



AN EXERCISE IN WORLDMAKING 2009

Best Student Essays of 2008/09

Evaluated and published by students
from the 2008/09 and 2009/10 batches
with the support of the PhD students and ISS staff

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Published by the
Institute of Social Studies
Kortenaerkade 12
2518 AX The Hague
Netherlands

First published in 2009

ISBN ??????????????????

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the Royal Library,
The Hague, The Netherlands

Printed in the Netherlands by Datawyse bv,
Universitaire Pers Maastricht

A participatory and student-driven academic exchange and reference tool
created for the Institute of Social Studies MA students of 2008 & 2009

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Acknowledgements

This book could not have been produced without the collaboration of all the ISS staff members and students involved in the process. We would particularly like to thank:

- the program administrators, Annet Geen van, Sharmini Bisessar, Tanya Kingdon, Vlada Tchirikova, Marja Zubli, Karin Hirdes, Cisca Vorselman, Josée Haanappel, and Katherine Voorvelt. For some, it has been their fourth year assisting Scholas with this initiative and without their time and energy this book would not have been possible.
- Louk de la Rive Box, Wim Knoester, Wil Hout and Inge van Verschuer for their support in this student initiative. Their doors were always open for us when urgent matters needed to be discussed, decisions made, and prompt action needed to be taken.
- the dedicated team of evaluators formed by the talented MA students, who applied their knowledge, time and energy in judging the essays with valuable qualitative comments, providing us a selection of the best among the best essays of Terms 2 and 3.
- the editing team, further formed by MA students who contributed their time on the English language editing of this book.
- Joy Misa, for the fourth year in a row, who has graciously taken on the meticulous task of assuring that the layout and format was done in the highest of professional standards. Thank you for working so hard within such a short span of time.
- Mavis Akinyi Olum, a 2009/10 MA student for taking the time and creative talent to design such an aesthetically pleasing cover for this publication.
- Paula Bownas, for her help with the ISBN number.
- Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank the members of the 2008/09 Scholas Executive Committee who have been dedicated to in ensuring the publication of this book.



Foreword

This collection of essays represents the fourth edition of *An Exercise in Worldmaking*. The contents of this anthology reflect a sampling of the insights and perspectives of the 2008/09 MA students from the International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam. These essays are illustrative of how a diverse student body, representing over fifty countries and a host of professional and educational backgrounds, can contest, construct and redefine the notion of development; thus maintaining the contemporary social, political and economic relevance of development theory and practice.

Indeed, *An Exercise in Worldmaking* provides insight on relevant themes of development by professionals who are immersed in the theoretical, historical and practical work and literature of development. It is in this way that the enclosed essays serve to further the effort of collective and participatory *worldmaking*.

On behalf of the 2008/09 student body, we are pleased to share 17 essays selected by a committee of peers on the basis of excellent writing, innovative thinking and critical analysis.

The Process

The methodology of this anthology is modelled on the approaches chosen in previous years. As in the last three years, the 2008/09 'best essay book' was developed in an open, democratic and collaborative fashion. However, due to time constraints, smaller groups made several decisions in the last stage of the compilation process.

The 17 'best' essays included in the book were selected from a total of 59 essays provided by ISS professors and lecturers during terms two and three. The initial 59 essays were those that received the highest marks. The essays were acquired through course administrators in an anonymous fashion, bearing only the course code and student number. This year's editorial

committee determined that the challenge of identifying the ‘best’ essays is inherently subjective. Thus, to avoid bias, encourage discussion and foster collaboration, the essays were reviewed and ranked by teams of two student evaluators.

A total of 20 students volunteered to review, rank and recommend essays for the book. Ten teams each reviewed six essays and one team reviewed five essays. Student evaluators came from a range of backgrounds, disciplines and regions, representing the diversity of the essays and the institute itself. While the workload for each evaluator was greater this year, the overall evaluation experience is seen as more open and collaborative and less biased as a result of the discussion and reflection inherent in the team evaluation process.

Evaluation teams were determined by common interest, specialization and previous experience. Thus, the essays that were assigned to each team generally followed a similar theme of specialization or topic so that evaluators would be in the best position to appropriately assess the essays. To ensure that no evaluator assessed their own essay, the course administrators provided a list of the student authors of the 59 essays. This list was separate from the essays themselves and only reviewed by one of the student volunteers who coordinated the assignment of essays to the teams of two.

As in previous years, creating a dialogue and learning process between the former ‘old batch’, current ‘old batch’ and ‘new batch’ of MA students lies at the heart of this anthology. This continuous and intergenerational dialogue is what propels the process of discovery, innovation and analysis by fostering collaboration and increasing diversity and representation. Thus the reflections of the 2008/09 MA students included in this book represent the influence of previous and current MA student groups; as a whole, it strives to be a relevant contribution to the institute’s evolving *exercise in worldmaking*.



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1

Demystifying 'Youth': Challenging the Conspicuous Absence of Young Women in the Conceptualization of 'Youth' and Understanding Youth as Potential Agents of Change through a Gender Lens

SANJUKTA CHAUDHURI

INTRODUCTION

In the globalised and transnational world of today 'youth' remains to be an integral and potential agent of change. 'History' in the absence of 'her story' has been testimony to the role played by 'youth' time and again in raising and addressing pertinent issues, initiating and sustaining processes of social change. 'Change' symbolizes and translates the exercise of agency, which challenges the conventional norms and status quo perpetuating social divisions, inequalities and violation of human rights. The emergence of youth movements, leagues, councils and clubs have been diverse modes of civic engagement in the realm of social, political and economic issues. These have been a vital fora and spaces through which 'youth' demonstrates active participation and exercises rights of citizenship.

This essay recognizes 'youth' as a potential agent of social change and justice. Having said so, however, it attempts to trace the gendered nature of 'youth' through a critical analysis of its conceptualization and representation in 'youth initiatives' like movements and programmes. Drawing upon youth initiatives during the Freedom Movement in India and post conflict context of contemporary Sierra Leone, it questions the limited participation and conspicuous absence of young women vis-à-vis young

men. It identifies the role of women being integrationist (*Women in Development*)¹ instead of applying an intersectional analysis² of social categories perpetuating discrimination and inequality. The paper argues that the issue of 'gender' in youth initiatives is tackled in a piecemeal basis, rhetoric, as an issue synonymous only to 'women' rather than being a relational concept, challenging the inherent 'maleness' to the understanding and perceptions regarding 'youth'. It reflects on 'youth initiatives' as a vehicle for raising and addressing 'gender issues' rather than 'being' 'gender equal'. To conclude, within the limited scope and research, the paper raises the issue of engendering the concept of 'youth', to rethink and challenge the biases and to strive for equal participation of the other half of the population; thus, realizing the vision of social change through a transformatory process and practice of equal participation thereby being 'gender equal'.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF 'YOUTH': A DISTINCT CATEGORY OF ANALYSIS THROUGH GENDER LENS

The theorization of the concept of 'youth' is highly debated in the works of youth studies. Although it is understood as a separate category from adulthood, the contestation lies in its conception that is, whether 'youth' as a stage in life is determined biologically- an age related process or is a social construct. Jones (in Wyn and White, 1997: 8) reflects that the study of youth sociology acknowledges the transition of young people from youth to adulthood as well as their distinct experiences which are unique and differ according to their social location. She further states that 'it is misleading to emphasize the qualities or otherwise of 'youth' per se, since young are neither a homogeneous group nor a static one'; thus, conceptualizes youth as an age-related process which acquires a social meaning.

For instance, the past deliberations between the Northern and Southern researchers have also centered around 'youth' being an 'age bound category', where the latter have been critical of this approach claiming 'youth' to be a socially constructed and contextually determined category (Tyska, 2005: 3). Further, this school of thought argues that age undergoes a series of social processes engaging closely with varied institutions of socialization (family, school, media, work etcetera) whereby the growth of a young person is continuously molded and conditioned. Simultaneously, the 'process of ageing' is also influenced by the historical

and cultural processes. It is this cyclic course that makes 'youth' a socially constructed concept (Wyn and White, 1997: 10). Hence, this conceptualization of youth proves to be instrumental in building a comprehensive understanding regarding the intersectionality of social institutions and individual life experiences with related complexities and power dynamics (ibid).

However, the above concept from the analytical framework of 'gender'³ attempts to demystify certain subtle assumptions which when probed further brings forth the inherent stereotypical constructions based on gendered understandings. Youth as a 'socially constructed' concept compels us to question and understand the impact of institutions of socialization and processes on the formation of 'youth' as a distinct category. Within the theoretical framework of feminist analysis it could be argued that with the given patriarchal system and gender biases prevalent in the existing social structures, society conforms to the sexually determined roles of men and women which plays a critical part in the socialization and permeates in the shaping of 'youth', making it a gendered category. This somewhere is manifested in upholding the notions of masculinity and femininity, reaffirming sexual division of labour, public/private divide where men are considered rational, worthy enough to personify the mainstream whereas women are labeled as the fairer/second sex, better off when controlled under male domination. For instance, the state is a masculine institution. This is not because it is primarily men who occupy high positions in state-led institutions but more so because the 'state organizational practices are structured in relation to the reproductive arena'⁴ whereby it thrives on the societal biases by practicing segregation of work, employment, etcetera based on the conflated intersections of sex, class, race and other social categories of inequality (Connell, 2005: 73). Similarly, 'family' as a primary institution of socialization is also much debated by feminist scholars and vehemently critiqued by Second Wave Feminists. It embarks on naturalization of gendered stereotypical roles based on sexual division of labour, invisibilisation of women's agency and unequal power relations between men and women. It further propounds the nuclear hetero-normative structure strengthening the public/private divide where men work in the public realm and women are meant to take 'care' of the 'household' that is, private sphere. It is this notion that was challenged by second wave feminists coining the phrase 'personal is political', reiterating family as a po-

litical unit of power dynamics and inequality which etched women's discriminated status and subordinate role in the public place e.g. labour market (Okin,1997: 14-16). During the 1970s, Nancy Chodorow and Dorothy Dinnerstien analyzed 'family' from a psychoanalytical viewpoint. It was then that they developed the understanding of the differences between boys and girls and related inequalities being entrenched in the child-rearing arrangements, where the mother (woman) was seen as a care taker, emotional vis-à-vis a father (man) working, bread winner hence more rational. This inevitably impacts the psychological development of children, where girls are able to associate to their same sex caretaker in a more relational way while boys get more inclined 'not to be feminine' and ally with more masculine traits. Thus, according to their theory it was only gender equal child rearing that would help in resolving misogyny and prevent such psychologies (ibid: 17).

It is in this historical, socio-political and cultural context that the young generation is raised and resultantly the concept of 'youth' formulated breeds 'maleness' in its conceptualization.

Taking lead from the above, whilst analyzing the conceptualization of 'youth' another facet that draws considerable attention is the process of 'production of knowledge'. Questions like who is involved in the creation of knowledge, the embedded power dynamics, construction of meaning, its relation with 'reality' and the relevance of usage of language; also, whether all of these have had a bearing on the interpretation of meaning and creation of 'truth' in social sciences, becomes pertinent in the context of this paper. Feminist studies reveal that men were considered intellectually more capable and rational in the field of academics compared to women's lack of 'reasoning' and ability to think about basic levels, bestowing men with privileged access as custodians to the 'production of knowledge'. So, it can be said that the 'male-defined models of knowledge' when translated into theory was not perceived as male-oriented as was well disguised under the accreditation of attaining value of being 'universal' and 'objective' truth in the field of social sciences (Gunew, 1990: 15). Brannen, McRobbie and Garber (in Phoenix, 1997: 2) further state that 'in the study of young people, gender has only recently begun to receive sustained attention [...] that young women were generally omitted from studies which claimed to be of youth, but were really of young men. Thus, knowledge produced about young men was treated as if it pertained to all young people'.

To unravel this a little more, it would be interesting to reflect upon Michel Foucault's 'theory of discourse'. Foucault (in Gunew, 1990: 19) emphasizes on the importance of language being a significant marker and communicator of the existing socio-political power relations. He further states that 'language is neither a neutral tool nor transparent reflection of reality. Its component parts in fact shape the way in which reality is perceived. Within literature, language is being crafted in even more particular ways and recent criticism attempts to disrupt the surface calm that has long reassured people that language is neutral and that its specific unities reflect unproblematically the supposed unities of the 'real' world. By focusing on the manner in which meaning is produced from texts [...] feminist critics reveal the gender bias within the use of language' (ibid). Furman (1980: 54) cites the example of 'textual feminism' defining that 'textual feminism implies the recognition of the fact that we speak, read, and write from a gender-marked place within our social and cultural context'. Thus, because language is imbued with patriarchal concepts it is instrumental in reproduction of patriarchy and perpetuates male hegemony (Gunew, 1990: 25). Hence, from the above discourse it can be derived that conceptualization of 'youth' is also a consequence of the complex interplay of power relations in the construction of universal knowledge and has a male orientation.

This paper builds upon the understanding of 'youth' as a relational concept which draws from the relational concept of gender. The theoretical debate on the concept of gender during the 1970s revolved around 'gender' being circumscribed to the sex roles of men and women, which in turn harnessed inequalities. The oversimplification and inherent passivity of the concept led to development of 'gender' as a relational concept. This encompasses social construction of masculinity and femininity in relation to each other with power being central to the concept. It further delves into the eclectic power dynamics and related discrimination, inequalities emerging from the same (Wyn and White, 1997: 11). Similarly, 'youth' as a relational concept with intrinsic power relations to adulthood helps in understanding both physical and psychological experiences which are unique and varied in the lives of young people (ibid). This challenges the attribute of homogeneity of youth as a category and develops a scope of it being more inclusive in its conceptualization and approach. Thereon, it would broaden its spectrum to incorporate experiences of young women as well, which is evidently different from that of

young men. Mitterauer (in Wyn and White, 1997: 14) supporting the above claim states that 'the traditional thresholds of youth have shown that many of them were applicable only to young men [...]. Male and female youth were so different that until the end of the nineteenth century the concepts relating to the age group were entirely gender specific. Only then did the sexually inclusive collective concept of youth emerge'. Thus, the concept of 'youth' needs to be reflexive of the multiple positioning and experiences of young people, challenging it being an age bound category. Additionally, to entail within its ambit the homogeneity of a social status, with due recognition to heterogeneity of sex, class, race and geographic location etcetera but most essentially being symbolic of gender equality by practicing the same.

YOUTH AS A POTENTIAL AGENT OF CHANGE

'Youth' around the globe at different times and spaces have demonstrated to be assets conjuring social change. This more than often has been reflected in their prowess in challenging social division and institutionalized inequalities accentuated in the present era of globalism. Active participation and civic engagement have been one of their prime fortes for raising issues related to social injustice and discriminatory practices. This is in conjunction to Mannheim's theory of 'fresh contact', that is, the emergence of youth is regarded as a turning point to 'start afresh', to explore the possibilities of reviewing the existing system and social structure. Being located in a particular context, time and history young people in their capacity mobilize change within the prevailing circumstances optimizing their intellectual abilities and purposefully can 're-orient any movement they embrace to adopt it to the total situation'⁵ (Mannheim, 1952: 297). It is this collective agency which embodies 'youth' and has been a transformatory force in the arena of economic, cultural and socio-political issues. For instance, young people have played a pivotal role in the anti-imperialist movement in China, the 1942 Quit India Movement in India and the Optor movement in former Yugoslavia (WYR, 2007: 167). Further, as articulated by Mannheim (in Herrera, 2006: 1427) young people at certain defining moments of life 'usually brief, episodic but often consequential and sometimes momentous, experience 'social collectivity'. It is this transition of consciousness 'in itself' to 'for itself' that leads 'youth' to cooperate efforts across boundaries of differences and division. This synergy of 'youth' as a category has become one of the

central subjects in development debates. However, there has also been much concern and contemplation that the volcanic capacity of young people may not always be progressive and peaceful, could also exhibit violent and destructive trends which is dependent on the socio-political context and needs to be channeled by creating conducive environment, opportunities and fair access to resources for the realization of their rights and capabilities. This contradiction of 'youth' being an agent of development, in the failure of which is considered a victim, cause of instability, or even a threat to development, remains an issue of contention.

However, for the scope of this paper having established 'youth' as a potential agent of change it would be interesting to closely examine some of the 'youth initiatives' in the form of 'youth activism'.⁶ This would propel us to think and question the very egalitarian vision of social change that is ingrained in understanding 'youth as a potential agent of change'. In the backdrop of the prevailing conceptualization of 'youth as a social and cultural category', questions that surface are which youth are involved in the process of change and what kind of change is envisioned.

GLIMPSES OF YOUTH INITIATIVES

Taking lead from the above arguments, this section attempts to analyze the trajectory of youth participation through the example of Indian Freedom Struggle and the case study of Sierra Leone in a post conflict context.

The events described below in the Indian Freedom Struggle testify the large-scale participation of young people in mass agitations playing a crucial role in raising awareness and showing discontentment towards the British Colonial Power. However, an analysis of the movement allows extricating certain tightly knit characteristics of youth participation. One of the most striking features of the movement was the civic engagement of students, which leads us to ponder whether the identification and consciousness of being the 'youth of India' was the deriving factor for young people to participate or was it the nationalistic fervor that appealed strongly to the student body and resulted in the glorified 'youth activism'. In the context of struggling for independence, the unifying cause that bolstered student movements was apparently 'patriotism' and 'nationalism' which catapulted a tumultuous mass agitation. The Indian Independence Movement was one of the rare occasions which saw the participation of young women in the 'public realm' but more in a sup-

Indian National Movement – Role and participation of ‘Youth’

The nascent signs of ‘youth activism’ in India can be traced back to the period of Freedom Struggle for Independence. Certain landmark events in the country’s freedom movement witnessed a large scale participation of students. The dissatisfaction towards the British system of education which aimed at providing basic knowledge and skills on the English language focused at recruiting the ‘young Indians’ to clerical posts for civil services stimulating student agitation. Mahatma Gandhi’s Non-Cooperation Movement (1920) mobilized the students to participate in boycotting British colleges and universities. Students actively participated in road demonstrations, protest marches and boycott campaigns (Altbach, 1970: 238).

A large number of youth conferences were held and coalitions, leagues, federations formed both at the national and regional level e.g. All Bengal Students’ Association which claimed a membership of 20,000 in 1929 (ibid). Similarly the Quit India Movement 1942 was regarded as a mass student upheaval where approximately 10 percent of the student population participated; even those who were passive expressed their support in boycotts, picketing of shops, staging street demonstrations against British administration, allied in clandestine activities with nationalist leaders and also took up leadership roles. Although the Quit India Movement remained unsuccessful in ousting the British, it laid the foundation of ‘National Liberation Movement’ (Altbach, 1970: 241).

*The history of Indian Freedom Struggle spans over the period from (1857-1947). However for the purpose of this paper the time period from Partition of Bengal (1905) to the Indian Independence (1947) has been taken into consideration.

portive role as compared to that of young men. The role of young women was essential to build up mass movements and was more integrationist. They too were swayed by the nationalistic feelings rather than rooting their identity as ‘youth’ and as ‘equal participants’ to young men. This was more so because of the male connotation in the perception of ‘youth’. It has been argued by some scholars that the traditional models of ‘political behavior’ have been built on ‘androcentric model of the public sphere’, ‘the political’, which predictably eliminate women and related issues. Feminists on the other hand have also established that ‘personal is political’, whereby it is the unequal status of women within the private domain which transcends to define her position in the male-dominated

political arena (Stewart et al., 1998: 64). The young men as leaders of the movement urged for young women's participation within the prevailing paradigm of emancipation, having a more social reformist bent, they raised issues condemning social evils of sati (immolation of a woman on the funeral pyre of her husband), female infanticide, bride burning, etcetera. However, they in no way challenged the social conditions in which women were located that perpetuated these violations. The domestic domain remained the legitimate area for women's intervention thereby epitomizing the conventional gender role of women based on sexual division of labour and not the earlier mentioned relational concept of gender. It is the latter which contests the unequal power dynamics in relation to men and women, questioning the stereotypical constructions of femininity and masculinity, where women are supposed to be subordinate, submissive and passive vis-à-vis men who are expected to be dominant, aggressive and active agents. Thus, the young women in Indian national movement played an adhesive role and their efforts to exercise agency and access individual rights were discouraged in lieu of a larger vision of freedom for the nation-state. This is evident when Gandhi (in Sen, 2000: 21) expressed 'in his first article on women in Young India, where he said that women should take their proper place beside men, but not with a "votes for women" campaign that would only detract the fight for freedom. Women, he argued, should use their energy "helping their men against the common foe"'.

CASE STUDY - SIERRA LEONE

'After a brutal civil war, young people in Sierra Leone are trying simultaneously to build their lives and their country. Institutions and infrastructure are now being rebuilt, but opportunities are still limited. The country's 1.5 million young people need a second chance to build their skills; they need opportunities to engage in productive employment; and they need the opportunity to help rebuild social institutions for better governance. Youth make up more than a quarter of the population; they are desperate to learn, to work, to start families, and to contribute to their country's growth and development' (WYR, 2007: 185).

Sierra Leone in a post conflict era is trying to recover from a decade of war, striving to establish economic and socio-political stability through focused nation-rebuilding interventions. It has severe loss in both productive and human capital. The government envisions the 'youth' of the

country as an asset for development and has formulated programmes around youth development and resource building. At present, the impending challenges faced are that of high maternal mortality rate, teenage pregnancies, high rate of sexually transmitted diseases, low level of life expectancy from 42 years in 1990 to 34 years as per 2002 etc. (WYR, 2007: 185). 'Youth' in the context of Sierra Leone is an age bound category between 12-35 years by which approximately 34 percent of the population is 'youth'. However, the government and intergovernmental programmes are aimed at integrating the young people by improving human capital services, opportunities for employment, motivate civic engagement and rebuild social capital (ibid).

The age category in the concept of 'youth' becomes an automated process of elimination for young women as 'the patterns of growing up on which the concept is based were not universally experienced'. The transitions to adulthood for women were very different from their male counterparts' (Wyn and White, 1997: 15). This basically relates to the fact that despite belonging to the above age category, women post-marriage no longer fulfill the category of being a 'young woman' rather are situated in the category of 'adulthood'. The initiatives with regard to resource building and 'productive employment' also have an inherent focus on 'young men' as in the post war period the hopes of economic and social development are tagged on as responsibilities of 'young males'. Johnson (in Wyn and White, 1997: 19) argued that the male gender bias in the concept of youth builds on 'the significance that youth had in the 1950s and 1960s as a symbol of the emerging post war, virile and self determined economies and societies of the developed world'. It was perhaps the linkage between this belief and success of the white middle class young men that assured a smooth and secure transition to adulthood for the young working class males (ibid). It is apparent that programmes on political and civic engagement were woven around 'young men' as young women rarely participated in the political sphere to voice their decisions which usually are taken on by men. Also, it was primarily in the health programmes that 'young women' were targeted specifically with issues related to 'teenage pregnancy' and 'maternal mortality', a normative and standard way of treating 'gender issues', where 'women' is synonymous to 'gender' related to differences based on sex and attached roles, ascribing women to the domestic domain as a 'mother and caretaker' instead

of challenging the overarching male hegemony ingrained in the institutions of society.

Hence, based on the above analysis, it could be argued that the inherent masculine character in the conceptualization of 'youth', insinuates the purpose of youth initiatives to be gender-biased. The insensitive and invisibilization of women's issues reaffirms the conventional norms and beliefs with regard to gender discrimination and related power dynamics. Thus, the paper raises the pertinent issue of rethinking and engendering the concept of 'youth'.

EMERGING TRENDS IN YOUTH ACTIVISM

The 'invisible presence' of young women in the 'youth initiatives' is a conspicuous indication of lack of spaces for women to exercise their agency and identify as part of 'youth'. The dormant voices and restrained aspirations have created their own channels to challenge the prescriptive gender roles and scope to exercise rights in the form of 'youth feminism'.

'Youth feminism is an integral aspect of feminist theory and activism in US today' (Mack-Canty, 2004: 162). It contributes to the third wave feminism, which discusses accounting for intersection of differences in the category of 'women' (ibid). In other words, youth feminism is inspired by third wave feminist thoughts and is representative of young women who are 'recognizing and dealing with contradictions of multiplicities in their life' (Findlen and Walker in Mack-Canty, 2004: 162). It is representational of 're-appropriation of girlhood', which implies 'empowering girls to keep and/or claim their agency, instead of going along with culturally (i.e. patriarchal) defined sex roles' (Wald, 1998: 601) thus resisting hegemonic interpretation of themselves' (Rosenberg and Garofalo, 1998: 809–10). Further on, Mack-Canty (2004: 156) articulates that the contribution of such feminism lies in broadening 'the explanatory power of feminist theory, allowing feminism to deal more adequately with the complex and myriad issues [...] such as globalization, multiculturalism and environmentalism'.

Thus, young women in the ongoing surge of 'youth feminism' and 'feminist youth culture'⁷ have created alternate spaces to exercise agency and voice their opinion. It is through their situated knowledge and multiplicity in experiences that they aim to carve a niche for themselves to strive and challenge the dominant culture and hegemony.

CONCLUSION

The essay lays down a micro-level analysis to raise certain critical questions and attempts to demystify the 'conceptualization of youth'. It illustrates the need for recognizing the embedded gendered nature of the existing concept which in turn influences the role of youth as potential agent of change. The feminist analysis and critique of 'youth as a social and cultural construct' lobbies for 'engendering youth' to endeavor for a gender sensitive/equal development. It also highlights the emergence of 'youth feminism' and 'feminist youth cultures' as forums for voicing opinion of young women, recognizing the multiplicity of identities and challenging the conventional gender roles and mainstream patriarchal ideologies. Thus, the paper within its limited scope attempts to stir issues which need to be further researched and analyzed to make tangible reflections on macro-level studies conducted on 'youth' and related work.

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NOTES

¹ WID or Women in Development Approach, 'puts emphasis on providing women with opportunities to participate in male defined and male dominated social and economic structures' (Rathgeber, 1995: 206).

² Intersectional analysis comes from the concept of intersectionality - refers to the interaction between gender, race and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements and cultural ideologies and its compounded interplay in terms of power (Davis: 2). It was originally coined by

Kimberly Crenshaw (1989), with the intent to “address the fact that the experiences and struggles of women of color fell between the cracks of both feminist and anti-racist discourse”, arguing for the need to understand the intersections of both gender and race and its ‘multiple dimensions on Black women’s experiences’(ibid).

³ Gender- defined as a ‘socially constructed category, that carries with it expectations and responsibilities that are not biologically determined’ (Rathgeber, 1995: 204) Gender refers to the ‘socially constructed differences between men and women’. It is about the social roles of men and women and the relationships between them, which in turn get formed by the ‘social, economic and political condition, expectations and obligations within the family, community and Nation’ (Mazurana, Parpat et al.: 13)

⁴ Reproductive Arena - ‘defined by the bodily structures and processes of human reproduction. This arena includes sexual arousal and intercourse, child birth and infant care, bodily sex difference and similarity [...]. Gender is a social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do, it is not a social practice reduced to the body’ (Connell, 2005 : 71)

⁵ For example, young people could adhere to a particular cultural, political stand within ‘conservatism’ which is in consonance to the needs of the ‘modern situation’ (Mannheim, 1952: 297).

⁶ Youth Activism - young people’s participation in various forms of civic and political engagement. This may range from exercising the right to vote, participating in demonstrations, protests, volunteering, service-learning programmes, debating-literary clubs, advocacy campaign for policy changes, sensitization of media, consumer boycotts etc. ‘Activism implies *action* that expresses dissent, attempts to effect change, or works to place issues on the political agenda’ (Kasimir, 2006: 22)

⁷ Example: ‘Riot Grrrl, an independent young female rock group that began in the early 1990s, is seen by many who study girls’ cultures in the United States as illustrative of this movement Garrison (in Mack-Canty, 2004: 161) A network of Riot Grrrls was created from the fans of this music group, based largely on zines. [...] The name “Riot Grrrl” was chosen to reclaim the vitality and power of youth with an added growl to replace the perceived passivity of “girl.” For the girls involved, Riot Grrrl bands and the fan clubs around them have helped to change the way they think and act and how they see themselves in their everyday lives (Rosenberg and Garofalo, 1998: 809–10).

2

Refugee Students in Canadian Schools: Their Distinct Needs and the Gaps in Existing Interventions

ANDREA NICOLE DYKSHOORN

INTRODUCTION

Canada provides one of the strongest examples of diversity and multiculturalism in the world today. While diversity in Canada ranges from aboriginal populations and visible minorities that have lived in the country for years, another source of its diversity derives from immigration. Statistics Canada reports that in 2006, 19.8% of the Canadian population was foreign-born. Among these immigrants, refugees make up a special class. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees identifies a refugee as anyone who has experienced persecution because of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group (United Nations, 1951). In Canada, refugees are classified as government-sponsored refugees (GARs), privately sponsored refugees (PSRs), or landed in Canada refugees (LCRs). Between 2006 and 2008, Canada accepted 735,599 immigrants, of whom 82,313 were refugees (Statistics Canada, 2009).

Although refugees are often incorporated into discussions and debates on immigration, it is important to recognise the uniqueness of their situation—and particularly how this affects their integration experience. The fundamental difference between immigrants and refugees stems from the selection process. While the largest group of immigrants—economic immigrants—are chosen according to their ability to contribute to Canadian society (a criterion that is largely based on economic potential), refugees are accepted into society based on need, as defined within the Geneva Convention (Yu et al, 2007: 18).

Several other key factors distinguish refugees from economic immigrants. First, while immigrants have time to prepare for moving, refugees often leave abruptly, at times, without finishing personal business at home. Second, immigrants have a choice of where they will relocate, while refugees are forced to move, and often do not choose where they will end up. Third, while immigrants may experience a sense of loss after relocation, it is generally not combined with trauma, an element that can be found in the experience of refugees. Finally, while immigrant children face adjustments in their new schools, they typically do not have long periods of interrupted schooling. For refugee children, however, civil war and lengthy stays in refugee camps can prevent access to basic education, leaving them far behind peers of their age group in their new country (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005).

EDUCATION—AN ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND SOCIAL PROCESS

For children new to Canada, schools are an important space for integration into a new culture. Kapreilian-Churchill (1996) writes that “as a vital socialising agent, schools bear a great responsibility in helping immigrant and refugee children understand the new country and become a meaningful part of it” (358). This understanding of the education process reflects the view that formal schooling is not a narrative process or one-way transfer of knowledge from teachers to pupils. The end result of education involves more than economic outcomes. Rather, formal education is also a highly political process that forms, reflects, and reinforces societal attitudes and values (Freire, 1998:68). This is often known as the hidden curriculum, and its impact transcends economic concerns of employability, to affect human dignity, social legitimacy, and empowerment (Stromquist et al, 1998: 401).

INDICATION OF THE PROBLEM AREA

Through multicultural education policies, many Canadian schools have made inroads in recognising and embracing students from diverse backgrounds. In fact, Canadian strategies for integration—conceptualised as a two-way process requiring adjustments from both sides (Atfield et al, 2007: 12)—are often cited in literature and modeled in other countries. Yet while all students who are new to the Canadian school system face adjustments, research indicates that refugee populations—and those

from visible minorities, in particular—face considerably greater challenges (Yau, 1995; Kanu, 2008). These barriers have been linked with ESL deficits, interrupted schooling, financial constraints, family values (particularly in regards to girls' education), trauma, and explicit or perceived racism, among other factors. According to research, academic challenges are more acute as the age of the refugee increases; thus, refugee youth entering secondary schools are at significantly greater risk than younger children who enter the primary schools (Ahorn et al, 1999).

A recent study conducted among 91 refugee youth in Alberta, Canada, revealed that approximately 50 percent of refugee students were on track to graduate from secondary school, with the remaining 50 percent experiencing difficulty or not expecting to graduate (Wilkinson, 2002). In a study focused on African refugee youth in Manitoba, similar concerns emerged (Kanu, 2008). One detailed study focusing on the Sudanese refugee community in Calgary, Alberta, reported dropout rates as high as 80 percent, with conservative estimates between 50 and 70 percent (Hittel, 2007), and a report from the African Sudanese Association of Calgary indicated that refugee youth who do not drop out of school are, in general, performing poorly in class.

The needs of refugee students cannot be divorced from the broader context. This includes the economic situation of the family, as well as the degree of social stability or instability in the community. In addition, the agency of refugee students—their ability and/or willingness to articulate their needs—cannot be ignored. However, this essay will focus specifically on the needs of refugee students within Canadian schools. Under this objective, I will identify a number of areas where the school system has failed to address the distinct needs of refugee youth. These will be described under five main headings: student placement in classes, resource commitment and allocation, identification and (mis)perceptions of needs, streaming or tracking, and the hidden curriculum.

RECOGNISING EXISTING SUPPORT

Before critiquing the Canadian education system, it is important to recognise that inroads have been made to accommodate and adjust to an increasingly multicultural society, and there are reasons that Canada is seen as an example on the international stage. ESL classes are held in almost every school, and community support systems are linking with schools to ease the adjustment process for refugee students. One exam-

ple, is a relatively new initiative called “Settlement Workers in Schools” (SWS), which is expanding in several provinces through government funding. This programme matches trained workers with specific language skills—and often coming from similar cultural backgrounds—to immigrant and refugee students. Various other examples exist as evidence that the school systems are working to provide support to diverse populations.

It is also important to recognise that the way in which schools assess and address the needs of refugee students differs greatly between individual schools, districts, and provinces. While the curriculum and funding are determined at the provincial level, districts and schools make decisions about the types of programmes that will be offered, as well as the allocation of financial and other resources to these programmes. Yet despite these differences, studies reveal that refugee students in metropolitan Toronto (Yau, 1995) experience many of the same barriers as those studying in rural and urban Manitoba—a province with considerably fewer resources devoted to immigrant and refugee programmes in schools (Kanu, 2008). If left unaddressed, these barriers have the potential to significantly and negatively affect the integration process for refugee students—and this will have consequences for society as a whole.

1. Placement

One of the first challenges facing the Canadian education system is the placement of refugee students. In numerous Canadian studies, refugee students themselves have identified improper grade placement as a significant barrier to their educational experience. According to research done by Kaprellian-Churchill (1996: 354), students of primary school age are generally placed in classes with their same age cohort. Yet at the secondary school level, age placements can lead to high levels of frustration and disillusionment, thereby increasing the likelihood of students dropping out. This was precisely the concern voiced by Sudanese refugee students in a recent needs assessment conducted by the African Sudanese Association of Calgary (ASAC, 2009: 26). In another study of refugee students, this time in Manitoba, a teenager of an African background reported the following frustrations at the placement practices of the school:

I was already 17 years old and they put me in grade 11 when we arrived... even though I was not going to school for almost five years, so grade 11 is very tough for me. (Kanu, 2008: 925).

One of the reasons that schools tend to use age as a benchmark for students' grade placement is linked to macro-level educational policies. In many Canadian provinces, public schools provide free education for students until the age of 19; after this point, mature students must finance their own schooling, request special access, or pursue alternative channels (Wilkinson, 2002: 176, 189). This policy is disproportionately discriminatory for refugee students, many of whom—as outlined earlier in this essay—were denied access to education or experienced long periods of interrupted schooling in their home countries or displacement camps. For these students, receiving a secondary school diploma requires knowledge of the alternative options available—as well as an understanding of the processes required to take advantage of these alternative options. However, knowledge of their options and the ability to pursue them can be severely limited due to the refugees' recent immigration and lack of knowledge of the Canadian system, and is further compounded by language barriers.

Some schools do use placement tests—usually assessing ESL and math competency—rather than age to determine a student's grade level. However, Kaprellian-Churchill argues that culturally-appropriate testing (including simple changes such as deleting references to lakes and rivers in testing for students from desert areas) is “sporadic and far from widespread (1996: 355). In another study, a student complained that the lack of preparation time for the language component of the competency tests meant that she was placed at a level below her ability. As a result, she was forced to repeat math and science courses that she had already studied (Kanu, 2008: 925).

The placement of refugee students is a difficult process; however, there must be adjustments made to ensure that the system identifies and accommodates the needs of students. In particular, policies that restrict access to secondary education from the age of 19 must be flexible for mature refugee students who will not be able to complete their education by that age. In addition to placement, however, the system's responsibility for the integration of students includes monitoring to ensure that their placement most accurately reflects their needs. Unfortunately, evi-

dence of the re-evaluation and monitoring of refugee students is inconsistent at best (Kapreilian-Churchill, 1996: 355).

2. Resource commitment and allocation

Schools have the responsibility to identify and accommodate the needs of refugee students. However, this requires both financial and human resources for programmes such as language training and counselling for students suffering from the trauma of war or extended refugee camp experiences. Yet many schools report inadequate resources to implement programmes and services for immigrant students in general, and refugee students in particular. In a province-wide study by the government of Manitoba, nearly 54 percent of schools categorised their programmes for refugee students as ‘weak’ or ‘somewhat weak.’ In addition, 26 percent believed their school programmes were, at best, ‘adequate’ (Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, 2005: 43).

According to Kanu, some school principals have attempted to meet the needs of refugee students by taking initiatives for teacher training, after-school programmes, hiring language tutors from within an ethnic community, and hiring psychologists to work with students suffering from trauma. However, these programmes were made possible through changes within existing—and already-tight—school budgets, not because of additional finances from the government (2008: 927). Thus evidence suggests that the commitment of schools to identify and support the distinct needs of refugee students appears to be largely contingent upon the initiatives of decision-makers within specific schools—and as a result, there is no external system of evaluation that will guarantee addressing the needs of refugee students in a school or district.

3. Identification and (mis)perceptions of needs

While studies have indicated that there is a deficiency of support programmes for refugee youth—or inadequate commitment to these programmes—another concern is the failure of educators to identify students who might need these services in the first place. In fact, Kapreilian-Churchill (1996) writes that one of the major limitations of her study on refugee students in Canadian schools was the fact that most schools do not keep specific data on the background of immigrant or ESL students. In one Toronto study, teachers repeatedly confessed that they had no idea which students—or even how many—in their classes

were from refugee backgrounds (Yau, 1995: 74). However, even if these students were identified, ESL and academic knowledge gaps are often seen as their main needs. Thus, ESL classes and remedial instruction are often identified as the main needs of refugee students who are socially distant and do not participate in class (Yau, 1995: 44). Language classes are certainly important for refugee students, and many studies reveal that these classes are highly requested and valued by students (ASAC, 2009; Kanu, 2008; Yau, 1995). But often, these students also suffer from trauma related to the violence and upheaval they experienced before coming to Canada. Some are unaccompanied minors; these children and teenagers are even more likely to struggle with their adjustments into Canadian schools due to the absence of a family support system (Kaprellian-Churchill, 1996: 356). While most schools have counsellors on hand, the failure of schools to identify students that might be suffering from psychological stress could have significant implications on the academic performance of these youth. In cases where the needs of refugee students are not identified and prioritised, the chances of poor academic performance and high dropout rates greatly increase—and the blame cannot be exclusively placed on the students.

4. Streaming

Another way in which the education system has failed to see the integration of refugees as a two-way process is through the streaming of students. In Canada, secondary schools direct students into one of three main tracks—university preparation, general-level education, or vocational training. While there are some legitimate arguments that exist in support of the tracking system for education, the fact that many refugee students are “streamed into dead-end programs” (Kaprellian-Churchill, 1996, 357) is particularly concerning. An Alberta study on the academic success of refugee youth supports the findings that refugee youth are entering these “lower-level” streams at much greater rates (Wilkinson, 2002: 174).

Streamlining in the education system disproportionately affects refugee students. If we assume that refugees, like Canadian-born students, have a diverse range of vocational goals and dreams for the future, the high percentage of students in basic, “dead-end” programmes demonstrates a systemic problem. Yet while some academics have expressed concern with the streaming approach (Kaprellian-Churchill, 1996; Wil-

kinson, 2002), schools often see it as the best option for students. An example of this is seen in a report submitted to the Manitoba government by Sisler High School in Winnipeg:

[The integration programme] considers itself effective but is concerned about unrealistic goals being placed on ESL learners, particularly in cases where it is not going to be possible to see students graduate from the regular programme by the time they are 18 years of age. In such cases, it may be preferable to gear instruction towards employment. (Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth, 2005:65).

For Sisler High School, accommodating refugee students meant providing a streamed education-for-work track. No mention is made of offering a modified version of the regular programme so that refugee students are not streamed out of general or university-directed programmes. This sets a dangerous precedent for school policy, making “lower-level” streaming an easy, convenient alternative to deeper structural changes that could empower students rather than pushing them into low-paying jobs. According to Yau (1995), the percentage of refugee students in non-academic educational streams was higher than one-third, as compared to one-quarter of immigrant and Canadian-born students. However, what she finds most concerning is the fact that 19 percent of refugee students in these non-academic streams aspired to attend university, compared to 4 percent of other students (Yau, 1995: v). This discrepancy between the aspirations of students and the reality of their placement reflects a serious lack of agency on the part of refugee students.

The streaming of students suggests that the education system is failing to find ways of enabling and encouraging refugee students to access the programmes available to the general student population. Li (2003) argues that integration must “take into account how Canadian institutions perform toward newcomers” (330). The streaming of refugee students can be seen as a symptom of a greater problem—the inflexibility of the education system in accommodating a population with distinct needs.

5. Hidden curriculum—the lived experience of refugee students in schools

The cognitive outcomes of schooling receive much attention, and the success or failure of students is almost always assessed through these outcomes (Wilkinson, 2002). Both the placement and streaming of refugee students have implications for the acquisition of knowledge, and are

important predictors of the ability of these students to integrate economically. However, as argued earlier in this essay, the educational system is a space for not just economic integration, but also socio-cultural and political integration. Participatory studies of refugee students provide insights of their lived experience in schools. This lived experience, which is also conceptualised as the “hidden curriculum” (Stromquist et al, 1998), reveals that many refugee students feel isolated and marginalised in Canadian schools. In one study, a Muslim Somali refugee student questioned how he could possibly feel a sense of belonging in a school which failed to provide a place for prayers, or overlooked his dietary needs. Other students expressed frustration at their inability to participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports because of their unfamiliarity with the games or the closed school teams (Kanu, 2008: 932). Feelings of marginalisation or a lack of belonging can also have a profound impact on the performance of refugee students, and their desire to finish school.

Refugee students—and particularly those entering an environment where the ethnic and religious traditions greatly differ from that of their homeland—face high levels of culture shock when they enter the Canadian education system. Schools therefore play an important role in mitigating the negative effects of culture shock that occurs within schools. In light of this, the following statement from one African refugee student to a researcher in Toronto is particularly concerning: “Sir, we have self-esteem but are struggling to keep it at school” (Sefa-Dei, 2008). The findings of the African Sudanese Association of Calgary reveal similar concerns. The refugee students who were interviewed also reported that their education experience often negatively affected their self-esteem (ASAC, 2009: 39). Yau reports similar findings in her study of nearly 200 refugee students in Toronto: “Feelings of alienation, discrimination, and sometimes even rejection by other students were not uncommon among these recently arrived refugees. Many were easy targets of bullying and racial incidents” (Yau, 1995: v). Another study by Kanu produced similar findings, identifying perceptions of racism from teachers and students as contributing to feelings of isolation and low self-confidence (2008: 932).

The role of teachers fundamentally impacts the lived experience of refugee children in schools and has inevitable consequences for integration. As a result, the preparedness of teachers to deal with ever-increasing diversity in the classroom is fundamentally important. Yet

Kanu (2008) reports that there are significant gaps in educating teachers in culturally sensitive pedagogy. In a series of interviews with educators from Manitoba schools, the majority of teachers reported that they did not make changes to the content or activities in lesson plans. Similarly, their means of assessing student's performance did not change. In light of these findings, the integration of refugee students appears as a one-way process centred on the ability of students to assimilate into the existing classrooms.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This essay has shown that despite Canada's reputation as a multicultural society and a model for integration, there are some important shortfalls in the ways in which the education system addresses the needs of refugee populations. However, the identification of problem areas is not enough. There are important policy implications that must be drawn from this analysis, and this calls for action at all levels—from the individual schools and districts to the provincial and national levels.

In terms of class placement, there is an important need to recognise that current provincial educational policies regarding the age of students in secondary schools are disproportionately discriminatory against refugee populations. There is a strong need for policy-makers to research the implications of age policies on the integration of refugee students, and to ensure that the system is responsive to these needs. At the individual school and district level, policies must be put in place to ensure careful follow-up on the placement of new students, so that incorrect and disabling grade placements are adjusted to the best interests of these youth.

Current practices in resource commitment and allocation also need to be revisited. Not all schools have high numbers of refugee students, thus the decentralisation that occurs in the current system is not necessarily problematic. However, schools and school districts must be aware of the demographics of their student populations, and the needs of refugee students must be a priority when they consider the allocation of resources. The failure to identify students from refugee backgrounds is a concern, although there may be valid reasons that schools choose to avoid these statistics. Districts and schools should be encouraged to weigh the costs and benefits of identifying refugee students, in light of the implications that the failed identification of these students might have on their integration experience.

The practice of streaming in Canadian schools also often has implications for refugee students. Provincial education ministries, along with individual school boards, must develop policies and programmes that ensure refugee students are not pushed into non-academic educational tracks. Instead, new and innovative ways must be developed to ensure that education is an empowering experience for these youth, and not one where they are socialised into an underclass in society. And finally, educational institutions must ensure that refugee students—and, in fact, all students from both minority and majority backgrounds—find a sense of belonging within schools. This may include school policies that designate specific spaces for religious activities, or that ensure cafeterias cater to the dietary needs of students. More importantly, however, strong policies that prohibit discriminatory or racist behaviour and actions, both by fellow students and teachers, must be implemented and enforced.

CONCLUSION

According to Wilkinson, “The school is one of the first sites where Canadian culture is introduced and learned, and it is also the site where much of [refugee students’] integration into Canadian society takes place” (2002: 174). If dignity, legitimacy, and empowerment—in addition to economic integration—are important outcomes of the education process, the fact that many youth from refugee backgrounds are performing poorly in school and dropping out at higher-than-average rates is particularly concerning. It carries implications for the ability of these students to be economically productive members of society, but it also affects the identity and self-esteem of these students.

While the Canadian government and individual schools and school districts have implemented programming directed at addressing the needs of diverse student populations, these interventions have rarely taken into account the distinct needs of refugees, as compared to other immigrant or visible minority students. The placement of students, allocation of resources, and identification and (mis)perception of needs, as well as streaming and the hidden curriculum, provide important evidence that refugee students are not only failing in Canadian schools, but Canadian schools are also failing refugee students.

For changes to occur, refugee students must be seen in light of the contribution they can make to the classroom, as well as to Canadian society. The very characteristics that have so often caused these students to

be identified and treated as outsiders are, in fact, qualities that can be utilised to foster understanding, acceptance, and a more holistic education for both students and teachers. In light of this contribution, the requirements for meeting these distinct needs must not be seen as a burden to the system, but as part of the mandate of the education system to promote the dignity, legitimacy, and empowerment of all citizens.

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3

Innovation in the Andes: Exploring Participatory Local Governance in Guamote

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 1980s, decentralization and municipal democratization initiatives in Ecuador have become increasingly widespread. This paper examines emerging structures of participatory local governance in Guamote, a rural municipality in the highland province of Chimborazo, Ecuador. Over the past three decades, the municipality has experienced profound transformations in its governance structures and the composition of local power relations. Indigenous groups that were traditionally excluded from public office and decision-making have come to occupy key leadership positions in the municipality, access to resources is noticeably more inclusive, and a variety of public consultation mechanisms have been established in order to ensure greater representation and participation in the municipality's social and economic development. My central argument is that Guamote's success in initiating a relatively inclusive model of local governance is the result of interventions by a range of actors, including strong indigenous-peasant organizations and substantial external support.

My analysis begins with a brief overview of municipal politics in Ecuador, with attention to key state reforms. Section two then examines important political transformations in Guamote, such as the election of the canton's first indigenous mayor and the creation of an Indigenous and Popular Parliament. Section three reviews the factors contributing to Guamote's success, before turning to some of the challenges limiting broader socioeconomic development in the municipality. I conclude that

although the transformations in Guamote are indeed dynamic, they have mostly been limited to processes of *political* development. Despite efforts to develop participatory municipal institutions and to encourage citizen involvement in decision-making, the region has yet to experience substantial economic growth.

DECENTRALIZATION AND STATE REFORM

Ecuadorian provinces are divided into cantons (counties), which act as the dominant units of local government. In rural cantons, such as Guamote, settlement typically “consists of a *cabecera* (town center), which is surrounded by many smaller rural *comunidades* (communities or villages)” (Keese and Argudo, 2006: 117). The municipality can be considered “the administrative level of government that corresponds to the geographic area of the canton” (Keese and Argudo, 2006: 117). It consists of an elected mayor and municipal council, as well as a *jefe político* (political boss) that is appointed by the provincial governor to represent the interests of the central government. Prior to decentralization reforms, the functions of Ecuadorian municipalities were limited to the provision of local services, such as road maintenance and trash collection; all other government functions were administered by central ministries. In this regard, the main function of local governments was “that of administering programs and policies that were set somewhere else” (Keese and Argudo, 2006: 117).

Following the country’s return to democracy in 1979, the number of cantons increased as “rural and urban populations incorporated into municipal governments” (Radcliffe, Laurie and Andolina, 2002: 293). A series of reforms during the mid- to late-1990s clarified and redefined the functions of municipal authorities, granting local governments considerable freedom over processes of local development. Principal among these reforms is the 1997 *Law of Social Participation and Decentralization of the State*, which allows “all government functions, except those related to national defense, foreign policy, fiscal policy, and the foreign debt, to be transferred to the provinces and the cantons” (Keese and Argudo, 2006: 117). Municipalities with the institutional capacity to administer these functions were thus given an opportunity to work in new areas, such as housing, infrastructure, health, social welfare and natural resource protection. The structure and responsibilities of municipalities were further clarified in the 2001 *Law of Municipal Governments* and the *Law of 15 Per-*

cent, which “requires the central government to transfer 15 percent of its total income to the provinces and cantons” (Keese and Argudo, 2006: 117). It should be noted, however, that Ecuador’s decentralization policies have not necessarily led to municipal democratization. As John Cameron (2005: 372) notes, “Decentralization policies in Ecuador, which were still incipient in the early 2000s, had almost no impact on municipal democratization. Decentralization legislation lacked any clear requirements or incentives for municipal governments to operate more transparently or to foster citizen participation”. Indeed, many Ecuadorian municipalities continue to be marked by high levels of socioeconomic inequality, “clientelism” and exclusion (Cameron, 2003: 165). In this context, the municipality of Guamote stands out as a relatively successful case of decentralization and municipal democratization. The following section outlines the region’s transformation in greater detail.

GUAMOTE: LAND REFORM AND PEASANT-INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATION

Located in the Andean highlands of central Ecuador, Guamote is a predominantly rural canton with a population of approximately 30,000. Ninety percent of the municipality’s inhabitants are indigenous Quechua people spread across small, rural communities. According to official statistics, Guamote is one of the poorest cantons in Ecuador, with close to 90 percent of its population living in poverty (Bebbington, 2007: 58; Cameron, 2003: 169). Until the latter half of the twentieth century, the region was dominated by the traditional *hacienda*—“large rural estates characterized by a system of tied Quechua labor... and abusive labor relationships between owners/managers and the local Quechua population” (Bebbington, 2007: 58). These local estate owners dominated Guamote’s social, economic and political scene until the mid-1970s, often operating “with the acquiescence of municipal officials and local priests” (Cameron, 2003: 170). Under these circumstances, political and socioeconomic relations in the region were highly “skewed against the Quechua population” (Bebbington, 2007: 59).

Figure 1
Guamote in Ecuador's highlands



Source: Bebbington (2000: 502)

During the 1960s and 1970s, indigenous-peasant mobilization for land became increasingly more pronounced. Forms of protests varied from “silent and quotidian” acts of resistance, such as deliberate ‘slow-downs’ among Quechua workers, to more loud and organized invasions of hacienda land (Bebbington, 2007: 59). Fearing further radicalization of the peasantry, the Ecuadorian government responded by making Guamote a specific target of its 1973 *Agrarian Reform Law*. Although the law was national in scope, it was implemented with particular vigor in Guamote. The situation was such that by 1980, all of the haciendas in the canton had been broken up, and more than 50 percent of land had been redistributed to peasants (Cameron, 2003: 170). Continued protest and peasant mobilization secured further concessions from the white-

mestizo landowners. As production became progressively less governable and less profitable, certain hacienda owners simply “gave up trying to preserve a particular regime of resource and social control, and sold their land to Quechua people” (Bebbington, 2007: 59). Peasants lacking the funds to acquire these lands themselves were frequently supported by NGOs and churches—collaborations that facilitated the transfer of the remaining hacienda land (Bebbington, 2000: 512). The result was a relatively equitable distribution of agricultural land throughout the canton.

In addition to large-scale land redistribution, these early peasant struggles also helped to consolidate the region’s intercommunity federations, known in Ecuador as second-level organizations, or OSGs (Cameron, 2003: 170). According to Carroll and Bebbington (2000: 214), an OSG is “a system of regional or multi-communal cooperation”. It operates at the meso level, establishing various internal and external linkages. Internal linkages include neighbor or kin-based networks, as well as intercommunity cooperation and support. External linkages refer to higher-level institutional linkages, such as the OSG’s relationship with state agencies, municipal and regional linkages, and relations between the OSG and civil society organizations or NGOs (Carroll and Bebbington, 2000). The aims and activities of OSGs can vary considerably. Some are more politically oriented and are primarily concerned with protecting and advancing the concerns of their members. Other OSGs act more as economic and developmental organizations, preferring to undertake livelihood initiatives and to facilitate the provision of local social services. In a context of state ‘rollback’ and privatization, these second-level federations can provide low-income households with vital economic and social services, often collaborating with NGOs and other development agents. However, many OSGs combine both political and economic activities. In this sense, their fundamental role “is to recapture dignity and voice in the political realm and to capture income flows and employment opportunities in the economic sphere” (Carroll and Bebbington, 2000: 227).

In Guamote, these supracommunity federations played a leading role in transforming local governance structures during the 1990s. As their organizational capacity grew, they became increasingly involved in the canton’s municipal affairs. During the 1980s, Guamote’s OSGs began nominating and supporting indigenous candidates for positions on the municipal council. In 1992, they succeeded in electing the canton’s first indigenous mayor, and by 1996, they had effectively ended the *mestizo*

domination of Guamote's municipal council; "candidates nominated by Guamote's OSGs occupied all of the positions on the municipal council, a situation that continued after the 2000 elections" (Cameron, 2003: 170-171). In this sense, OSGs acted as a vital source of social capital and support, providing upcoming municipal leaders with valuable experience in leadership, mediation (between communities and external institutions) and municipal affairs. As Carroll and Bebbington (2000: 220) note, "leadership in OSGs has been the key path to municipal political power. All the indigenous and *campesino* politicians elected in the two cantons [Guamote and Cotacachi] held leadership positions in local federations before entering municipal politics as mayors or councilors".

Once elected, Guamote's indigenous councilors transformed the canton into one of the most participatory and developmentally oriented municipalities in Ecuador (Cameron, 2003: 171). One of the most important initiatives in the canton was the creation of an Indigenous and Popular Parliament in 1997. According to Cameron, the Parliament was established in order to:

give a stronger voice and decision-making power to the elected presidents of the *cabildos* (councils) that formally represented each of the 121 legally recognized rural communities in the canton. Its central functions included overseeing the work of the mayor and municipal council and holding them accountable, allocating the municipal budget, debating municipal investments and projects, and nominating the authorities appointed by the central state in the canton as well as the candidates in the municipal elections. (Cameron, 2003: 171)

Although the municipal government was not legally or constitutionally obligated to implement the Parliament's resolutions, indigenous peasant leaders felt there was a strong moral imperative to do so.

Another important function of the Parliament was to coordinate and regulate the activities of NGOs and external development actors working in the canton. Prior to this parliamentary oversight, external development interventions in Guamote often failed to respond to local priorities. Projects were uncoordinated and unregulated, and often focused on marginal improvements in the town center while neglecting many of the canton's smaller rural communities. Local governance in this context was also dominated by a limited number of actors, notably the church and rural development programs administered by the central state (Bebbington, 2000: 507). The Parliament thus became an important mechanism

for channeling external development efforts toward a more coordinated, endogenous development agenda. As a result, the indigenous-led municipal government has begun to shift resources and investment from the urban center to the canton's poorer rural communities.

Initiatives such as the Indigenous and Popular Parliament reflect a growing awareness among Guamote's indigenous leaders of "the importance of designing local institutions in accord with local capacities" (Cameron, 2003: 172). In addition to these types of regulatory and coordinating mechanisms, the government of Guamote has also made considerable efforts to include community members, as well as a host of development actors, in the canton's development plans. This commitment to public participation was evident in a series of "development roundtables," organized by Guamote's indigenous leaders. These discussions provided a forum for both community members and outside agents to discuss the implementation of various development initiatives in the canton. During the negotiations, efforts were also made to ensure that voices in the community were not overshadowed by more formally educated external actors. These forms of direct participation have been extended beyond development planning to other governance areas, such as government auditing and public budgeting (Bebbington, 2007: 59). There has therefore been a noticeable change in the composition of Guamote's local governance structures. Power over local development has shifted from an exclusive group of white-*mestizo* landowners to communities and federations, of which indigenous Quechua citizens are an integral part. Long excluded from formal and informal criteria of citizenship (Radcliffe et al., 2002: 290), indigenous and low-income residents are now treated as local citizens in a much more inclusive and participatory system of local politics and decision-making. In the following section, I briefly review the factors underlying Guamote's transformation before turning to limitations in the canton's democratization and development process.

BEHIND GUAMOTE'S SUCCESS, BEYOND ITS REACH

One of the most significant factors supporting the emergence of participatory municipal institutions in Guamote was a relatively high degree of indigenous-peasant organization. As noted earlier, social protest was a driving factor behind Ecuador's land reform and helped to consolidate the region's intercommunity federations. The OSGs, in turn, played a decisive role in scaling-up collective action, empowering communities

and mediating between micro and macro structures (Carroll and Bebbington, 2000: 227). The overwhelming success of indigenous and peasant candidates in Guamote's municipal elections was only possible through the support of local OSGs. These organizations mobilized rural voters and played an important role in the production (training, education, etc.) of local leaders (Cameron, 2003: 180).

A second factor behind Guamote's success was the presence of substantial external support. Indeed, it would be highly inaccurate to attribute the presence of strong indigenous-peasant federations solely to popular mobilization and political struggle. For example, much of this political mobilization was in response to legal and monetary incentives created by the central state. While indigenous and peasant communities articulated new demands for local autonomy and recognition, they also organized to hold the state accountable to its promises and to ensure that national legislation was implemented fully in the region. In this sense, state policies of land reform and decentralization created spaces that enabled new social actors to emerge (Carroll and Bebbington, 2000: 228). In addition, indigenous-peasant organizations benefited considerably from the support of NGOs, churches and development agencies. As Carroll and Bebbington (2000: 211) argue, "Behind the origin and evolution of every OSG studied in the course of our research were one or more NGOs or churches, which were significant institutional capacity-builders providing financial, technical and organizational support". External aid from NGOs and development agencies also served to increase the legitimacy and autonomy of Guamote's municipal government. These additional sources of funding reduced the municipality's dependence on government transfers and enabled local authorities to "invest in certain public works, especially in rural areas, that would have generated significant opposition had the funding come from traditional sources of municipal revenue" (Cameron, 2003: 182). Public works, such as volleyball courts, acted as important symbols of development, which lent legitimacy and support to the municipal government, especially during election period.

In this context, political organization and external support appear to be mutually enforcing variables. External aid provided municipal actors (both the OSGs and the local government) with financial, technical and organizational resources that supported ambitious local governance projects, such as the Indigenous and Popular Parliament (Radcliffe et al.,

2002: 297). In turn, the success of these participatory initiatives and the growing incidence of successful indigenous organization drew the attention of (new) external actors and development schemes. Therefore, the emergence of participatory local governance in Guamote cannot be solely attributed to popular mobilization nor to external interventions by state and civil society actors; both appear to be crucial variables in the canton's transformation. A third factor that merits brief mention here is the notion of economic marginality. As Cameron (2003: 183) notes, "It is no coincidence that participatory processes emerged and indigenous and peasant mayors were elected in some of the poorest cantons in highland Ecuador". Guamote did not possess oil, gas and minerals, nor was it a large agro-export county. In this sense, the canton was "marginal to the interests of capital" (Bebbington, 2007: 72). Had there been more lucrative economic opportunities in the region, powerful economic actors would have certainly resisted political and economic restructuring that challenged their power and threatened their interests in the municipality.

The transformations outlined in this paper represent one the most innovative cases of local governance in Ecuador. However, Guamote's success is not without limit. Problems of exclusion and representation have not disappeared completely. Given the centrality of indigenous-peasant identities to Guamote's OSGs and local development initiatives, there is a danger of marginalizing the canton's non-indigenous and non-peasant members. Similarly, there has been a noticeable underrepresentation of women in local initiatives. For example, Cameron (2003) has noted the "extremely low representation of women" in Guamote's Indigenous and Popular Parliament. Despite legislation to increase female candidacy for political office, women tend to be elected to "the lower-ranking posts with less control over budgets and management" (Radcliffe et al., 2002: 300). It should be noted, however, that these tendencies are much more pronounced at the provincial and state level, and there is growing evidence that municipalities such as Guamote are overcoming gender imbalances.

A more pressing issue in Guamote is the relative absence of economic development. Despite dynamic changes in the canton's political organization, economic growth has been slow and is much less obvious. Income remains extremely low, with all three of Guamote's parishes exhibiting "poverty rates of near or above 90 percent of the population" (Bebbington, 2000: 507). For many, agricultural production continues to

offer little more than basic subsistence: “crop prices remain low and input prices high, and there is little scope for adding much value to agricultural products within Guamote” (Bebbington, 2007: 60). In this context, seasonal migration to coastal agro-industry and urban areas is a reality for a majority of families living in the canton. As Cameron has argued:

There is still a big gap between the creation of a few fledgling micro-development projects or increased attention by a municipal government to rural infrastructure, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, real processes of local economic development that might begin to curb outward migration by creating local employment opportunities and generating broad improvements in people’s capacities and standards of living. (Cameron, 2003: 183)

Tackling issues of underdevelopment requires addressing the broader national policy environment in which communities, such as Guamote, are embedded. In the absence of macroeconomic policies favorable to peasant agriculture, neoliberal restructuring will continue to have adverse effects on Guamote’s rural poor. Funding from NGOs and external development actors can provide support for small infrastructure works and development projects, but these interventions are “neither sustainable in the long run nor replicable on a broad scale” (Cameron, 2003: 182). Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to claim that the socioeconomic situation in Guamote is worse than it was during the period of hacienda control. Economic accumulation is present in the region. It may just be that the constraints on economic development “are greater than those on changes in local governance” (Bebbington, 2000: 512).

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined an innovative process of local governance in Ecuador’s highland region. Focusing on the municipality of Guamote, I have attempted to show that transformations towards more inclusive local governance involve interventions and coordination among a variety of actors. The participatory spaces that have been created for Guamote’s long-excluded Quechua population are the effect of strong indigenous-peasant mobilization and external interventions by state agencies, churches, NGOs and other development organizations. In many ways, these internal and external activities have been complimentary and mutually reinforcing. In the final section of the paper, I called attention to im-

portant challenges facing the municipality. Principal among these challenges was a noticeable lack of economic growth. In order to preserve the gains of municipal democratization and to foster local economic development, broader macroeconomic policies in Ecuador must be reassessed. However, these shortcomings at the national level should not detract from Guamote's dynamic transformation. To date, the canton stands out as one of the most innovative and successful cases of decentralization and municipal democratization in the country.

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4

Labour Rights Governance, Decent Work and Global Value Chains

EVA SABATE

More than 40 years separate the words of Milton Friedman, 1976 Nobel Prize Winner in Economics, '*the business of business is business*', from the actual European Commission's statement '*CSR is not or should not be separate from business strategy and operation*' (Friedman 1976; DG Enterprise and Industry). In the meanwhile, CSR has emerged as a widespread company trend to respond to society's concerns about the effects of greed and power abuse on the workforce. Despite the impressive engagement from different public and private actors, CSR's lack of real enforcement and regulation raises multiple concerns about the true outcomes for workers, especially for the most vulnerable ones.

This essay aims to present a gradual improvement of CSR initiatives in terms of enforcement potential. Taking Inditex, one of the world's major fashion companies, as a case study, this paper will compare the company's own code of conduct with the International Framework Agreement (IFA) signed in 2007, focusing on advancements in the promotion and protection of working rights. It will also be argued that CSR can work as a complement to national and international regulations and, accordingly, provide an opportunity to enhance labour standards; however, it should never be regarded as a mere substitute for the proper role of the state.

The paper is structured as follows. First, a brief introduction on the main differences between company codes of conduct and IFAs will be exposed. Next, a general overview of the Inditex group will be presented. The essay will then focus on the comparison of Inditex's code of conduct and IFA, and will address the ideal scenario of home state regula-

tion of Multinational Enterprise (MNE) labour standards performance. Last, some relevant conclusions will be highlighted.

Codes of conduct are one of the key instruments of CSR. Defined by the ILO as '*companies' policy statements that define ethical standards for their conduct*', they have been strongly criticized in the related literature. Nevertheless, their voluntary feature and the limited enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the included statements are translated into practice are the most important shortcomings that will be stressed in this essay. In an attempt to overcome some of those limitations, International Framework Agreements have appeared as a relatively new phenomenon in the CSR scene. In the recent years, Global Union Federations (GUFs) have been embarked in its negotiation with the aim to achieve international labour relations in an increasingly globalized context (Sobczak, 2006).

Even the fact that they are not legally binding, IFAs are regarded in many senses as an improvement for the enforcement of workers' rights. Given that they are negotiated and signed between social partners, IFAs have a higher legitimacy than company codes, which are mainly a unilateral declaration of management principles. IFAs also formalize the participation of GUFs in the implementation of the agreement, which is of special importance due to the lack of global regulation. Moreover, they promote the recognition of local unions as social bargaining partners at the local level, and strengthening their workers' protection capacity. Instead of being implemented and monitored by management or external social auditors, the implementation of IFAs are undertaken together with trade union organisations and are mainly dialogue-based, allowing a greater representation of workers' voices and independent monitoring. However, IFAs present also important shortcomings in terms of enforcement since they still depend on soft mechanisms such as conflict resolution and joint problem solving (Schoemann et al., 2008). Moreover, companies which have been engaged in IFA negotiations are predominantly those that already have good industrial relations at the workplace, take responsibility for their supply chain and are open minded about trade union activities (Hellman 2007).

As the Inditex case will be used to bring practical examples of the differences among both instruments, the following is an overview introduction to the company's key features. *Industrias de Diseño Textil S.A. (Textile Design Industries, Inc.)* was founded in La Corunya, Spain in 1975. The company is one of the world's largest fashion groups and the first Euro-

pean clothes retailer with almost a hundred companies dealing with activities related to textile, design, production and distribution. It counts with a global workforce of 79,500 employees and runs 4,264 stores in 73 countries.

Inditex's financial success is also remarkable. In 2007 the company's annual net sales reached 9,435 million euros (Inditex 2007). The company has developed a revolutionary business model acting as an integrated vertical retailer controlling its value chain, outsourcing only the most labour intensive items. Lead-times have been reduced, shorting the time from design to distribution up to 15 days and being able to bring in new products to the stores twice per week (Umans et al., 2007). Moreover, the 49% of its production is based on proximity factories in Spain and Portugal, although the company outsources are also from Morocco, Bangladesh, Cambodia and China (Intermón OXFAM, 2004). Despite the relatively small amount of outsourcing compared with other international retailers and having a good employer reputation, Inditex "just in time" production practices and global buyer pressures can bear serious labour consequences on the factory floors.

The first company's code of conduct was issued in 2001. Similar as many other companies engaging with the CSR, the instrument was a response to strong criticisms received from the civil society community about the company's labour practices among its suppliers. It is important to mention that due to the impossibility to access the original 2001 version; this essay will focus on the available 2007 revision and the information offered by the company's different annual and sustainability reports.

The Inditex code of conduct for external manufacturers and suppliers has been developed unilaterally by the CSR department of Inditex, and is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and ILO conventions. It refers to the four core labour standards including other important aspects of decent work such as safe and hygienic working conditions, no harsh or inhumane treatment or no excessive working hours. However, being one of the most complete company codes among the Spanish textile environment and assuring to be "committed to ensure that...all Inditex's External Manufacturers and Suppliers fully adhere to these commitments", the code lacks of a credible monitoring mechanism that could guarantee real enforcement.

When addressing the issue of supervision and compliance, the code stresses that external manufacturers, suppliers and subcontractors should

authorize Inditex or third party audits. Yet, it does not mention how those audits have to be implemented, nor who are those third parties. Moreover, it does not refer to any corrective plans or sanctioning mechanism in case of non-compliance

With the aim to assess the way such audits were taking place to ensure labour rights enforcement, several Inditex internal documents have been researched. In the company 2003 “Memoria de Sostenibilidad” Inditex refers to a social audit system and details its procedure. However, the programme has been entirely designed by the CSR department of the company together with the factory directors and purchasing responsables. No input from trade unions, labour organisations or workers has been included (Inditex, 2003).

The report also addresses the exercise of third party audits by Intertek, one of the three largest quality control firms, and the Business Social Compliance Initiative (BSCI). Nevertheless, several problems were associated with both auditing companies. BSCI and Intertek have been strongly criticized by the Clean Clothes Campaign report *‘Quick fix, looking for a fast answer’*, highlighting the lack of true commitment towards code compliance. Their social audits are described as too short and superficial, ignoring the input of workers, trade unions and NGOs and failing therefore to detect labour rights violations such as freedom of association, forced overtime or discrimination (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2005). Importantly, those rights are central issues in the Inditex’s code of conduct.

Enforcement of labour rights cannot be achieved through mere auditing procedures. Despite being an important first step towards the improvement of labour standards, there is a need to go beyond auditing and implement further practices (ETI, 2003). The Inditex’s code of conduct, however, makes no reference to important aspects for code enforcement such as corrective action plans, grievance mechanisms or training. Similarly, the Sustainability memory of 2003 and 2004, as well as the Annual Report 2001 and 2002 refer to the application of corrective action plans. However, none of the mentioned documents explain what those corrective action plans specifically consist of, how they have been designed and how the costs are borne (Inditex; 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004).

In the years after the issuing of the code, Inditex has faced strong criticism about the production of its garments, showing serious short-

comings of the company code for the enforcement of labour rights. In 2002, the Spanish NGO, SETEM, issued a striking report about the social responsibility of Spanish textile companies in production sites in Morocco. The report found important labour and human rights violations in some of the factories where Inditex had outsourced its production. Especially alarming was the situation of the female workers, some of 12 years of age (SETEM, 2002). Comparable concerns about the company production practices were raised in similar reports issued in the years 2003 and 2004 (Campana Ropa Limpia et al., 2003; Intermón OXFAM, 2004). The company was also found to be sourcing from two illegal manufacturing workshops in Galicia and Catalunya in 2003, where migrants worked up to 17 hours per day under very poor working conditions. Awareness protests have also taken place against the company in 2005 in Galicia, when the women's association *Mulheres Transgredindo* organized different street actions in front of Inditex subsidiaries.

The case Spectrum was probably the most serious failure of labour rights enforcement. Spectrum was a factory in Bangladesh where Inditex together with other European brand names were sourcing from. The factory had repeatedly been audited by BSCI and other company monitoring programmes, failing to ensure safety and healthy working conditions as well as to address the extreme abuses that workers were facing. The factory collapsed in April 2005, killing 64 workers (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2005). This and the mentioned examples show the weakness of a complete code of conduct which is issued unilaterally and lacks of real implementation, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.

In 2007, the company signed an IFA with the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers Federations (ITGLWF). According to the ITGLWF, the agreement was the outcome of a long ongoing relationship with the company towards ensuring decent work (ETUF-TCL, 2007). In the textile sector, an IFA negotiation is far more complicated than in other sectors. The high number of code of conducts, the established anti-union stance of some multinationals and the possible collective employer resistance are important factors underlining this complexity (Miller, 2004).

However, the cautiousness and bargaining capacity of the ITGLWF during the discussion process was well worth it. The agreement was described as ground-breaking. It was not only the first to be signed in the textile sector, but also the very first one to cover a retail supply chain and

provide workers with the mechanisms to monitor and enforce their rights (ETUF-TCL, 2007). This represents an important improvement with relation to the company's first code of conduct addressed firstly in this essay.

In the agreement, Inditex recognizes the ITGLWF as its global trade union counterpart and acknowledges the central role of freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively. The text describes this right as indispensable to ensure the long-term observation and enforcement of all other labour standards by the workers themselves. Moreover, according to the document, the agreement should be applied to the complete Inditex supply chain, including workplaces that are not represented by any affiliate of the ITGLWF. This is of utmost importance to increase local trade union recognition and provide workers with adequate mechanisms to voice their concerns.

The implementation and monitoring of the agreement has been also greatly improved within the IFA. According to Neil Kearney, ITGLWF's general secretary, *'Irregular policing through snap-shot audits is replaced by constant internal factory monitoring by those who know the enterprise best – managers and workers'* (ETUF-TCL, 2007). Jointly, the two organizations undertake to ensure the sustainable and long-term observance of the mentioned labour standards through the Inditex supply chain keeping their developments under review. With this aim, the IFA establishes an equal mixed monitoring body with representatives from the company and the federation that would meet once a year to review the application of the agreement. Moreover, the company commits to provide ITGLWF with relevant information on its supply chain situation.

According to the text, in the case that labour issues are detected within the Inditex supply chain, the company and ITGLWF will cooperate in finding solutions, including remediation action plans and collaborating on training programs for the management and workers concerned. This represents an important improvement in respect to the company code procedures.

Although the agreement has a voluntary nature, it has already shown remarkable effectiveness in the enforcement of the code of conduct. Some of those cases took place even during the bargaining process between the ITGLWF and the company, showing the significance of bilateral negotiations and the implementation possibilities of such agreement.

In 2006, the Cambodian River-Rich factory dismissed 30 trade union members and representatives who were in process to form a union to deal with the company's abusive use of temporary contracts. In 2007, the CCADWDU (Coalition of Democratic Cambodian Apparel Workers Unions) requested the help of the ITGLWF, who had recently developed the addressed IFA with River Rich's biggest customer, Inditex. The agreement stressed the responsibility of the company in ensuring freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining for its workers, including those in subcontracting factories. The company went then together with ITGLWF to Cambodia and negotiated with the factory management to reinstate the dismissed workers. The management was first reluctant and several strikes took place during 2007. A second visit was paid in May 2007 and this time a much better agreement was reached. It led not only to the reinstatement of the dismissed trade unionists, but also to the payment of their average salary from the date of their dismissal. The factory also committed not to discriminate any trade unionist and to convert the fixed-term contracts into long-term (ITUC, 2008).

Other cases stressed by the Dutch FNV trade union also refer to further enforcement outcomes of the Inditex IFA. Using the agreement in the Topy Top factory in Peru and Interstoff in Bangladesh, negotiations achieved the reinstatement of dismissed trade unionists, the recognition of unions in the factories, an important increase in trade union membership and the introduction of industrial relations management systems and grievance procedures (FNV, 2008).

Notwithstanding these positive outcomes, the IFA has also shown considerable enforcement limitations. During the last shareholder meeting of the company in 2008, the Spanish Clean Clothes Campaign stressed alarming shortcomings of the Inditex outsourcing practices. More specifically, the campaign focused on the issues of living wages, labour rights violations, the indemnization of the Spectrum Bangladesh victims, and the need to address Inditex "just in time" purchasing practices (El economista, 2008).

The failure to properly address such vital issues with CSR initiatives even when an international framework agreement has been signed, shows the need for national regulation for the real enforcement of labour rights and the ensurement of decent working conditions.

However, as stressed by Gereffi, there is a *'governance deficit of considerable magnitude'* in terms of national and international institutions to regu-

late and compensate undesirable MNE behaviour (Gereffi, 2005). International human rights laws have not yet been developed enough to be able to hold states responsible for the extraterritorial activities of their non-government citizens, including corporations. The lack of enforcement mechanisms in multilateral organisations dealing with labour rights such as ILO or OECD are illustrative examples for this international deficit. Arguing that this would represent a competitive disadvantage for their companies, home states have consequently been unwilling to regulate their overseas activities (Joseph, 1999). However, recent examples in France and the UK have shown that it is possible to apply national laws by means of the *forum non conveniens*. In those cases, home states have enabled litigation against national companies for violation of human rights of their subsidiaries in other countries.

The European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ), in an attempt to challenge the limited liability of MNE, has proposed a legal recognition of MNE as single legal entities in Europe, extending parent company liability for the environment and social impacts of their actions. The proposal also includes the extension of the duty of care to subsidiaries and suppliers (ECCJ, 2008). If the initiative reaches European recognition, it could represent an important opportunity to hold Inditex accountable for the working rights violations overseas, including the Spectrum case, and it could pave the way to make companies more aware of the dangers of “just in time” production practices.

The case of Inditex has allowed a comparison among the enforcement potential of two CSR initiatives undertaken by the company. As highlighted when dealing with the Inditex’s code of conduct for external manufacturers and suppliers, the several limitations found in its implementation procedures have led to important labour rights violations in the company’s supply chain. The IFA signed with ITGLWF in 2007 has shown significant improvements in terms of enforcement possibilities. The application of the agreement in several cases has led to solve critical labour issues in the company’s overseas subsidiaries.

Moreover, both the unilateral company code of conduct and the bilateral signed IFA have failed to address important labour issues. Among them stand out the irregularities in the Spectrum compensation process and the working rights violations resulted from the company’s purchasing practices. This fact raises concerns about the limitations of the CSR

enforcement potential and its real outcomes for the most vulnerable workers.

Important initiatives to enforce national and international laws and provide an opportunity to litigate companies for their extraterritorial behaviour are regarded in this essay as the ideal scenario. Such regulation would successfully protect and promote core labour standards providing workers worldwide, including those from Inditex, with a decent work and a decent life.

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5

The Role of the Local Government in Enabling the Development of the Private Sector and Other Relevant Actors: The Case of the Herman Costerstraat Market in The Hague

SERGIO FERRAGUT

“Governments are in a position to make markets and competition work better, by taking the lead in making business easier and less expensive and in determining the nature and level of regulation”(ILO, 2007, page 12)

INTRODUCTION

First there was no market; the establishment of the Herman Costerstraat Market (HCM), more than seventy years ago, was the initiative of the Municipality of The Hague (MTH) and the result of extensive negotiations that lasted for several years. With more than five hundred stalls, the HCM is currently one of the largest open street markets in Europe and the centre of an area transformed from suburbia into a hub of economic and social activity. The transformation and sustainable development of the market and the neighborhood are the result of a combination of factors and circumstances. The aim of this essay is to understand the role of the municipality as an agent and facilitator of local development and positive change and regulator of the relationships among different local actors. To understand the dynamics, roles, and negotiations between the different actors involved in the HCM and its surroundings, primary data through the form of informal first-hand interviews and photography adjoined in the appendix was gathered from the market and the municipal archives for a period of three weeks in March of 2009.

THE ROLE OF THE MUNICIPALITY: ESTABLISHING THE HERMAN COSTERSTRAAT MARKET

On 16 May of 1928, the HCM was officially inaugurated (MTH website, 2009) by the MTH as an effort to relocate and reorganize the street originally located on the margins of the Prinsengracht Channel. The main reason for the relocation of the market was the lack of available space to accommodate the increasing number of street vendors congregating from different parts of the country to sell their products during days the market was open. The reorganization was part of an effort to regularize and establish control over the economic activity carried out in the city (Vonka, Municipal Archives staff, 2009, first hand interview).

With an increasing population originally migrating from the countryside of the Netherlands to the more recent migration from all over the world, the MTH's agenda has always included the need to create employment and reassess the administrative needs of its residents. At the same time, the strategic location of The Hague between Amsterdam and Rotterdam has made the city a traditional place of cultural and commercial exchange, also translated into the street markets. While the market was in the Prinsegracht Channel area, only two hundred stalls could be accommodated on a market day at the same time, yet at the new location in Herman Costerstraat, more than five hundred spaces have become available for street vendors (MTH website, 2009).

The establishment of the HCM was not a smooth process and lasted almost ten years, from 1929 to 1938. At the time of negotiations, many street vendors did not want to move to the Herman Costerstraat area because they thought that they would not be able to sell as much as in the Prinsegracht Channel area (Vonka, Municipal Archives staff, 2009, first hand interview). Their concerns were well founded as in 1928, the Herman Costerstraat area was part of the suburbs of the city and only the wholesaler's market was in the vicinity (see appendix 1a - 1e). The Prinsegracht Channel area, on the other hand, was in the centre of the city, where people from different corners of the country converged on the days the market was open to buy and sell their products and to socialize with people from different parts of the country.

FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOPMENTAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The role of the Municipality of The Hague has evolved over time. Starting as a service provider, associated with the traditional role expected of local governments, to become one of the main actors in the process of local development, fulfilling the modern concept of local governance as presented by authors such as Nick Devas and others. Traditionally, local governments were only responsible for providing basic services to the residents of the city, such as public lighting, transportation, and cleaning of the streets. The concept of local governance goes beyond service provision to include responsibilities such as planning for development, governance and administration, financial self-sustainability, provision of services to citizens and businesses, and the establishment and maintenance of regulations.

This change at the municipal level represents a shift in paradigm from local government to “developmental local government”. As sustained by Nel and Binns, developmental “local governments are to maximize social development and economic growth, to help ensure that local economic and social conditions are conducive to the creation of employment opportunities, to take a leadership role, involving citizens and stakeholder groups in the development process and to build social capital and generate a sense of common purpose to find local solutions for sustainability” (Nel and Binns, 2001, page 357).

The MTH has been at the forefront of institutional change to adapt to the demands and needs of the residents of The Hague and the economic reality of the region and the country. By playing a pivotal role in the creation and administration of street markets, the municipality has contributed to the smooth economic and social development of the city and its residents. The creation of the market has provided employment for people working in the market, people serving and administering the market, people that own shops in the periphery of the market, and has also added to the spaces available for social interaction and integration of the residents of the city.

While becoming a central actor in the process of the local development of the city, the MTH has also contributed to the creation of a friendly business environment appropriate for the growth of the private sector. Through high-quality planning and the establishment of clear rules and regulations for all stakeholders involved, the municipality has provided entrepreneurs with a friendly environment where investors,

both old and new, can find opportunities for the establishment of their businesses.

THE ROLE OF THE MUNICIPALITY: CREATING A BUSINESS ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

As experience has demonstrated, “a good business environment encourages investment and promotes higher levels of growth” (ILO, 2007, page 25), which in turn can create employment to accommodate the needs of a fast increasing population and the basis for the sustainable development of the city.

The growth of the private sector relies on continuous investment, which only remains constant if the investors feel the climate is appropriate for further development. Initiatives to support the growth of the private sector can take different forms. In the case of the HCM, the municipality has over time created the conditions for the market to grow in a sustainable way and in harmony with the residents of the neighborhood. An area that in the past was considered to be part of the suburbs, and therefore unsuitable for carrying business, has transformed itself over time into one of the most vibrant commercial areas in the city.

The services provided nowadays by the municipality, and coordinated at the markets by the OASM, include cleaning and maintenance of the market area, running of a well organized transportation network that includes two lines of trams and several of buses, provision of parking space located under the market for four hundred and seventy vehicles, public toilettes, coordination with local police to make sure the market and its surroundings are safe, settlement of disputes among vendors and with residents of the neighborhood and provision of electricity and running water for the stalls that wish to have that service (Thelma, Police Officer at the HCM, 2009; Maria, OASM cleaning staff at the HCM, 2009; Marieke, OASM staff, 2009; all first hand interviews).

The sustainable growth of healthy markets requires strong institutions and regulations and coordination among the different actors involved and affected by and in the process. The initiative and leadership of the MTH has resulted in the creation of an environment that is friendly for further investment. “The investment climate reflects the many location-specific factors that shape the opportunities and incentives for firms to invest productively, create jobs and expand (ILO, 2007, page 26). (see appendix 1f - 1j).

THE ROLE OF THE MUNICIPALITY: ADMINISTERING THE MARKET

The HCM is the centre of a space where different actors interact among each other and carry on with their different activities. Among them, we can identify the employees that work for the OASM and other branches of the municipality (local government), vendors that have stalls assigned to them and work at the market and owners of small shops located in the periphery of the market (private sector), residents of the neighborhood (local community), and visitors from different areas of the city that arrive on the days the market is open to do their shopping and enjoy the chance to socialize with all kinds of people. Making sure that all this relationships and interests do not conflict with each other and are aligned in order to bring the best outcomes for all the parties involved, is the role and task of a municipality that is practicing the principles of a developmental local government.

Besides the Herman Costerstraat Market, the OASM is responsible for all other street markets in The Hague, a total of seven markets (MTH, website). Its main office, responsible for issuance of permits, processing of applications for stalls' permits and implementation of the rules and regulations approved by the municipality, is located close to the HCM and staffed with fifteen employees, at the main office, and eight in the office located at the market floor (Marieke, OASM staff, 2009, first hand interview). In addition, the OASM is also responsible for making decisions to settle misconducts and grievances among the street vendors.

Rules and regulations for street vending have been in place in The Hague since 1856, when first created by the municipality. Throughout time, the rules and regulations have been modified to adapt to the changing nature of business and society, most recently in 2004 (Municipal Archives, 2009). The responsibility for the creation and modification of the rules lies in the MTH and its administration and execution in the OASM. Although the creation and modification of the laws is carried exclusively by the municipality, top-down approach, the vendors are allowed, through their organizations, to voice their concerns during the approval process.

In addition to the OASM main office, each market has a smaller office that represents the OASM and is responsible for the markets' daily administration, located in the market floor. In the case of the HCM, the office is located in the centre of the market, thus facilitating effective monitoring of activities and compliance of the rules and regulations at

the market and early response to any grievances that may arise among the street vendors. (see appendix 1k and 2).

Although grievances among vendors and/or the administration of the market are not common, they do occur; however, most of them include minor violations of the rules and disputes among the street vendors that are easily addressed and solved by the staff representing the OASM at the market. Early response by the OASM staff at the market level facilitates the resolution and addressing of grievances that could otherwise escalate into major conflicts. Mario, an OASM staff member, has been working on the market floor for a few years and comments that “problems occur, but when vendors receive their permits they also sign an agreement where they accept to comply with all the rules and regulations established for the market, the rules are clear and they know them, we are here to make sure they comply, which in most cases they do” (Mario, OASM staff at the HCM, 2009, first hand interview).

When grievances cannot be resolved at the market level, the main office of the OASM is notified immediately. After reviewing the report prepared by the staff at the market, the OASM contacts the vendors involved for hearings, and then, in accordance with the established rules and regulations, makes a decision, and if necessary, imposes a sanction. In case the vendor does not agree with the decision of the OASM, he or she has the chance to recourse in first instance to the MTH, and in last instance, to the judicial court. As indicated by a staff from the OASM, in her many years of experience, she has never handled a case that has reached such stages and the number of street vendors that have had their licenses revoked is minimal (Marieke, OASM staff at the main office, 2009, first hand interview).

THE SELLERS AT THE MARKET

At the time, there are approximately five hundred and fifty vendors that have received permits from the OASM to own a stall at the HCM. Permits are issued for three years to individuals that are already registered in the Dutch Chamber of Commerce as authorized to own a private business on their name and are either renewed automatically after completion of the three years period or inherited to direct family members after death (MTH website, 2009). As noted above, permits are rarely rescinded. As a result of this policy and circumstances, new places in the market rarely become available. The OASM administers the waiting list

of vendors that have applied for a permit. Currently, the waiting list to obtain a permit for the HCM has more than nine hundred names on it and the average waiting time for obtaining a permit is twenty years (Marieke, OASM staff at the main office, 2009, first hand interview).

Once a permit is obtained from the OASM, daily rent at the market is quite low and depending on the size and the extra services available at the stall, such as electricity, refrigerators or storage space, varies between seven and sixteen euros per day. If a vendor does not arrive to the market, the space is assigned for that day to the next person on the waiting list. That function is under the responsibility of the staff of the OASM at the market. In addition to rent, vendors are also required to pay income taxes, which vary depending on the type of products they sell. The fact that operational expenditures are quite low, allows for vendors to start and operate their businesses with relatively small amounts of capital, which in turn grants them the option of continuing in the market at a relatively low cost.

The sellers at the HCM are represented by two organizations, the Central Association for Ambulatory Trade (CVAH), established in 1921 and mostly representing the interests of vendors of Dutch origins, and VETRA, a recently formed organization that groups non-Dutch vendors. The CVAH, an association at the national level, has a more powerful voice in terms of influencing the decisions of the municipalities in The Netherlands in all matters concerning the administration of the markets and the advancement of the interests of the street vendors and in particular negotiations that might affect the interests of particular vendors. Furthermore, if a vendor wants to appeal a decision made by the market administration at the court level, the CAVH provides legal advice.

Despite the existence of these organizations, street vendors are not usually eager to participate and voice their concerns as a group. Most of the time, they are so focused on the care and improvement of their own businesses, that do not have the time or the willingness to associate with others. At the same, they do not have the structural or organization capacity at the market level, to reach consensual decisions or undertake collective action. This results in inefficiencies in terms of lack of share of knowledge, higher costs that could be reduced if more communication among the vendors was existed and also in terms of bargaining power in matters that could be of their interests against the administration and

other actors. Experience indicates that facilitation and construction of structures and spaces for organization and dialogue can be the result of the initiative of the civil society and NGOs, such is the case of the “Freehouse Project” in Rotterdam at the “Afriknaanderwijk Market” (Kaspori, D., Freehouse Project, 2009, first hand interview).

Once at the market, vendors are assigned stalls within the market space according to the type of products they sell. For instance, all fresh vegetables go on the same area, all fresh sea food goes into another area, all clothes for women in another area, etc. (see appendix 1n and 1o). Within these areas, the best places are assigned to those vendors that have been at the market for the longest time and so forth.

Most stalls are run by members of the same families, which contributes to the more relaxed atmosphere in the market than in established shops in other areas of the city. Families sometimes own more than one permit on the same market or in markets in different cities. Ruben, a vendor at the HCM, works half of the week with at the stall owned by his family in the HCM and the other half of the week at the stall they own in a street market in Rotterdam (Ruben, Street Vendor, 2009, first hand interview).

Although many of the vendors at the market come from different origins, they all communicate in Dutch among each other and with most of the customers. At the same time, given that vendors from the same origin usually end up selling the same type of products and hence are located in the same area of the market, they also use their local languages to communicate among each other and with members of their communities that might be visiting the market on that day.

This variation of backgrounds among the vendors results not only in a wide assortment of products being offered but also in a unique cultural richness that reflects the spirit and demographic composition of the city. Customers to the market are not only attracted to it by the products for sale or the low prices but also for the unique experience of interacting with so many different people in such a reduced space.

THE CUSTOMERS AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Each week, more than one hundred and sixty thousand customers visit the market for different reasons and from different parts of the city and the country (OASM website, 2009). Many customers choose to shop at the market because of the variety of products and the prices that are in

most cases cheaper than those offered by established stores or supermarkets throughout the city. Others, shop at the market because there they can find products from their home countries that are not available anywhere else. Some come to the market because of the experience, because they enjoy the atmosphere and see it as entertainment. For those that are not interested in shopping, many stalls offer different types of local and foreign food and drinks.

Due to the large number of people coming to the neighborhood when the market is open and despite the efforts made by the OASM to minimize the negative effect on the residents of the neighborhood, sometimes, complaints arise. Most of complains received by the OASM, are related to cars or trucks that belong to vendors and are parked blocking the streets surrounding the market or entrances to private houses. Although petty crime increases during market's days, most of it is limited to the market area (Marieke, OASM staff at the main office, 2009, first hand interview). In response, a special unit, staffed with ten officers, has been set up by the Police to patrol the market floor and the surrounding streets (Thelma, Police Officer at the OASM, 2009, first hand interview). In addition to the other responsibilities above mentioned, the OASM is also responsible for receiving the complaints from residents of the neighborhood and coordinating with the relevant actors involved.

It is essential for the sustainable development of the market, that customers, sellers and local residents are all respected in their spaces and interests. It is also the role of the municipality to maintain this equilibrium in order to ensure the well functioning of the market and peaceful coexistence of the various actors present at the market. Given the fact that no neighborhood organization exists in the area of the HCM, it falls under the responsibility of the municipality to ensure that the rights of the residents that live in the area are respected and cared for.

The commercial activity and social interaction among all actors present at the market is not limited to the market itself, many shops around the area in which the market is located offer products directed to the customers that visit the market every week. Some of the products are quite different from the ones offered in the market, like money transfer services, while others complement the already wide variety of things offered at the market, like hair dressers and nail polishers. (see appendix 11 – 1q).

SYNERGIES WITH THE BUSINESSES IN THE PERIPHERY

There are a number of shops that offer a wide variety of products and services located in the streets surrounding the market. Some of these shops have been in the neighborhood for a few years but most of them have opened recently to serve the huge number of customers that arrive to the area when the market is open. The products and services they sell complement the variety of products and services already offered in the market. Most of the owners of shops located in the periphery of the market interviewed during the research, mentioned that the majority of sales take place when the market is open, while some of the owners mentioned that they do not open their shops on non-market-days. (see appendix 1i – 1w).

The contrast of visiting the HCM area when the market is open and when is closed is significant. When the market is closed, the few shops that remain open are usually run by their owners only, who mostly spend the day reorganizing or cleaning the shop waiting for the next day when the market is open and customers abound (Hussein, Money Transfer Service, 2009, first hand interview).

As Pieterse sustained, “agglomeration increases the productivity of a wide-ranging number of economic activities in urban areas. Essentially, agglomeration allows firms to experience the benefits of both economies of scale and scope” (Pieterse, 2000, page 8). The role of the municipality in this process is to provide the services and legal framework for all this actors to interact in a productive way. Agglomeration has more chances of bringing success and positive outcomes for the actors involved, if the local government successfully manages to regulate and facilitate the activities and interactions among the different actors.

CONCLUSION

First there was no market, by taking the lead in becoming a central actor in the process of establishing, regulating and administering the HCM and the relations and interests of the various actors involved, the Municipality of The Hague has contributed to the sustainable development of the neighborhood and the city. In the early 1900s, nothing could have indicated the potential of the Herman Costerstraat area, which at the time was an empty space in the suburbs of the city considered by the private sector as unsuitable for doing business. It was the long term vision and

commitment of the municipality to the development of the area that initially triggered and then carried on with the process that resulted in the successful story of the market and the neighborhood that we witness today.

By providing services to the area that facilitated the starting of new businesses, and creating a regulatory framework that allowed the different actors to interact with each other with certainty, knowing what to expect in the near and long term future, the municipality laid the foundations for a peaceful coexistence that benefit all actors involved while creating economic prosperity and space for social interaction and integration..

The synergy among the different actors present at the HCM is to a large degree the result of a process in which the municipality has facilitated and accompanied the development of the private sector while attending the interests and the needs of the local community and other businesses in the periphery. Furthermore, by being close in proximity to the vendors, the municipality has been able to ensure understanding of their needs and quick response to their demands in an efficient and effective way.

At the same time, by creating the conditions for sustainable and continuous incoming investment to the city and increasing economic activity, the municipality has ensured a steady source of income that results not only in profits and employment for the private sector but also in taxes and income for the city from services provided to the different actors. Having that sustainable source of income increases the available funds that might be used to pay for current expenditures and finance future plans.

When it comes to the limitations of the experience of the HCM, it is important to highlight the lack of a body, representative enough, that would effectively guarantee that all voices and interests of the vendors of the market are included and considered when making decisions and taking positions in negotiations. The lack of a structure or organization that represents the interests of all vendors, regardless of their origin or the type of products they sell, hampers the efforts to achieve common long term benefits for all. More dialogue, at the market level, is required among vendors and between vendors and the municipality. For that dialogue to be productive, however, it should include the voices and interests of all vendors and not only the few that are represented by the exist-

ing organizations. Who should be responsible for taking that initiative, is a question that remains open.

The market is not only a space for economic activity but also for social interaction and integration. The market does not only create jobs but also creates links among people and actors that can lead to increased and “better” economic activity. The case of the Herman Costerstraat Market is an example of the developmental local government approach, in which the government becomes a central actor in the process of development. From the municipality’s perspective, the challenge for the future is once again to understand how it can keep contributing to the further development and improvement of the market, while remaining sensitive to the needs and interests of all actors involved.

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- Vonka, Municipal Archives Staff, March 2009, First hand interview

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The Utility of the Citizen: Relating Citizenship in Social Movement Activity

MEGHAN MICHELLE COOPER

Social movements are actively involved in imagining new processes, structures or even individual identities. Whether we are speaking of ‘new’ or ‘old’ social movements, there exists a conscious effort to alter the actions of public and private actors, changing how we claim rights and demand accountability. While the purpose of social movements clearly varies, theoretical approaches have covered perspectives ranging from a structuralist understanding of political opportunity, material and human resource mobilization, and constructivist or identity-oriented paradigms considering frames and meanings. Outside of demands, social movements have also become “signifying agents actively engaged in the production and maintenance of meaning for constituents, antagonists, and bystanders or observers” (Benford and Snow 2000: 613). Regardless of which camp you believe to describe the nature and purpose of social movement activity, citizenship is inevitably a concept of utility and significance. Understanding this utility leaves me to ask the question: what is the relationship between social movements and citizenship? The argument put forth for this paper is that citizenship is a meaningful concept carried throughout social movement activity, making it an imperative tool to sustainability. It is because of the imagination often found in social movements’ vision for diversity in democratic principles, participation and inclusion of marginalized subjects and the injection of new identities or subjectivities that citizenship cannot be broken from the analysis and actions of social movements. The Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) of South Africa displays an interesting case for a radical political

project dedicated to these concerns where citizenship confers a sense of responsibility and the recognition of rights to these three arenas.

CONTESTING DEFINITIONS

In a simplistic sense, a citizen is “a member of a political community who is endowed with a set of rights and a set of obligations” (Shukla 2006: 94). Therefore, citizenship is commonly viewed to represent the relationship between the individual citizen and the state whereby the two are entwined with reciprocal rights and obligations (ibid). Turner (1993) broadens this reciprocity whereby in recognizing citizenship, this shapes the flow of resources to persons and social groups (2). T.H. Marshall is widely acknowledged as a forefather in citizenship studies, with his distinction of political, civil and social citizenship identifying distinct rights and institutions in modern societies existing to service these rights. In a general sense, Marshall’s analysis of citizenship understands social rights as contextualized and connected with history and the subsequent operation of civil and political rights. By degree, most mainstream approaches address citizenship “as a complex and contextualized status giving expression to ideals of personal autonomy, social justice, equity and inclusiveness in modern societies” which Marshall identifies as “democratic-welfare-capitalist” formations (Roche 2002: 72). These formations are serving and giving substance to autonomy that is presumably expressed through political and civil rights. Marshall’s analysis accounts for complexities and context however, must be expanded to account for additional contexts and social formations beyond the level of the nation state that in many ways can repress autonomy. Such formations will be discussed further in relation to the conflicting dynamics of capitalism and capitalist societies.

Over the past few decades, various challenges have emerged to historical and more mainstream theories of citizenship. The typologies and methods through which citizenship is commonly understood have been expanded to consider it “not as a legal status but as a form of identification, a type of political identity: something to be constructed, not empirically given” (Mouffe 1992: 231). Recognizing the impacts of globalization and in particular the global capitalist economy furthers the analysis of understanding these structures in relation to the realization of citizenship. These complexities leave the nation-state and national level considerations of citizenship alone as inadequate, as there are forces outside of

these levels operating independently of the state and or simultaneously influencing the function of the state. Challenges to such notions of citizenship concern diverse issues and subjectivities as well as the role of the citizens themselves within these structures, accounting for social contexts and rights. Social movements have often been a part of this process, promoting certain interests, agendas, and identities in the search for the recognition and inclusivity of marginalized communities outside of only a state-based orientation. Culture has arguably now been ignited in the citizenship debate most notably through such authors as Dagnino, Escobar, Alvarez (1998) and those claiming to be from more a 'post-modern tradition'. However, much of this can also be largely attributed to the work of social movements, which have revealed and addressed new levels of complexity to dealing with national citizenry (Roche 2002: 73). Therefore, I do not suggest that social movements are no longer concerned about relationships with the state; rather, many have evolved to recognize the connections that exist between diverse sets of issues from different frameworks and the many actors involved in addressing them.

CITIZENSHIP AS A CONCEPT AND A TOOL

The discourse surrounding citizenship has now been widely extended to cover identities, grievances, gender, class, nationalities and ethnic considerations. This has paved new avenues for actors to conceptualize the citizens they wish to be viewed as. However, this malleability also leaves room for manipulation and imposing conceptions of citizenship within imbedded power structures. For example, Robison (2006) references the notion of social neoliberalism whereby citizen's rights are assumed against their position and productivity in the market place (5). Furthermore, approaches of Civic Driven Change (CDC), emphasizing civic agency, assume a history of processes whereby power accumulation has marginalized polities, "recasting citizenship in terms of clients to be served by privatizing rights, public space and fulfillment of government obligations" (Biekart and Fowler 2009: 4). It is important to note this imposition, as social movements are likely to be engaged in the same process, injecting notions, which communities and or individuals do not identify with. This leaves many assumptions about the nature of participation and representation of social movements. While this point cannot be ignored, this paper argues that social movements are inherently more

egalitarian, horizontal and solidarian structures seeking to disable or question unequal power relations. Therefore, citizenship is a crucial concept and tool for them to claim and realize equality or rights against such power relations.

While there are inevitably impositions to concepts dictated by overarching social and structural power relations, the potential of citizenship remains as a useful tool for actors such as social movements who seek to mobilize on the basis of common concerns, mutual interests, identification and grievances. Social movements often seek to reveal issues not necessarily considered problematic within mainstream politics or media, attempting to shine light on frequently ignored spheres of influence and conflict. This can also be referred to as a political strategy whereby the concept of citizenship is a tool contesting the right of a collective and the individual held within it to possess rights and express them. As argued by Dagnino, social movements actually inject new forms of citizenship on the basis of their grievances, redefining the very idea of rights. These rights may not even be linked to dominant classes or the state for their incorporation and transcend the liberal perception for inclusion, membership and belonging to a given political system. Rather, a movement's imagination of citizenship is the right to participate in the very definition of a system, economic, political, legal or otherwise, and to define what type of structure they wish to be members of (Dagnino 1998: 51). Therefore, citizenship is a multidisciplinary concept related to socio-economic, political, legal and cultural arenas serving as a tool upon which social movements can engage public and private action around a potentially new kind of inclusion (Hickey and Mohan 2004: 70). Not all social movements may envision such a radical reorganization of politics and society; however, the sustainability of social movements themselves still depends quite distinctly on citizenship not merely as a concept, but also as a tool for their mobilization and action-oriented activities.

POLITICAL ARENAS

Citizenship is now recognized not only in relation to its legal and political considerations, but encompasses a pluralist understanding, acknowledging ideas of inclusivity, participation, culture, etc. Social movements are able to envision a new form of political engagement enshrined by democratic principles that accounts for this diversity. With citizenship as a reference point, social movements are able to operationalize democracy

or political realm and the claims that individuals have a right to within a system (Dagnino 2008b: 29). In this way, citizenship can be seen as a prominent notion as well as “a crucial weapon not only in the struggle against social and economic exclusion and inequality but also in the broadening of dominant conceptions of politics” (Dagnino 2008a: 63). A relevant example can be seen through the progressive and diverse political agenda of the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) of South Africa.

The unifying theme of the APF has essentially been against the privatization of basic community and worker needs, claiming the failure of state privatization policies not only as inefficient but also as ideologically polarizing the country (Ballard et al. 2006: 402). A movement centred on class-based ideologies, the APF is often described as anti-neoliberal, anti-capital, anti-GEAR, anti-globalization, pro-poor, pro-human rights and socialist (Ballard et al. 2005: 623). Due to prevailing influences from the political right in promoting the reduction of state based capacity through privatization and the deregulation of labour, etc., many movements have been actively opposing this reorganization (Roche 2002: 74). Moreover, the context and way in which the APF operate are in direct opposition to the outcomes and nature of a capitalist society. The very claims and efforts of the APF clearly oppose their economic and structural context, placing citizenship as a key reference for imaging a new democratic arena. By opposing state economic restructuring the actions of the APF can be considered as “the survivalist responses of poor and marginalized people who have had no alternative in the face of unemployment and a retreating state that refuses to meet its socio-economic obligations to its citizenry” (Ballard et al. 2006: 402). The activities and claims of the APF suggest a fundamental reorganization of the way the state operates and who is included and participates; thus, ultimately, the APF influences the nature of the democratic arena in post-apartheid South Africa. This process becomes especially conflictual in the relatively new democratic state, where many actors have emerged with different opinions on state transition and consolidation.

INCLUSIVITY

As previously stated, reconceptualizing the democratic arena involves fundamentally changing the notion of who should be included in democratic processes, considering pluralism as crucial to the many identities within a nation state. The concept of inclusive citizenship addresses this

point, offering an examination of what it means to be included or excluded from the political sphere or society. Speaking to social constructs of gender or discrimination are a few of the ways citizens are socially and systematically excluded. This very dilemma is of concern to Naila Kabeer (2005), who suggests that there are values which people associate with the idea of citizenship. This commonality exists through a fundamental connection of experienced exclusion, which provides a basis for the imagination of a more inclusive structure (3). While inclusive citizenship is but an example of an emerging concept applied to citizenship, it represents a move towards understanding citizenship as something that is not simply given due to territoriality. It is a process of struggle for consideration, inclusion and rights. This particular understanding of citizenship closely resides with individuals and communities such as migrants, who are often denied the rights associated with citizenship on the basis that they are not a national of their country of residence.

To provide an example, resistance movements have often been noted for their ability to expand the state-given framework of inclusion, replacing it with a radicalized version that defines inclusion from the perspectives of those who are excluded (Mohanty 2006: 82). Under the neoliberal institutional model adopted in South Africa, the APF is one of many movements seeking to crumble state and its partner's perceptions of social progress and inclusion for marginalized communities. Following the break from apartheid in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) began to form a state under an assumed "trickle down effect" from neoliberal institutional arrangements such as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and its subsequent replacement by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR). Strongly situating itself within socialist tradition, the APF was created in order to provide a platform for solidarity and information-sharing for communities and groups of the left that had broken from alliances with the ANC, and who were seeking a space to express their concerns. In turn, the APF became a movement for organizations, individuals and associations alike in order to challenge governmental and private companies' systematic exclusion, which denied citizens access to basic goods and services (Buhlungu 2004: 4). Therefore, as social movements are involved in an active process of imagining new mechanisms or opportunities for inclusion, citizenship becomes a crucial reference point upon which they contest this exclusion. The movements themselves can become a space to counter

this while simultaneously engaging in actions and mobilization to see the inclusion of those marginalized from a particular polity. The APF displays a case that seeks to counter, among many items, the exclusionary nature of South Africa's democratic transition, claiming injustice and rights violations from emerging structural formations that extend their contestation beyond merely the state.

IDENTITIES AND SUBJECTIVITIES

In many ways, a citizen can seek citizenship outside the formal realm of a political polity, but rather in recognition of a particular identity. Through the imagination of new spaces for engagement, the purpose of these mechanisms and who will be considered, social movements have actively used citizenship as a form of imagining new identities. Expanding the notion of citizenship is in many ways how identities come to be considered, whether formally in-state or non-state actors or informally from within a particular community. This is often referred to as "citizenship from below" or a 'horizontal' viewpoint whereby citizenship is fulfilled "beyond the incorporation into the political and into a project for a new sociability, a more egalitarian framework for social relations at all levels, new rules for living together in society" with "recognition of 'the other' as a subject bearer of valid rights and legitimate interests" (Kabeer 2006: 22). This tends to be characteristic to social movements, who claim to be representative of the poor and excluded. The consideration of various identities speaks quite highly to the question of participation and inclusion; however, it moves deeper to question values and stigmas that may hinder this opportunity.

Few cases display the systematic exclusion and dehumanization of the "other" better than the experience of an apartheid system in South Africa. While South Africa has left the racial apartheid in its past, most grievances of the APF are distinctly juxtaposed to a perceived class apartheid, whereby the historical promises from the ANC government have now completely deteriorated (Bond and Ngwane 2009: 6). The class apartheid understood by many social movements in South Africa displays the shift that the country has made from an overtly racially divided system to class based divisions which have only served to perpetuate the historical racial divisions in the country. The identities and subjectivities social movements tend to speak to vary significantly depending on their histories; however, the APF represents a distinct example of a social

movement challenging class-based divisions that interact with many identity issues such as gender and ethnicity. The campaigns and activities of the APF vary considering issues of basic necessities such as water and electricity, xenophobia, violence against women and media and communication (The Anti-Privatisation Forum 2001). Due to the various issues that the APF considers, as well as its structure as a forum or platform for many voices, the APF speaks to the questions of identities and subjectivities in relation to how they are experienced on a daily basis. They engage with multiple actors, and in this diversity the APF has been able to bring these issues to the table, providing a platform for these identities and voices to be heard—not only for their consideration politically and economically, but also as communities and individuals with legitimate grievances and rights.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: REVAMPING CITIZENSHIP

As has been sustained throughout this essay, social movements, in their varying purposes, are creative and signifying agents of change. The Anti-Privatisation Forum, while heavily involved in actions against the state and its partners, including political parties and corporations, is a strong example of a social movement actively fighting for the inclusion and identification of marginalized communities. Their anti-neoliberal standpoints, ideologically socialist and representative of poor, working classes as well as their methods for engagement with the state clearly place them with a more revolutionary label. Notable for being a strong voice in South African politics, we can see the APF as a social movement engaged in pushing the notion of citizenship beyond a mainstream liberal conception. The APF tends to focus more on citizenship as collective rights, voice, and identity, challenging public and private actions that have put the individual at the centre of attention under a neo-liberal rubric for citizenship.

What can be seen through the engagement of social movements such as the APF is the use of citizenship towards pursuing democratic principles and practices politically, economically and socially. Accounting for the plethora of influences that may impinge this process, social movements further consider citizenship in pushing for more inclusive practices, the understanding of multiculturalism and subsequently the creation of new identities. Moreover, I have aimed to suggest that social movements are not necessarily concerned with the relationship between

citizens and the state, but the rights of citizens relative to another with whom they have a relationship. This involves an increasing recognition of diversity in how we perceive citizens, rights and the institutional arrangements that invariably influence them. As we consider how new systems can be imagined and identities included, moving to the program of social movements is inevitable and noteworthy because of their continued imagination and persistence. While citizenship has a long liberal tradition attached to its meaning, social movements have actively redefined how we perceive citizens' agency and rights amidst this process of systematic and social change.

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7

Does the Aid Consensus Shift from Washington to the South? A Case Study of PRSP Ownership in Rwanda

SABRINA BRANDT

1 INTRODUCTION

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD 2005) introduced the principle of *ownership*, which implies that countries receiving official development aid are to exercise leadership and coordination on their development policies and projects. This principle seemed to announce the aftermath of the “one-size fits all” approaches to development by offering the possibility for context-based approaches.

However, country ownership of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) has been questioned because critics noticed them reflecting the neoliberal policies of the past. They argue the PRSPs lack alternative policies and are influenced or even directed by the international financial institutions (IFIs). Rather than context-based development policies, the contents of PRSPs seemed surprisingly similar across countries.

This essay will examine the principle of ownership in the PRSP process in Rwanda. By analysing the content of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (EDPRSP) for the period 2008-2012. The present essay considers whether the EDPRSP only represents morphed neoliberal policies that suit the Washington Consensus, or whether there is also some room for policies that could fit the alternative Latent South Consensus as proposed by Charles Gore (2000).

The next section will provide the necessary background information; depicting the changes in the architecture of aid from the neoliberal Washington Consensus to the new Paris Declaration. The third section

maps the criticisms that have been expressed on the principle of ownership in relation to the PRSP process. Fourthly, the theoretical background of the presumed paradigm shifts after the Washington Consensus will be examined. The Latent South Consensus described here will provide a tool to measure alternative policies that indicate the scope for ownership. The analysis of Rwanda's EDPRSP 2008-2012 in the fifth section will reveal the scope for alternative policies reflecting ownership. The findings will be summarised in the conclusion.

2 CHANGING THE ARCHITECTURE OF AID

After the decolonisation, the first official development aid flowed to the Global South under the assumption that these countries only suffered an investment gap, and thus a big push was needed to get them back on track. Although the “dirigist” local post-colonial development policies can be commended for some achievements, they were heavily criticised by the donor community in the 1970s for their weak results (Meyer and Schulz 2008: 2).

The weak state systems were blamed for their inefficient interventions in the economy – announcing of the rise of neoliberalism. In the following decades, the IFIs and the OECD donor countries worked together towards the downsizing of the development state. Macroeconomic stability was prioritised as a means for development under the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). In the 1980s, the IFIs coupled this to the principle of conditionality. That is, a country should comply with the SAP first before receiving development aid. Conditionalities can be seen as the first vehicle for improving aid effectiveness, but they came at a high cost: they were criticised for excluding the (poor) people in developing countries whose governments did not comply with SAPs.

As history shows, the SAPs did not bring about miracles either. The assumed relationship between macroeconomic stability, liberalisation and growth proved to be weak in practice. Many developing countries endured growing poverty, inequality and debt (McKinley 2008: 93). The IFIs were criticised for the failure of their policy prescriptions.

The New Aid Architecture

In the 1990s the IFIs were seen as the bloodletting doctors of the 19th century, whose prescriptions only make the patient weaker. The aid fa-

tigue shaped the circumstances for a paradigm shift (Pender 2001: 397). It led to a debate on aid effectiveness with a focus on the moral obligation to reduce poverty (World Bank 1998).

The World Bank director James Wolfensohn responded to this with the Comprehensive Development Framework (1999). Following the importance of poverty reduction and ownership of development policies, the concept of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers entered the stage. Since these development strategies are written by the recipient government they are assumed to be nationally owned. Poverty reduction is the umbrella under which the development strategy is supposed to function.

The factual changes in the aid landscape were that the volumes of aid donations as well as the number of actors involved increased. Aid had become more complex and the need for an aid architect was expressed (Meyer and Schulz *op cit*: 1). Especially the recipient countries challenged the fact that aid issues were mainly discussed by the donor community. This led to the constitution of the High Level Committee for Aid Effectiveness by the OECD, which includes members from both donor and recipient countries. Their meeting in Paris in 2005 led to the formulation of the Paris Declaration (PD) by which ‘aid’ allegedly entered a new era.

The focus of this essay is the principle of *ownership* that the PD introduced, meaning that the design and the implementation of aid and the development strategy should be in the hands of the recipient:

Partner countries exercise effective leadership over their development policies and strategies and co-ordinate development actions (OECD 2005: 3).

3 OLD HABITS DIE HARD

Did the Paris Declaration indeed formalise the paradigm shift in development aid? The focus on poverty reduction is of course a striking feature. The principles of ownership and participation also signify a change away from the universalistic approaches of SAPs. The implication of nationally owned development strategies would probably mean a lesser focus on macroeconomic stability, and more focus on context specific solutions.

However, in recent years many of these principles have been criticised for their – covert – neoliberal foundations. The PRSP programme has been identified as “old wine in new bottles”, referring to its remarkable

similarity to SAPs. Here I will focus on the criticisms of the principle of ownership in combination with the PRS process.

One would expect the PRSPs to differ per country if they are indeed locally owned. Furthermore, one would expect that space has opened up to alternative (non-neoliberal) policies. Research has shown differently. In the 2005 World Development Movement (WDM) report 'One Size for All', it is argued that the *process* of drawing a PRSP undermines the principle of ownership. IFIs link conditionalities for funding to the PRSP, which becomes a mechanism for influencing policies. The PRSP requires the "seal of approval" of both the World Bank and the IMF. This mechanism makes it almost impossible to include alternative policies in the PRSP. Stewart and Wang also point out that the Comprehensive Development Framework in fact expands the range of conditionalities, which renders the term "ownership" a psychological perception (2003 : 3) because it will not actually lead to empowerment of the country. McKinley (2008) argues too that PRSPs do not offer space for alternative policies.

Reduction Strategies?

And indeed the WDM report finds that the content of the PRSPs of different countries are not only very similar to each other, they are also very similar to the Washington Consensus prescribed policy set. Sumner (2006) has examined the contents of 50 PRSPs, and again sees strong patterns among them – including neoliberal macroeconomic policies like strict fiscal policy and privatisation. The cases where the neoliberal policies were missing turned out to be already "sufficiently structurally adjusted". Therefore the policy did not have to be included anymore, although Sumner points out that this conclusion deserves more research in the future. The research by Stewart and Wang finds the same conclusions. They point out that the link between the policies and poverty reduction is actually quite weak (see also Cling et al 2002). This makes one wonder: should these papers actually just be called *reduction strategies*, for still merely "downsizing the state"?

4 THE THEORETICAL ROOTS OF AID

Before one can comment on a possible paradigm shift, it is important to consider whether the PRSP contents of countries reflect *only* Washington

Consensus policies, or if there are *also* policies that might fit a more alternative consensus. It is therefore important to understand the theoretical underpinnings of the Washington Consensus, as well as the proposed alternative to this in the form of a Southern Consensus (Gore op. cit.).

The Washington Consensus

As Mohan et al. (2000: 26) write, the macroeconomic policy preference from the World Bank and the IMF is rooted in neoclassical economic theory. This theory became popular at the end of the 1970s as a result of the debt crisis and the high interest rates (*ibid.*). In search of a way to achieve policy change in the developing (borrowing) world, the SAP became the means to achieve more healthy balance of payment conditions and presumably also economic growth in the South. Technically, neoclassical theory considers price uncompetitiveness and excess demand as the cause for balance of payment deficits (*ibid.*). To solve this; devaluation and demand contraction are the appropriate vehicles.

Furthermore, neoclassical trade theory is based on the assumption of perfect competition and optimum allocation of resources when trade is free and specialised according to comparative advantages, which requires outward oriented trade policies without any tariffs or other barriers.

The neoclassical model therefore translates in a number of neoliberal policy options which we see reflected in the SAPs: cutting public expenditures, less regulations for the private sector (liberalisation), openness and free trade, and privatisation of state-owned enterprises. This has been often summarised as the “downsizing of the state” or making development countries more market-oriented. This policy-set is also known as the Washington Consensus, since Williamson (1990) pointed out that – despite the fact that these policies cannot be found in the United States themselves – it is both the US Congress as the staff of the IFIs that favour structural adjustment for developing countries.

The ideological character of the Washington Consensus leaves no room for country specific policies, like Akyüz and Gore (2001) for example have argued this in their analysis of growth in Sub-Saharan Africa. Without taking into account the contextual problems like shortcomings of the domestic market, infrastructure and institutions; the liberalisation and privatisation policies led to instability rather than to proper market incentives (*ibid.*). This then led to the failure to accumulate capital and create a competitive economy (*ibid.*).

Stiglitz (1998) challenges the theoretical assumptions of neoliberalism and proposes a Post-Washington consensus. This new consensus still favours the market system but calls for more appropriate management of it by the benevolent state. It questions the assumption of perfect markets, hence suggests that coordination is required to solve market failures. The Post-Washington consensus supports the shift in focus from economic growth to poverty reduction wholeheartedly. However, there is some scepticism about the Post-Washington claiming to epitomise a paradigm shift:

The post-Washington Consensus is, [however] primarily a critique of the Washington Consensus as practised by the IFIs rather than a new paradigm ... many have argued that the difference between the post-Washington Consensus and the Consensus itself [sic] is relatively little ... Stiglitz only repudiates fiscal discipline, and liberalisation of the capital account and rate of interest. (Sumner 2006: 1404)

[T]he proposed post-Washington Consensus [sic] can also be interpreted as simply a change to preserve the old order by making it more effective as well as more humane. (Gore op.cit.: 800)

A Southern Consensus

The same Gore (op cit: 796 and further) introduces us to an alternative vision of development, the so-called Latent South Consensus. The name can be explained by tracing its roots to both East Asian developmentalism and Latin-American neo-structuralism. As Gore explains, the difference in the achievements of the East Asian policies and the Washington Consensus policies will eventually lead to a paradigm shift. The Washington Consensus is unsustainable because its ideology and methodology contradict each other (ibid.: 800).

The Southern consensus opts for a less universalistic, country-specific and long term development strategy (ibid.: 796). Economic growth is the central objective, and achievement is expected from a strong *productive* focus. This idea is based on the historical analysis of late industrialising countries. Especially for agriculture based economies this means a shift towards manufacturing by improving the production capabilities and competitiveness. In order to achieve this, capital accumulation is prioritised by increasing domestic savings, investments and exports.

Policies in the Latent South Consensus aim to support the private sector to develop. This includes formulating a technology policy, human

resource development policy and a focus on building infrastructure with an eye on possible competitive advantages in the future. As in the East Asian development model, this requires strong public-private partnerships in order for national development to benefit from these arrangements, as well as policies that enhance state capabilities.

Rather than market-oriented, the Latent South Consensus can be seen as market-friendly. Instead of large scale liberalisations, a strategic integration into world markets is favoured. This means a strong focus on regional integration. Liberalisation of imports as well as that of the capital account can be expected to proceed more gradually. There can be a strong focus on attracting foreign investments. Economic nationalism, according to Gore, can be compatible to market capitalism:

This is not ideologically committed to self-sufficiency or public ownership, nor hostile to foreign ownership in and of itself. It does not seek the appearance of catching up, through either imitating consumption standards, or setting up showcase industries. It respects multilateral rules and arrangements, engaging in their design, negotiation and interpretation. But its aim is to build international competitiveness as part of a long-term national economic project founded on the development of national capabilities. (2000: 789)

5 OWNERSHIP IN THE EDPRSP OF RWANDA

[The PRSP] is a lengthy document – over 85,000 words – offering a richness of information and analysis that is rare in PRSP documents (...) Even Rwanda's Summary 34-page (13,000 words) version is longer than Uganda's full PRSP (Golooba Mutebi et al 2003: 257)

Although this remark is about Rwanda's first PRSP, its second EDPRSP of 166 pages which is analysed here is no less extensive. Since the policies are more detailed it will be interesting to see if there are also alternative policies mentioned. However, due to conciseness issues, it is impossible to include every detail here. I will therefore consider the main policies required to answer the question whether the EDPRSP reflects only the Washington Consensus or if it also includes an alternative Southern consensus.

Rwanda is a small, land-locked country in the centre of Africa. Its recent history is known for the massive genocide that occurred in 1994. Although Rwanda's economy was struggling before that, the genocide gave it a disastrous blow. After 1994, the transition government focused

on reconstruction and reconciliation and it has been internationally commended for its results. Rwanda reached the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative completion point under its first PRSP in 2005 and is now in the Multilateral Debt Relief initiative. The second EDPRSP is less rooted in a post-conflict context and therefore more suitable for analysis.

Washington, Rwanda

Given the critical literature on the oxymoron between conditionalities and country ownership of the document discussed above, it would be realistic to assume that at least some of the neoliberal policy recommendations can be found. Such a hypothesis is confirmed by the following remark on the process of writing the first PRSP:

There followed considerable debate over several months, particularly with the IMF, mainly concerning the macroeconomic framework and the deployment of three expenditures scenarios. The World Bank also had concerns about some of the sectoral substance, about the need for more prominent attention for governance as a set of cross-cutting issues, and more minor matters of presentation. In March 2002, the Bank insisted that the PRSP be revised before it could be submitted for endorsement (Golooba Mutebi et al 2003: 257).

Furthermore, compliance to IFI standards can be expected in the Latent South Consensus as well, as is explained above. And indeed, some of the neoliberal policies and theories from the past are reflected in Rwanda's EDPRSP. In the introduction already one can read Rwanda's compliance to some of the foundation values of the IFIs, such as transparency, efficient administration, respecting intellectual property rights, respecting the rule of law and others (Government of Rwanda [GoR] 2007: 1-4).

In the evaluation of its former PRSP (2002-2005) the neoliberal accomplishments are explicitly stated, such as the privatisation efforts by the Privatisation Secretariat for example (ibid.: 35). Furthermore, it makes the claim that both privatisation and liberalisation efforts for the period 2002-2005 led to greater private investments (ibid.: 18). As Sumner (op. cit.) points out, this might explain why these policies are not mentioned often in the remain of the document (the policies for 2008-2012).

Trade liberalisation is referred to once, as leading to expanding exports (GoR op. cit.: 63) rather than imports (this may relate to liberalisation in the Southern Consensus, see Gore op. cit.: 797). Inflation is referred to as a problem for the future, but instead of defining a percentage goal of inflation, the report mentions that ‘double digit inflation will return to single digits in the coming years’ (ibid.: 129) by improving monetary policy but also by removing the bottlenecks for economic growth, which can be seen as a more alternative explanation. Further comments on monetary and fiscal policy are seemingly limited. The report does mention that the local fiscal capacities remain weak due to a lack of skills, so human resource development must take place before decentralisation in that aspect can continue (ibid.: 36) – an explanation that again can be rooted in the Southern consensus.

Decentralisation is a dominant theme throughout the document, which could be related to Rwanda’s limited accomplishments in decentralisation in the past. Overall, the importance of macroeconomic stability is much emphasised.

The Southern Experience

What is interesting to mention here is that the main aim of the Rwandan government is a social transformation into a knowledge-based, technology-driven middle-income country by 2020 (GoR 2000, GoR 2007). As Sumner points out, this is the ‘point of arrival’ for the Latent South Consensus as well (op. cit.: 1405; see also Gore 2000: 796). It implies a long term development strategy, which is also a Southern approach to development.

Especially one of the three flagship programmes of the EDPRSP – Sustainable Growth for Jobs and Exports – reflects some of Gore’s notions on development policy. First it is important to point out that the paradigm shift Gore refers to will mean a more analytical approach to development. In Rwanda’s EDPRSP this can be found in their growth diagnostic (GoR 2007: 49), which ranks the bottlenecks for growth. Interestingly, macroeconomic risks are given low priority whereas low human capital and skills and weak infrastructure are given a high priority. These are thus priorities in the flagship programme:

[T]he right policies for growth should revolve around fostering human capital, business skills development and upgrading the infrastructure. (ibid.: 49).

The growth diagnostic and investment climate analysis propose five sets of policy interventions for the Growth flagship:

- (i) develop skills and capacity for productive employment
- (ii) improve the infrastructure especially energy, transport and communications
- (iii) promote science, technology and innovation, and
- (iv) strengthen the Financial Sector.
- (v) The final set of interventions, that is, improve governance to address the challenges associated with micro risks, pertains to the Governance Flagship. (ibid.: 50)

Instead of “downsizing the state”, public spending thus plays an important role in these programmes. Public investment programmes are believed to spur private investments in the long run. They now focus on support for small businesses, for instance through Business Development Services and helping the private sector to innovate. There is a strong focus on reducing operational costs for business. Policies for improving technology and innovation come from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Scientific Research. When it comes to human resource development, attention is paid to improve secondary education and especially increase the number of graduates in science and technology, with the incentive of state funding for students. Productive employment relates to the long-term development goal of employing less people in the agricultural sector (GoR 2000).

This can again be found in the second flagship in the EDPRSP, Vision 2020 Umurenge, which is concerned with eradicating extreme poverty by 2020. As Stewart and Wang (2003) point out, Rwanda is one of the few countries that actually build a strong causal link between growth and poverty reduction. After diagnosis of the causes of poverty, Rwanda has built a program for poverty eradication based on empowerment through productive capacity, rather than redistribution or social protection. This is coherent with the Latent South Consensus (Gore op. cit.: 789).

The prioritisation of productive capacity can also be seen in the following remark on the current account deficit, representing a more Southern than neoliberal approach:

The export base has traditionally been relatively narrow. Public investment will increase the imports of machinery and equipment by 15% per year on average and worsen the current account slightly. Over time, however the

improved productive capacity will reduce the imports of construction material and boost export growth to 15% per year on average. This will ease the pressure on the current account. (GoR 2007: 129)

Finally, Gore's notion on strategic integration into regional markets can also be found in the EDPRSP. Progress on regional integration is mentioned (for example, Rwanda has joined the East African Community) and it aims to turn its weakness, being landlocked, into a strength - a regional hub.

Besides the PRSPs, which are medium-term oriented, the GoR has also published a long term development strategy, *Rwanda Vision 2020* in 2000. The content of this document is even closer related to the Latent South Consensus – be it already for the fact that its orientation is long-term. The final sentence of this document gives us a last confirmation of some similarities between the Southern Consensus and Rwanda's development strategy:

[I]here is a need to devise and implement policies as well as mobilize resources to bring about the necessary transformation to achieve the Vision. This is realistic based on the fact that countries with similar unfavourable conditions have succeeded. The development experience of the East Asian "Tigers" proves that this dream could be a reality. (GoR 2000: 25)

6 CONCLUSION

In the 1990s, critiques on the achievements of neoliberal development policies led to a debate on aid effectiveness and poverty reduction. This has introduced us to the Poverty Reduction Strategy of the IFIs and the five principles of aid effectiveness of the Paris Declaration. Though announced as a "paradigm shift", these mechanisms have been criticised for being mere morphed versions of the neoliberal policies of the past. The principle of ownership more specifically has been challenged because it is undermined by the conditionalities and IFIs interference in the process of drawing the PRSP. Therefore the PRSP offers no room for alternative policies and resemble the neoliberal policy package favoured by the Washington Consensus.

This essay contributes to this debate by examining the content of the EDPRSP 2008-2012 of Rwanda. It finds that indeed some neoliberal oriented policies are found in the document, and the IFIs did interfere in

the design of the EDPRSP. But it also highlights policies that fit the alternative Latent South Consensus as proposed by Gore in 2000.

Concluding on the basis of one case study is almost an impossible task when one considers there are so many other countries enrolled in the PRS programme. For example, as Goleeba Mutebi et al write, Rwanda's approach may be related to its specific culture and history:

Vision 2020 represents a long-term strategic perspective on Rwanda's development prospects and intentions. Despite criticisms of this form of planning, it has supporters in Rwanda. It reflects a tradition of planning in the country (2003: 258)

It is not clear whether this approach will apply to other countries as well. Furthermore, it is not at all certain that this approach to development will be as successful as it has been in the East Asian countries. Ansoms (2009) for example points out that the elite vision of re-engineering society might clash with traditions of subsistence farming, which can lead to increased inequality rather than poverty reduction.

However, the question of this essay was whether the PRSP of Rwanda included "alternative" (e.g. non-neoliberal) development policies, which would indicate some scope of ownership. Based on the analysis this question can be positively answered.

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8

Neoliberal Restructuring in the Aftermath of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis: Benevolent Makeover or Insidious Takeover? The Case of South Korea

MEKALIA PAULOS AKLILU

“Theory is always for someone and for some purpose.”
Robert Cox

INTRODUCTION

Few individuals anticipated that the much lauded East Asian Miracle would disintegrate in the abrupt fashion that it did. Much like a whirlwind, it was cataclysmic, ruthless and unyielding in its impact, mushrooming with speed and vigor, sweeping economies in its path. Its reverberations echoed throughout the globe as the world hung precariously on the precipice of financial armageddon. One such economy was South Korea, a fateful tiger caught in a tempestuous storm of its own making, arguably.

This essay aims to address South Korea’s experience with neo-liberalism, more specifically the underlying motives behind the International Monetary Fund (IMF)-facilitated neoliberal restructuring that took place in the wake of its 1997 financial crisis. I will initially start with defining the concept of neo-liberalism in an attempt to lay the backdrop against which the implemented policies may be scrutinized. This will be followed by a brief historical overview of the events which led to South Korea’s day of reckoning. Subsequently, I will undertake an analysis of

the restructuring that took effect and its consequences. Ultimately, I will put forth my own personal reflections by way of concluding the debate.

Whilst acknowledging that indeed neo-liberalism is in essence conceptualized as a dialectical interaction between ideology and underlying material interests, an unresolved contention remains amid various authors and academia as to which of these two elements transcends the other: ideational or material? This paper constrains itself by analyzing issues through the prism of a more critical materialist perspective; the alternative view will also be presented so as to achieve a more nuanced understanding. This scope may appear limited given the complex nature of the issue at hand. However, exhaustively presenting an analysis of both perspectives would, I believe, be neither possible nor prudent, and moreover, would not be in the interest of clarity given known constraints. Furthermore, notwithstanding the role of homegrown neo-liberalism, I feel it important to accentuate the ramifications of the IMF-imposed course of action during the time in question.

NEO-LIBERALISM DEFINED: A MATERIALIST PERSPECTIVE

Anchored in the ideals of eighteenth and nineteenth century liberalism, neo-liberalism came to govern the international sphere in the 1980s and beyond. Its ascent was instigated by a crisis in capitalism, as the “embedded liberalism” that reigned during the post-World War 2 period appeared untenable and stagflation became a striking characteristic of much of the 1970s as oil prices reached astronomical heights. It therefore became evident that the Keynesian economic thought and policies marked by state-interventionism, which had dexterously constructed an agreeable compromise between capital and labor, had to be revamped (Gamble 2006, Harvey 2005, Robison 2006). The monetarist critique of Keynesianism that had been stealthily amplifying began to take hold as intense debates followed in the corridors of political power as well as academic circles.

In the event that a particular notion seeks preeminence, it requires a conceptual apparatus that embodies ideals held in high esteem by those it desires to sway. Hence, neo-liberalism opted for human dignity and individual freedom, both potently magnetic in their allure (Harvey 2005: 5). The concept of freedom was denigrated to a sheer promotion of free enterprise and as Karl Polanyi astutely observed, “planning and control [were] being attacked as a denial of freedom. Free enterprise and private

ownership [were] declared to be essentials of freedom” (Harvey 2005: 37). Accordingly, the primacy of the market over the state was advocated. Prosperity and welfare maximization for all would only be achieved, the new belief held, if the market was situated at the apex of an institutional configuration which featured private property rights, free markets and free trade.

Further ascendancy of neo-liberalism was attained, pushed forth not only by the conservative political forces of Thatcherism and Reaganomics, but by international agencies such as the IMF, World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO). They translated neo-liberalism into policies encompassing deregulation, liberalization and privatization; necessitating monetary stability and fiscal austerity in the pursuit of fostering economic growth, themselves becoming the new conduits through which this new model was sold (Chossudovsky 2003, Gamble 2006, Harvey 2005). Thus, the dawn of an era which entailed a limited welfare state, decentralized labor relations and a weakening of unions, and a curtailment of social policies institutionalized in what came to be known as the Washington Consensus, a universalistic template for world economies (Robison and Kewison 2005).

However, as Robert Cox aptly states, “theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose” – there is always a conglomeration of interests that act as an impetus for an idea/doctrine. There are complex social, political and strategic dynamics at play in the global system. (International bodies are ever at the mercy of conflicting and contradictory pools of interests as they shape, oversee and regulate policies.) Undoubtedly, this was a battle for supremacy amongst a myriad of interest groups with varying agendas and ultimately, that which triumphed set the tone that would come to be established as the new orthodoxy. Markets are politically constructed, with government and societal power blocks guarding their interests. Guised under a neoliberal regime of freedoms, capitalism became corporate capitalism, whose power proliferated, motivated by vested financial interests as the finance and banking sector sought to gain (and maintained) the upper hand in the global arena. There was a need to liberate corporate and business power in order to continue the process of capital accumulation; however, without legitimacy and justification, this aspiration would not be fulfilled.

Harvey defines neo-liberalism as a relentless pursuit in “the restoration/reconstitution of ruling class power” (Harvey 2005: 152). As op-

posed to generating, it tends to *redistribute* wealth and income through what he refers to as *accumulation by dispossession*, a modern day manifestation of “primitive accumulation”, which Marx believed to precede the establishment of capitalism. Thus, it is first and foremost, a *project* and a *conscious process*, an articulation of interests, rooted in a capitalist *politics of production* which seeks the incessant accretion of wealth (Harvey, 2005). Particular interests seek to rule others, however require legitimacy via ideas of certain interest groups that emanate from their positions in the existing division of labor. To this end, noble ideas such as freedom, liberty, self-regulating market, and prosperity are used to co-opt the masses into accepting it as a hegemonic discourse, as though there is no other alternative.

PRE-1997 SOUTH KOREA: AN *UN*-NEOLIBERAL ASCENDANCY

From the ashes of World War II and the Korean War soon afterwards, a roaring tiger rose from the humble beginnings of one of the poorest places, making its mark on the global arena, transforming itself into one of the most advanced industrial economies in a span of no less than 40 years. With an exceptional long-term development record, this was nothing less than a true miracle, a marvel of its counterparts. Its phenomenal leap from tungsten, fish and other primary commodity exports to becoming the abode of Samsung, LG and Daewoo was attained through a skilful fusion of market incentives and state direction, the latter more prominent in its institutional configuration (Chang 2007: 3-14). Fashioned in the image of the Japanese model, it was a rather *un-neoliberal* ascendancy, a testament to the intrinsic worth of a developmental state (Bello 1998, Harvey 2005). As such, it posed a direct challenge to the neoliberal approach.

Perhaps there was no one-size-fits-all model of economic growth after-all. Predictably, this indeed ruffled feathers as it was eroding the superiority of the pro-market advocates. The very foundations of neoliberalism were being probed (Robison and Kewison 2005: 188). Furthermore, over a decade of structural adjustment packages that were unswervingly being conferred on developing countries elsewhere were not yielding the much sought after results, thus a replication of the East Asian model seemed to loom ever the larger on the horizon. Moreover, initially assisted by the United States during its economic expansion for strategic reasons relating to the Cold War, the spectacular progress of

South Korean corporate power was a threat to Western powers. The escalating portion of trade and production in the East Asian region in totality impinged on US, European and Japanese corporate interests which naturally were not disposed to the idea of willingly relinquishing their prized crowns, thus being on full alert to thwart the advances of the tiger encroaching on their lucrative global territory was the rule of the game.

Driven by the momentum of monetarism, the impetus for liberalization of international capital movements was endorsed and vigorously pursued not only by the IMF, but by the WTO as well as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)-Development Assistance Committee world-wide in the post-1980 period. This was despite mounting evidence as to the risks posed for developing countries (Sitglitz 2003: 100). Accordingly, South Korea was steadfastly pressured (primarily by the US Treasury) to deregulate its capital controls and to its detriment, partly due to hubris, South Korea felt that it could come to grips with the ramifications of such an action, given elite status which was tacitly symbolized by its acceptance to the OECD club of rich nations in 1996 (Chang 2007: 208).

It would be remiss to not acknowledge that global and national politics in concert sculpt responses to neo-liberalism while a certain level of endogenously inspired neo-liberalization had been creeping into the economic fabric of South Korea. The chaebols had amassed massive influence and economic power during the 1980s and thus sought a loosening of regulatory controls, calling for flexibility of labor markets, lower taxation and liberalization of trade and capital flows (Harvey 2005: 107-111). It was at this juncture that the crisis struck, propitiously affording the ideal opportunity to re-legitimize the merits of the neo-liberal modus operandi and remake South Korea in the West's image, re-establishing the primacy of neo-liberal creed. Confronted with massive capital flight, the beleaguered economy had little choice but to knock on the IMF's door for a loan (conveying a colossal amount of power into the hands of the IMF). Subsequently, a bailout agreement was expeditiously devised.

TAMING THE TIGER: THE INEVITABLE BITTER ANTIDOTE

Regardless of the belief in globalization as a tempering factor in attenuating dissimilarities, in light of the multifaceted and intricate web of nations which constitute the world, the very notion of crafting a "one-size-fits-all" trajectory to economic prosperity borders on utter credulity at

best and sheer insanity at worst. *However, to the extent that it attains a certain implicit objective, the aforementioned concept is pivotal in benevolently shrouding this underlying motive.*

The history of developed nations irrevocably attests to the fact that they did not achieve such heights in the manner they faithfully prescribe to their ill-fated counterparts, a strategy of “kicking away the ladder” as Chang so poignantly epitomizes (Chang 2002). The rich Western nations seem to have fashioned “a multilateral order which best suits their current developmental trajectory – one that diminishes space for promoting industries critical to [other nations’] climb up the development ladder” (Weiss 2005: 723). Particularly telling is the fact that South Korea had no necessity for further capital owing to its phenomenal savings rate, thus this begs the question why it was pressured by external forces to follow such a course of action. The accumulation of immense sums of wealth in the realm of global financiers, a substantial percentage of which resulted from speculative transactions, would be one indubitable drive.

That there is an enduring liaison between individuals in the US Treasury, US Federal Reserve, IMF, World Bank and chief Wall Street financiers is a well-known but not overtly acknowledged phenomenon as influential forces continue to hold the IMF and World Bank captive to their agendas (Chossudovsky 2003). With a “one dollar, one vote” rule, the US has a major say in world financial policies. It is thus prudent to view the response to the crisis in the larger framework of the crucial position ideas and ideology (premised on underlying interests) hold in formulating economic policies. As Beeson and Islam argue, “the contest of ideas in economic policy-making can evolve independently of their intellectual merit and empirical credibility” (Beeson and Islam 2005). The excessive sway the United States held over the IMF and World Bank policy making apparatus was reflected in the notion that the South Korean economy was essentially flawed and thus warranted fundamental reform. There was a severe dearth in a rational, impartial and dispassionate study in the origins of the crisis. Those that raised objections to the verdict were expediently discounted (but this begs the question if such institutions can ever truly be politically neutral as it can be argued legitimizing certain entrenched interests was the very reason for their inception in the global sphere). By Stiglitz’s own admission, viewing the IMF recommended reform process through the prism of accomplishing, first and foremost, the interests of the financial community would make sense of

reforms that appeared to be counterintuitive to the pressing needs of the South Korean economy (Stiglitz 2003: 206-213).

For all the praise that the IMF, World Bank as well as western nations lavished upon the country prior to the crisis, the quick about-face was nothing less than astonishing. Almost overnight, conventional wisdom necessitated the emendation of a structural flaw assailing the economic and political system (Crotty and Lee 2006: 381). Hence, a thorough market-oriented overhaul was in order or so the IMF believed.

It was no secret that South Korea had strong macro-economic fundamentals: high domestic savings and investments rates, high rates of output growth, strong export performance, low inflation (Hardy 1998). However, private debt had amplified astronomically fueled by rapid financial and capital market liberalization. South Korea was a casualty of the unfettered short-term capital flows as continual speculative raids on the won had brought the economy to its knees as international capital exited at an alarming rate (Raghavan 1997). However, the IMF verdict held that speculation and hedge funds played no role in the crisis (indeed, “speculation was a healthy activity”) and good governance, democracy and free markets were inseparable. The tiger had become wayward. Crony capitalism and heavily regulated, inefficient political and financial systems thus became red herrings for the further involvement of international financial institutions in the affairs of the nation.

Loans did not come unattached to conditionalities. In selling the neo-liberal counter-revolution, Margaret Thatcher famously remarked “there is no other alternative”. In a similar vein, the IMF predictably urged the South Koreans to swallow the bitter antidote which it prescribed, though it be painful in the short run, it would indubitably lead to a recovery. A beleaguered government whose coffers were ransacked by merciless speculators and in desperate need for replenishment, weakened in bargaining power and reluctantly accepted . The conditionalities entailed drastic measures discussed here in turn.

Capital Flows: Further opening up of the capital account was agreed upon in order to stem the outflow (this is ironic, in light of the fact that it was the root cause of the problem). This only furthered the speculative attack on the won which further devalued the currency (Chossudovsky 2003, Crotty and Lee 2006).

Austerity Measures: A thriving economy (the South Korean government did not have a deficit problem) prior to a speculative attack was

instructed to deflate its economy: restrictive fiscal and monetary policies were called for. It was compelled to raise interest rates, drastically cut back spending on welfare programs and run a surplus (something Sweden was not forced to agree to during its rescue earlier in the decade). Coupled with further labor market flexibility, this plunged the economy into a recession as purchasing power plummeted, wages depressed and unemployment sky-rocketed (Chossudovsky 2003, Sitglitz 2003). Furthermore, the IMF would later be bestowed with the title “chief debt collector for foreign banks” by virtue of the fact that a substantial portion of the loan to South Korea was directly transferred to international banks, despite the stark warning to the government to refrain from aiding local banks and companies in dire straits. However, if the market was as efficient as they alleged it to be, “why not let them work their magic in full?” (Khor 1998). The austerity measures appeared to be a guise in ensuring international creditors were paid as it implicitly amounted to favoring international subsidies over local ones. How such an action would achieve a speedy recovery is anyone’s guess.

Banking System Takeover: As banks were faced with bankruptcy, the ceiling on foreign ownership was raised. Central Bank independence was also agreed upon, eroding national autonomy in furthering economic development as state-supported credit was shed. Supply of domestic credit was also curtailed as the “let the bankrupt go bankrupt” notion took hold (Chossudovsky 2003, Crotty and Lee 2006).

Chaebols Taken Apart: As the IMF measures further devalued the won, the chaebols predictably crumbled faced with massive debts. Thus, “friendly” mergers and acquisitions and “strategic alliances with foreign firms” by foreign capital were encouraged, giving way to more “capable managerial expertise” (foreigners) to assist in the makeover. Consequently, Western corporations shared the spoils at rock-bottom prices, the biggest peace time transfer of assets from domestic to foreign owners. US corporations were known to be lobbying for the closure of rival South Korean corporations and enterprises and required assurance that they would not benefit directly from IMF funding (Chossudovsky 2003, Harvey 2005, Raghavan 1998).

Trade Liberalization: South Korea was compelled to open up its market further to Japanese goods, a goal Japan had been unsuccessfully pursuing prior to the crisis, but now that the former’s bargaining power was at a low ebb, this exercise of power was opportune (Sitglitz 2003).

CONCLUSION - TIGER DOWN: A MISSION ACCOMPLISHED?

Reform is inherently political and the universalistic one-size-fits-all recipe for policy reform does not enable countries to craft their own distinctive country-specific path to sustainable and equitable development (Beeson and Islam 2005), but perhaps that is the end goal after all? Neo-liberalism as an aggressive manifestation of capitalism crushes the sovereignty of nation-states, diminishes labor standards, amplifies poverty and exploitation and robs people of the inherent right to shape their own economic destiny. For South Korea, it did not bode well. By the World Bank's own admission, a 2005 report deduced that "the national economy is now suffering from weak investment, slow growth and slow job creation and rising unemployment", signifying that the neo-liberal model may not have been the correct model to impose on South Korea in the aftermath of its financial crisis. (Earlier on, there were those who believed it did not work due to "incomplete reforms or incorrect sequencing of reform measures") (Dollar and Kraay 1999, 2000).

In the final analysis, the tiger was down: from the heights of one of the most industrialized countries in the world to the home of one of the highest suicide rates in the world (brought about by agonizing labor market reform, it was quite a leap. Moreover, "unemployment rate was up fourfold in Korea, urban poverty almost tripled, with almost a quarter of the population falling into poverty, GDP declined by 6.7 % (Harvey 2005: 96). South Korea was able to re-gain its footing as it later on chose to ignore some of the industrial and financial restructuring (it recovered faster than other neighbors which had followed IMF policies more stringently), but the demise of the Asian miracle was achieved. Those who bucked the trend of following the free market gospel had to be brought down from their lofty, hallowed position by virtue of the fact that in an age of shrinking resources, further accumulation, by definition, necessitated the dispossession of another. A benevolent makeover was never the true aim of the exercise, much to the detriment of the Asian tiger. Insidiously shrouded in a call for wholesale reform, it was a takeover at its most severe.

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9

One Size Doesn't Fit All: Tailoring Credit Programs along the Logic of the Poor

BERNICE CAMPOS ROLDAN

INTRODUCTION: MINIMALIST OR COMPREHENSIVE?

Microfinance has proved to be a potent concept in development. The 1990s saw the upsurge of slogans such as 'helping the poor help themselves' and 'giving a hand up, not a handout'. The concept continues to benefit from immense support 'across the political spectrum, in an era of domestic welfare reform and cutbacks on foreign aid budgets' (Woolcock, 1999: 17-18). Rogaly (1996, in Mosley and Hulme, 1998: 783) observes how the concept of providing loans to microenterprises for poverty alleviation has in recent years 'generated enthusiasm bordering on hysteria'. It is a political concept that has captured the imagination of the left 'by being redistributive and a direct approach to alleviating poverty, and to the right as facilitating the emergence of an independent, self-sustaining "penny capitalism"'.

Discourse used to underscore the need for education and training to help the poor make the most out of credit. Development practitioners and credit providers thought along similar lines in that providing training in livelihood and financial literacy would unleash the poor's entrepreneurial spirit, which would then enable the poor to work towards a better quality of life. Hickson (2001: 55) explains the logic behind this approach: '[Some microfinance institutions] include technical training in their programs with the rationale that extremely poor people do not have the entrepreneurial skills or assets to use business loans productively'. Parallel to this approach, Hickson adds that other MFIs 'take the view that minimalist programs are more likely to become sustainable and can

help very poor people stabilize their income and build a buffer against future crises’.

This initial divergence of views on credit provision as a single intervention (minimalist), or as the missing ingredient that would complement existing approaches (comprehensive), is just one aspect of the evolving discourse. Many authors (Berner, Gomez and Knorringa, 2008; Vonderlack and Schreiner, 2002; Eversole, 2000; Mosley and Hulme, 1998; Anzorena et al., 1998) contribute to the debate by examining the microcredit for poverty alleviation phenomenon through various lenses: self-help, gender, targeting.

Some have pointed to the lack of understanding microcredit schemes seem to have for the poor and on the dynamics of poverty. This is reflected in how the poor are obliged to build microenterprises to gain credit access, and to abide by mechanisms like group lending and peer pressure to increase repayment rates. Kabeer and Rahman (in Vonderlack and Schreiner, 2002: 603) state how microfinance practitioners have come to realize that ‘small loans are not always appropriate for poor women’. As Rogaly (in Vonderlack and Schreiner, 2002: 603) puts it, ‘a loan becomes debt, and the poor are exposed to crisis if expected sources of funds for repayment evaporate’.

Evidence suggests that very poor households are ‘either excluded from entering microfinance programs, or drop out of these programs at an early stage’ (Kempson and Whyley, 1998; Matin, 1998; Ito, 1999, in Hickson, 2001: 57). Factors for exclusion include identification failure, and with the very poor being perceived as credit risks, conscious attempts by program officials and existing group members to keep poor households out. Eversole (2000: 48-49) cites other factors: the poorest might not qualify for a loan (lack of business experience and physical assets for collateral), credit costs (travel, regular meetings) outweigh benefits, or irregular income discourages them from taking a risk with loans. And when they do take a risk, ‘the high turnover rate among clients suggests that many find these loans do not suit their needs’.

Other authors have revisited the pervasive categorical differences among small enterprises to explain the elusiveness of graduating from one category to the next. In proposing a ‘typology of entrepreneurship’, which makes clear distinctions between survivalist and growth-oriented entrepreneurs, Berner, Gomez and Knorringa (2008) underscore the

logic of the former and recommend realistic poverty alleviation strategies to increase the security of the very poor.

This paper attempts to contribute to the discourse by making the case that understanding the logic of the poor is critical to their inclusion in microfinance programs. Various microfinance solutions tailored for the very poor, and their accompanying trade-offs, are presented through innovations found in the literature. The paper concludes by highlighting the need to put development back into microfinance, to tailor it as a poverty alleviation instrument more than a profit-making enterprise.

Microfinance programs as a tool for urban poverty alleviation are perceived as more than technical activities geared towards product-related 'hard issues' (technological, financial, physical and material, in Botes and van Rensburg, 2000: 46-47). Such interventions are considered political activities that view process-related 'soft issues' as an endogenous aspect of the developmental process. 'Soft issues' refer to community involvement, decision-making procedures, organizational development for capacity building, and related processes.

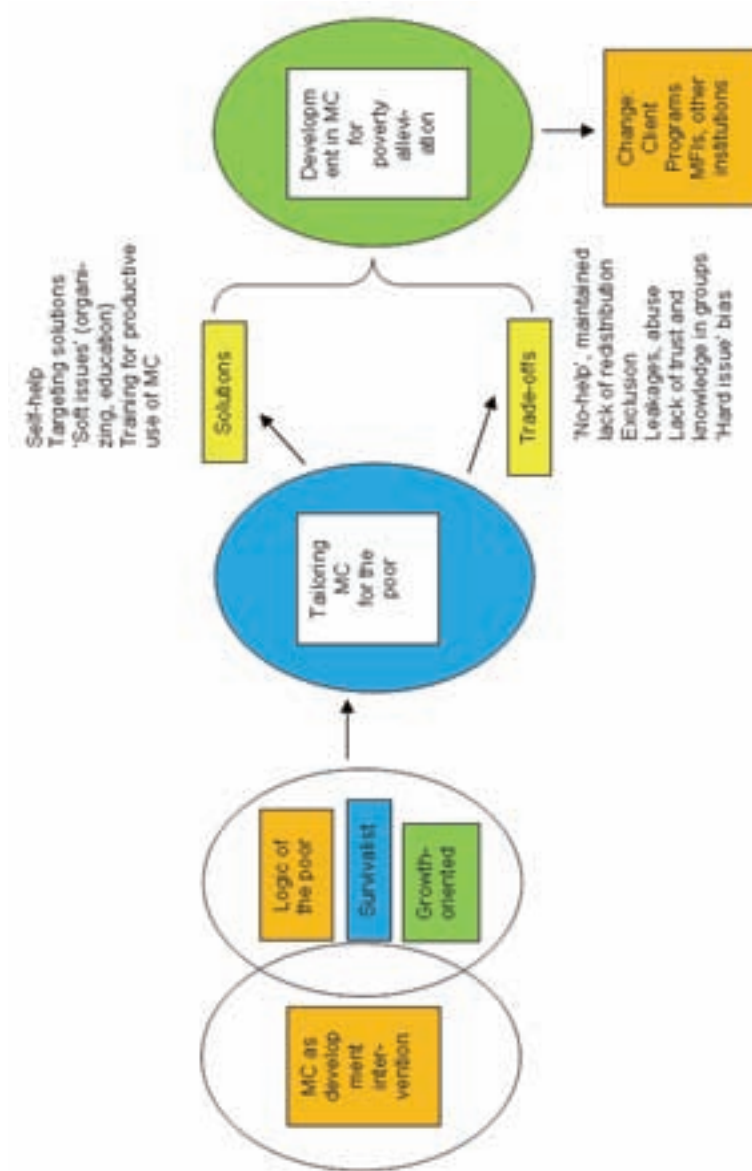
Figure 1 is an analytical framework illustrating the concepts and arguments in this paper.

THE POTENCY OF MICROFINANCE

The potency of microfinance has been much debated: as a single intervention, it can be sold to any government and regime as it is widely considered a cost-neutral way to reduce poverty. Yet this presumed cost-neutrality is criticized, particularly with regard to credit programs subsidized by government to benefit the poor. If the poorest mostly cannot benefit from microcredit, Eversole (2000) argues, then it is the less poor who do.

Mosley and Hulme (1998: 783-784) observe that by lending to the uncollateralized poor, financial institutions have attained higher rates of loan recovery than commercial banks, and that apparently, a 'reliable organizational technology for lending to the poor of developing countries now exists'. However, they argue that the assumption that this technology reduces poverty has rarely been tested, apart from studies by the Grameen Bank. To address the gap, a study assessed the impact of 13 MFIs in seven developing countries (Bangladesh, Bolivia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi and Sri Lanka). The findings indicated that the poor preferred consumption loans, economic shocks made them more vulner-

Figure 1
Analytical framework



Source: Own construction

able to asset sales, and they had a limited range of investment opportunities. While there were very poor people who had attained a major loan impact, at the level of one percent among all the MFIs studied, not counting one in Malawi, this was a striking exception rather than the rule.

THE LOGIC OF THE POOR

Opposing views of poverty are reflected in the literature. Hulme and Mosley (1996: 105) state that poverty is about satisfying consumption-related material needs that are measured with income, which bears on a broader set of needs that make well-being possible. Meanwhile, Sen (in Ellis, 2000: 77) believes that 'positive well-being may be thought of as an expression of the human capabilities of doing (choice and freedom) and being (welfare and happiness)'.

Evidence points to how 'ostensible microenterprise loans are in fact used for consumption (or at least not directly invested in business assets) and are repaid out of existing income sources. Thus, the poor have a strong demand not just for microenterprise loans but also for financial services that help them manage liquidity in the household' (Sinha and Matin, 1998; Johnson, 1998, in Vonderlack and Schreiner, 2002: 603). While this would be anathema to some MFI circles, the less than satisfactory performance of microfinance in helping the poor has prompted some authors to call for a reality check. Considering the one percent level of graduation in the study on MFIs, microenterprises and the poor discussed by Mosley and Hulme, there is a need to distinguish between survival, micro and small firms, for microfinance practitioners to be cognizant of these differences and to design program interventions tailored according to the logic and needs of each firm group.

Berner, Gomez and Knorringa revisit the categorical differences among small enterprises and propose a 'typology of entrepreneurship' to distinguish survivalist entrepreneurs from growth-oriented ones. In doing so, they reinterpret what is discussed in the literature to explain the 'elusive mirage of graduation' from the survivalist to the growth-oriented category.

Table 1
Characteristics of survival and growth-oriented enterprises

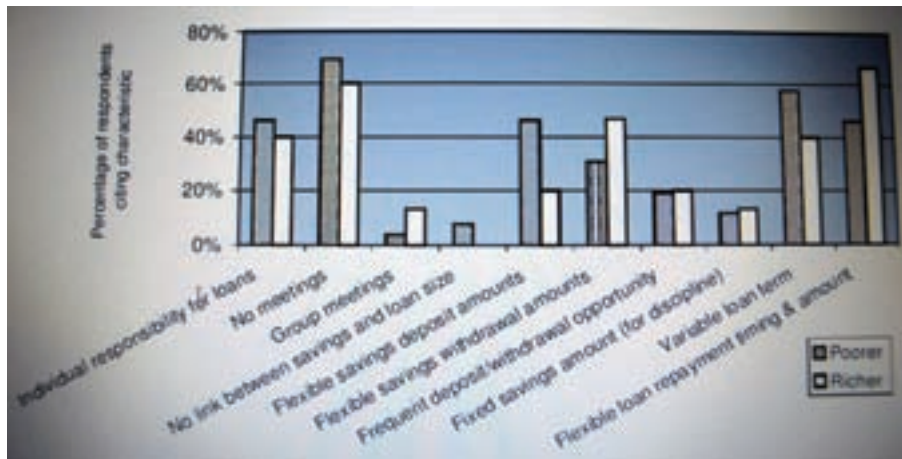
Survival(ist)	Growth(-oriented)
(Street businesses, Community of the poor, [Microenterprise,] Informal own-account proletariat, Sub-subsistence)	(Small-scale family enterprise, Intermediate sector, [Microenterprise,] Petty bourgeoisie, Micro-accumulation)
Ease of entry, low capital requirements, skills and technology	Barriers to entry
Involuntary entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurs by choice, often with background in regular employment
Female majority	Male majority
Maximizing security, smoothing consumption	Willingness to take risks
Part of diversification strategy, often run by idle labor, with interruptions, and/or part-time	Specialization
Embeddedness in social relations, obligation to share	Disembeddedness, ability to accumulate

Source: Berner, Gomez and Knorringa (Table 1, 2008: 7)

We can see how motivation is one factor that underpins the characteristics of survivalist entrepreneurs, who are described as ‘simply not interested in expanding their business. They are forced into creating a firm by unemployment or other economic shocks, while growth-oriented entrepreneurs make an affirmative choice based on the identification of a specific business opportunity’ (Reynolds et al., 2004, in Berner, Gomez and Knorringa, 2008: 8).

Other factors are risk aversion and handling the business as a survival effort. To illustrate, the authors draw on research findings in India revealing that 20 percent of households with a microenterprise also maintained a second and even third income-generating activity (ibid: 9, citing Banerjee and Duflo, 2007; Banerjee et al., 2006). This risk-averse and survivalist attitude is expressed by the poor in other countries and regions in the South, where ‘the percentages rise to 47 percent in Cote d’Ivoire and Indonesia, 36 percent in Pakistan, 24 percent in Mexico and 20.5 percent in Peru. A survey of eight districts in West Bengal found that the median family had three working members and seven occupations’.

Figure 2
Respondents' selection of preferred program characteristics



Source: Hickson (Figure 2, 2001: 57)

WHAT THE POOR PREFER

Hickson (2001: 56) reports the findings of a Bangladesh study on micro-finance programs being offered in slum areas. The survey reached out to 41 slum households in Dhaka, and aimed to find out how attitudes towards financial services varied between very poor households and less poor households.

While both clusters used the services of MFIs, the less poor made use of them more, with an average of three programs while poorer households were clients of 1.8. Most MFIs in the study provided the standard Grameen Bank model, allowing clients to take out one loan at a time, comprised of a single disbursement followed by repayments made every week over the next 12 months. If a client experienced shortage of money more than once within the same year, he or she would have to find another MFI to address the second need.

Figure 2 shows how both clusters disliked collective loan responsibility and mandatory group meetings. They preferred flexible loan and savings products on frequency of transaction opportunities, size of deposits to be made, withdrawals, loan repayments, and maturity. Hickson adds that 'neither the richer nor poorer households were interested in pro-

grams that emphasized savings over loan provision'. Trustworthiness of MFIs was a priority for both clusters, as 'existing and potential clients do not automatically consider MFIs trustworthy'.

There was fairly equal use of loan and savings withdrawals both for consumption and business investments. A significant number took out loans to repay old debts, a practice considered taboo by most MFIs. There is a clear disconnect between the microfinance characteristics preferred by the poor, particularly flexibility of financial services, and the services and products offered by MFIs. As Hickson states, 'The extent to which poor households seek this flexibility is not often appreciated by MFIs, or if it is, these demands are usually dismissed as unrealistic and impracticable'.

SELF-HELP AND 'NO-HELP'

In India, the typical form of credit provision is through self-help groups (SHGs), defined as microcredit-based groups where women access and repay loans as a collective. Supporters assert that the groups make credit accessible and create inroads towards poverty alleviation and women's empowerment. These collectives, borne out of class-based struggles and the autonomous women's movement, evolved over recent decades based on principles of solidarity and collective action. In the 1970s, pioneering NGOs used SHGs as a means of organizing poor communities in the southern states of India (Nirantar, 2007: 4-6).

Self-help, like microcredit, has its peculiarities. Promoting self-help among the poor is encouraged as it 'creates respect for poor people's capability and creativity, and modesty on the side of development "experts"' (Berner and Phillips, 2005: 19). But community self-help is nothing new. It is characterized as 'the default strategy of the poor', and the attention given to self-help by international development agencies such as the World Bank may be seen as 'masking defense against calls for redistribution'. The authors cite the case of the Bank, which 'still dismisses redistribution as usually "leading to political upheaval and violent conflict"', ignoring the findings of consulted experts who had stated that growth with some redistribution has the largest impact on poverty' (World Bank, 2000: 56 f., in Berner and Phillips, 2005: 19, emphasis in the original). Promoting self-help would be in the interest of those trying to cover up a 'no-help' attitude.

GROUP LENDING: LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND TRUST

Copestake, Bhalotra and Johnson (2001) discuss a Zambian case study to demonstrate how inflexible enforcement in group lending has resulted in some borrowers becoming worse off after taking out a loan. PULSE (Peri-Urban Lusaka Small Enterprise Project) is a group-based micro-credit program providing loans to low-income neighborhoods in Lusaka, Zambia. Qualified loan applicants were formed into groups of 25 to 35, called *gulus*, and attended weekly training sessions for two months at their own cost.

The program was launched in 1994 by the NGO CARE-Zambia supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The agreement was that after five years, PULSE would be financially self-sufficient, with a minimum of 10,000 active clients from target cities of Zambia's 'economically active poor'. In June 1998, the program generated GBP 100,000 in savings (Loan Insurance Fund, or LIF), had provided loans to 4,235 clients and had 2,640 active participants (63 percent of which were women). On-time repayment was reported at 79 percent, and overall repayment was nearly 100 percent.

The group approach was intended for guaranteeing repayment by offering group collateral: future credit, personal assets and LIF payments. Members resented being obliged to cover for the debts of others in order to access loans themselves, and appealed to PULSE to supply loans to individuals instead. Given the lack of previous knowledge and trust among members, the group approach did not sufficiently reduce costs in screening, monitoring and enforcement as planned. These costs were transferred from PULSE to the clients, which the authors interpret as a failure to screen out non-creditworthy clients. This may also be linked to inflexible group enforcement and fixed loan repayments without considering irregular income due to ill health, theft, job loss and fluctuating demand.

On a positive note, some members said they benefited from the entrepreneurial experience of others in the *gulu* through advice when they encountered challenges. Some cited instances of *gulu* members helping each other by mobilizing funds during illness or for funeral expenses. These positive experiences are reflected elsewhere. A study of seven urban poverty reduction programs (in Argentina, Brazil, India, Nicaragua, Pakistan, South Africa and Thailand) emphasizes the role of credit not

just in accumulating cash but also in collectivizing people in low-income settlements:

Once a community-based savings and loans group generates, spends and manages funds, it develops the capacity to articulate its members' priorities. It learns to negotiate for resources and support... The savings group also becomes better organized in defending the interests of its members – as in, for instance, fighting a threat of eviction... In the case studies from India and South Africa, the savings groups became the engines of the community organizations and their federations. (Anzorena et al., 1998: 174)

TARGETING WOMEN, BUT WHO TAKES THE CREDIT?

Since the 1990s, there has been a rise in targeting, following the general shift from food price subsidies to credit programs. Coverage has narrowed from universal benefits to targeted transfers. Devereaux (1999: 61) defines targeting as 'any mechanism for identifying eligible ("needy") individuals and screening out the ineligible ("non-needy") for purposes of transferring resources, typically by defining eligibility criteria'. Coverage, meanwhile, is 'the proportion of a (total or eligible) population that is actually reached by an intervention'. Targeting is intended to reduce the number of the poor and improve the situation of the poorest, and also ensure the efficiency, sustainability and inclusiveness of the intervention.

It is a mechanism riddled with problems: complex definitions of poverty entail high costs of assessment, and cut-off points are essentially subjective. Given the poor's risk-averse and survivalist attitude, they would benefit by not revealing their real income, so even detailed targeting processes can be prone to leakages (defined as transfers to the non-needy). There are also trade-offs between diligence and bureaucratic costs: Devereaux (1999: 69-70) cites the GAPVU case of individual assessment in Mozambique where administrative and monitoring costs took up 15 percent of the program budget; estimated losses to ineligible claimants and corrupt officials was at 50 percent. Finally, there are political costs: beneficiaries of well-targeted poverty alleviation programs 'are often quite weak politically and may lack the clout to sustain the programs... Benefits meant exclusively for the poor often end up being poor benefits' (Sen, 1995: 14, in Devereaux, 1999: 62). Devereaux concludes

that although no perfect targeting mechanism exists, the gains to the poor from targeting should offset the costs.

Since the 1980s, there has been a policy shift in Bangladesh targeting women in special credit programs. Studies have indicated how increased income 'improves the unique livelihood enhancement functions women perform for their households as brokers of the health, nutritional, and educational status of other household members' (Goetz and Gupta, 1996: 46-47). Mayoux (2001: 438-439) points to how the perceived link between savings and credit provision and women's empowerment rests on three assumptions: first, that women would invest in their own economic activity; second, that this would result in increased well-being for women and their families; and third, that economic empowerment would enable women to renegotiate changes in gender relations in the household, leading to social and political empowerment.

These assumptions are challenged to a large extent. In their research on gender, power and control over loan use in rural credit programs in Bangladesh, Goetz and Gupta (1996: 49) found that a significant proportion of women's loans were being controlled by male relatives. Out of qualitative studies of 253 loans to women by four MFIs, the degree of women's control was broken down as follows: partial control at 24.1 percent, no control at 21.7 percent, significant control at 19.4 percent, full control at 17.8 percent, and very limited control at 17 percent. The findings come with the implication that the pervasive optimism for selecting women as the main credit beneficiaries should be reconsidered, given the risks women take in navigating horizontal and vertical relations within the household and the community.

ZEROING IN: MICROFINANCE INNOVATIONS FOR THE VERY POOR

The issue of reaching the very poor is related to targeting and program design, which are not only 'hard issue' tools in poverty alleviation, but also political activities that affect the poorest. In this sense, the very poor are discriminated against because they are perceived as credit risks. Having distinct needs, they function according to a distinct logic: they avoid putting all their eggs in one basket (or spread the risk by diversifying sources of income), and make use of survivalist strategies to keep themselves from slipping deeper into poverty. One way for microfinance programs to zero in on very poor households is for MFIs to 'modify their products so that they are unattractive to non-target households, e.g.,

through imposition of very small first loans that increase only gradually and setting higher interest rates for larger loans' (Hickson, 2001: 64).

Below is the summary of a study of four programs that attempted to target very poor households. Nisho Prakalpa is a 'destitute program experiment' of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, IGVGDP is BRAC's Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development Program, Safe-Save is a self-funding experimental project in Bangladesh, and lastly, Qinghai Community Development Project is managed by the Agricultural Bank of China.

From the findings, Hickson (2001: 59) observes an 'interesting dichotomy of approaches'. The first approach 'seeks to modify the client and his or her environment to be better prepared to utilize the services available to mainstream society'. The approach combines non-financial services (capacity-building in health, literacy, social action, environmental protection) with financial services. The second approach modifies services to align these with the capacities and interests of the very poor, who are considered as 'non-traditional clients'. As a more 'demand-led' approach, it focuses on clients' perceived financial needs (such as savings and consumption loans) aside from their investment objectives.

Hickson (2001: 64-65) revisits the mainstream microfinance components debunked by these four innovations: group lending is essential to be able to lend to the poor successfully; savings discipline must be imposed on the poor through regular compulsory savings; it is administratively impractical and too expensive to provide daily access to microfinance services and flexibility in loan size, starting date and repayment schedule; and non-financial services are needed by the very poor to be able to manage credit.

The lessons from these innovations bring us back to where this paper began: the two positions in the microfinance for poverty alleviation debate. IGVGDP is an example of the comprehensive approach: it assumes that very poor households lack the capacity to effectively use credit to start or manage a microenterprise, and gives premium to 'soft issues' with the belief that non-financial services are essential components of poverty alleviation. SafeSave is an example of the minimalist approach, 'which insists that even the extremely poor have entrepreneurial niches that they can and do fill, and that access to financial services expands these opportunities' (Hickson, 2001: 64). Supporters of the minimalist approach argue that more flexible microfinance products,

Table 2
Summary of characteristics of innovative programs for the very poor

MFI	Nisho Prakaipa	IGVGDP	SafeSave	QCDP
Targeting method	Women in vulnerable and remote areas. Selection of poor households by mainstream program members and officials.	Very poor women, selected by local government officials on the basis of land and income.	All households selected in Dhaka slums.	Selection of poor villages based upon vulnerable geographic location. Small loan size and high interest rate to deter richer households.
Training	Yes, limited to learning to sign their names and discussions related to health and education.	Yes, extensive training in poultry production and sericulture.	Basic training in program rules and operation.	Basic training in program rules and operation.
Marketing assistance	Yes, if possible.	Yes, e.g., day-old chicks provided, to be sold as layers, veterinary care organized.	No	No
Other non-financial services	Yes, health and education.	Yes, health and education.	No	No
Innovations	No groups. Variable loan term. Consumption loans. Leasing, e.g., of goats.	Establishment of a coordinated program of input supply and service provision to support a poultry production chain.	No groups. Very flexible loan length, timing and repayment schedule. Unrestricted daily savings deposits and withdrawals. No loan-use restriction.	Very flexible loan length, timing, repayment schedule. Unrestricted daily savings deposits and withdrawals. Use of local commissioned agents. No loan-use restriction.

Source: Hickson (Table 1, 2001: 62)

keeping in mind the capacities and interests of the very poor, facilitate loan repayment and savings build-up.

Hickson makes a strong case by saying that both positions have merit and that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive. However, practical experience of the very poor in relation to microcredit so far sup-

ports the concerns raised over 'the high cost of capacity building and the poor record of continued utilization of skills gained in vocational training programs'. Difficult choices would have to be made in order to maximize resources, but again, in choosing between modifying the client and environment, or modifying the service, it is critical to be guided by the logic of the poor and the dynamics of poverty if we seek to better include them in program interventions.

CONCLUSION: SOLUTIONS AND TRADE-OFFS

In revisiting the microfinance for poverty alleviation debate, this paper compared and contrasted the research contributions and perspectives of various authors, and placed emphasis on those that examined the phenomenon through the lenses of self-help, gender and targeting. To challenge the suitability of the 'one size fits all' model of microfinance in reaching out to the poorest, this paper presented case studies and innovations targeting the very poor. Conscious attempts were made to present both 'hits and misses' in the literature. Studies indicate that just as no perfect targeting mechanism exists, no perfect microfinance model for the poorest seems to exist either. It is evident that solutions come with their accompanying trade-offs, so it is critical to take the context into account when employing microfinance strategies for poverty alleviation.

In closing, this paper highlights the need to put development back into microfinance, to tailor it as a poverty alleviation instrument more than a profit-making enterprise. This requires not only the poor going through change in the process. Credit programs, MFIs, policy-making institutions and international development agencies should be reformed as well, bearing in mind the capacities of the poorest and the dynamics of poverty. Microfinance for poverty alleviation is more than a technical activity. Making tough choices between approaches of targeting and program design, or between the comprehensive and minimalist approach in microfinance, or questioning our assumptions in development – these are clearly political acts as well. It is critical for those designing, implementing, monitoring or funding program interventions to seriously attempt to prevent the poorest from falling under the radar.

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10

The Relationship between Institutional Formation, Macro Policies and Informal Micro Production: Understanding Informality in a Colombian Context

ISABELLE TURCOTTE



INTRODUCTION

The informal economy has been particularly well documented in Latin America, where its prevalence in economic life has made it a centerpiece for discussion and dialogue. Since the inception of academic discourse

regarding the nature and definition of 'informality,' the concept has largely evolved, reflecting a myriad of local and regional experiences with production and working relationships beyond the realm of *recognized, regulated* and *registered* employment. At the national level, the interpretation of informality has largely driven the kinds of interventions states initiate to encourage changes in the domestic labor market. These interpretations heavily fall on the interests of the protagonists of political and economic life with future policy formulation being anchored on these particular interests. This essay draws a link between the process by which the formation of institutions defines the macro policies that drive political, economic and social relationships, by which a society may interpret the existing reality of informality. As such, a translation of interests into policy will allow us to view how interventions have affected the dimensions of the informal economy in contemporary Colombia.

DEFINING AND INTERPRETING INFORMALITY

Since the early 1970s, the conceptualization of informality has been central in academic and policymaking circles to analyze the linkages between domestic relations of production, employment, growth and expressions of marginality. With marked flows of urbanization, changes in industrial production and growing differences in education and skill attainment, the labor market segmented in such a way that more and more individuals resorted to production outside of formal recognition, regularization and protective covenants, differentiating 'informal' workers and occupations from the masses of public and private 'formal' sector workers. The prominence and expansion of informality in most cities brought scholars to articulate conceptual definitions so as to draw links between these workers and their inherent connection or disconnection from state institutions that provide the parameters to affect policy formulation regarding the labor market.

The discussion on the informal economy can be loosely divided into three periods, the first focusing mostly on characterizing the workers, their activities and the economic factors affecting the development of urban economic linkages; the second drawing attention to the construction of institutions, and the role of power and politics in affecting the capacity and access of entrepreneurs to required capitals and inputs for production; and the third concentrating on the access to capital or legal recourses that change the nature of enterprise and labor relations. In or-

der to develop an understanding of informality within a Colombian context, it is important first to review the evolving terminology and the progress achieved in its analytical dimensions.

Dualistic and Petty-commodity Production Definition

Primary research performed by Hart in the early 1970s in Accra revealed a notion of two distinct sectors divided and independently operating from each other, as two largely disconnected spheres. Informality is characterized as operating between traditional rural activities and modern urban production, a middle ground of small-scale labor intensive production with limitations on capital investment, skill content and productivity levels relative to the formal sector. Contiguous ILO work broadened this description of largely inefficient micro-production, acknowledging its sectoral ability to compensate limited employment opportunities in urban areas, therefore adding to its merits its short-term centrality in economic production, which would reduce over time as the modern urban sector absorbs excess labor. The dichotomous definition quickly came under criticism as it characterized enterprises and their owners as either forming part of an intricate yet protected market or an informal sector of activity surviving at the fringe.

Reflecting the larger debate between neoliberal and neo-Marxist thought during this period, a conflicting notion of informality focused on the articulation of relations of production, describing the informal sector as a dependent, if not subordinate, form of production that needed to rely on low production cost and low protection to be able to effectively supply goods outside the realm of large formal businesses. As a result, the Petty-commodity production definition presents the labor market as being a continuum of workers and activities rather than independent sectors, yet stresses that what appears as independence is a disguised form of exploitation. As Birbeck exposes in the late 1970s through a study of waste pickers in Cali, Colombia, the individual picker most efficiently identifies appropriate materials to sell to industrial recycling plants, with his ability to work in this field being firmly rooted in the minimal skills requirement to perform such work. This is used to justify the low material cost received by the pickers on behalf of large industry whose monopoly power allows price setting (Moser, 1994: 19). The very fact he/she does not receive a wage by the industry but is

rather paid in a piecemeal fashion for the inputs reinforces the intrinsic relationship of subordination he/she holds with formal enterprise.

Structuralist and Legalist School

The Petty-commodity production discourse indeed provides the first conceptual linkage between informal production, large enterprises and public institutions, no longer focusing on separate spheres but viewing the economy as an integrated and inter-reliant whole. The Structuralists further ascertain that “informal economic processes cut across the whole social structure” where circuits of accumulation and the “reorganization of production under changing economic, institutional, social and legal conditions” affect the nature and size of the informal economy and the policy environment to intervene in its midst (Castells and Portes, 1989, in Rakowski, 1994: 36-37).

The position of the state relative to the informal economy in this sense is quite contested. On one hand, it was assumed that by favoring economic growth, the state would be able to ensure the absorption of informal workers into formal enterprise and as such expand its taxation base with individuals and enterprises. A second perspective on state involvement focuses on the shortfalls of social security schemes which stimulate the expansion of the informal economy as a space for survivalist economic production, in which case extending greater social security would limit the need for individuals to participate in the economy at such a low cost. This argument did not particularly hold for developing countries whose central governments often do not have the financial and organizational capacity to extend universal social security schemes.

The Legalist school takes a very different approach to state involvement, stating that the root cause of informality is the excessive transactional cost to operate within extensive bureaucratic guidelines that legalize and formalize the status of enterprises. In fact, accessing the required certifications to formalize depends on relationship to power figures, often through patronage. De Soto, the founder of this school of thought, focused on the Latin American experience of informality, stating that it is the people’s “spontaneous and creative response to the state’s incapacity to satisfy the basic needs of the impoverished masses” who live within a system that “traditionally made them victims of a kind of legal and economic apartheid” (de Soto, 1989: xiv-xv). Further elaborated by Rakowski, this notion of apartheid is considered to be “the state’s con-

scious acts to defend the status quo and respond to the privileged interest groups or state dependence on the informal sector to supply goods and services the state cannot or will not” (Rakowski, 1994:41). In other words, the Legalist school recognizes that the government is a central entity that blocks the entry to formality either consciously or out of neglect in order to maintain its monopoly position, and thus by instituting bureaucratic mazes, stunt the opportunities of small or informal producers.

Current Notions of Informality

Linkages have remained central to the current understanding of informality. Both the *nature of enterprise* and the *status of employment* form the basic units of analysis, thus covering all economic activities. The lack of formal arrangements in either category is what particularly thwarts access to the institutions necessary to fortify either the enterprise or the labor relationship that affords security and growth. As such, discourse has largely shifted towards issues of access, to capital, infrastructure or benefits.

From this notion of access, the Micro-enterprise development approach has been adopted both by state agencies and non-governmental organizations who perceive potential benefits of stimulating local economic development. Intervention is seen as a practical means to ensure that formalizing status and relationships allow individuals and enterprises to pay contributions to the state. The state in turn would develop the capacity to provide more physical capital and social benefits to the overall working population and their dependents. This point is particularly important as with the exception of welfare states, legislation in many countries “make social security dependent on employment rather than a universal citizen right” (de Oliveira and Roberts, 1994: 57-58). In other words, those who participate in the informal economy are shunned from accessing these basic measures of social security, unless the state decides to expand the scope of inclusion of its social policies.

Given the centrality of the state, either defined as a principle cause, contributor, intervener or solution provider for the local informal economy, it is important to draw the processes of state formation and development to be able to understand the domestic interpretation of the informal economy and its required interventions.

THE COLOMBIAN POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The Colombian State has historically been driven by the interest of an elite class who consolidated through two principal political parties in 1850. Liberals and Conservatives were opposing factions with fervent backing who have been responsible in shaping “almost every aspect of political life, nation-building and the characteristics of Colombian society itself,” and are still present in the Colombian political landscape a century and a half later (Tuft, 1997: 29).

Political partisanship has been central to the functioning of politics and has instituted forms of patronage and clientelism that have reinforced the polarization of both parties. This has created cleavages within social order leading to violence and constant destruction of the country’s productive structure (Tuft, 1997: 31). As a country scarred by consistent factional fighting, the first half of the twentieth century witnessed the politicization of economic issues, as in 1945 “almost three-fourths of the population were peasants living in relative poverty and three percent of the landowners monopolized half of the land” (Sanchez, 1992, in Tuft, 1997: 40). Structural changes started to emerge, beginning with the demographic shift towards urban areas affecting the workforce composition, followed by an expansion of educational access and attainment, and the first significant inflow of foreign capital, bringing about growth and larger disparities in wealth and ownership.

Of particular historical note, the period between 1946 and 1966, known as ‘La Violencia’, was marked by severe bloodshed initiated by the continued clash between political parties and their factions. It was a crucial turning point in Colombian political and economic affairs. The political disintegration brought on by 20 years of internal conflict strengthened the position of the gremios (business associations) as “the only institutions capable of guaranteeing a degree of cohesiveness in Colombian society” further solidifying themselves as a “parallel government by 1960” (Pécault, 1987, in Tuft, 1997: 42). At the same time, the articulation of social protest by new groups outside the formal political parties emerged behind the leadership of Gaitan, who brought forward proposals for economic redistribution and expansion of political participation, attempting to lay the foundation for alternative groups to enter political discourse so as to address the elite political pact that existed and was reproduced through the leadership of the conservative and liberal parties (Weinhert, 1966: 341). Gaitan’s assassination leading to the *Bogotazo* of

1948, known as the “greatest urban riot in the western hemisphere,” fragmented the protesters into smaller, more regionalized groupings which were incapable of offering alternatives to the existing oligarchy embodied by the two original institutional parties (Tuft, 1997: 40).

After a brief experience with dictatorship below Pinillas, the National Front returned the country to democracy, as a formal agreement negotiated strictly between the liberals, the conservatives and the army further establishing a power sharing agreement between the parties and formalizing the position of the army as a protector of oligarchic interests. The exclusion of new political challengers within the negotiation process was largely responsible for the crisis of legitimacy, which made governability a principal challenge as insurgent groups of guerrilla, paramilitary and military clashed, segmented the overall population and encouraged continued displacement toward urban centers. Plurality within the political apparatus was needed to re-align the relationships between state and society, manifesting itself through the edification of a new constitution, decentralization measures and labor reforms (Helmsing, 2001: 1).

EMERGING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES

It is important to highlight that tension in political life and decision-making spheres has partly been responsible for a neglected focus on national strategies directly related to employment (rather than economic growth implying expansion of employment) up until the 1980s. Tokman reminds us that “although the origin of the informal sector may have been a response to insufficient job creation, it expands in response to excess regulation of the economy, inadequate labor and economic legislation and inefficient bureaucracy. Thus, law, procedures and government are responsible for the existence of a large and increasing proportion of employment in low productivity and badly remunerated jobs” (Tokman, 1992, in Florez, 2002: 10).

By the 1980s, various measurements placed the share of informal employment between 50 to 57 percent of total employment in the seven largest cities of Colombia (Uribe-Echevarria, 1991: 34). This decade witnessed significant changes in institutional arrangements as the country experienced administrative, political and fiscal decentralization of government functions in an attempt to strengthen the capacity of local governments and municipalities in light of significant inefficiencies. *Fiscal decentralization* aimed at fostering departmental taxation autonomy, thus

improving revenue for investments in local service provision and industry development. *Administrative decentralization* aimed at strengthening decision making autonomy for improved project execution and overall management of resources. Lastly, *political decentralization* aspired to augment the accountability of state agents through the election of mayors and governors. As stated by Fiszbein, local governments improved the execution of their functions through *selectivity* and *specialization*, meaning that municipalities focused on relatively fewer priorities, and avoided doing everything by itself, rather implementing projects with the involvement of external community actors (Fiszbein, 1997: 1039).

Political involvement, however, has historically stood as a principal challenge to plural participation in the construction of domestic policy. The composition of the new Constitution of 1991 came at an important crossroad in Colombian history and had lasting political bearings. At this time, struggle for power and dominance encouraged pervasive clashes between different factions' armed groups. The turbulences created confusion and popular mobilization instigating projects of political reform. This concretized through the platform of the National Assembly which, for the first time in Colombian history, represented the principal societal constituencies, implying the involvement of groups that had been formally excluded from political debate. The negotiations put forth an ambitious document recognized as “[one of the most] progressive project[s] in contemporary constitutional thought” as it combined two principal axes: that of a *social constitution* formalizing an extensive bill of rights, and on the other fortifying the institutions required for continued *efficient management of economic affairs*, both rivaling as paradigms in the new macropolitical reality (Murillo and Gomez, 2005: 3).

The Constitutional court appeared as being one of the most important new institutions in administering justice and ensuring compliance with the Constitution. It has not only been used to reinforce the legislative branch relative to very strong presidential power, a legacy of the 1886 Constitution, but also mediated the clash between the social rights and neoliberal attitudes adopted by the elites in power. An interesting debate on pensions arose. The Constitution officially grants this right of subsistence to its citizens, yet economic arguments related to the insufficiency of state funds to guarantee citizens this benefit has often been used in justifying the non-compliance to this basic constitutional right (Murillo and Gomez, 2005: 8). The position of the Constitutional court

has been to fortify citizen rights regardless of economic or political tendencies, which have grown over the years, rather intermingled. This is why the Constitutional court is often controversial but is used in practice to reinforce the social contract on the part of executives and citizens alike.

Despite the existence of such institutions, imminent pressures of self-imposed neoliberal measures quickly opened the economy to international markets, largely conditioning subsequent labor reforms. This was done in two steps, first by signing free trade agreements with important regional players including Chile, Mexico and Venezuela, and second by opening the capital account through exchange rate policies and direct foreign investment (Florez, 2002: 6). Expanding trade and creating formal linkages with other countries propelled the integration of Colombia in the international economy, placing its need for competitiveness as a central marker in labor reforms. In concrete terms this has meant that flexibility has been achieved “by facilitating temporary contracts, facilitating firing of workers with more than 10 years of experience in the firm but introducing a higher ‘indemnization’ instead” (Florez, 2002: 4). While firing workers has become easier in order to reallocate workers in productive and competitive industries, the price of hiring workers on the other hand has increased significantly since 1993, due to the creation of Law 100 that extends a general system of social security in health based on employment and income status including public and private salaried employees, low income or self-employed individuals (Florez, 2002: 5).

The concrete results are two-fold; on one hand employers who used to contribute 12.5 percent to insure their employees now must disburse 25.5 percent, meaning that the value of hiring formal workers has significantly increased, presenting a liability to employers and changing the nature of employer-employee relationships (Florez, 2002: 6). The second result is that self-employed individuals who want to register to enjoy these social security benefits must spend 25.5 percent of their personal income as a contribution to these funds, again reducing the incentive of personal enterprise owners to legally register below this framework. While these social security schemes were intended to expand access to health benefits regardless of wealth or employment status, they have nonetheless created disincentives towards formal employment relation: labor can be easily retrenched, incentives to hire workers on a formal basis are reduced, and the incentive of small business owners to register

formally is also diminished. In other words, economic and labor relations have become thinner as a consequence of moving towards trade liberalization, which has created promising conditions for the expansion of *informal employment relations* and *informal enterprises*, the two units of interest according to the recent development in the informal economy debate.

A related development within the national institutional framework occurred a year prior to the labor reform. The Colombian National Small Enterprise Policy can either be understood as a timely initiative to support the wide base of micro-entrepreneurs throughout the country, or as a precondition to absorb reallocated workers as a result of labor flexibilization. This national plan to assist micro-enterprises combined the effectiveness of the National Learning Service, SENA, and the creation of Centers for Productive Development throughout the country (Helmsing, 2001: 11). These centers became focal points for the cooperation of various local players in economic affairs and allowed the different regions the ability to react to cyclical upturns and downturns that drive the dynamic displacement of workers.

Of course it would be incorrect to assume that micro-entrepreneurs are necessarily part of the informal economy, as Florez reminds us that in the case of Colombia “the self-employed and owners of small firms are generally very different types of workers. Self-employment mostly includes street vendors whereas small firms refer mainly to small entrepreneurs” (Florez, 2002: 18). Regardless of definitions, creating a national policy sends an important message on the importance of entrepreneurial ventures.

CONSTRUCTING INTERESTS AND INTERVENTIONS

In light of these historical events, tensions, linkages and developments, a better conceptualization of both the informal economy and of the Colombian institutional framework will allow us to transfer meaning to the experience of informality and its interventions in the national context.

A significant shift in focus relative to informality occurred after the 1980s as neoliberal thought concretely materialized in domestic and regional practices. The *problem of employment* which is at the base of the proliferation of the informal economy has increasingly become understood as a variable of economic growth, which intrinsically is a variable of the competitiveness of productive systems which are in and of themselves groupings of enterprises divided along the lines of their area of industrial

specialization, size and scope and relationship to legal structures (Ramirez Guerrero, 2003: 85). This means that the informal economy, both as workers and enterprises unrecognized, unregulated or unprotected below any normative legal framework, can be altered by focusing on remediating the *worker's access to productive activities through the use of enterprises* that meet labor norms, fiscal obligations, urban space allocation and social security coverage. In practical terms, the national discourse has shifted from the informal economy to micro-enterprises (ibid).

The micro-enterprise development discourse reflects the alignment of political interests with neoliberal ascendancy in macro-level priorities and planning. Informal micro-enterprises are known to behave counter-cyclically, meaning that in economic downturns they have a tendency to gain ground to generate income for those who have lost their jobs or source of revenue (Otero, 1994: 179). The imminence of fluctuations, cyclical shocks and economic crises in Latin America have demonstrated that micro-enterprises hold a key position in generating local economic activity to meet basic needs and diversify household incomes; the basis of micro-enterprises is well understood and respected.

Instruments Forming the Macro Strategy

The first and most central actor in proposing and monitoring the macro-dimensions of the economic-labor relationship is the national government. As problems of employment are increasingly understood through economic segmentation, the government has drawn up domestic policies known as *Formacion Profesional y Capacitacion Laboral*, whose three main components are policies for education, competitiveness and employment. Of particular emphasis are professional training and the formation of micro-enterprises.

Professional training is seen as a way to expand knowledge and technical abilities so as to reallocate workers in areas of higher productivity. This initiative is closely linked to the SENA which came into existence in 1957 as a joint effort between organized workers, entrepreneurs, the Catholic Church and the ILO. While the SENA has maintained its autonomy relative to the state, it nonetheless holds a close relationship with the Labor and Social Security Ministry of Colombia (ILO, 2008). The SENA holds a two-fold strategy towards informality, focusing on incorporative measures which link workers to formal employment, and promotional measures that focus on improving conditions for productiv-

ity enhancement. The success of these services suggests a transition into formal jobs, or the ability to independently produce goods and services by means of their own formal enterprises. This has in turn incited other macro-policies on behalf of central government, notably the National Plan for the Development of Micro-enterprises which regroups three micro-enterprise typologies including 'growth,' 'survivalist' and 'associative' micro-enterprises.

With the legacy and continued presence of the *gremios* (business associations), micro-enterprises are encouraged to join panels and participate in forums related to their trade. Workers and business owners are encouraged to integrate in these organizations that "offer collective solutions to common problems" such as employment protection and stability, and representativeness in the face of government of private institutions (Alves et al. 1998: 32). These *gremios* are practical platforms of negotiation resembling unions, yet breaking the traditional employer/employee relationship, replacing it with a sectoral focus and a diversity of legal statuses, allowing smaller informal micro-enterprises to formalize relationships. These networks expand the bargaining power of individual micro-enterprises and include them within an intricate system of relationships that reduces, at least in theory, the structures of disadvantage inherent to the atomized state of unorganized informal work.

CONCLUSIONS ON EVOLVING DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

The Statistics Bureau of Colombia known as the DANE holds updated data regarding the informal sector based on the current ILO definition as a basis of measuring informality, yet it includes all enterprises in which ten or less employees actively work. While this may simplify measurement, it demonstrates that micro-enterprises in themselves are the specific area of focus, as there are many small enterprises that can have perfectly formal labor relationship and status, and larger enterprises that do not ensure proper coverage to their employees or avoid taxation. This goes to confirm that the political focus has shifted to productive capacity rather than intrinsic rights, obligations and status.

The DANE indicators for informality state that between 2007 and 2008, informal employment still accounts for 55 to 58 percent of total employment with its value of GDP just above 30 percent (DANE, *Boletín de Prensa: Informalidad* 2008). What we learn from such statistics is that the proportion of small producers has virtually been left unaltered in

the past few decades, between 50 and 60 percent of employment since the early 1980s. What has dramatically changed is the focus of interest regarding the workers that operate outside the realm of direct state intervention. By shifting to a focus of micro-enterprise rather than ‘informality,’ the conceptualization and subsequent interventions by state agents can address the levels of productivity that have been important in sustaining and expanding the growth of the economy. Accounting for over 30 percent of the GDP, this sector is non-negligible and holds potential both for individual owners, their communities and society at large.

By focusing on organizing workers through associations and by creating platforms for participation, workers and their organizations can require changes within the structures that have limited their access to capital, infrastructure and services. These platforms are used in both directions, as a way of ensuring better dialogue to fulfill the rights and obligations of both government and workers. An example of this success are that health benefits being extended to formal and informal workers in relatively similar proportions, moving social security away from a dependency on employment relations to a system resembling universal coverage (Alves et al., 1998). Organizations help *recognize* individual workers; the platforms for dialogue affect the *regulation* of industry and *protection* of employment and benefits. In other words, the institutional framework helps address all three aspects of informality without treating it as an intrinsic ‘informality’ issue. By first dealing with the issue of micro-enterprise creation and expansion, productivity is central to progress, which supposes much like many neoliberal assumptions, that the positive externalities regarding employment will trickle down to the worker, which is not in itself guaranteed in the Colombian case, but rather is a result of the institutional changes that have created platforms for the engagement of these micro-enterprise owners in the channels that broaden coverage and security. This is why the use of institutions borne out of intense historical conflict now sustains the linkages necessary for macro-level visions and policies to be implemented at the local level where informal workers operate.

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The Interesting Facts of the New Trade and Growth Theories

TISKA YUMEIDA

1 INTRODUCTION

Trade is the engine of economic growth, however the economic policies adopted by many developing countries to foster growth and comparative advantage in international trade and the finding of economic theory regarding the role of government in this process have undergone substantial change over the last few years. Many developing countries have adopted an economic policy stance that emphasizes the importance of liberalization and “getting the price right” for the attainment of overall economic efficiency. By contrast, the finding of the new trade theory has led some economists to raise questions such as “is free trade *passé*?”. Moreover, the endogenous theory has shown that economic policy in general, and under certain conditions specifically, support to selected economic sectors can raise the rate of growth. A basic contribution of the new trade and the endogenous growth theories have been to allow for the formal modeling of divergences from standard neoclassical assumptions; for example that technological change is exogenous, that the same technological opportunities are freely available and can be used efficiently in all countries of the world, and that firms operate in an environment of perfect competition. (Mayer 1996:1)

The objective of this essay is to discuss the new trade and the difference from the “old” trade and growth theories and their influences to the economic growth, since the argument of trade is an engine of convergence that brings the economic integration between countries. First, section II provides brief concept on the new trade and growth theories which have different assumption of returns to scale and treat technology and knowledge accumulation as endogenous variables. Section III then

presents policy implications of both theories that consider market imperfection, protection of infant industry and accumulation of technology and knowledge by learning-by-doing to sustain country's position in international market. Next, section IV shows the different 'facts' of convergence argument in world's per-capita income levels when these new theories are applied. Finally, the main conclusion is summarized in the last section.

2 THE NEW TRADE AND GROWTH THEORIES

2.1 What Is the New Trade Theory?

Rather than rely on differences in relative productivity or relative factor endowments between countries for trade to exist, the new trade theory emphasizes economies of scale. The familiar 'old' models in trade theory are the *Heckscher-Oblin-Samuelson (HOS)* model and the *Ricardian* model. In HOS model, international trade between countries can exist from differences in factor endowment that is given. Here, 3 dimensions are applied, where two countries produce two goods using two factors of production, capital and labor. There is no specialization; both countries gain from trade. This leads to convergence since workers in both countries will be paid by the same wage as well as return to capital. Thus, trade is an engine of convergence that brings the economic integration between countries. In the Ricardian model, trade is caused by differences in productivity. The two dimensions of international trade are followed where there are two countries trading for two different goods. A country will export a good in which it has a comparative advantage and import a good in a cheaper price, so people will move to the higher level of consumption. Comparative advantage leads to specialization. The traditional interpretation of comparative advantage is based on the assumption of constant return to scale, and a country will specialize in one good and completely stop to produce another.

New theories of international trade developed by many economists (the most popular one is Paul Krugman) since the mid 1970s may be interpreted as a fruitful synthesis of the following idea: *Economies of scale*. In other words, increasing returns to scale and product differentiation, not different endowments of countries, as determinants of international specialization and trade, even if all countries have the same technology and preferences. In a conventional model, there would be no reason for trade

to occur between these economies, and no potential gains from trade. In the presence of economies of scale, the larger the scale on which production takes place, the more efficient the production – i.e. doubling the inputs to production will more than double its output, while the notion of increasing return to scale means an increase in output that is proportionally greater than a simultaneous and equal percentage change in the use of all inputs, resulting in a decline in average costs. From the notions above we see that economies of scale refer to a firm's costs, and returns to scale describe the relationship between inputs and outputs in a long run production function.

The assumption of increasing returns in the new trade theory gives rise to imperfectly competitive markets. Imperfect competition, in turn, makes possible the theoretical explanation of intra industry trade. Trade among countries with relatively similar endowments has been the fastest growing component of global trade flows throughout the post-War period. Even if countries had the same overall K/L ratio, their firms would continue to produce differentiated products and the demand of consumers would generate intra-industry trade. This phenomenon does not conform to the neo-classical paradigm, whereby the greater trading opportunities; the bigger the differences between the productive endowments of countries. Furthermore, a large proportion of trade among industrialized nations consists of two-way flows of very similar products. Such intra-industry trade is also difficult to accommodate within the neo-classical models, which predict that countries specialize in different sectors according to their comparative advantage and thus exchange different products. Intra-industry trade allows countries to benefit from larger markets. Countries produce fewer varieties of goods at a larger scale with higher productivity and lower cost. Consumers benefit from the increased range of choices. Intra-industry trade implies that a country can be an exporter as well as an importer.

2.2 What Is the New Growth Theory?

The new growth theory is a view of the economy which incorporates two important points: (i) viewing technological progress as a product of economic activity. Previous theories treated technology as a given, or a product of non-market forces. The new growth theory is often called “endogenous” growth theory, because it internalizes technology into a model of how markets function; (ii) holding that unlike physical objects,

knowledge and technology are characterized by increasing returns, and these increasing returns drive the process of growth. (Cortright 2001: 2)

This new theory addresses the fundamental question about what makes economies grow: Why is the world measurably richer today than a century ago? Why have some nations grown more than others? The essential point of the new growth theory is that it treats technology and knowledge as economic goods in attempting to understand the determinants of long-term growth based on learning by doing or investment in human capital and new technologies. Because ideas can be infinitely shared and reused, we can accumulate them without limit. They are not subject to what economists call “diminishing returns”. Instead, the increasing returns to knowledge propel economic growth. The new growth theory helps us make sense of the ongoing shift from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy.

A market for knowledge has different competitive dynamics than a market for ordinary goods and services. Because knowledge has increasing returns (continuously declining marginal costs), having the largest market shares produces the highest profits. As the leading producer faces permanently declining costs—the next unit of output can be produced even more cheaply than the last—whoever has the leading position in the market can maintain and extend it. Eventually, it is likely that a single firm will dominate or monopolize the market (Cortright 2001: 8). To maintain the leading position in the market, we used to innovate. Innovation causes productivity growth in the product-variety paradigm by creating new, but not necessarily improved, variety of products. This paradigm grew out of the new theory of international trade, and emphasized the technology spillovers according to which the greater the productivity of resources devoted to developing new product varieties; the greater the variety of products that have already been developed (Aghion and Durlauf 2007).

3 WHAT POLICIES SHOULD BE TAKEN

The policies of the new trade and new growth theories should not be built separately, because they both have arguments of increasing returns, market imperfections, product variety and learning-by-doing. Policies of the new trade theory focus on the decreasing costs, increasing products and competing foreign products when open trade issued should be supported by the new growth policies which support innovation by accumu-

lating of knowledge (human capital) and technology to maintain country's position in international trade.

3.1 New Trade Theory Policies

The approach differs from that of the most other formal treatments of trade under increasing returns. Scale economies are here assumed to be internal to firms, with the market structure that emerging being monopolistic competition (Krugman 1979: 469). Firms are aware that their actions affect the price they receive and are able to charge different prices in different markets (Krugman 2000: 185). Internal economies of scale occur when the cost per unit depends on the size of an individual firm; it allows large firms to obtain a cost advantage over small ones and therefore likely to give rise to an imperfectly competitive market structure. The limited size of market constrains both the variety and quantity of goods that a country can produce efficiently when there are internal economies of scale. Firms operating on a relatively large domestic market will tend to have more sales and hence lower average unit costs than those operating on a small domestic market. Given their cost advantages, these firms will be more competitive on international markets and therefore find it easier to establish export activities. This suggests that countries with a relatively large domestic market will find it easier to diversify into activities where internal economies of scale are large (Mayer 1996: 3-4).

Situations where dynamic externalities exist have sometimes been used as a basis for the infant industry argument for temporary protection. This argument can rest on dynamic internal economies or on dynamic external economies. The case of dynamic internal economies refers to the process through which the average costs of a firm fall from its original level through continued production because the firm learns from experience, i.e. through learning-by-doing because the accumulation of knowledge and technology are probably the main source of dynamic scale economies. The argument then goes that new entrants to the market should be protected during the early stages of the production process, when they face higher costs than those faced by foreign competitors. As Krugman (2000) supports, protecting the domestic firm in one market increases domestic sales and lowers foreign sales in all markets. By protecting one market, the government gives the domestic firm greater

economies of scale while reducing those of its foreign competitor. Hence engendering decreasing costs.

Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) and Export Promotion Industrialization (EPI) are the policies which support protection policy of infant industry. ISI is a set of trade and economic policies which make a country try to reduce its dependency from foreign products through local products. This policy suggests that state should induce industrialization by government spending. It was adopted by some highly industrialized countries, such as the United States (US) until the 1940s. Many forms of ISI that can be adopted including subsidies, protective barrier to trade, such as tariffs, an overvalued currency to help manufacturers import capital goods (e.g. heavy machinery), and not encouraging foreign direct investment. Through EPI governments help exporters to participate in exhibitions abroad to promote their products in foreign markets and sends delegations to export markets to explore new market and develop the traditional markets. But, as argued by Bardhan and Udry (1999: 190), a time inconsistency problem that afflict such policies in most countries is that once protected, the infant sometimes refuses to grow and face competition, and instead concentrates on lobbying for prolonged protection.

3.2 Policy Implications of the New Growth Theory

The new growth theory emphasizes the importance of increasing returns to the overall opportunities for economic growth. Increasing returns imply tremendous opportunities for growth, and the need for policy to deal with resulting monopolies and market imperfections. The principal objective of such policies would be to upgrade a country's production and export pattern by successively moving up the technology and skill ladder of products and taking into account the dynamic demand potential in world markets (Mayer 1996). This objective could be achieved by accumulation of human capital which enforces an increasing of country's productivity.

Mayer (1996: 21) states that successful accumulation of human capital is not just a matter of sending people to school. Several additional factors need to be taken into account when designing a policy strategy with a view to supporting the accumulation of human capital. Giving strong attention to the quality of education is one factor. Skill acquisition at school also depends on the quality of learning, rather than just on the

time spent in it. The influence of school and teacher quality on a student's performance, for example in primary school, appears to be particularly strong in poor countries, while in developed countries the impact of these factors can be partly outweighed by the educational background of a student's family. School education is only one part of the stock of a country's human capital; the other part is training, which both builds and adds on specific knowledge to the more general knowledge imparted by school education. School education consists of basic and advanced (basically tertiary) education, while training can take three forms, namely apprenticeships (generally given to a young person who learns by working alongside an experienced worker), on-the-job training (giving further specific skills to a person who already has some knowledge of the work) and formal training courses (giving new or refreshing training and altering previously acquired skills, mainly to experienced employees).

4 WHY IS THERE NO CONVERGENCE?

According to Krugman (1979: 476), the new trade theory assumes that countries have identical tastes and technologies and there will be both trade and gains from trade. Let us suppose that trade is opened between these two economies at zero transportation cost. Symmetry will ensure that wage rates in the two countries will be equal, and that the price of any good produced in either country will be the same. The effect will be the same as if each country had experienced an increase in its labour force. There will be an increase both in the scale of production and the range of goods available for consumption. Welfare in both countries will increase, both because of higher real wage and because of increased choice.

Moreover, since technology is assumed to be both universally available and applicable, the levels of per capita GDP in different countries will have a natural tendency to converge through a process of multiple catching-up. But, it is a fact that there is no convergence process over time. According to estimates by Pritchett (1995) the income ratio of the richest (North) to the poorest (South) countries has increased dramatically, from around eight in 1870 to over fifty in 1985.

	1870 (Estimates)		1960	1985
	Truncation	Radial		
Ratio of GDP per capita of richest to poorest country	8.7	8.7	38.1	51.6
Standard deviation of natural log of per capita incomes	.636	.513	.867	1.025
Standard deviation of per capita incomes	P\$435	P\$459	P\$2,112	P\$3,988
Average absolute income deficit from the leader	P\$1657	P\$1307	P\$7748	P\$12,662

Notes: The estimates in the columns for 1870 are based on backcasting GDP per capita for each country using the methods described in the text assuming a minimum of P\$250.

Source: Prichet, Lant (1995)

Lack of convergence and increasing international inequality has begun to show the spirit of the North-South trade literatures, specifically the relationship between primary production and growth. The North is the manufacturing center and the South is the primary product center issued by Ronald Findlay (DATE), de-industrialization model by Paul Krugman (DATE), and The North is an innovator and the South is an imitator by David Dollar (DATE) will explain the inequality of per capita incomes occurred in the world. Obviously, this is not a case of permanent disadvantage for the South, but it is a model of permanent asymmetry between the North and the South. Thus, while the role of each region in the world economy changes; there is always a "South". One of the major issues is the relationship between the monopoly of the North's power in trade and movements in terms of trade. The famous Prebisch-Singer hypothesis has it that the secular deterioration in terms of trade for the developing countries is due to the the monopoly of the North's power in trade. We can see from the implication of trade liberalization agreement by Northern (developed) countries. Trade liberalization agreements issue free access to other countries' market, the South opens its markets for the North's products, however at the same time, the North builds a barrier for the South's products. Other arguments why there is non-

convergence of income and the North's monopoly of power in trade will be explained below.

As mention before, the North-South model by Findlay (1980) states that the North is the manufacturing center and the South is the primary product center which is supported by Sachs and Warner (2001) who find that the share of natural resources exports in GDP is negatively correlated with growth, even controlling for changes in the terms of trade. In a similar vein, Glyfason (2001) finds that natural resources wealth undermines growth, stressing the impact of natural resources abundance on educational expenditure and attainment. Moreover, the North and South have asymmetric engines of growth. The North's engine is internal, with its own rate of capital accumulation, while the South's engine is external, with its exports of primary products to the North. When the North is on an upswing, it imports more of the South's goods generating higher rates of growth in the South; when the North is on a downswing; it transmits recession to the South by reducing its demand for Southern exports. It is a model of unidirectional dependency (Darity and Davis 2003). Mayer (1996:10) also explains that the process of convergence may be retarded because in developing countries a large part of income needs to be spent to satisfy basic needs and is therefore not available for investment.

The second model built by Krugman (1979) implies that the growth rate of a region is positively related with its own capital stock and negatively related with other region's accumulated stock. The North, historically, has higher stock of capital from colonial accumulation. The free trade will lead to uneven development while the North will grow faster in manufacturing sector than the South. When the North reaches the upper limit, the South's manufacturing sector can shoot to zero causing manufacturing to disappear in the South to fully specialize in agricultural sector. Here, the de-industrialization occurs. Stokey who also developed a so called North-South trade model confirms that based on vertical product differentiation and international differences in capital quality, the South produces a low quality spectrum of goods; and the North, a high quality spectrum. If human capital is acquired through learning by doing and is stimulated by the production of high quality goods, free trade will speed up human capital accumulation in the North and slow it down in the South. The country that begins with a technological lead tends to widen the lead over time (Bardhan and Udry 1999: 190). These arguments are supported by Aghion and Durlauf (2007) who state that coun-

tries with low levels of capital stock do not grow faster than more advanced countries. Thus, it tends to increase the divergence. It is also explained by van Leeuwen in his thesis in that the human capital stock can explain why Japan was more successful in developing its economy than Indonesia and India.

The model built by Dollar (1986) mentions that labour force expansion in the South leads in the long-run to a decrease in the ratio of the number of goods produced in the North to that produced in the South and allows the flow of technology from the North to the South. If the return per unit of capital is negative, it initiates a movement of capital from the North to the South. An increase of labour supply in the South initially increases the Northern wages by improving the North's terms of trade. Actually, this model refers to the convergence of growth. The movement of capital from the North to the South continuously will cause the capital-labour ratio in the North to fall and reduce wages in the North, but it will still remain higher than wages in the South.

5 CONCLUSIONS

There are obvious relationships and similar views between the new trade and the new growth theories. They both make economies of scale, learning-by-doing, market imperfections and product variety a crucial part of their models of international trade and long-run growth. These assumptions lead to trade policies which protect the infant domestic firms from foreign competitors during the early stages of the production process. They also lead to accumulation of human capital which stimulates an increase of a country's productivity to upgrade its production and export pattern by successively moving up the technology and skill ladder of products and taking into account the dynamic demand potential of world markets.

By taking the policies above, there is no doubt that there will be a natural tendency to converge in leveled per capita GDP. However, the opposite happens. We find that there is no convergence process over time, and the income ratio of the richest to the poorest country has increased dramatically. World's inequalities become more important over time, it still continues since the North's monopoly of power in trade does not change.

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The Epistemology of My Ongoing Research “Feminist Representations of Rape and Victimization: The Case of Sexto Sentido in Nicaragua”

STEFANIA DONZELLI

INTRODUCTION

In this essay I will reflect on the epistemology of my ongoing research “Feminist Representations of Rape and Victimization: The Case of Sexto Sentido in Nicaragua”. More specifically, once my research is introduced, with special attention to my core assumptions, I will reflect on how my claims on reality are supported by my epistemological position. I will also present some criticisms in this investigation and I will defend my position. Finally some methodological considerations will be included and linked to the epistemology adopted in the research.

ON THE RESEARCH

Social Problem and Assumptions about Reality

When a rape takes place, survivors *may* face a consequent violent experience, caused by their victimization. The uniqueness of every person and the singularity of any socio-historical context make impossible any generalization around victimization. Each one’s particular way of looking at reality, constructed throughout personal and not repeatable experiences contextualised in specific situations, brings people to elaborate different reactions to violence. However, once the impossibility of establishing universal knowledge about something so personal and particular is recognized, it is still possible to state that survivors *may* go through different processes of victimization after a rape. For example, survivors *may* feel a

sense of guilt for having “invited” the perpetrator in some way or another; they *may* blame themselves for a “too passive” reaction; they *may* feel ashamed and face societal reproach for a “too free” conduct; they *may* lose confidence in themselves or trust in human relationships and so on.

Whatever forms of violence a survivor *may* face, I assume that s/he will pass through a process of reflection to make sense of the violence experienced, both in the rape event and in the following and likely victimization. Moreover, I am inclined to think that, in this process of making sense of violence, a person *may* be influenced by her/his own dynamic understanding of the world. Thus, being aware of the working of gender power relations and of their intersection with other social relations of power based on sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, age, etc., *may* influence survivors’ understanding of the world, and hence, their reactions to the process of victimization. More specifically, assuming that the notion of power is related to one of responsibility, acknowledging social relations *may* contribute to emancipate survivors from their condition of victimization, clarifying them what has and what has not been their responsibility in the deploying of violence, what might be their future possibilities to take decisions and what they might face in relation to their decisions.

Finally, I consider that human beings understand the world through discourses and representations: language, in fact, operates as a representational system through which meanings are constructed and exchanged. In other words, it is through language that we make sense of the environment around us. Beside this, recognizing that the construction of meanings is not fixed and steady makes possible to change discourses and representations (Hall, 1997: 1-11). In relation to these reflections I believe that making visible, through discourses and representations, the operating of social power relations in daily life may have a practical implication for survivors’ emancipation.

Research Problem

The present research is concerned with the analysis of the politics of representation of sexual violence promoted by feminist organizations working with media and communication that make visible the working of social relations of power in daily life. More specifically, this investigation will analyse the politics of representation of rape/victimization of a

feminist soap opera – *Sexto Sentido*. This *telenovela* has been produced by Puntos de Encuentro, a Nicaraguan feminist and pro-youth organization, whose principal objective is to transform oppressive social relations of power in daily life and strengthen the women's and youth movements.

Research Questions and Objectives

The overlying question of this study is 'how does the politics of representation of rape/victimization promoted by feminist organizations look like?' Particularly, I will analyse how rape/victimization is represented in *Sexto Sentido*, which are the intended and unintended meanings of these representations and what could explain these intended and unintended meanings from the perspective of the producers of this *telenovela*. The overall objective is to examine a case of feminist representation of rape/trauma and to understand which lessons could be learnt from this case.

Methodology

In order to understand how rape and trauma are represented in *Sexto Sentido* and the intended and unintended meanings of these representations, I will rely on the following secondary data: episodes of *Sexto Sentido* and documentation of Puntos de Encuentro. The episodes of *Sexto Sentido* will be discursively analysed employing the following tools of analysis: categorization (Leudar et al., 2004), framing (Schwalbe, 2006), focalization (Mijer, 1993). The internal documentation of Puntos, as well as some collective discussions and dialogues with people exposed to *Sexto Sentido* could help me in identifying some cues for my reflection and analysis, especially in understanding which is the frame of *Sexto Sentido* from a Nicaraguan perspective.

Finally, to understand what could explain the intended and unintended meanings of rape/victimization representation in *Sexto Sentido* from the producers' perspective, I will rely on internal documents produced by Puntos de Encuentro; besides this, I will conduct semi-structured and in-depth interviews with people from Puntos who participate in the preparation of the script of *Sexto Sentido*. The objective of these interviews will be to discuss the founding of my discourse analysis. To make possible this part of the research, field work will be essential. During the whole process of researching I would like to rely on feedbacks from Puntos and I will acknowledge my position every time

that I will consider it relevant. This wariness aims not to “betray” Puntos’ point of view, with which I strongly sympathise.

The triangulation of the sources of data collection finds its justification in the limits that I will experiment in grasping the different nuances of Nicaraguan society, determined by my condition as an outsider. Moreover, in analysing data I will inevitably use interpretative categories typical of my context of origin, based on my personal experience and identity. Combining this observation with the idea that a text may be open to different interpretations (Eco, 1962) makes me evaluate primary data as indispensable to offer depth and accuracy in this research.

WHICH EPISTEMOLOGY?

Although I consider likely to change my epistemological posture during the process of researching, at this stage of the investigation I would like to combine a feminist post-structuralist/post-modern position with elements of Gramscian thought, more grounded towards a critical realistic position in the epistemological spectrum. Notwithstanding that I am conscious of the differences, and sometimes contradictions, of the epistemological perspectives considered, I will try to make them work coherently, since both of them have particular virtues that I appreciate.

Post-modernism argues that human beings get to know the world through language: it is through language that perceived sensory impressions are communicated, so language becomes the data to analyse in order to know reality. Cameron states that ‘those claims to data constitute knowledge for others and with knowledge comes a potential for the exercise of power’ (Cameron, 2009: 4). This refers to Foucault’s conceptualization of power/knowledge that Mills explains as follows: “the process of exclusion that lead to the production of certain discourses [labeled as facts] rather than others [...] is a claim for power... the only between facts and falsehood is power” (2003: 67-68).

The recognition of the operation of power in the production of knowledge leads post-modernists to “deny any view of reality that assume the independence of individual mental processes and intersubjective communication” (Rosenau, 1992: 110-111). What follows is scepticism about impossibility of knowledge closure on the past or the future, rejection of any generalizations and celebration of contextual relativism (Cameron, 2009).

This epistemological position, of which I appreciate reflexivity and lack of closure to any generalization, will allow me to reason around issues of power and accept the limited, relative and situated nature of the knowledge that will be produced through the process of investigation. It will be made clear, throughout the research, by the constant adoption of modal verbs such as *may*. Moreover, it will help me to recognize how this knowledge will be mediated by my personal and cultural experience.

The feminist variant of post-modernism/post-structuralism analyses gender as socially and culturally constructed. It will make me recognize a plurality of subjectivities, and so avoid essentialization of women's identities. In fact women, as Sawiki stresses, "are differentiated across divisions of race, class age or culture" (1991: 17-18). Furthermore, feminist post-modernism advocates for fluidity of identities, conceptualising gender as a representation that "correlates sex to cultural contents according to societal values and hierarchies" (De Laurentis, 1987: 5). This posture will allow me to appreciate the spaces for agency, opened by the recognition that identities and people's worldviews may be likely to change. Finally, feminist post-modernism, that appreciate discourses' influence on practices, will help me in understanding how "the violence of rape/[victimization] is enabled by narratives" (Marcus, 1992: 389).

Although I really value the previous element of post-modernism, I have not found in this epistemological posture a strong and explicit link to emancipatory stances, something like the "preferential option for the oppressed" sustained by the Latin American philosophy of liberation. Post-modernism, in fact, seems more interested in de-constructing oppressive discourses than in re-constructing new and emancipatory narratives. For this reason, I would like to combine post-modernism with certain elements of Gramscian thought. This author does not have, according to my understanding, a clear epistemological position, on the contrary, he moves from Marxist to idealist stances and to a certain form of post-structuralism *ante litteram*.

The work of Gramsci is founded on the need of emancipating the Italian working class from capitalist exploitation. This author philosopher recognizes the power of culture through the conceptualization of "hegemony", the power to create a "common sense" to persuade the exploited classes that the way society develops under capitalism is natural and legitimate. This "persuasive power" is exercised through different

institutions, such as media, educational systems, churches, etcetera, that contribute to justify oppressive power relations (Kehoe, 2003).

Gramsci highlights the role of history in informing human knowledge, discourses and practices. He recognises that “objectivity always means humanly objective which can be held to correspond exactly to historically subjective: in other words, objective would mean universal subjective” (Kehoe, 2003: 14). It may be seen in line with the feminist post-modern concept of situated knowledge. Moreover, Gramscian thought will allow me to stress how linguistic activity can be conceived as praxis and recognizing how the activity of researching is an exercise of political agency toward emancipation (Kehoe, 2003). Beside this, the concept of hegemony will thus make me think of the real, or better, to the representation of the real, not as a fixed reality, but as a space for resistance and negotiation (Gledhill, 1997: 348). Media representations become thus a site for struggle and justify my intention of analysing the way in which feminist organizations represent rape/victimization.

Until now, a criticism that I faced, in relation to my epistemological position, addresses the assumptions on rape and victimization that are explicated at the beginning of this work. In this case I do not think appropriate to support my assumptions with reference to the literature, for two main reasons. First, these assumptions do not aim to construct a generalization, as I made clear by the repeated use of *may*; on the contrary, they simply recognize that what I described may happen. Second, these assumptions are based on my personal experience of life and the one of the people I met, so I do not see the need to refer to academic literature in order to make them accepted by the reader. What I found important is only to acknowledge the presence of my experience to avoid any generalization. Moreover, the claim that my personal experience could not be objective or free from biases falls in front of the observation that “according to post-modernism, objective understanding of human development is fundamentally impossible” (Diamond, 2006: 471).

Another criticism that has been moved to my epistemological position is related to my use of Gramsci. Even if I am conscious that other authors, more in line with the post-modern paradigm, have treated some of the elements of Gramscian theory that I will use in this context, I do not see the necessity of substituting Gramsci. In fact, I am very familiar with this author since he bases his theory on the analysis of Italian his-

tory, thus my same country of origin, and familiarity with an author can help.

Moreover, even if Gramscian philosophy of praxis is directed only to the emancipation of the subaltern classes and, just to make an example, women or ethnic or sexual minorities are not taken into consideration, I believe that his understanding of philosophy as an exercise of political agency, can be adapted to a more relativist conceptualization of oppression. In fact, as Lather explains talking about emancipation as a "multi-centred discourse", we can think in emancipation as a process of liberation from different types of oppression –not only class, so that it can become discourse that recognises the intersectionality of power relation at stake in society and accepts a certain degree of relativism (1991: 22).

The last point of my research that has been subjected to criticisms is related to my assumption on the existence of social relations of power. But actually, this is not an assumption present in the research; in fact, I do not state that there are power relations in reality, but that interpreting reality with the lens of social relations of power *may* be emancipatory. This clarification should be readjusted to the ontology of this research with a post-modern perspective, without disregarding emancipation, as the most important quality of Gramscian epistemological position.

LINKING RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Recognising the interplay that exists between epistemology and methodology, I will explain here how my conceptualization of the process of knowing is connected to the way in which this process will be organized according to my methodology. More specifically, I will present two main points that make visible this interaction.

First of all, as I already explained, I will pay attention to representations of rape and victimization in *Sexto Sentido* and I will analyse them in terms of discourses. This choice reflects the importance given to language in post-modern epistemology. Moreover, understanding my discourse analysis of *Sexto Sentido* as influenced by my context of origin, my personal experience and identity and remembering the possibility of multiple interpretations of texts, I will reject any claim to objectivity or neutrality.

Second, in order to not "betray" those who participate in the production of *Sexto Sentido* and to transform my research into a political activity, I will propose and discuss my analysis with people from *Puntos de*

Encuentro, to make this investigation collective and participatory as much as possible, notwithstanding time constraints. This inclination to participatory research is in line with my conceptualization of research as praxis. In fact, collective discussions and dialogue with people from Puntos or who have been exposed to Sexto Sentido will involve them (and me) in moment of reflection for action, thus in a strongly political activity. Furthermore, the choice of not using the term focus group to refer to the discussion meeting wants to highlight the importance of creating spaces for mutual learning between the researcher and the participants.

CONCLUSION

In this essay I have introduced my ongoing research "Feminist Representations of Rape and Victimization: The Case of Sexto Sentido in Nicaragua" and I have reflected on how the epistemological position that I would like to adopt in this investigation can support my core assumptions on reality. More specifically, I have presented post-modernism, its feminist variant and some elements of Gramscian thought, highlighting which of the epistemological virtues of these postures I value more. The biggest effort of this essay has been to try to make post-modernism and Gramscian thought work coherently. Finally, I have explained how my methodology is consistent with my epistemological posture. Still, I have some doubts on a precise point: in certain moments I cannot understand if my opinion tends more to asserting an objective need of emancipation or to relativising it. It seems to me that oppression is self-evident in this world, but at the same time to impose any type of universalism appears as another form of oppression. In any case, I have an entire life in front of me to clarify more this point: the hope never dies!

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Imaging Women and Compassion in the New People's Army: The Communist Party of the Philippines' Construction of its Army's identity

TERESA LORENA JOPSON

INTRODUCTION

Underground movements by their nature are hidden from the public eye. Their publications flow through channels different from the mainstream and the state-regulated. Broadsheets and television channels cover them arbitrarily and in angles acceptable to their commercial sponsors. The popular imaging or identity of the underground New People's Army (NPA), a guerrilla group guided by Marxist-Leninist theories and Maoist thought through the leadership of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), is then usually sketched and ascribed by outsiders.

The coffee table book *Pulang Mandirigma* (Red Fighter): Images of the New People's Army (2004) is the CPP's construction of its army's identity. An emic imaging, it is a careful assemblage of text and photographs that is a disclosure without giving itself away to perceived enemies. Its publication is both an assertion of its power as an organization and a show of confidence in its determined path.

Organized into five parts, it introduces the NPA firstly as a collective of ordinary people living a simple and disciplined lifestyle. It follows with a section on the NPA's relationship with the people in the countryside, stressing its agrarian reform work and mobile clinics. The third section is about "forging revolutionary thought and culture," where political education, cultural work, and public engagement are featured. The fourth section is on the NPA's military activities and its conduct. It ends with a section on the gains of the NPA, with particular attention to the estab-

lished revolutionary government in some undisclosed areas and the continuing support and collaboration with the masses.

Photographs as a medium engage its audience to be witnesses to a particular temporal and spatial location. As a product of optical machine such as the camera, photos have strong potential as evidence. This makes it a good medium to build the narratives the CPP aims to elucidate. The compilation has 111 captioned photographs occupying a page each. In its foreword, their Spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal explains the aim in selecting photos for the compilation,

to show the breadth of activities of the NPA: crossing fields, mountains and the heart of forests to travel from one barrio to the next; the masses offering their homes; the enthusiastic greetings and steaming hot coffee welcoming the comrades; the Red fighters as students and teachers, friends and advisers, cooks and bakers, dentists and medics, fighters, and partners in the people's struggle. (Rosal in Communist Party of the Philippines 2004: ii)

Chosen for the exercise of discourse analysis are five of 22 photographs accompanying the fourth section, "Fighting Army." Among the photos that show women fighters in the section, I chose three of four. The other two photos were chosen because they show the NPA's conduct of war and its effort to be humane. To understand the context, I will first deduce the intended audience of this book publication based on its style and format. I will then briefly introduce the Communist Party of the Philippines and the background of a civil war in the Philippines.

The body of the essay unpacks the text and photos using rhetorical analysis. In this abridged version, I eliminated the rhetorical analysis on the text, focusing instead on the visual analysis of the photographs. Themes found throughout the text and the photos are then discussed in turn. In its imaging agenda, the CPP/NPA aims to build credibility and authority, a realm of logos; establish itself as an attractive organization, a realm of ethos; and to collect sympathy, if not empathy, a realm of pathos – thus rhetorical analysis proves valuable in this regard. The imaging of women within the fighting army is highlighted in the self-identification. The effect of portraying women in the CPP/NPA identity-assertion is then wrapped and concluded.

Audience and Social Context

Pulang Mandirigma is a small coffee table book printed in smooth white paper and covered in two-toned matte-finish board – a far cry from the mass-produced primers that the CPP distributes for free. The cost of production of this book suggests that the CPP has financial support from its organized forces or allies. Its very form, a coffee table book, as well as its sleek look, clean layout and general aesthetics appeal to the middle class. It is in this light that I assume that the book is mainly intended for allies and the middle class forces it solicits support from. In the rhetorical analysis of the text and photos, I will have this audience in mind. Although I have no idea how many are in print, the use of the English language in the book also broadens this middle class audience to Filipinos and their allies abroad.

Published in 2004, it celebrates the 35th anniversary of the New People's Army and its renewed strength after the Second Great Rectification Movement. It might be said that it is long overdue for the CPP to muster confidence to assert its own identity in public. In 2004, they finally gathered energy to put together a project that needs national coordination of protected files, not to mention the logistic of quality book printing machinery. It is, indeed, a show of organizational strength. Furthermore, in asserting an identity that is revolutionary, the publication is a glimpse to alternative governance in the country.

The book is released at a time when the political crisis in the Philippines was intensifying. That year, one of the most contested presidential elections took place. The spate of political killings is on the rise, targeting legal organizations that were said to be supportive of the underground movement.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES AND THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY

Criticizing the leadership of the *Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas* ("old" Communist Party of the Philippines), Professor Jose Maria Sison reestablished the CPP in 1968. The CPP on its First Great Rectification Movement led by Chairperson Armando Liwanag, reaffirmed its Marxist-Leninist principles and incorporated Maoist thought in its guiding political line. It also made clear a struggle for a national democratic revolution through a protracted peoples war with a socialist perspective. To

carry this on, an army and united front work were required. With 60 fighters and 34 rifles, the New People's Army was founded in March 1969. In 1973 the National Democratic Front was organized (Liwanag 1988).

The dictator, Ferdinand Marcos' declaration of Martial Law in 1972 fed the ranks of the CPP, NPA and later, the NDF. The underground movement has become vibrant and daring in confronting the dictatorship. For instance, 300 workers' strikes were realized in October 1975 to January 1976 despite the ban. The NPA had only 1000 high-powered rifles in 1977, although its supportive mass base was estimated to have reached a million people. By 1983, offensives by the NPA have increased its armament almost five times (Liwanag 1988).

While internal political debates have stalled the utilization of certain opportunities, the CPP has led militant struggle nationwide that contributed to the mass actions that eventually toppled the dictatorship in 1986. The political struggle in the Philippines was such that by the time the dictatorship fell, there was already another type of government being set up by the CPP-NPA in the countryside. During the administration of Corazon Aquino, the NDF opened a door for peace negotiations. While the peace talks since then has been on and off (NDF 2006), in the background is an ongoing civil war.

For brevity, the contending ideas in the 1992 organizational split following the Second Great Rectification Movement will not be discussed. Suffice to say that military adventurism, urban insurrectionism and other grave errors were found to have been committed by the Party, and those who affirmed the Armando Liwanag's document *Reaffirm our Basic Principles, Rectify our Errors* recognized the mistakes and sought to correct or prevent them from recurring. Since then, the Party and its Army have struggled to rebuild mass bases where it was lost, and organized new ones in areas previously unexplored.

Land reform remains an important task of the NPA alongside its military work. It involves higher productivity through cooperation, rent reduction, fair wages for farm workers, fair prices for farm products, and the elimination of usury. The CPP sought to demonstrate progressive stance in asserting that gender equality and women's struggle have a place in the movement, including the NPA. While women are still struggling within the movement, the CPP is showing support for the realization of women's rights and sensitivity to the concerns of lesbians and

gays. In 1995, the CPP amended its orientation on sexual relationships to include same-sex relationships and marriage.

According to the CPP Information Bureau, by 2004, the NPA is 27 battalions in size with high-powered rifles, augmented by thousands of militias and self-defense units. They operate in 128 guerilla fronts covering 8,000 villages in some 700-800 towns in more than 90 percent of the provinces in the Philippines (p. xi).

UNPACKING THE FIGHTING ARMY

The elements of visual analysis to be used in unpacking the visual images are framing, focalization, demand or offer, shot/ angle, and a master narrative. In addition, I will identify the ethos and pathos being solicited by the photos, consistent to rhetorical analysis.

Image 1. BALANCING ACT

The Basic Politico-Military Course (BPMC) is a rigorous theoretical and practical program lasting about a month. These trainees negotiating the obstacle course are part of a company-size batch that finished in Surigao del Sur province in early 2004.



What we see from this first image are two NPA trainees skillfully negotiating the duck walk course. The shot is wide, containing information such as the dark clothes and cheap rubber boots worn by the trainees,

the obstacle course, and the background of a generic forest. The framing is a bit intense, but the use of wooden sticks instead of real weapons makes the photo less intimidating.

The central image and focus is the woman with a partly hidden face at the foreground. Attention to her is both demanded and offered. It is demanded because the shot is frontal, she points the wooden stick towards the audience and a fierce-looking eye peers from behind her arm. Yet, the angle of her gaze and the stick tilts above the eye level, making the gesture non-threatening to the viewer. The man behind her has more facial exposure, and this draws the audience to him. His gaze is only offered to the audience and the angle of his wooden stick visually points to the woman trainee, and thus reverts attention to her. Both are depicted wearing identical clothes and serious, fierce expressions.

The photo caption takes gender equality for granted, makes no comment about the fact that women do the trainings with men. The master

Image 2. HAND STRUGGLE:

This training session is on hand-to-hand combat and martial arts.



narrative of the photo is that both women and men NPA members go through the same rigorous training. That the woman is ahead of the male trainee suggests that women can lead men in military activities. What this image does for the CPP's ethos is to lend it credibility in its claim of being a progressive platform for the realization of women's rights. Audiences are likely to admire the strong woman in the photo, and by extension, the NPA for having a place for these women in the army.

In the second image, a woman NPA soldier is practicing martial arts on a male NPA member. She succeeds in overpowering him with a swift twist and a suggestion of a blow. The shot is a wide

shot from a slightly high angle that makes explicit their effort of dressing in martial arts clothes and their relaxed spectators in the background.

The audience's engagement with the woman is only offered. While her chest is frontal to the camera, her gaze diverts attention. The master narrative is that women are physically able in the martial arts. This ability is also transferable to actual military combat. The image reiterates the progressive stance of the CPP-NPA in terms of gender relationships. The audience is reminded about gender relations and is likely to agree that women in the NPA are competent fighters.

Image three is a medium close-up of an NPA member on a sniper course. The woman appears to be calm as she intently focuses her aim. The butt of the firearm she is using is wrapped in masking tape, suggesting the scarcity of NPA resources but also their resourcefulness. The shot is a close-up yet its angle does not fully disclose the identity of the woman fighter, important for the security of those featured in this compilation. Its engagement with the audience is only offered, but the tight shot focus our attention to the central image.

In the background we see that the woman is alongside other trainees. We can assume that the main subject of the photo, Ka Johan, is practicing with other NPA members, majority of whom are males. The caption of the photo tells us that Ka Johan is one of the best sharp shooters in her class. The main narrative of this photo would again be the ability of women to excel as fighters within the NPA. Like the first two photos, this one adds credibility to the CPP in being gender sensitive that it feels no need to comment on the shooter's gender. At the same time, women fighters also add an important aspect to the image of the CPP and the NPA – it negates the stereotype of the army as a group of war-freak armed men. The audience will then have the image of calm Ka Johan in mind when they think of NPA snipers. The breaking of the

Image 3. SURE SHOTS:

Sniper courses are among the specialized military trainings the NPA gives. Ka Johan, one of the top graduates of her class, takes aim.



stereotype may possibly earn for the NPA a nod of appreciation from the audience.

The fourth photo is a wide, eye-level shot that captures a busy scene. CPP spokesperson Ka Roger is in the middle of the photograph, microphone in hand. Everybody else in the photo, including a senator and cabinet members – some approximately 80 people look at and listen to him. Cameras in the foreground are aimed at him, and a banner saying “Realize CAHRIHL! (sic) Respect Human Rights!” hangs in the background. It is the release of an NPA prisoner of war, Major Noel Buan.

Interaction with the central character, Ka Roger, is only offered in the photo. The audience becomes like one of Ka Roger’s listeners, looking on from a distance. The mute photo suggests that Ka Roger may be talking about the CARHRIHL (the banner after all resembles a speech bubble). The master narrative is that the CPP commands attention from all sides, the common people, the media, and even government officials.

Image 4. RELEASE:

CPP spokesperson Ka Roger speaks at the release of POW Maj. Noel Buan, intelligence chief of the AFP's Southern Luzon Command, by the NPA's Melito Glor Command in 2001. The release was held in a mountain village of Bulalacao in Occident



Another narrative is the commitment of the CPP-NPA to human rights and international laws such as the CARHRIHL. Both narratives boost the CPP's and NPA's ethos. The photo shows the organizations' authority and credibility, and further describes it as a compassionate authority. This is based on the warrant that people listen to those who have something relevant to say, and that organizations that uphold human rights are compassionate organizations.

Image 5. HUG OF APPRECIATION:
Upon his release in Sorsogon City, Bicol, POW Police Maj. Roberto Bernal runs back to embrace one of his erstwhile custodians – his show of appreciation for the fine humanitarian treatment given him as a prisoner of war of the NPA.



are occluded, leaving much to the imagination of the viewer. At the same time, the choice of angle respects the two men's privacy in their emotional moment.

The audience is then impressed with the command of the organization, and its commitment to human rights. Those already sympathetic to the organization may celebrate these positive qualities of the CPP and NPA. Previously turned off audiences may start being open to the outlawed organizations upon this knowledge.

The last photo in this selection is an image of two men in an embrace. The medium shot shows us that one dressed in white has his back to the camera, the other, in black, is slightly on a profile-angle. Since one is wearing a lighter colored shirt, the attention is first drawn to him. We can note that he has a bag slung over his shoulder. Clad in black, the other's paraphernalia shows us that he is an NPA soldier. The engagement with them is offered. Both their faces

The caption tells us that the man in light clothes is a prisoner of war that is being released, and the other man, his custodian. This embrace is a hug of appreciation for the humane treatment he received.

The master narrative of the photo is then the compassion of the NPA as custodians of prisoners of war. At the same time, a narrative alongside this is that it is still taboo to depict military men as tearful or affectionate explicitly (in a photo – a frontal shot or a tighter shot). To be fair, I am aware that frontal shots of underground personalities are being protected from public eye.

This last photo adds to the NPA image as a compassionate army. The audience is touched by the show of affection of the two men, and is likely to agree that the NPA is humanitarian.

From the analysis of the five images above, I will now discuss some themes in the section “Fighting Army” of the book *Pulang Mandirigma* that are relevant to identity.

Strength

The strength of the NPA is a recurring theme throughout the text and the photos. Because it is expected and only necessary for the imaging of an army, exploration of this theme will not be extensive. It is however interesting to look at two kinds of strengths being credited to the NPA: physical strength as in the number and quality of soldiers and the weapons they have amassed, and moral strength as in the just cause, the support of the masses, and the just conduct of war. To its members, the two kinds of strengths become a source of inspiration.

In its physical strength, the NPA shows its ability to win the “people’s war” by depicting its growing armament, attractiveness to the youth, military command in the barrios. Its moral strength is alluded to in being “the main weapon of the revolutionary people against the oppression... (p. 99).” Drawing from these two strengths, the CPP-NPA finds authority to speak critically of the administration, and even confidently discuss (instead of dodging) the terrorist tag by the US government.

The discourse on strength of the NPA is particularly relevant in establishing authority, credibility, and legitimacy (ethos). Done in an understated manner, the photos in particular imply a confidence from the part of the NPA.

Women in the Army

The military as an institution has been historically associated with men. Soldiers are usually gendered, and to refer to the women in the group, we often have to put qualifiers for the term, such as women soldiers. Often occluded, the women are visible in this collection and depicted in active roles such as fighters. However, much is left unsaid about the struggle of women within the Army. The New People's Army has dominantly male fighters, yet it has not been overlooked in this book that women have been fighting alongside them. In fact, I would argue, the women guerrillas are imaged amply in *Pulang Mandirigma*. I suggest that this is for good reasons.

First, the CPP and NPA are reinforcing its stance as a progressive and revolutionary platform towards empowerment of the masses, and the realization of people's rights. In images 1-3, we can observe that women are able fighters, capable of leadership, competent in combat, and trainable to acquire special skills (such as snipe shooting) within the army. This negates the stereotype of women being passive and weak.

Secondly, following the logic that able members make able organizations, we can say that these capabilities of women can be extended to the capabilities of the army.

Thirdly, imaging women fighters negates the stereotype of the army as a group of violent armed men. While this reinforces women's capability for fighting, it also banks on the stereotype of women being peace-loving that "softens" the image of a violent army. This might be relevant in light of the imaging of terrorist groups being male and cruel. The CPP and NPA sets itself apart from these groups by showing that the war it is fighting is every Filipino's cause.

The images of women in 'Fighting Army' then helps build the identity of the CPP and NPA as progressive, strong and just, and an army apart from terrorist groups.

As counterpoint, I explored if the emphasis on women fighters constitutes a textual violence as suggested by Meijer (1993). There is danger in imaging guerrilla women as exotic fighters and romanticized rebels. Another trap is a kind of representation as objects intended to lure male soldiers to the army. Studying the focalization in the three photographs in 'Fighting Army' that image women, I am confident that the CPP was careful in portraying women.

Compassion

Compassion emerged as a relevant theme in the identity building of a strong, fighting army. The text utilized elements such as the story of Armand, an innocent witness of the affairs of his barrio, who observes that "The army they cherish and consider as their own has helped the people in the area in so many ways" (p. 98). The NPA's task in land reform and peace and order is an expression of compassion that is returned by the families such as Armand's.

The commitment of the CPP-NPA to human rights and international laws such as the CARHRIHL are also signs of compassion in the NPA's conduct of war. Image 5 illustrates this well in showing two military rivals in embrace. The humane treatment of the prisoner of war is evidenced by the gratitude expressed by Maj. Bernal.

Identifying the CPP-NPA as compassionate is again important in negating the 2001 terrorist tag imposed on their organizations by the US government. Against this, the CPP asserts that common people do not consider the NPA as a terrorist, and that the NPA is needed and supplied by the people. For the purpose of the book, however, a compassionate identity is most relevant in its appeal to audiences (pathos) in supporting its cause.

CONCLUSION

The identity being built by the CPP of the NPA is one that is a balance of strength and compassion. It is one that plays up its strength as an organization in its optimism for the sure victory of its just cause. This boosts the morale of its members and supporters, and solicits further support from outside its circle, satisfying the main function of the publication.

The NPA thrives where the government neglects the people. The othering language the CPP uses to distinguish its army from the Armed Forces of the Philippines depends largely upon atrocities of the military. The violence of the NPA is a response to a structural violence of poverty and oppression from the ruling elite in society.

The NPA distinguishes itself apart from its perceived enemies by constructing itself as "just" and its antagonists, "unjust". It depicts its perceived enemies, as the ones threatening the security and therefore, terrorizing the people. Together with its emphasis on strength, the CPP

depicts the NPA as a legitimate authority to advance its ethos. This is particularly crucial since the NPA is an underground organization that aims to establish acceptance and cooperation from conservative sectors that it can tap as tactical allies.

One of its strengths as an organization is its claim of progressive stance that incorporates the realization of rights to its agenda. Its attempt at breaking stereotypes of women and imaging them as partners in, and constitutive of the revolution is a positive image that enhances its identity.

If the imaging of the NPA as compassionate is a response to the terrorist label that has been decreed by the United States government, it makes its case publicly denying that the organization is not to be feared by the common people. The terrorist tag is therefore being fought out in the public sphere. In *Pulang Mandirigma*, the CPP makes sure that it stacks the cards on its favor. Its emphasis on human right and humanitarian conduct of war prove to be effective in mobilizing pathos – identification, sympathy, and support from its audiences.

Using rhetorical analysis to unpack ‘Fighting Army’ illustrates that strength and compassion are the NPA’s main claims to ethos and pathos respectively. The effect of portraying women and compassion in the NPA improves its identity as an army.

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14

Orientalisation of Veil:
Unpacking the Politics of Veil
in the Context of Bangladesh

UMME BUSRA FATEHA SULTANA



INTRODUCTION

Perhaps one of the most frequently asked question regarding Muslims is: why do their women wear veil? The veil - a piece of cloth has often been seen by the West as a barrier to “modernity” and “freedom” thus politically used to represent the oppressed and submissive Muslim women under “Muslim Patriarch”. France’s banning of the veil contextualizes the politics behind these representations as successfully revealed by Scott (2007). Presentation of the veil as the ultimate symbol of Islam’s resistance to modernity is a part of the Orientalist discourse of veil, which reminds us of the larger politics of creating an “other culture” and labeling it as an “inferior culture” to construct a “superior Western culture”. Such a discourse remains static, and has been further used by different political groups for their own political projects.

From this perspective, in this paper I attempt to unmask the politics of the veil in the context of Bangladesh. In the first section, I focus on different meanings of the veil. Tracing the history of the veil, I explain different practices of veiling in Bangladesh and sketch the complexities surrounding it from an antagonistic position of feminists and Islamist fundamentalists. Given the larger spectrum of debates surrounding veil in Bangladesh, in the second section I employ Said’s (1978) ‘Orientalism’, Abu-Lughod’s (1991) ‘remaking women’ and ‘reverse Orientalism’, and Scott’s (2007) ‘clash of civilizations’ to understand the rigid positions of both groups regarding the veil. Finally, I conclude with the concern that the notions of “cultural fixity” bring multiple dangers, and the solution to get rid of such dangers is to learn to live together with negotiated differences.

TOPOGRAPHY OF THE VEIL COMPLEXITIES IN BANGLADESH

Symbols alone cannot be meaningful unless we give them certain meanings. The political use of veil both by certain “feminists” and “Islamic fundamentalists” in Bangladesh demonstrates how powerful symbols can be given the meanings we attach to them. Before going in depth with the veil debate in Bangladesh, first I want to briefly focus on what the veil means. While some people consider the veil an expression of modesty and piety, it is mostly represented by Western world as a conspicuous sign of submissiveness, through the oppression of Muslim women by Muslim men and as a symbol of terrorism and aggression towards non-

Muslims (Kandiyoti, 2007; Abu-Lughod, 1991, 1998, 2002, 2006; Mahmood, 2001; Scott, 2007). Literally veil means covering, and there are different forms of covering depending on different community and cultural contexts (Abu-Lughod, 2002: 785). For instance, there are head scarves, head covers, large scarves or chador covering the shoulder and head; there is the burqa which covers the entire body with or without covering the face except for the eyes, and these different coverings also have different meanings (Rozario, 2006: 368).

Below are some photos¹ of different types of veils in Bangladesh:



Burqa without face cover



Burqa with face cover



The present (left in photo) and former (right) Prime Minister of Bangladesh with head covers.



This type of head scarf is a part of school uniform

¹ Photos are downloaded from <http://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images?p=Bangladeshi+Women> Accessed on 14th June, 2009.



In the left photo the first two girls are wearing chador; in the right photo, the girl in the middle is wearing a chador.

My use of the term ‘veil’ in the case of Bangladesh means Burqa, not the headscarf or chador, because unlike the headscarf and chador, burqa is labeled as conservative and a symbol of oppression by feminist groups and as a symbol of piety, modesty and “good Muslim women” by religious fundamentalists. Chadors, head covers and scarves are considered as socially accepted forms of dress, yet there is no imposition to adopt such veils. Difference in attitudes towards different types of veil needs another paper to explain; therefore, this paper only focuses on the complexities of burqa. In addition, similar to Scott (2007: 16), I also find it difficult to make rigorous distinction in my own terminology; therefore, my use of ‘veil’ and ‘burqa’ interchangeably reflects the way they are deployed in the debate.

In most recent discussions of Islam, burqa and purdah have been noted as the same, however for Bangladesh there are discrepancies between burqa and purdah (Feldman and McCarthy, 1983: 950-52; Kirleis, 1991: 31-32). Here, purdah in its literal sense means spatial segregation and the seclusion of women. Purdah has been operated as a means of restraining and prohibiting women’s visibility inside and outside the household. In addition, it is closely linked with the socio-economic status of women. Though it has been identified as a Muslim practice, for Bangladesh it is more a social than religious practice, which simultaneously exists within Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and other religious communities (Feldman and McCarthy, 1983: 950-52; Kirleis, 1991: 31-32). In contrast, various studies (Feldman and McCarthy, 1983: 953-54; Abu-Lughod, 2002: 785) note that in pre-colonial Bangladesh burqa was a liberating invention for upper class Muslim women, whose male kin could afford to go to Haj (religious trip to Mecca) where they purchased it for females in the family. It enhanced their physical mobility allowing them to move

out of segregated living spaces, and was thus introduced as a symbol of independent privileged upper class women who were no longer dependent on male relatives to go out.

However, the symbol of burqa in present days is entirely opposite from what it used to be in the past. Discourses have shaped burqa to symbolize “the restricted life of Muslim women”. A wide range of feminists are worried about the increasing rate of burqa use among “educated” and “modern” women, as is reflected in Rozario (2006: 368) who calls it a backlash of the Islamist movement towards women’s new visible roles, and a “new challenge of patriarchy” which violates women’s rights in Bangladesh. Kirleis (1991: 31) opines that “the disguise of the female body by burqa constructs women as bodies, sex objects and at the same time signifies that this body is owned by somebody, who only has access to it.” Thus in most feminist literatures on burqa users in Bangladesh, burqa is characterized as epitomizing Muslim women’s oppression and low status (Feldman and McCarthy, 1983: 957) and the key aim of these feminists has been to “save” these women from such oppression. The radical feminist writer Taslima Nasrin has been celebrated in the West for her brave voice against the “oppressive Islamic structure” of Bangladesh (Azim, 2005: 195). She views burqa as a symbol of disrespect and women’s oppression, which ensures that women are the object and property of men (Nasrin: 2007). She boldly claims:

Covering a woman’s head means covering her brain and ensuring that it doesn’t [does not] work. If women’s brains worked properly, they’d [they would] have long ago thrown off these veils and burqas imposed on them by a religious and patriarchal regime.

Surprisingly, other feminist writers, women’s groups and “progressive” thinkers do not question this type of labeling or placing all burqa users under the same category. Likewise, many development organizations uphold the view that burqa represents the “patriarchal Muslim culture” as well as its conservatism and goes against enlightenment and progress. Therefore, the burqa users are seen as conservative and are highly criticized by these organizations. They are rarely able to secure jobs in those organizations and are not allowed to participate in women’s organizations working on feminist issues. In addition, universities show stigmatized views towards them, and many challenging private jobs such as those offered by multinational companies and phone call centers do not recruit women wearing burqa (Rozario, 2006: 372).

Contrary to that, “fundamentalist Islamic” groups are highly vocal on insisting women to wear burqa. The issue of the burqa becomes more critical when these groups consider the whole Middle Eastern veil debate as a Western attack on the Muslim world, and use the burqa as a tool to express their strong rejection towards the Western model of modernity (Feldman and McCarthy, 1983; Kabeer, 1991; Rozario, 2006: 375). They coincide with women’s increasing visibility as a replication of Western modernity, which is anti-Islamic according to them. Therefore, as a solution in returning to the Islamic path, they choose to be followers of the Middle East and impose burqa on women as a “proper Islamic dress” (Feldman and McCarthy, 1983; Kabeer, 1991; Rozario, 2006: 375). Yet, Middle Eastern “Muslim women” are not a homogenous group; neither is there a fixed concept of the veil that may only refer to burqa (Keyman, 2007; Kirmani, 2009: 48-49; Abu-Lughod, 2006, 2002, 1998; Scott, 2007). Accordingly, similar to the feminist groups, they also fall under the trap of the Westernized discourse of “Muslim women” as a fixed category and use this category as a defensive mechanism for their “anti-modernity” project against Bangladeshi women. With several threatening occurrences, many of these groups have warned all Muslim and non-Muslim women to wear burqa otherwise they will be killed (Chowdhury, 2005; Freedman, 1996:58; Kabeer, 1991; Rozario, 2006).

Given this larger spectrum of politics behind the veil in Bangladesh, whenever any woman wears burqa gets many dubious identities imposed on her; on one hand, she is recognized as a good Muslim woman, pious and submissive, but on the other hand she is oppressed, conservative, lacks agency, powerless, property of a “patriarchal” male and needs to be emancipated. Questions arise as to why do we essentialize these identities with the veil? Why do we place burqa users within different dichotomous identities? Attempts to answer these questions unmask the broader politics of orientalism through which specific discourses of “Muslim Culture” and “veiled women” are created by the West, politically represented through the Western media and reinforced by the rest of the world where consciously and unconsciously people are using these orientalist imagery of the veiled women.

ORIENTALISATION OF VEIL- THE DANGER WITH FIXITY OF “CULTURE”

The complexities surrounding burqa in Bangladesh are influenced by the larger discourse of “Muslim veiled women”, which can be best explained

by Edward Said's (1979) 'orientalism'. Said's employment of orientalism from the perspective of Foucault's notion of 'discourse' reveals that the whole European scholarly work which intrinsically viewed Islam and Muslims as inferior and sub-human has created a discourse of the "Muslim Other" (Musallam, 1979: 25) to establish the "Western Self" as "civilized" and the unique possessor of hegemonic knowledge (de Sousa Santos et al., 2007: xxxv). This identity of superior culture at the same time gives the West the authority of symbolizing veil as the ultimate marker of Islam's resistance to modernity (Scott, 2007 : 2), backwardness and Islam's degradation of women (Butler, 2008: 13; Ruby, 2006 : 62). Thus, from a simple piece of cloth veil becomes the fixed icon of "oppressed Muslim culture", which at the same time denies the numerous ways through which it has been practiced by Muslim women. Likewise, though Rozario (2006) explores several reasons behind Bangladeshi women's adoption of burqa, she ultimately brings all burqa users under the same category and claims that such adoption is the result of an increasing Islamic movement and as a women's rights activist she concludes "however empowering the burqa might seem to the women who take it up, in reality it contributes to the ongoing violation of women's rights in Bangladesh" (Rozario, 2006: 378). Consequently, ideas like "women's rights", "emancipation" and "empowerment" are only limited to hegemonic Western perspectives, and remain ahistoric. Whatever "emancipatory" was the history of burqa in Bangladesh (Feldman and McCarthy, 1983: 953-54; Abu-Lughod, 2002: 785) has totally a reverse association with present notions of feminist thinking of burqa.

The description of the worldviews of civilized versus backward, morally upright versus ideologically compromised, modernity versus traditionalism, inferiority versus superiority, fundamentalism versus secularism, oppression versus emancipation as 'the dangers of dichotomization' by Scott (2007:19) is perfectly apt for these feminists who fail to see beyond the oppressive nature of veil. They leave no room for self criticism, no acceptance of the diversity of knowledge, no ability to see beyond the prisms of right versus wrong, tradition versus modernity and so on. Such dichotomizations are so pervasive sometimes women have to sacrifice their burqa to get attractive and challenging jobs. One of my friends had a keen desire to be a part of the women's movement; however, she was perceived as a fundamentalist and conservative due to her burqa, and at last she had to replace her burqa with a high neck, long sleeves and a

head cover to get a job in a renowned women's organization. Such cases perfectly fit with de Sousa Santos et al.'s claim (2007: xxxiii) of a 'modern versus colonial world system' which is often carried out on behalf of "civilizing", "liberating", or "emancipatory projects", thus reduces the understanding of the world to only Western epistemic logics. This dominance of Western knowledge implies that colonialism has ended only as a political relationship, but still remains as a social relationship of power and is more obvious at present than ever before (de Sousa Santos et al., 2007: xlix).

Feminists, women's organizations and private companies who cannot unveil the veil from its "orientalised" symbols are totally remade by the discourse of Westernized "modernity". They establish moral superiority by linking themselves with discourses of modernity and emancipation. Such "emancipatory projects" only rely upon the conditions imposed by the West (Butler, 2008: 6), and remains static even when they do not fit with the reality. European obsession with unveiling women makes veil the quintessential symbol of Muslim's resistance to modernity (ibid.: 14); hence, to veil or not to veil becomes the ultimate marker of modernity vis-à-vis conservatism. Private schools and companies disallowing burqa users' access demonstrate that they are "progressive", "liberal" and embody a symbol of "superiority". Feminists like Rozario (2006: 368) and Kirleis (1991: 31) who perceive veil from an orientalised perspective go to different "Muslim countries" like Bangladesh with their prefixed research agenda, and as soon as they see veiled women whatever the proportion is, they reach the conclusion that these women are subjugated and "disempowered" under a Muslim "patriarchal" country as if "patriarchy" is uniquely an Islamic phenomenon and these "poor", "helpless" women can be "emancipated" by these feminists who are the only incarnation of "emancipated women". Akin to that, feminists like Taslima Nasrin are not only influenced by the West, but also adopt Western knowledge as a religious belief and consider it as the sole source of reality. Being influenced by the Orientalist discourse such feminists start 'creative destructions' (de Sousa Santos et al., 2007: xxxiii) of other possible knowledge of the veil, under the label of "civilizing" or "liberating" women. As a consequence, everywhere one looks, there is the grafting of European ideas and practices (Abu-Lughod, 1998: 20).

The danger of such coloniality of knowledge is not only limited to control of local knowledge, but also initiates another category of the

“Western Other” by the “Eastern Self” which is coined as ‘reverse Orientalism’ by Abu-Lughod (1991: 470). She explains the present day anti-West struggles as an attempt to reverse the power relationship and a retort against Western devaluation of Eastern knowledge. As she exemplifies, the new Islamist appeal to a greater faith in God, compared to the immorality and corruption of the West is based on essentialist terms of Orientalist constructions, yet has been applied in a reverse way (ibid.). What is also viewed by Scott (2007: 19) as a ‘clash of civilization’, clash between “Islam” and the “West”, as she links it with the dangers of dichotomization: creating reverse categories “civilized” versus “backward” or “morally upright” versus “ideologically compromised”, in fact we refuse to accept and respect differences and diversities and turn each other into enemy. Consequently, it secures “us” in a rigid and dangerously defensive posture in relation to “them”.

Although such identical explanations of ‘reverse Orientalism’ and ‘clash of civilizations’ were explored as a case of “Middle East” versus “West”; they are similarly applicable to Bangladesh in understanding the extremist positions of feminists versus Islamic fundamentalists regarding the veil. Whereas feminists are prejudiced by the Orientalist discourse of the veil, the Islamists use such essentialist construction in a reverse way, and accordingly turn veil into the ultimate symbol of women’s religiosity, piety and modesty. From such a rigid position they do not consider the specific context and particularities of the veil debate, rather judge it as a Western attack against the Muslim world viewed by Scott (2007) as a clash between Islam and the West. Hence, in a reverse Orientalistic way, all public visibility of women and all progressive activities of women are deemed to be the simulation of “Western modernity”, labeled as anti Islamic, and the threat in support of compulsory adoption of veil or the pro-choice of veiling in these groups works as a defensive mechanism for their ‘reverse Orientalism’ project.

CONCLUSION

In this essay I attempt to unpack the politics of veil in Bangladesh. I encapsulate the antagonistic positions of feminists and fundamentalist Islamists concerning burqa and bring theoretical insights to delve the politics of both groups behind their pro and anti choice of burqa. From various theoretical perspectives I reveal that the feminists who have a very negative attitude towards veiled women are largely remade by the

Western discourse of “modernity” and by linking themselves with such discourse they try to be a part of the “superior Western culture”. In contrast, the rigid positions of the fundamentalist Islamists are also based on the Orientalist construction of superior versus inferior culture, a clash between ‘Islam’ and the ‘West’. Thus, both are radically influenced by a fixed knowledge, have no consideration towards difference, do not consider history and its particular context, and fall in the dangerous dichotomy of “superior” versus “inferior culture”. Such modernity and anti-modernity projects of both groups create unnecessary complexities in societies and fail to capture the realities of social life. To avoid such complexities we need to learn to respect cultural differences; definitely other knowledge is possible and we have to admit that. To conclude, I would like to quote de Sousa Santos et al. (2007: xlvii), who bring the hope of living together with negotiated differences:

The epistemic diversity of the world is potentially infinite. There is no ignorance or knowledge in general. All ignorance is ignorant of a certain knowledge, and all knowledge is the overcoming of a particular ignorance. There are no complete knowledges.

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Reimagining Reproductive Health Interventions: Exploring the importance of including Men in Reproductive Health Programs

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PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

This essay supports the argument that including men in sexual and reproductive health programs and interventions is essential to the realization of SRH (sexual and reproductive health) rights by men and women, boys and girls. The focus is mainly on developing countries, however it is acknowledged that lack of male-involvement in SRH and women's struggle for empowerment and rights is a global phenomenon. The attempt is made to explore how men have historically been left out of SRH programs as well as why this has proved counterproductive in furthering women's empowerment and fostering healthy sexual and reproductive behaviors among men and women. Past and current SRH frameworks and interventions are discussed as well as an explanation of the locus shift of reproductive health field frameworks further stressing male-involvement. Specific challenges posed by male-involvement programs are identified and the importance of transforming cultural notions of masculinity is introduced as pivotal to sustaining male-involvement in SRH. The essay will conclude by introducing SRH interventions centered on male-involvement, yet rooted in a comprehensive development framework sensitive to gender and power inequalities that are present in the political economy and imbedded in culture and society. These progressive and inclusive programs seek to transform gender identities, believing that gender and power inequalities lie at the heart of the struggle to achieve SRH rights.

INTRODUCTION

The lives of men and women are inexorably connected; they are indispensable partners in sexual relationships. However, this interconnection in the lives of men and women is not reflected in many SRH programs and government policies today. Women, as the vulnerable gender are the targets of interventions and policies, whereas men are sidelined as the problematic gender posing a barrier to women being empowered and realizing SRH rights. However, it doesn't make sense to think that the problem of male non-involvement in SRH can be solved without addressing male behavior and including men as part of the solution. Globally, women's lack of SRH rights has manifested itself in many harmful ways including high levels of maternal death, high exposure to HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), as well as increased vulnerability to poverty and sexual and gender-based violence. In light of increased attention to women's vulnerability, prior to the 1995 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) conference in Cairo most SRH programs and interventions targeted women for mainly biological reasons such as women being the only ones who can become pregnant and bear children, and most contraceptives being designed for women's use (AGI 2003: 7).

These interventions were soon criticized however by those who felt gender inequalities and unequal power relations enforced by social and cultural norms in many countries were working against many of the interventions, and rights were still not being realized. For example, even if contraception, health facilities, and ante-natal care are available, it is possible that because of socially and culturally enforced gender roles, a woman must rely on her partner's permission in order to access or receive the SRH rights through services made available to her; thus her journey to access and receive services includes firstly, a need for gender equity and secondly her partner's involvement in SRH. Many programs did not take gender equity and male-involvement into account and instead considered men to be secondary and problematic, deciding to work around men instead of with them, in an effort to achieve empowerment and realization of SRH rights for women (Greene 2000). However, these programs actually served to reinforce gender roles and inequalities that inhibit reproductive health, essentially pushing men to the side and failing to challenge the root causes of the disempowerment of women: gender inequalities.

WHY WORKING WITH MEN IS IMPORTANT AND WHY WORKING AROUND MEN IS NOT EFFECTIVE

Men were of little interest in the family planning and RH field for a long time, being left out of research and assumed to have minimal roles in fertility decisions and behavior. Most programs and interventions had women at the center as primary caregivers and child bearers, as well the main actors in reproductive decision-making. Men were seen as having uneducated and irresponsible behavior regarding fertility control, blocking female contraception, being sexually promiscuous, and under-investing in their children's lives (Greene 2000). In general, programs operated in a normative fashion, believing male resistance to family planning and SRH to be an unchanging fact. Such an attitude reinforced men's non-involvement, permitting men to be disengaged from reproductive activities (*ibid.*). But sharing SRH information and contraception through gender-specific channels will never address problems of unplanned pregnancies, HIV/AIDS infection, and STIs that affect and devastate the lives of both men and women (AGI 2003: 7). For instance, HIV/AIDS can never be tackled without researching and understanding the sexual behavior of men; high incidences of sexual violence towards women will not be adequately understood or handled without understanding the perpetrators and digging down into the root causes for such violence. Unwanted and high-risk pregnancies and their possible outcomes of dangerous abortions and the need for ante-natal care will never be controlled if the decision-making locus involving strong culturally-defined gender relations is not understood and adopted as part of the framework of SRH programs (Dixon-Mueller & Germain 2000: 73).

Understanding that reproduction is a stratified social process, not just a biological act is central to understanding that SRH programs must involve both men and women. The decisions surrounding reproduction lie within a social context involving individuals who live with the reality of inequalities based on gender and class. Men and women live in socio-economic climates full of uncertainties; they live in cultures that many times define their roles as men and women. The reality of difficult political and economic climates make it difficult for such notions of being a 'real man' or a 'real woman' to actually be attained (Keysers 2009a). Men's 'irresponsible' or 'disinterested' behavior towards SRH is not something that is static: behaviors are contextual and not necessarily biological and unchanging. Therefore, men's risky behaviors must be under-

stood, analyzed, and taken into account in SRH programs and their interventions. The social ecology model developed by psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) is an important analysis tool that can be used to help develop interventions. The model illustrates the inter-relationship between social structure, context and agency, and how this relationship influences behavior and decision-making. According to the model, individuals make decisions and form behaviors firstly within the context of their home life (family, peers, school, work, culture) which lies within the context of a community (job market, media, culture, interventions), which in turn lies within the wider context of a national and international system of laws, policies, culture, and institutions (Keysers 2009b). SRH attitudes and behaviors need to be analyzed using a tool such as the social ecology model in order that interventions are designed to reflect the reality of a complex process of decision-making and behavioral formation.

An ineffective intervention could be one based on statistics that show a low percentage of male condom use. The intervention promotes female contraception and also increases male and female access to condoms, making sure there are adequate resources available. The first problem with this intervention is that it does not take into account what is behind the statistics. The reasons why men are not wearing condoms are not explored, and it is quite possible that they know about condoms, that they already have access to condoms, but that there are other reasons condoms are not being used. Introducing women to contraception does not solve the gendered power relations shaped by a woman's culture that might limit her from using contraception. Men must be included in research in order that their reasons for not using condoms, for example, are understood and addressed (AGI 2003: 7, Greene 2000: 54). When research that includes men is done in this fashion, it has been found that masculine identities and cultural pressures in gender constructs lie at the heart of the choice to use or not to use a condom, not only availability (Adriao et. al. 2002: 204). The SRH community has learned to treat women in their own right, not only as child bearers or wives, however the same step needs to be taken with men. Including men in research and designing interventions purposefully to educate and encourage male-involvement in SRH is essential to building a strong foundation for family life and well-being. Studies that identify the obstacles that prevent men from being receptive to SRH services and education are few, yet

more emphasis is emerging on studying masculinity and addressing gender inequalities, to ensure that work with men is successful and both men and women's SRH rights are realized.

SHIFTS IN FRAMEWORKS AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES - CAIRO ICPD 1994 & BEIJING 1995

A breakthrough in the world of SRH took place during two international conferences: the 1994 United Nations ICPD in Cairo and World Conference of Women in Beijing in 1995. The ICPD program of action stressed the need to increase male responsibility and participation in SRH. The 20-year program of action calls for the promotion of full involvement of men in family and the full integration of women in community life in order to ensure that men and women are equal partners. It recognizes that:

Efforts should be made to emphasize men's shared responsibility and promote their active involvement in responsible parenthood, sexual and reproductive behavior, including family planning; prenatal, maternal and child health; prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV; and prevention of unwanted and high-risk pregnancies (ICPD 1994: 4.27).

During and after the conference it was accepted that knowledge about masculine social practices and sexual behaviors contributed to successful programs and interventions centered around child health, prevention of HIV/AIDS and STIs, gender-based violence and also family planning (Adrião et al. 2002: 201). Cairo and Beijing represented a paradigm shift, acknowledging that the debate about reproduction was much broader and deeper than a mere problem of fertility control amongst poverty-stricken individuals in society, a more holistic approach to understanding reproduction actually needed to be taken when designing policies and program interventions (Dixon-Mueller & Germain 2000).

This more holistic approach moves further and further away from the pre-Cairo family planning models that only target women, to an approach titled "Gender equity in reproductive and sexual health" that integrates the ICPD framework's gender perspective centered on education and human rights (Keysers 2009b). Social, cultural, economic, and political factors are included as part of a rights-based framework, recognizing that taking into consideration and understanding the context of individuals in their wider realm combined with a holistic approach cen-

tered around gender equity is the best way to provide transformative and sustainable SRH interventions. However, achieving gender equity implies social transformation, which can only occur when men recognize that women and men live interdependent lives and empowering women will also benefit them (UNFPA 2005: ch. 6). The ICPD program of action states that,

Changes in both men's and women's knowledge, attitudes and behavior are necessary conditions for achieving the harmonious partnership of men and women. Men play a key role in bringing about gender equality since, in most societies, men exercise preponderant power in nearly every sphere of life ranging from personal decisions regarding the size of families to the policy and program decisions taken at all levels of Government (ICPD 1994: 4.24).

The shift in the SRH thinking paradigm allowed for new types of creative interventions to be introduced and financed with the consensus that such targeted interventions were now essential to not only SRH issues, but issues of poverty, violence, and inequalities impairing development and the general well-being of individuals and families.

CHALLENGES PRESENTED IN MALE-INVOLVEMENT CENTERED PROGRAMMING

Interventions that see risky sexual behavior among men as biological, normal, and unchanging miss the opportunity to work with men and women to change gender stereotypes paving the way to tackling gender inequality (Greene 2000: 54). However, a holistic male-inclusive approach to achieving SRH rights is not easily developed; there are many layers of transformation that need to occur within society in order that male behavior is changed. Perhaps most essential and pivotal to changing gender inequalities and enabling men to be involved in family planning and SRH is the transformation of constructions of masculinity. Differing from one culture to another, the idea of what it means to be a 'real man' has a huge impact on male involvement in the reproductive sphere (Connell 2007). For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, cultural attitudes encourage "machismo" male-dominant behavior to persist, inhibiting gender equality conducive to promoting healthy sexual and reproductive lives for men and women (AGI 2004: 2). Specifically, in Jamaica, the dancehall music culture serves to reinforce dominant

masculinity with lyrics that promote men having to prove virility by acts such as womanizing and spending large amounts of money. Such behavior has been termed “badass honor” and is characteristic of men in Jamaica trying to gain social power:

In the ghetto, as in the wider society, the rites of manhood entailed proving one’s manliness to other men. Some was skill in sports, or use of weapons, capacity for smoking large amounts of weed, consuming liquor, enjoying the fineries of life, and most importantly being able to control women or have sexual access to as many of them as possible (Gray 2004: 168).

Challenging deeply embedded and culturally enforced and accepted gender constructs is an extremely difficult task because it is a collective reality reinforced by so many aspects of public and private life, including schools and other institutions. According to anthropologist R.W. Connell (2007),

This is why a change in gender practice among men and boys is hard to start simply by persuasion. An individual man may be willing, but the institutional setting, or the peer group culture, pushes in the other direction.

Gender constructs are formed over long periods of time and are influenced by social and political factors. For example, “badass honor” in Jamaica is believed to have been constructed partially due to colonization and slavery, where flaunting of sexuality was seen as a form of social resistance, a political weapon of the weak through which men found personal power in a society where they were politically and economically lacking (Gray 2004: 240). Men may have qualities conducive to being a dedicated father, yet their social situation does not call or encourage these qualities. Connell (2007) believes that it is this complex nature of masculinities and femininities that indicates tensions that can lead to change. History and survey research has given evidence that gender constructs do change over time and that economic change, war, generational turnover, and broader cultural shifts may be involved, in a sense, there is “fertile soil for the seeds of rebellion and change” (Dixon-Mueller & Germain 2000: 73). The paradigm shifts in SRH may represent these broad cultural shifts if program interventions are designed that challenge gender constructs and transform culturally accepted hegemonic masculinity to be broader, and more accommodating and favorable to achieving SRH rights for all.

TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAMMING PROMOTING MALE INVOLVEMENT

The Papai (“daddy” in Portuguese) organization in Recife, NE Brazil is a research-oriented program started in 1997. It develops activities in gender and masculinity through partnerships, teaching activities and social interventions with the local young male population. One of Papai’s projects, “Gema,” promotes a multi-disciplinary context of dialogue and research, bringing together researchers in human, social and health sciences from both universities and NGOs in order to broaden the debate on SRH. This research group produces books and booklets and organizes events allowing for a unique sharing environment shaping effective social interventions and research work in SRH rights. Papai seeks to open channels of thinking about masculinity that encourage men to reflect on sexual behavior and the social practices into which they are socialized yet don’t generally think about. The organization works together with men to address gender inequalities, and develops strategies to engage men, placing them at the center of their own discussions and transformations. One such strategy is “fórró” workshops, which use the local language of music in an effort to attract and sensitize those who hear it and promote greater participation. In fórró workshops popular music is loaded with lyrics about gender, sexuality and fatherhood, providing content worth reflecting on. The workshops have so far engaged men in different contexts including schools, low-income neighborhoods, and amongst young fathers and RH professionals in the local hospital. Papai has found that in all contexts, the music brings young men together and through singing and playing instruments, has created a dynamic environment for RH education and dialogue. Young men talked about feelings of insecurity that they didn’t feel able to discuss regularly. The organization always finds addressing these issues challenging because they touch on alternative constructs of masculinity, which are not encouraged by society (Adrião et al. 2002: 204).

Papai also worked with unemployed men who live in extreme poverty and spend most of their time in bars. Researchers explored ways in which they could be more self-reliant. The young men said that the dominant model of masculinity made them feel guilty because their social and economic status did not allow them to fit the model, causing them to neglect their bodies and health and expose themselves to dangerous situations. Fórró workshops were used in order to create a comfortable environment for dialogue about men’s needs.

The songs served as a major catalyst in the process of reconstructing meanings of what being a man or a woman signifies in our society, opening up the space for participants to express themselves by providing an artistic medium to which they could relate their ideas and feelings (Adrião et al. 2002: 207).

The important part about this intervention is that it eventually belongs to the participants who are not only singing and playing music but through dialogue and education are reconstructing their own histories and identities. Once reflection has begun, sexual attitudes and risky behavior that are directly tied to social norms related to manhood can begin to be transformed.

Effective interventions like those of Papai's seek to help men understand how gender norms affect them, how norms about what it means to be 'real men' are harmful to women but also to men. According to MenEngage Alliance, an NGO also located in Brazil, it is incredibly important that programs give men and boys the opportunity to build the communication and negotiations skills necessary to change behaviors, such as having a sense of self-efficacy that allows them to question gender norms, negotiate with partners, question peer groups, and seek services for themselves (Ricardo & Barker 2008: 33). Successful interventions must have a wide spectrum at their core in order that gender inequalities are challenged and behavior transformed into those, which enable healthy sexual and reproductive behaviors to be practiced and sustained.

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE OF SRH RIGHTS FOR MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN

There are many gaps in SRH programming, most particularly the absence of men as participants in research and interventions. Since the shift in thinking in Cairo and the explicit attention to involving men in SRH, research methodology has changed to include men and also to include more qualitative research taking into consideration power hierarchies and gender inequalities. There is now a general consensus about the importance of transforming gender relations and masculinities among programs whose interventions deliberately target gender inequalities with an ultimate aim at the realization of SRH rights by men, women, and children. Advocates for SRH rights have come a long way in appealing to the wider realm of national politicians in charge of finance and govern-

ance and demanding that SRH continue to be placed in the development agenda and new and creative interventions be financed and encouraged by public officials (UNFPA 2005: ch. 6).

However, there is much more work to be done. Many SRH programs still do not challenge gender inequalities and notions of masculinity. There is also an urgent need for public dialogue and questioning in schools, communities, homes, and religious institutions about male sexuality and their involvement or lack thereof in SRH. Men need to speak out, and hold each other accountable if cultural norms that make risky sexual behavior acceptable and possible are to be challenged, masculinities to be transformed, and gender inequalities to be leveled out (Ricardo & Barker 2008: 36). SRH rights advocates Ruth Dixon-Mueller and Adrienne Germain stress that,

It is important not to underestimate the agency of individual actors within even relatively rigid systems. There is often more room for maneuver than one might think (2002: 73).

Though research is lacking, and few good models of male-involvement work exist, it is important that the transformative work has started, and that the “fertile seeds of rebellion and change” continue to grow, in order that both men and women can live healthy and happy sexual and reproductive lives.

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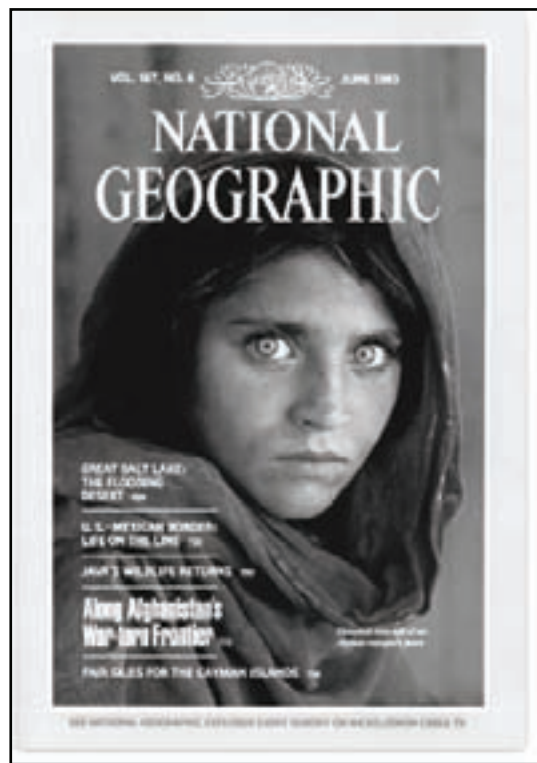
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16

What's Yours is Mine

TARA TABASSI



'Best Cover' 20/3/2009

INTRODUCTION

This essay explores the complexities of how identity and life are represented in media through analysis and assessment of Cathy Newman's

Special Report: A Life Revealed, featured in National Geographic's (NatGeo) April 2002 edition.

Situating Myself

I remember, as a young girl, the day I turned the NatGeo page and saw the famous photograph popularly termed 'Afghan Girl.' I cut out the arresting photo and hung it on my wall, where it remained until I moved away. I was just one girl, ignorant of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the impact on Afghani people: attaching my own specific meaning to the photograph. The act of cutting out her picture and looking at it for years, however, is where the analysis of ownership and objectification begins. The 'Afghan Girl' was utilized to operate within a storyline representing specific Afghani refugee populations to the West, and commercialised to sell everything from calendars to coasters. The character Chacko from *God of Small Things* articulated imperialism as, 'What's yours is mine, and what is mine is mine also' (Roy 1997:57). This verbalization expresses the problematic role of media as a holder of representations along with media-consumers' ownership of publicised images and experiences. Only later in life did the historical role of images, articles and particularly the function of NatGeo as an 'educational source' for developing ideology in Western adults and youth become clear. I situate myself in this essay as a participant in this Western ideology; Iranian-American raised in the Netherlands, sitting in my middle-class apartment bedroom gazing at the green eyes of the 'Afghan Girl,' allocating my interpretations of her reality and feelings to a photograph – a photograph that now, as a graduate student, I am critiquing through a reflexive process.

Interest in Piece

Johnstone's exploration of the function of narration ('talking about the past is apparently something all humans do') was elaborated by Rosen's 'autobiographical impulse' – the 'urge to make our lives coherent by telling about them' (Johnstone 2001:640-1). Linde further expands their ideas: 'In order to exist in the social world with a comfortable sense of being a good, socially proper, and stable person, an individual needs to have a coherent, acceptable and constantly revised life-story' (ibid). If stories are living and changing as products of social life, what then is the power of discourse in arresting development? Examining NatGeo's role

as a teller of other human beings' stories, what does it mean when a story is taken, printed and distributed far from its source? In *Orientalism*, Said explains: "the Orientalist's presence is enabled by the Orient's effective absence" (1978:208). Precisely because the source of a representation is not the person/group/country represented, the representer can enable a new kind of essentializing discourse. Does this affect the 'comfortable sense of being a good, socially proper and stable person'? (Johnstone 2001:640-1) Who is a good person and who is not? Where is the humanity of the person whose story it 'is' and more critically, what value is given to the people/institutions who make profit from taking that story? To whom is a story told, by whom, and for what purpose?

Methodology

Framed by the above questions, Narrative Analysis will be used, structured by five of Labov's personal experience narrative (PEN) clauses: (1) Abstract; (2) Orientation; (3) Complicating Action; (4) Result/Resolution; and (5) Coda. Johnstone defines 'narratives' as talk about past events and 'story' as narrative with a point (2001:636-9). NatGeo's stories are arguably presented as 'first-hand' data and interpreted as reality. Johnstone's definition becomes meaningful if NatGeo is interpreted as a creator of discourse with specific agendas, following Said's analysis that every representation is political and therefore specific agendas (1978:11). Roe's work applies fairytale structure and questions "'real' world versus fiction' in the context of development literature, arguing that 'storification' occurs due to demand for writing that 'holds together' without fragmentation, developed by a cast: Villain, Hero, Victim, Magical Object, Magic Helper, Obstacles, and Journey (1989:1-2). Analyzing an article as a whole, seamless narrative, presenting heroes and demons, illuminates the structures necessary for readers to believably follow discourse.

Text will be analyzed with special attention to metaphor, underlying assumptions and 'constructed dialogues' created for characters by the narrator (Johnstone 2001:640). Overall narrative analysis will be complemented by rudimentary visual analysis of related images in order to understand the story's function.

BACKGROUND

NatGeo speaks as 'fact,' and therefore exemplifies the true danger of speaking as though the experience of the beholder is not only the human experience, but also 'fact.' Often NatGeo represents the world through androcentric-Eurocentric perspectives, creating damaging, distorted discourse because of its limitations on definitions of difference. Established in 1888 in the U.S, NatGeo is its third largest magazine, with more than ten million subscribers. As Steet describes, 'Having been given privileged educational space that material from popular culture is generally denied, [NatGeo] has long been a staple of school, public, and home libraries across the country,' and 'for more than a century, North-Americans have learned something of their sense of self and other by way of [NatGeo's] worldview' (2000:2-3). Until the mid-1960s, the magazine's slogan was 'It Identifies You.' Currently it reads, 'Inspiring people to care about the globe,' engaging popular development discourses. NatGeo has presented certain images and frames of the Third World, such as the symbolization of veiled women, as commodities to be uncovered and discovered, as exemplified through the adventurous process of 'A Life Revealed.' The article's author, Cathy Newman, is a senior writer for NatGeo, most known for her work on perfume, fashion and women photographers (nationalgeographic.com n.d.) While Newman is a third-party author of the narrative, at times she becomes an authoritative and omniscient voice within the minds of characters, expressing their motives.

The Photographer

The photographer of the original 1985 'Afghan Girl' is Steve McCurry, 'recognized universally as one of today's finest image-makers' (McCurry 2009). McCurry's career began with photographs of the previous conflict in Afghanistan, highlighted by the 'Afghan Girl,' one of the most globally recognizable photographs from which McCurry gained great benefits in terms of career status, reputation and livelihood.

(Un)Intended Audiences

By examining the actual (Austrian edition) NatGeo magazine, I found advertisements by: Rolex, Cartier, Elouda Bay Palace Hotel, Shell, Land Rover and Siemens. Judging by the class of companies and products, the magazine caters to affluent readers. Models featured in advertisements

were 'white,' and the ambiance is one of luxury. Because NatGeo is based in the U.S, and is readily found in Western newsstands, the advertisements and the €5.50 price of the magazine (albeit standard magazine pricing) would allow one to conclude that it was published for wealthy white Western populations. The unintended audience, and ontological message they possibly received, is pertinent. An Afghan friend once jokingly described how the 'Afghan Girl' hung over every immigrant Afghani mantel in America as if she were part of the family.

Social Context

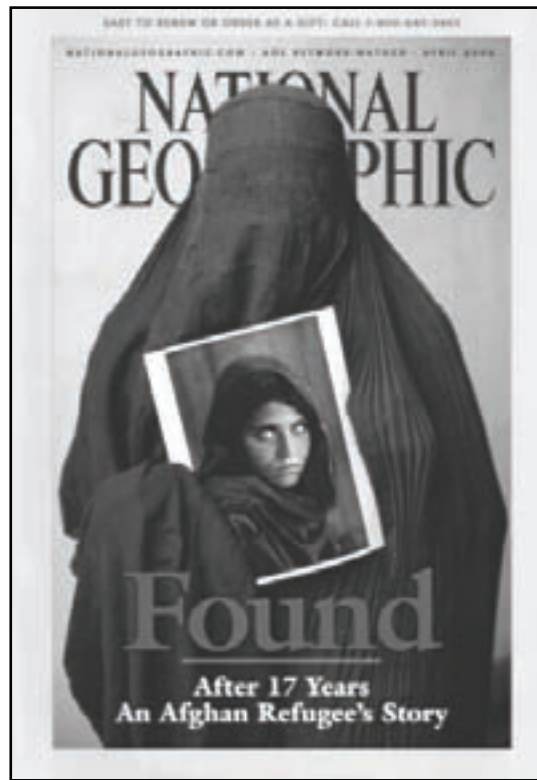
The article was written in April 2002, approximately half a year after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001. The invasion was fuelled by defensive militarized discourses of 'finding Osama Bin Laden,' demonization of his Taliban hosts and U.S. retribution for 9/11. By 2002, supplemental justification was needed. The academic and socially Orientalist feminist call to 'save' Afghani women from their violent men was seized. Underlying this discourse was the image of the veiled woman, a 'visible sign of an invisible enemy that threatens not only "us", citizens of the West, but our entire Western civilization' (Hirschkind and Mahmood 2002:341). The image of veiled oppressed Muslim women flooded U.S. media and contributed to an automatic association of Islam with violence and terrorism.

ANALYSIS

Analysis will follow the sequence presented by the article: Cover and caption; Contents; Main text (with images); and, McCurry's concluding letter.

1. Abstract

The abstract summarizes the impending story to entice potential readers to the worthiness of 'the speaking rights temporarily relinquish[ed]' (Johnstone 2001:5). In this case both text and image will be analyzed to assess the worthy claim:



'Sharbat Gula...' 20/3/2009

Cover and Contents Page

The bold red 'Found' colourfully clashing against the purple burqa clutching the infamous 'Afghan Girl' presents a compelling visual abstract for the upcoming story. The use of 'found' means that something was lost; the search implies certain entitlement or authority. Most compelling is the subtext, 'An Afghan Refugee's Story,' suggesting that words from the 'found' woman herself will follow, signifying agency. To Western audiences, spoon-fed with discourses of 'unveiling=saving,' the truth beneath the veil is enticing. Crucial are the questions: Was her story asked? Was everything she said reported, or only what the writers/editors thought is interesting? What therefore becomes essentialized? The cover's inside caption reads, 'An Afghan woman holds a photograph of herself as a young refugee - a photograph seen by millions, but never,

until now, by her.’ The caption demands that the original picture should be important to her because it was seen by countless people and assumes that notoriety, not privacy, is valued by her. In NatGeo’s assumption of the photograph’s importance to her, it appoints itself her saviour by delivering it.

The label ‘Special Report’ in the Contents page emphasizes the featured article’s importance. Here, the blurb reads, ‘Her eyes have captivated the world since she appeared on our cover in 1985. Now we can tell her story.’ This one line makes the discourse vivid. Using the words ‘captivated’ and ‘appeared’ imply that she would have dissipated without Western audiences. The description does not centre on the woman herself, but on her body: her eyes as captivators. The continuous use of possessive ‘our’ and ‘we’ assumes a collective voice between reader and magazine: a united Western voice sharing similar discourses and viewpoints. The description concludes in final ownership over her – instead of ‘now she can tell her story,’ a damaging but oddly truthful statement: ‘now WE can tell HER story’, renders her voiceless. Whatever hopes of agency the cover promised, are now lost.



'A Life Revealed' 20/3/2009

A Life Revealed

The double-spread of images marks a shift, the 'Afghan Girl' still nameless but now, with the turning of every page, unveiled. The title reflects this undressing, 'A Life Revealed,' where wording such as 'told' or 'asked' is not used, but 'revealed' as if to imply a grand opening and excavation: a lifting of the burqa for Western eyes. This heading is subtitled, 'Seventeen years after she stared out from the cover... a former Afghan refugee comes face to face with the world once more.' The disturbing phrase, 'face to face,' immediately begs the question: Can she see us, the audience, from the page? We, the well-to-do buyer, can see her face, scrutinize the two photographs, ourselves the intimate explorer, comparing features, discovering matching freckles and liplines, like a one-way sexual expedition. And her? What did she find in her tiny distorted reflection mirrored in the camera's lens? The passage of time is suspenseful. Seventeen years of waiting: what will she say? The sentence concludes with 'once more' to confirm the reader's relationship with this character. This is a sequel, a catching up of old friends....

After the sequence of 'thrilling' headlines, photographs and suspenseful captions, readers finally have access to the story. The actual article begins with an engaging opening paragraph, including the ominous abstract: 'She remembers her anger.' The author engages readers here with raw emotion, a glimpse into the 'mind' of the anonymous woman through constructed inner dialogue.

2. Orientation

The Orientation is an introduction to characters, temporal and physical settings, and situation, usually by using 'past progressive' timing (Johnstone 2001:638).

Orientation of Memory: Romantic Encounter

The text begins in present-tense, describing the 1985 encounter and establishing relationship: 'She remembers the moment. The photographer took her picture.' '...She had not been photographed since,' prioritizing time shared with the photographer. The recollection is set metaphorically, 'the light was soft,' creating a romantic setting. The Hero 'noticed her first,' reconfirming her unique value. The constructed monologue moves readers through McCurry's memory.

It could be anyone at anytime, much like in romance novels. While he noticed her first, he approached her last, 'sensing her shyness.' The language, metaphor and avoidance of names collude to produce a familiar account: these two people know and remember each other, seeding in readers' minds the romantic connection between Hero and Victim, almost a star-crossed destiny.

Photo Orientation: Those Haunting Eyes

The photograph introduces the 'Magical Object,' described metaphorically, 'one of those images that sears the heart' attributing an active role so powerful that it jumps from page and stabs the viewer's heart. Eyes 'haunted and haunting' suggest her struggle and that of viewers when looking into her eyes. 'Searing,' the eyes becomes not only a source of beauty, but hostility as well. They tell a story; 'in them you can read tragedy of a land drained by war,' whereby her eyes becomes representative of Afghanistan at a specific time, ravaged by invasion. Despite the role of the Soviet Union as Villain in U.S. militarized discourse during the first photograph's time period, the antagonist is now depicted differently, 'She became known... as the "Afghan Girl," and for 17 years no one knew her name.' Within this namelessness NatGeo begins its adventure: 'hero decides that this misfortune has to be corrected and... departs from home to do so' (Johnstone 2001:2). Through an Orientalist lens, anonymity allows people to universalize the 'Afghan Girl,' and serves as the misfortune, representing 'that something is simply missing, thereby motivating action:' (ibid) justifying the beginning of adventure – the Search!

3. Complicating-Action: The Search

The Search begins quickly; the 'team from NatGeo Television & Film's EXPLORER brings McCurry to Pakistan 'to search for the girl with green eyes.' The team's name is telling. Using historically-packed 'explorer' invokes nostalgia for discovery: what can be found?

The 'complicating-action' is the 'sequence of events leading up to their climax' (Johnstone 2001:638) and is designed to maintain suspense without boring readers. The first Magic Helper appears: a nameless teacher who 'claimed' to know the Victim. The Hero rejects her and continues the search, establishing the authority McCurry embodies on

this voyage; therefore shifting that Helper to the category of 'obstacles': people pretending to know the Victim.

The second nameless Magic Helper appears, who 'got wind of the search,' as though nature is carrying the goal through elemental forces. This Helper is obliging and mentions childhood history with the Victim as well as her present location. He brings her, defying obstacles not only temporal ('six-hour drive and three-hour hike') but deadly ('across a border that swallows lives'). Despite that, she arrives after three days with children and, like a lover's reunion, Hero and Victim meet: 'When McCurry saw her walk into the room, he thought to himself: This is her.' And with his certainty, she is 'found.'

4. Evaluation: Examination of Her Life, Her Body

The 'finding' instigates evaluation in many forms: free clauses on the story from outside ('it was the strangest feeling'); attributed character commentary; extra details; suspension of action via paraphrase/repetition; gesture intensification; and comparisons of what did/did not happen, or might have been (Johnstone 2001:638).

Villain 'namelessness' is first resolved, 'Names have power, so let us speak of hers: Sharbat Gula.' No longer anonymous, yet her name, probably unheard before by 'typical' Western readers, will not resonate, establish connection or meaning. Gula will effectively remain 'other.' To embed the unusual, she is identified as Pashtun, described as 'the most warlike of Afghan tribes,' reinforcing ethnicity-driven barbarism and racist perspectives Western militarized discourse often attributes to Third-World conflict. This is further legitimized by presenting supposedly widely-known (essentializing) facts, 'it is said of the Pashtun that they are only at peace when they are at war.' Here the entire ethnicity is not only attributed to being inherently violent, but enjoying it as well. This separates them from the intended audience of 'good, socially proper and stable persons'. Gula is identified within this violent category: 'her eyes - then and now - burn with ferocity,' as though both as adult Pashtun and as child, she embodied natural aptitudes for violence.

Damaging attributions continue in discussions about the uncertainty of her age. 'Stories shift like sand in a place where no records exist. No one, not even she, knows for sure.' The metaphor evokes stereotypical 'Arabian night' imagery, and bestows importance to Western record-keeping and science. The timelessness of Afghanistan is reminiscent of

that assumed of the Orient. In the context of development, 'time-standing-still-at-the-precipice-of-change' connotes the ability of development practitioners to sweep in, making claims despite changing realities (Roe 1989:4).

Judgment of her physique ensues: 'time and hardship have erased her youth.' The author reduces natural aging processes not only to time but to hardship, and diminish her by equating it to 'erasure'. Gula is dehumanized; 'her skin looks like leather.' This is reinforced: 'the eyes still glare. That has not softened,' as if the intense look caught in 1985 will permanently render her a hardened woman. 'She has had a hard life,' states McCurry in an authoritarian role as arbiter of beauty.

The paragraph concludes by demanding reflection: 'Now, consider... a young girl with sea green eyes. Her eyes challenge ours. Most of all, they disturb. We cannot look away.' This effective questioning of readers' thoughts and its strategic timing implies another level of interaction - perhaps one of U.S. intervention in order to save... Afghan women... like Gula?

Aggressive description of Gula's plight continues metaphorically: 'jaws of soviet invasion' and imagery of airplanes 'stabbing her with dread.' Dehumanizing metaphors describe Gula's nameless brother's 'raptor face' with 'piercing eyes' who speaking for Gula, 'fill[s] in the narrative of her life,' and plays into negative representations of Afghani males.

An apparently 'respected' (therefore authoritative), named Pakistani journalist, Yusufzai, explains Gula's experience, apologizing for Sharbat, and how she 'live[s] at the mercy of the politics of other countries,' hinting at the U.S. There is no mention or critique of U.S. involvement in the article. Only present and future instability: 'It is the ongoing tragedy of Afghanistan. Invasion. Resistance. Invasion. Will it ever end?', suggesting need for a larger Hero. With that helpless tone, the author returns to Gula and describes her life as 'means to scratch out an existence, nothing more,' following dominant discourses of poverty as bland unfulfilling livelihoods. Her day's 'bare outline' is described for her, as though only a skeleton of a 'real' day - presumably those of cosmopolitan lives filled with thoughts and opportunities. Gula's life is apparently quite the opposite, thoughtless and hopeless: 'she cooks... cleans... does laundry. She cares for her children: the centre of her life.' Her brother again speaks for her, 'Sharbat has never known a happy day...except perhaps

the day of her marriage'. This (assumed direct quote) from him confirms insulting presumptions that disadvantage persons – particularly oppressed Muslim women – do not experience joy. Further details report that Gula remembers being married at 13, which the husband disputes as 16. So far, Gula is defined solely by relationships and remains mute. Some attributed roles are contradictory, such as that of mother enjoying her children and violent Pashtun with searing eyes.

Finally, Islamic dress comes into question via Yusufzai, explaining Gula's entry into purdah at age 13, explained by the author as secluded existence instead of systematized modesty: 'Women vanish from the eye.' 'Vanish' engages Orientalist discourse whereby women apparently cease to 'exist' in contrast with the visibility of female body exposure in Western society. For the first time in the article, Gula herself is directly quoted: '[burqa] is a beautiful thing to wear, not a curse.' Ignoring that statement, in the next sentence she is described with constructed inner dialogue, 'Faced by questions, she retreats into the black shawl wrapped around her face, as if by doing so she might will herself to evaporate.' She states that her hijab is positive, and it is portrayed as something under which she hides and vanishes.

Culture is implicitly addressed, 'The eyes flash anger. It is not her custom to subject herself to the questions of strangers.' Despite it not being 'custom' to be without burqa in front of unrelated males, photographs of her face are viewed by millions of readers. The author chooses not to discuss this, nor the dynamics of how Gula's unveiling is orchestrated in the presence of McCurry, translators and other male members of the EXPLORER, dismissing her attachment to hijab. The author perpetuates a dehumanizing tone, choosing to write 'the eyes,' not 'her eyes.' Gula is asked, 'Had she ever felt safe?' to which she answers, 'No. But life under the Taliban was better. At least there was peace and order.' Profoundly disturbing is the lack of unpacking this statement. Gula is not asked why she feels this way, nor her reasoning. Instead the story quickly shifts to education, Gula's lack of it, remorse about leaving school and her hopes of education for her daughters. The author writes, 'Education is the light in the eye. There is no such light for her.' By making grand claims of Gula's lack of light, as well as equating light solely with book-learning and not life experience, ontological assumptions of her ignorance are made. This claim, paired with descriptions of her allegedly wanting to disappear into hijab and the failure to unpack her state-

ments, undermine her and generate a feeble, pathetic character. Is Gula presented as anything more than nothing? The narrative continues brightly, ‘The two younger daughters still have a chance.’ If they have a chance at the light Gula has supposedly missed, the assumption is that something must occur so as to remedy this lack. And quickly...

5. Result/Resolution: Reunion of Survivor and Saviour!

The result/resolution clause releases tensions in the narrative and finally tells what happened (Johnstone 2001:638). ‘The reunion between the woman with the green eyes and the photographer was quiet.’ This is justified through cultural explanations, ‘[for] married women, cultural tradition is strict. She must not look [and]... smile - at a man who is not her husband.’ Repetitively the article continues, ‘she did not smile at McCurry’ as if to imply unfriendliness to him, despite earlier explanations. Gula’s thoughts are constructed, ‘she cannot understand how her picture has touched so many. She does not know the power of those eyes.’ Gula has become multi-layered in her ignorance: she cannot perceive what all in the West know of her: the power of ‘those’ eyes.

6. Coda: She survived?

The story closes with the Coda, whereby summaries or brief connection with the world is achieved (Johnstone 2001:638) and concludes with her Survivor role. ‘Such knife-thin odds. That she would be alive. That she could be found. That she could endure such loss.’ Repetitious sentence structure emphasizes the gravity. ‘Knife’ imagery implies danger and recalls her ethnically-violent inherency. The pairing of the dehumanising ‘found’ and dangerous imagery implies courage of those who find her.

The righteous conclusion that ‘surely, in the face of such bitterness the spirit could atrophy,’ comparing what could have happened, suggests that Gula’s spirit has indeed atrophied. Reference is made to Gula’s ‘losses,’ not mentioned before except of one daughter’s death. Gula is asked: ‘How had she survived?’ Such a grand question fails to take into account her point of reference, as if her survival was nearly impossible, despite the survival of millions of Afghani refugees. ‘The answer came wrapped in unshakable certitude. “It was,” said Sharbat Gula, “the will of God”.’ This is one of few times Gula’s full name is used instead of female pronouns or only first name, reinforcing diminutive objectification. The choice of ‘unshakable certitude’ suggests fanatical faith, and is

oblivious to cultural common courtesy which requires automatic responses to many questions, including 'it was the will of God' or 'In-sha'Allah' (God willing) in reference to something hoped for. To readers ignorant of these colloquialisms, the coda clause is established: Gula's unshakable faith in God. What does Muslim faith in God mean to a presumably Christian majority Western audience? In line with terrorism discourse, unshakable Muslim faith is fearful, particularly when from 'oppressed' women, and not only bearded male fanatics.

Finally, a short letter by the photographer himself appears. Despite its placement after the feature piece, it arguably contributes to Reunion clause, explicitly stating in bold lettering, 'I could see her eyes through the camera lens. They're still the same.' Gula's unchanging 'essence,' is stated not as his opinion, but fact. Similar rhetoric is used, McCurry as hero, Gula as Victim/Survivor described with reverence (for her survival), yet maintained within stereotypes of a 'simple' woman. It has a compelling closing, 'it's fortunate we found her now' due to government plans to tear down her camp, and the impossibility of finding her without camp contacts. He states in vividly Orientalist language, 'Afghanistan has been in a Dark-Age for two decades,' solidifying Third-World backwardness, as well as using 'dark,' attributing sinister locationality. He continues in biblical fashion, 'That she's resurfaced now is perhaps prophetic, a hopeful sign' implying that she has arisen by way of miracle, not by the heavily-funded EXPLORER who tracked her down for a story, but by divine fate to satisfy the audience's curiosity: 'What ever happened to that Afghan Girl?' That she was subjected to a hike, drive, border-crossing and invasive unveiling to get her 'story' to satisfy the public and further enrich the pockets of NatGeo and increase its circulation is yet another objectification, dehumanisation and victimisation. His letter concludes ominously, 'We'll have to wait and see,' implying passivity of readers, who are not social agents, merely allowing fate and prophesy (or politics and war) to play out. This passivity does not address the active role of U.S/European militaries invading and occupying Afghanistan. It hints at McCurry's intention to continue actively tracking her with no thought given that he or others who have profited from her image could help realise resettlement, asthma treatment and her dream of her daughters' education. Thus, the journey is temporarily completed and the audacious statement that she never had a happy day in her life presumably includes the day of reunification between Hero/Saviour and Victim.

TEXT AS SOCIAL PHENOMENON WHAT EFFECTS IT ACHIEVES AND HOW

The most vividly disturbing effect of this article is its existence in a highly politicized and militarized period. Imperative is reflection upon how it uses deceptive political representation of Afghanistan to strategically justify violent U.S. invasion. Representation is particularly effective in descriptions of Pashtunis as inherently violent, with the existence of the Taliban as the ruling Pashtun elite and U.S. nemesis. Conspicuously absent is ANY mention of U.S. participation in the conflict. There are underlying assumptions of justification for using force against the Taliban, as means of controlling their violent inherency and fanaticism. The suggestions of Islam's imminent threat, found both in statements of culture and faith, and hopeless representations of Gula arguably conclude with the need for sustained military invasion into Afghanistan, and the importance of U.S. influence to bring about change and 'save' nameless victimized women, such as Gula.

In light of the 1985 photograph and the 2002 sequel claiming to focus on Gula, effective objectification occurs. Reflecting on dehumanization, Said states, 'Orientalism's failure [has] been human as much as intellectual;... in having to take up a position of irreducible opposition to a region of the world it considered alien to its own, Orientalism failed to identify with human experience' (1978:328). Orientalism's failure is evident, particularly in Gula's dehumanization, subtly achieved by maintaining namelessness and allowing her space only at the article's end to make her own statements (dismissed either by male relatives or anti-Islamic discourse). Dehumanization is also manifested in who is given priority and ontological value: the photographer and his quest. McCurry's letter states that he would 'like her to look back in ten years and be happy this happened.' However amiable that he mentions her well-being, it assumes the 'finding' was not carried out for himself, his career, the magazine, the EXPLORER's adventure, the voyeuristic Western audience, or U.S. humanitarian interventionist discourse, but for her and her happiness.

CONCLUSION

Statements about her leathery skin or glaring eyes disturb me and I wonder if Gula is aware of those hurtful descriptions. Would she agree that she never had a happy day except perhaps her wedding day? How did

she feel about millions of people looking at her previous photo and the prospect that millions more might be looking at the new series and judging her. And at what cost (children in tow, nine hours each way, the border crossing)? This project has forced me to reflect deeply on representation: what it means as an outsider writing about people and, therefore, how important it is to go beyond simply obtaining consent. What is really called for is an ethical evaluation of the function of writing about another's experience in the first place, especially for profit.

Why is it so rare to find representations of Afghani refugees as complicated thoughtful people? Or honest discussions of the imperfections of individuals, particularly where author, or photographer, have made mistakes? What would happen if McCurry had discussed what it meant that he took a photograph of a young refugee and never noted her name, or considered giving something back to her, and merely left to make a living off her eyes? Thus rings true Roe's statement that, 'Most of us could start making change now, by realizing the loss of magic that comes with admitting that we don't need any more folktales about the Third World' (1989:7).

If one were to categorize this article, particularly with NatGeo's ability to create realities, one could read it as structured similar to a 'long-lost love story' – Hero photographer catches one glimpse of fair maiden and for years searched for her. However, where this story differs is that when he finally finds her, after long and perilous journeys for both, life has weathered her into the 'Hag,' wrinkled, married, hopeless, and pathetic. Her daughters, however, the youthful offspring, embody hope still, and thus, NatGeo is able to continue its adventurous story with triumph. There was success, yes, and much more adventure to come... Who will win?! Antagonistic Islam swallowing little potential-filled girls? Or NatGeo and the West: shining heroes coming to bring hope to the girls and women of Afghanistan!

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Intersectionality and Human Rights: Law, Theory and Praxis

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To be discriminated against because one is a woman is bad enough. But to be discriminated against because one is not a man, not heterosexual, not white, not a citizen, not Christian, not rich, not young, and not ethnically-correct is worse. It is an act intended to negate an entire human being... After all, don't these identities constitute a critical part of what a human being is and how she relates to her world? (Raj 2003: iv)

A review of the literature on intersectionality indicates that this concept is gaining increasing prominence from human rights activists, feminist and anti-racist theorists, gay rights activists and even criminologists and psychologists. It is therefore a concept worthy of analysis, given its potential to change and improve our current conceptions and approaches to human rights, justice and the social relations of power.

The aim of this essay is to explore human rights theory and praxis at the international level through the lens of intersectionality, with a particular emphasis on rights-based feminist theory which faces many of the same challenges as mainstream human rights theory, despite its contribution to uncovering the gendered dimensions of these theories. According to Freeman (2002: 55 and 56), the extensive international focus on human rights is in need of discussion, exploration and debate because of the controversy and disagreement about rights, their existence or otherwise, their justification and what they, in turn, can justify, such as military intervention. In addition, the universality or otherwise of human rights and the values which underlie them is also a contested issue. This essay will offer arguments for what intersectionality can add and how it can improve current conceptions of and approaches to human rights.

The first two sections provide a definition of intersectionality and offer concrete ways in which intersectionality can improve human rights theory and praxis, with a particular focus on social exclusion, though it should be mentioned that this is not an exhaustive analysis. The final section provides three potential problems or critiques that the application of an intersectional framework could be confronted with, and uses these to further explain the strengths and advantages of intersectionality.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Intersectionality refers to the interaction between and intersections of multiple identities, what Davis calls “categories of difference” (2008: 68), which are produced and reproduced – directly and discursively – in individuals, institutions, and social relations of power, as well as in cultural ideologies and social practices. These intersections result in complex and multi-dimensional experiences of oppression, power, privilege and domination, and their attendant consequences, such as violence and discrimination. The term was first coined in 1989 by Crenshaw (Davis 2008: 68), who differentiated between structural and political intersectionality.

Structural intersectionality is when individuals “are situated within overlapping structures of subordination” so that the reality of multiple hierarchies results in complex and compounded effects, as these multiple systems of oppression interact with one another (Crenshaw 1993: 114). For example, a Native American woman who is the victim of intimate partner violence not only experiences this violence as a woman, but also as a member of a racial minority where there are particular and specific cultural expectations and gendered norms. In addition, she may find that women’s shelters are unable to communicate effectively with her due to language barriers, or that the relative geographic and social isolation of Native American communities could result in difficulty of access to health and support services. She therefore experiences additional discrimination based on race, ethnicity and language, which compounds and changes the reality of how gender-based violence impacts her.

Political intersectionality refers to the way that political and legal discourses and rhetoric “erase” particular individuals and communities by highlighting or “favouring” specific forms of subordination or discrimination at the expense of others (Crenshaw 1993: 115-116). Thus, following on from our earlier example, if the dominant voices in the political arena are those of white, middle-class women, they are likely to speak to

white, middle-class interests, thus concealing the fact that the identity and social positioning of Native American women result in a different experience of domestic violence. The voices of these women are silenced, thereby disguising the need for discourses and services which appropriately address diversity.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND HUMAN RIGHTS THEORY AND PRAXIS

Intersectionality (as a concept) has much to offer human rights theory and praxis, particularly at the international level. The current fragmentation of conventions and human rights instruments such as treaties and treaty bodies, as well as humanitarian organisations and other role players, is due to their attempts to address one “problem” at a time. Thus, we have a multiplicity of human rights conventions, with each treaty addressing one particular issue, such as racism, gender discrimination and women’s rights, child rights, refugees, and more. People are not one-dimensional, however. A woman is not only a woman – she is positioned (and she positions herself) in multiple identities of race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation, among others. For example, women’s experiences of racial or ethnic discrimination often differ radically from those of men.

In addition, despite all these instruments, human rights violations occur on a daily basis – in homes and places of work, in prisons, and so on. While human rights (in both theory and practice) can be used creatively and effectively, some have argued that this “impressive regime of laws do not protect women” (Murungi 2002: 33). There is some truth to this. Both human rights law and practice treat human beings as though we have linear identities. The reality of structural intersectionality means that we need instruments and theories which deal appropriately with the complexities of being a human being and the continuities of socially constructed identities, which are multiple and relational. Intersectionality, as a concept, offers us this potential. Human rights instruments, such as international treaties, as well as interventions in conflict situations, can be strengthened, improved and made more effective through the application of intersectionality.

The realities of intersectionality are lost among our attempts to categorise – people, experiences, data, almost everything. These categories, and the resulting linear identities they create, are neat and relatively easy to work with. The application of the law is made less complex if we

know exactly what we are dealing with: which violation or crime, against whom, by whom and when. And yet, the experience of violence, oppression and social exclusion is different for each individual and community depending on their location in this nexus of discrimination and identity. Thus, improving labour rights on paper, while important, does little to address women's rights if it does not take into account the way women experience institutional gendered discrimination and how this intersects with class or ethnicity. The importance we place on these categories means that they support a particular system as they

are the pathways, the mechanisms through which societies assign and attribute identities... They determine the way we think, the way we frame the world, and the way the world perceives and treats us. Thus categories exert a profound influence on our lives because some categories are given more importance than others; some categories wield more influence and are more powerful than others and some categories marginalize other categories and silence their points of view (Raj 2003: v).

Raj's latter point about the impact of categorisation on influence and power goes to the heart of Crenshaw's characterisation of political intersectionality. Political, legal and social practices directly and discursively create and recreate frameworks through which we understand identity, oppression, discrimination and victimhood, and often "erase" marginal voices, such as those of women of colour. Institutions and processes which address racism, sexism and other forms of oppression as separate and mutually exclusive, can create exclusionary practices as they embrace what Crenshaw calls "monocausal frameworks" (1993: 112). This is the trap that some human rights lawyers, activists and treaty bodies have fallen into. The prioritisation of human rights issues is strongly influenced by the dominant voices within the global human rights community. Thus, how a problem is framed, and hence the solution, are often the result of how those with access have understood a particular issue.

The impact of this monocausal approach, as well as how it shapes political, legal and social discourses on any particular issue, has multiple dimensions. Firstly, the value of interventions or "solutions" that are adopted at the international level (in conventions, law and practice) is diminished by the lack of an intersectional understanding and approach. For example, undocumented migrants (as a whole) struggle to ensure that their human rights are fully recognised and protected. This can be made far more difficult and complex, however, if the migrant is a woman

from an ethnic, religious or cultural group in which her marital status is an integral part of her survival (more so than in many secular societies), or if she is disabled or cannot speak the dominant language/s of the country in which she currently resides. Conventions which are aimed at providing protection to undocumented migrants, but which fail to recognise the particular positioning of a woman migrant, perhaps a woman who is not heterosexual, not married, or not young, for example, become documents which offer procedural justice but little substantive protection.

The same can be said of programmes, civic organisations or international multilateral agencies, which aim to provide assistance to survivors of sexual violence. The way a woman experiences violence not only differs from the way a man may experience it, but factors like economic status, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity all play a significant part in how she experiences the violence, as well as the causal factors that led to it (such as “corrective” rape for lesbians as opposed to the systematic sexual assault of women during violent conflicts). The way that these programmes and organisations approach violence and the survivor, how they frame solutions to the problem and which strategies they adopt to promote victim empowerment, can be significantly improved through the application of an intersectional framework, as services and support can recognise and accommodate her specific needs based on her particular location.

Secondly, intersectionality has the potential to highlight the multiple dimensions of political and social exclusion by asking the right questions, such as: how do the multiple identities of individuals or communities emphasise or intensify the way that they experience injustice? How do reformist politics on one issue (such as gender) (re)enforce the subordinating and exclusionary aspects of another issue (such as race)? How do current human rights theories and practices exacerbate social exclusion through their denial of intersectionality?

The multiple positioning of identity results in a multi-dimensional experience of exclusion. If identity politics and theory fail to take this into account, they relegate the identity and the differing experiences of exclusion to a place of irrelevance or complete denial. In other words, it is not only that human rights praxis can be improved through a clearer understanding of the nature of oppression, but it is also true that theory and praxis that fail to employ an intersectional framework runs the risk of excluding some

of the very people or communities they try to empower by displacing their experiences and voices “to a location that resists telling” (Crenshaw 1991: 1241).

For example, notions of what appropriate behaviour is for victims of violence and oppression are shaped by what and who we think the victims are or should be. As part of the legal, political and theoretical tendency to categorise, “authentic” victims are defined in legal instruments, mainstream discourse and political rhetoric. Crenshaw (1991: 1249-1250, 1993: 119), Bograd (1999: 279-281) and Burgess-Proctor (2006: 40) have written about how political discourse, policy, criminology and psychology frame survivors of domestic violence in ways that (re)produce society’s expectations on how victims should behave and react to violence. For example, women who fight back and use violence as a defence strategy against intimate partners, can be conceptually unsettling for policymakers or criminologists who have stereotypical assumptions that see victims of domestic violence as helpless or passive (Bograd 1999: 280). By making these frames and expectations explicit, intersectionality provides us with the tools and insight to question hegemonic discourses and interpretative assumptions about how others experience, and should respond to, violence, as well challenge what Bograd calls the “socially structured invisibility of certain victims” (1999: 277).

Finally, it is worth noting that oppression (its nuances and how one experiences it) not only varies across multiple identities and location, but also across time. At both the macro and micro levels, systems of oppression and domination have historical significance. Hegemonic and subversive discourses on identities such as gender, race, sexual orientation, and class (among others) change over time, as they interact with one another, and with other factors such as economics, law and mass media. Because intersectionality emphasises the importance of context, it can be used to reshape and reframe how human rights theory and praxis approach identities, human nature and international law in line with the realities of the 21st century.

INTERSECTIONALITY AND ITS POTENTIAL PITFALLS

A) The complexity of social relations of power

Intersectionality requires a rigorous understanding of the dynamics of power, identity, exclusion and social structure. For example, the Conven-

tion on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its treaty body, as well as the actions and programmes that emerge from CEDAW, cannot fully address gender without understanding how race, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, culture, health, citizenship status and other issues intersect with gender. Given the complexity this implies, how can we avoid making international law and human rights theory and praxis unworkable? The fuzziness and amorphous nature of intersectionality is due to the complexity and dynamism of what it is trying to study (multiple identities and structural power) as well as its relatively recent emergence in mainstream feminist and human rights theory.

It is important to understand what we want the concept to do. Intersectionality cannot solve all the problems that are faced by theorists or human rights activists and lawyers working at the international level. It can, however, ask the right questions about power, privilege and access, as well as uncover the inadequacies and contradictions in current human rights theory and praxis, as discussed above.

B) Human rights and feminist theories: universalism and relativism

It is worth asking, and has been asked, how human rights theory as well as feminist theory can develop coherent and universal theories without losing the nuances of context. But intersectionality offers a different, and perhaps contrary, challenge. How do we theorise about multiple identities and multiple dimensions of oppression without descending into complete relativism through the claim that “context is everything”? In other words, while intersectionality offers us the tools or conceptual framework to understand the complexity of identity, politics, law and discrimination, it becomes a potential liability if we allow it to deconstruct us into irrelevance or meaninglessness. After all, how valuable is a concept if it tells us that one person never experiences oppression like anyone else due to the nature of multiple and shifting identities over time and space, and therefore there is no one theory, practice or institution that will ever have any universal applicability? This conflict between what Davis calls postmodern theoretical perspectives (which deconstructs binary labels and abhors any attempts at universalism) and other human rights theory is potentially resolved by intersectionality (Davis 2008: 8-9), though perhaps only partially.

Human rights theory has been subject to the claim that human rights are Western constructs that have no universal applicability or validity, and they cannot therefore be used to justify state intervention or external criticism of the way that non-Western government run their countries and their governments (Marks and Clapham 2004: 387). In addition, human rights are seen by some as a new form of colonialism and imperialism, as they represent the West's desire to impose their values and institutions on poorer nations, by "recycl[ing] the colonialist project of re-making the world in [their] image" (Ibid 2004: 387).

The criticism has spilled over into feminist theory, with critics questioning the ability of feminism and other social movements which use a human rights approach, to develop universally-applicable theory that is not imperialistic and ethnocentric (Davis 2008: 9). Davis correctly argues that feminist theory needs to be inclusive of all women by taking into account how different women experience oppression depending on where they are located on the intersectional nexus of relations – but this needs to be achieved without losing its "theoretical and normative platform" (2008: 9). Through its emphasis on social context and the multiplicity of identity, intersectionality offers rights-based feminist theorists a way to interpret and use context without altogether abandoning the claim that social relations of power and gender identities lay at the heart of gender discrimination universally. Thus, intersectionality allows rights-based feminist theory to examine "gender through the lens of difference" (Burgess-Proctor 2006: 35) into complete theoretical and phenomenological relativism. In other words, intersectionality permits feminists to retain their emphasis on identity and power without becoming exclusionary by claiming that they speak to the experience of all women universally. Feminists are therefore able to avoid rights-based theory from becoming "obsolete or superfluous" as "there is still work to be done, and – luckily for all of us – we are the ones to do it" (Davis 2008: 9-10).

C) Intersectionality's own ethnocentrism in a world of difference and diversity

Thus far, intersectionality (as a concept) has primarily (but not exclusively) been discussed and debated in Europe and the United States (Davis 2008: 3). Given the value that intersectionality can bring to discussions on human rights theory and praxis, in terms of raising questions

about inclusivity, power and privilege, as well as access to constructive spaces and “voice” within these spaces, it is important to consider where – geographically and conceptually – the theoretical debates on intersectionality occur. It is crucial to reflect on how it is currently framed and its applicability to other contexts. For example, Crenshaw has prominently explored violence against women in the US through the lens of intersectionality, arguing that the lack of attention to how race and gender intersect has rendered US policy and practice ineffective with regard to violence against women of colour (1991, 1993). Other feminists have followed suit with an increasing volume of feminist literature on the need to incorporate intersectionality by looking at how race, language, social class and other issues of identity politics come to bear on the way that women experience violence.

How applicable is this growing body of literature, however, to other contexts? I have written elsewhere about how gender-based violence and sexual violence against women in South Africa are often addressed by the government and some civic organisations as if these have nothing to do with gender (De Nobrega 2008). Instead, the focus has tended to be on how violence against women is “really” about class (poverty) and racial discrimination (apartheid), or an effect of the devolution of the family unit which is resulting in moral decay and social disorder. There is little or no recognition of how gender inequality, and hegemonic discourses on gender identity and sexuality, are at the root of this violence. The case of South Africa is therefore the complete opposite of examples in the mainstream writing on intersectionality that is emerging on Europe and the US.

Does this mean that intersectionality is merely a useful concept for the North? No. On the contrary, the strength of intersectionality is that it allows rights-based feminist writers to recognise their own location and their positions of power and privilege with regard to other women (and even men), without needing to abandon the entire feminist project altogether for fears that their views are somehow compromised because they are not on the “bottom-rung” in terms of oppression. It is not the case that someone who has “applied” an intersectional framework or analysis to a particular issue (such as gender oppression) is suddenly “freed” from her own framing and identity, but if she uses her “own social location... as an analytic resource” she may be more able to understand her location of oppression in relation to others (Davis 2008: 9). Intersectionality en-

hances “the theorist’s reflexivity by allowing her to incorporate her own intersectional location in the production” of theory (Davis 2008: 9 and 8). This has the potential to create a more nuanced and more apposite construction of feminist human rights theory by highlighting the dynamic workings of power and structure which hide among what should be transformative human rights theory, and by uncovering the exclusions of human rights praxis.

This goes to the heart of oppression, identity and power. It is important to realise that it is not only “the oppressed” that are located in multiple identities and intersections, but rather that marginalised individuals and communities are only “marked at the intersection as being on the subordinate side... [A]ll social groups (including middle class white men) are at the intersection” (Burgess-Proctor 2006: 38).

Those who are in positions of power and privilege usually fail to understand or admit their own place in oppression and structural relations of power. Their own “invisibility” is one reason why most of the literature on racism, sexism or social class (and other issues) is about and by those who are not part of the hegemonic or most dominant social group. Thus, most (though not all) theory and research on gender is about women, by women, and the same is true of anti-racist literature, which is predominantly about people of colour instead of “whiteness” and the construction of white identity.

Because “dominant groups often do not see and/or admit how they benefit from the subordination of others... and view themselves as ‘non-racialised’ or ‘non-gendered’” (Bunch 2002: 112), the “generic” norm of white, middle-class, heterosexual men perpetuates the myth that the intersections of identities of the dominant groups and individuals, and the power and privilege they derive from their multiple locations, is irrelevant. Intersectionality, however, can be used to shape a clearer understanding of how our own positions of both oppression and privilege intersect in various ways and at various times.

As can be seen from above, human rights theory and praxis can be significantly improved through the application of an intersectional framework: conventions and treaties, as well as human rights organisations, can become more nuanced, flexible and responsive to the realities of individuals and communities. The work of activists, lawyers and policy makers can have a more positive influence, not only by improving their effectiveness, but also by uncovering their own “location” in society and

systems of oppression and power. While intersectionality is a relatively new concept and is likely to face challenges in theory and in practical application, and its value should not be overlooked.

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