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The Struggle for AccountAbility: The World Bank, NGOs, and Popular Movements by
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Development in Practice, Vol. 9, No. 3 (May, 1999), pp. 348-349

Published by: [Taylor & Francis, Ltd.](#) on behalf of [Oxfam GB](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4029754>

Accessed: 26/11/2011 21:44

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more useful to work first separately with dominated and dominating groups rather than lump them together prematurely in popular village-style meetings.

One works with dominated groups to empower them economically, psychologically, socially or politically. One works with the dominating to change attitudes or to foster empathy for the change sought. To work separately with either of these groups may mean that the power issues between them is never mainstreamed; but to rush into things may actually dampen their participation.

There are some articles that could have done with additional work. Caren Levy's 'Institutionalisation of Gender through Participatory Practice' is promising as a checklist of elements or factors that need to be in place before an organisation could be said to have institutionalised participatory or gender equitable approaches. However, it leaves begging the question of how the framework itself was developed and, therefore, of the validity of the framework itself.

There is a critical theme in the book that strikes me as under-explored: if participatory and gender equitable approaches must be designed, implemented, and monitored from a long-term perspective, what are the implications of this for project funding and partnership development between Northern and Southern organisations? The book speaks to this from primarily a project development perspective and under-utilises its advocacy potential.

However, the value of any book can be measured by how much it inspires the reader to do more work and advance thinking on any critical issue. This book stirs imagination, challenges assumptions, provides concrete examples of what is and should be. In the process, it strikes an apt empirical and theoretical balance. For all these reasons, I will be drawing on the 'Myth of Community' for a while yet.

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The Struggle for Accountability: The World Bank, NGOs, and Popular Movements

Jonathan A. Fox and L. David Brown (eds.)

Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998,
ISBN: 0 262 56117 4

Jonathan Fox and L. David Brown have done the development community an important service through the publication of their edited volume. The book brings together a broad array of expertise and experience to reflect upon the complex dynamics of transnational advocacy efforts by civil society organisations to bring about changes in World Bank policy and practice. The goal of the book is to draw together lessons and develop hypotheses about these dynamics, based on careful study of actual transnational campaigns.

The book is divided into three main parts—the first analysing the actors involved in transnational coalitions, the second describing project-level campaigns, and the third dealing with efforts to change Bank policies. These are flanked by an introduction and two concluding chapters written jointly by Fox and Brown. The authors give balanced assessments of what occurred, and the use of case studies provides a richness of experience that challenges some of the oversimplifications about the power and influence of transnational civil society, and the linear and rational nature of policy change.

An important point illustrated by the book is the fallacy of a simple two-actor model—the World Bank and NGOs. National and local governments also have varying degrees of influence and control, and the book makes useful distinctions among the various civil society actors such as grass-roots organisations (GROs), local and national NGOs, international NGOs (INGOs), and bridging organisations that provide the connective tissue to bring transnational coalitions together.

The chapters also repeatedly demonstrate

the divisions within the Bank around specific policies and projects. These internal divisions create space for what Fox and Brown argue are modest but real reform within the Bank triggered by, supported by, and partially shaped by the existence of external transnational campaigns. Where internal Bank divisions did not exist, however, the prospect for Bank reform appears bleak, as illustrated by Jane Covey's case on the NGO Working Group on the World Bank's attempts to influence World Bank policy on structural adjustment—the one case in the book that met with almost no success.

The NGO Working Group case, again by being the exception, also draws attention to the fact that none of the other cases involved a challenge to the core macroeconomic development model driving the projects in the first place. Instead, they focus on the social and environmental consequences—'externalities' in Bank parlance—of projects and policies. Rather than a failing of the volume, however, this focus reflects the state of the debate, which has started with the important first step of introducing social and environmental concerns into Bank discourse. The value of this volume is that it shows how these pioneering efforts challenge the Bank's (or the International Monetary Fund's, or the World Trade Organisation's, etc.) core development model.

The promise of transnational coalitions is great, combining detailed first-hand information about social and environmental problems on the ground, knowledge of the local, national, and international contexts, and access to Northern decision-makers, to reshape development discourse and practice. But in practice, bridging the vast geographic, cultural, language, financial, technological and information distances is often problematic.

Despite the very high quality of the book, we would have benefited from a fuller synthesis of decision-making and power differentials within the Bank. Fox and Brown note that 'most critics portray the Bank as monolithic, but this volume shows that one cannot explain

the impact of protest without taking into account how external pressure is mediated by the Bank's internal policies, structure, and factions' (p. 533). However, given this analysis, more could have been done to 'unpack' the internal dynamics of the Bank. This is important because the overall assessment of the authors is that the Bank demonstrates a tremendous resistance to change.

In focusing so intensively on World Bank/civil society relations, the book fails to touch on some of the major challenges facing those of us concerned with sustainable development and accountability. Many would argue that the Bank is a decreasingly important actor, when compared with the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation, and private transnational capital. Governments, the Bank's clients, are also decreasingly important in a globalised economy.

But this is not so much a criticism as an acknowledgment of the power of this volume to suggest hypotheses and new directions. One can think of these efforts as an early phase and key entry point in a broader strategy to reshape the dominant development model to one that brings human rights and environmental and social issues to the forefront, and addresses equity head on. Recent developments in east Asia and the former Soviet Union, and debates emerging among economists about the costs and inherent instability of the current system, give rise to important openings for NGOs and social movements. They will be better able to take advantage of these opportunities, with the experience, insights, and analysis such as those provided in *The Struggle for Accountability*.

Laura Roper and Gabrielle Watson
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Hidden Lives: Voices of Children in Latin America and the Caribbean
Duncan Green
London: Cassell (with SCF and Rädä Barnen), 1998, ISBN: 0 304 33688 2, 209 pp.