on different perspectives and interests. Common ground may be found through the recognition that policy and action must be thought about in terms of process, and the challenge for policy research is to fit into this process in an effective way.

Tools for Institutional, Political, and Social Analysis of Policy Reform, edited by the Social Department of the World Bank, is a sourcebook which presents a framework and a series of tools for institutional, political, and social analysis within the more global concept of Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA). This book aims to help the reader to gain a better understanding of the overall impacts of reform at the macro level, as well as local processes of policy review and design at the micro level. PSIA is presented as an integrated part of the policy process which applies to any reform, whether or not it is focused on poverty reduction.

To achieve this ambitious objective, the World Bank's Social Department has opted for an original methodology and book structure, introducing in the first part PSIA objectives and methodology, as well as micro- to macro-level analysis of policy reform, including a risk assessment of such reform. The second part of the book is then dedicated to developing each aspect mentioned in the first part, by means of three case studies.

The reader is introduced to a range of institutional, political, and social tools for

understanding the dynamics of policy reform at macro, meso, and micro levels and for assessing uncertainties and risks to policy reform. One is therefore offered an extensive range of tools from which to select the most appropriate for the level to be analysed. Tools are based on methodological and analytical frameworks, adding empirical value and critical depth to economic analysis. In addition, the sourcebook provides guidance on reform contexts.

The case studies correspond to three recently conducted PSIA's which highlight three aspects of good practice in policy analysis. The first illustrates the fact that evidence from PSIA can have a tangible impact on policy discussions, design, and implementation. The second shows how the careful sequencing of research methods and data collection can add to the usefulness and

impact of policy research. Finally, the third demonstrates the benefits of embedding policy analysis in a sustainable and locally owned process of policy dialogue. The case studies illustrate interesting elements of methodology. This very didactic book comes with a CD-RoM loaded with useful bibliographic references and additional material (tools, general information on PSIA, a range of case studies, etc.), organised into six folders.

Both books provide the reader with a vast range of examples and analysis, with a strong emphasis on comparative presentation of methodologies, mainly through practical examples. They both provide tools which should prove very useful both to researchers and development practitioners.

Jean-François Brière