

affected by war may be in need of psychotherapeutic intervention, by giving it a central place in rehabilitation programmes the healing potential within the individual and the community may be neglected. Aid should be geared at the real, often social, needs and demands of the target groups and their communities. This involves obtaining more insight into the meaning of violence for the target groups, as McCallin and Richters highlight.

The book certainly gives rise to further study and debate. However, although the arguments of the authors are quite convincing, they may be no more than 'sweeping statements' if they are not supported by empirical evidence. The book would also have gained in persuasiveness if more credit were given to our colleagues from the South, by referring to their enriching experiences with community approaches—in Latin America and the Philippines, for instance. Last but not least, globalization is a continuing process, which not only has the effect of distributing globally 'beliefs' in Macdonald's, Levi jeans and TV soaps, but also beliefs in 'sexy' trauma programmes. As long as mainstream mental health professionals in the North tend to apply and teach 'trauma programmes' uncritically at home, how can we prevent them from being exported to the South? Colleagues from the South and from other disciplines should be involved in this debate.

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**The Struggle for Accountability: World Bank, NGOs, and Grassroots Movements.** Edited by Jonathan A. Fox and L. David Brown. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1998. xiii + 569pp. £23.95. ISBN 0 262 56117 4/0 262 06199 6.

No brief review can do justice to this powerful, path-breaking work. It represents a first attempt to analyse and establish the relative effectiveness of various strategies used by northern and southern non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and grassroots movements, to catalyse change in the World Bank's environmental policy. The relevance of these studies to *JRS* readers concerned with the rights of refugees and the accountability of such actors as humanitarian organizations and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), cannot be over-stated.

The aim of the various campaigns is to hold the World Bank accountable for the human rights abuses and negative socio-economic impacts on the victims of development projects that the Bank has bankrolled. The editors, Jonathan Fox and David Brown, who author four of the chapters, are university-based researchers who have extensive experience working with southern and northern NGOs and international development agencies, including the World Bank. Academics with activist experience and 'activists with research experience' write the other chapters, which are case studies of campaigns.

The book traces the struggle spanning some two decades to hold the World Bank publicly accountable to civil society. In the analysis, two specific questions are raised: to what degree did activists, northern and southern NGOs, influence specific projects or policies; and to what degree were those most directly affected by World Bank projects, people at the grassroots, represented in the campaign process? To answer these requires a definition of accountability and an examination of how and why 'large, relatively autonomous institutions change'. Institutional adaptation and institutional learning are

distinguished. The former refers to reactions to external pressures without any adjustments to the underlying goals or processes of decision-making; institutional learning, on the other hand, leads to change throughout an institution, resulting in new goals and priorities, as well as changes in behaviour.

The authors remind us that accountability is a concept that has received 'remarkably little research attention'. As used in this study, accountability is the extent to which the Bank complies with its *own* 'reform goals' in relation to its *own* environmental policies. In short, can it be shown empirically that the World Bank does what it says it will do? If it can be shown that NGOs and grassroots movements have managed to hold the Bank accountable '*for its own promises*', we then have a method of measuring their impact.

Technically, this institution is only accountable to its shareholders, the member states, and their vote is based on the level of each member state's investment. The relative autonomy of Bank management, in relation to these members, is illustrated by the fact that no loan applications that the management has recommended have been turned down by its shareholders. However, as the editors remind us, more than a 'two-actor model' of the conflict is required in conceptualizing the role of civil society critics.

The authors comment on the difficulties of analysing the behaviour of the rarely united NGOs and grassroots movements. They take different positions, some choosing to work *within* the system, others from outside. They may split over whether to push for mitigation or compensation or to block a project entirely. To what extent do these different actors represent the interests of the victims? 'Representation, like accountability, is relational and a matter of degree.' Even more difficult is discerning the degree of policy change and what relative weight NGOs and grassroots movements may have had in bringing this about.

The delicate role of insider/outsider coalitions was also found to be critical to bringing about institutional *learning*. External pressure was often critical in empowering individuals *within* the institutions; 'they legitimate and reinforce the other'. At the same time, external pressure weakened 'those within the apparatus that paid little attention to the already learned lessons of the past'. An international campaign led to the establishment of an independent commission to review the Narmada Dam in 1991. It was able to make its 'precedent-setting breakthrough' because it had both autonomy and authority needed to extract controversial information and to make these critical findings public.

Could the methodology of analysis be applied to the refugee situation? Admittedly, UNHCR is an entirely different animal from the World Bank. Moreover, the 'victims', the refugees, unlike some of the grassroots movements described in the book, are not organized, either to act on their own behalf, or to form effective transnational advocacy coalitions with northern NGOs that purport to represent them. But there are many similarities—for example, the role of states. States act as the donors, they are members of UNHCR's Executive Committee, and as host countries in the south, they are recipients of donor funds.

Among the many empirical questions to be answered are: To what extent are host states that receive international aid responsible for their own policies; or are they simply ventriloquists for UNHCR or donor policy? What has been the role of NGOs that implement assistance and those that claim to advocate for refugee rights? Recent experience in central Africa could be examined to pursue these questions. Until scholars, and the few northern human rights organizations concerned with refugee rights, begin

to look beyond the role of the host state in failing to uphold the rights of refugees, we will not begin to know.

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**Conflict, Postwar Rebuilding and the Economy: A Critical Review of the Literature.** By Gilles Carbonnier. Geneva: UNRISD, 1998. War-torn Societies Project Occasional Paper 2. 84pp. Nps. No ISBN.

Gilles Carbonnier's critical review targets the gap between theory and practice in the field of assistance provision for economic reconstruction and rebuilding of war-torn societies. The author rightly argues that the contributions of economists to research in the field of post-war reconstruction are still limited, despite the fact that conflicts result in enormous human and economic costs. This review of the available literature illustrates that 'Economic research on contemporary countries at war and post-conflict reconstruction is an extremely complex and somewhat novel area for scholars and practitioners alike'. This has led the author to extend the review beyond the direct relationship between conflict and the economy to include the wider perspective of post-conflict rebuilding.

Having explored the cost of war and the dynamics underlying conflict economies, the study presents the reader with a review of relevant literature in a range of widely discussed current issues in the context of post-conflict rebuilding, including socio-economic root causes of conflict, peace-building, and foreign aid. The author demonstrates that the theories of neo-classical economics are limited in explaining the economic environment created by the complexities of contemporary conflicts. It is in this context that the study urges scholars and practitioners to work towards the establishment of more multi-disciplinary and holistic economic approaches. All of us who recognize the fact that '...there is no blueprint or tool kit for rebuilding war-torn societies' would definitely sympathize with the author's arguments. The study highlights the fact that a great deal of the available literature and post-conflict rebuilding recommendations '...tend to be directed primarily at the international community, mainly the international financial institutions, relief agencies and key donors, rather than at domestic actors'.

The study concludes with a set of recommendations focusing on (i) the modes of delivery and impact of external assistance, where the author suggests that 'Donors can do much to lessen the human and economic costs of conflict even during the hostilities'; (ii) the appropriate content and pace of economic policy reforms for war-torn countries, recommending alternative directions to IMF policies; and (iii) the controversial role of economic conditionality in support of peace processes.

This is a very well researched and written literature review. However, the arguments and recommendations made could have been strengthened by giving more attention to some of the current national policies and economic reconstruction strategies in countries emerging from war. There is also a need to recognize that not all of the economic difficulties we witness today in war-torn societies are the result of conflict. Very often conflict has simply acted as an agent to expose much deeper pre-war economic vulnerabilities.

Nevertheless, one of the most valuable contributions of this study comes at the very end in the form of suggested areas for future research. In my view, this