

Newsletter
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RC 09

Social Transformations and the Sociology of Development

a Research Committee of the
International Sociological Association



Remarks from the Co- Presidents of RC 09, Ulrike Schuerkens and Habibul Khondker

Dear RC 09 members,

Greetings from RC 09: Social Transformations and the Sociology of Development. The core of the Newsletter before you provides some articles from RC 09 members on the fiscal crisis, agribusiness in Chile and microcredit in Bangladesh. These case studies provide some clues for the understanding of possibly worldwide processes and are not limited to the specific, concrete empirical cases they present. In this issue we are pleased to give some publication announcements by RC 09 members as well.

A forthcoming concern for us is the Vienna Forum of 2016. The topic of our Research Committee will permit us to contribute in a befitting manner to this Third ISA Forum of Sociology to be held in Vienna, Austria in July, 10-14, 2016. The main theme of the Forum, *The Futures We Want: Global Sociology and the Struggles for a Better World*, will interest scholars of social transformations and

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sociology of development. RC 09 will organize as usual an exciting program with sessions on globalization, inequality, labor markets, civil society organizations and development. Moreover, we will also introduce an open session for young and established scholars who are interested in breaking new grounds in social transformations and sociology of development. This session will showcase recent and innovative sociological studies on sociology of development in both the North and the Global South that are slightly outside the scope of the more focused and specialized RC 09 sessions.

Furthermore, we want to enlarge our program to include the topics of media and the environment related to RC 09's interest in social transformations. Resistance movements and the worldwide increasing expulsions that Saskia Sassen discussed in her recent book may also become topics for sessions that will interest RC 09 members and scholars worldwide. We kindly invite you to contact us if you are a specialist or interested in one of the above-mentioned fields so that we can explore possibilities to cooperate in preparing the Vienna Forum.

Last but not the least, we wish to thank Joshua Dubrow for putting this interesting Newsletter together. We hope that the Newsletter will continue to grow under his editorship.

The RC 09 co-chairs wish you peace, joy and prosperity throughout the coming year. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation. We look forward to working with you in the years to come.

Ulrike Schuerkens and Habibul Khondker

RC 09 Co-chairs

RC 09 Election Results

The election process of the RC09 board members for the period 2014-2018 had been successfully concluded as of October 22, 2014. The incoming RC 09 board is composed of the following scholars according to the results of the board elections:

Co-Presidents

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Articles

What Does the Fiscal Crisis of the State in the Global North Teach Us About Development in the Global South?

by Samuel Cohn, Texas A and M University

The Sociology of Development has been impaired too long by making false differentiations between the Global North and the Global South. The assertion that the Global South is profoundly different from the Global North was a historical reaction to the Panglossian functionalism of conventional development economics and modernization theory. The students of development in the 1950's naively believed that if the underdeveloped world simply increased its capital stock, got a big enough urban labor force and adopted Western institutions that it would attain the same level of prosperity as the United States and Western Europe. Mid-century functionalists were blind to the process of international exploitation. First the dependistas, then the world-system theorists argued that there were profound differences between the core and the periphery, the processes of development between the two were not the same, and that the North exploited the South.

This was an intellectual breakthrough in 1970. It is not such hot news in 2015. To be sure, the forces of international exploitation continue to rampage the planet. However, a rigid focus on the differences between North and South obscures the developmental dynamics *within* the North that have close parallels *within* the South. The ecological contradictions of manufacture and chemical intense agriculture in the North are sadly replicated in the Global South. Dynamics of regional internal colonialism in wealthy nations such as the United States and Italy have clear parallels in Brazil and China. Theories of the mature capitalism of the core can be remarkably useful in explaining the dynamics of peripheral economies.

I want to draw the attention of RC-09 readers to a particularly important theory of late capitalism - James O'Connor's 1970 *Fiscal Crisis of the State* - that poses a major challenge to our thinking about the state and development in the global periphery. In our traditional dependista models, unequal terms of exchange cause market forces to work to the systemic detriment of peripheral nations. The

only solution is to create state barriers to world-systemic market forces. We see the hard-bargaining state of Peter Evan's Brazil or contemporary Venezuela – or the full-blown developmentalist states of East Asia as only viable policies that can protect a nation from international degradation. However, developmentalist states and even hard-bargaining states require extremely favorable sociological pre-conditions in order to exist: a state with high autonomy from elite special interests, high levels of Weberian technocracy, and geopolitical limits on the capacity of the hegemon to impose regime change from without. Most of the Global South lacks this favorable substructure. What do we as development sociologists tell a nation such as Mali or Bulgaria? *"Sorry, you don't have the social pre-conditions for a proper developmentalist state? We have no recommendations for you. Live in corruption and misery."*

O'Connor suggested a different model of the state and development that actually applies to Mali or Bulgaria. He was very skeptical about the claim that the state needs to compensate for market failures. He argued that in capitalist economies, capitalists find plenty of lucrative investments.

The state reproduces capitalism not by direct investment in industry – but by providing public goods that would never be provided by profit maximizing actors. Capital accumulation requires

- Infrastructure
- Education
- Basic Scientific Research
- Military Defense
- Welfare Provision To Maintain Consumption In the Face of Cyclical Downturns

None of these activities are particularly profitable. Airports for example require the purchase of vast amounts of urban real estate, and pouring vast amounts of concrete, all at great expense. The revenues that derive from this are landing fees, gasoline sales and the rentals of store fronts. The costs vastly exceed the proceeds. If the state did not provide these inputs into the economy, private firms would lack the physical and human capital necessary for production and capital accumulation would stagnate.

What O'Connor implies is that states produce growth not by glamorous confrontations with multinational enemies, but by executing routine garden variety provision of basic services. They build roads. They run schools. They catch pirates. Any government can do this. A state riddled with corruption, rife with political instability, dependent on elite special interests in civil society and plagued by

bureaucratic incompetence may not be able to jump-start a software industry through state-led investment. However, they can probably lay pipes for a water system, build a bus terminal, and hire teachers to teach the children how to read. These small scale programs have profound effects on growth.

More importantly, these programs contribute to *articulated* growth. The benefits of bus stations and piped water do not accrue to a small comprador elite, leaving the rest of the population starving – but instead are more widely dispersed.

In my own work, *Employment and Development Under Globalization*, I found that in Brazil, regions that built the most airports, the most water systems, the most sewage systems and the most roads also created the most employment in jobs poor people could hold. It is not that rich places that can afford to build infrastructure have the most jobs just because they are rich; that would be too obvious. It is that controlling for income, the places that build the most airports, sewage systems etc. had the most low-level jobs. Infrastructure created a more egalitarian, less disarticulated development by creating jobs for poor people regardless of whether the region was generally rich or poor.

This finding has parallels in the work of writers on public capital such as Aschauer and in writing on American regional development. For a detailed review of infrastructure studies, see Cohn 2012. Education spending is also being rehabilitated as a developmental variable.

Once out of favor due to the many Sub-Saharan African nations that invested heavily in education to no developmental effect, believers in education spending are now vindicated by economic growth in school-spending-intense African nations such as Ethiopia, Rwanda and Nigeria. Lindert has linked welfare spending to economic growth.

So what does the fiscal crisis in the North tell us about economic development in the South? O'Connor's warnings on this point are chilling. He argued that the petite bourgeoisie would revolt against paying taxes when it became obvious that they were paying the lion's share of all taxes while monopoly capital accrues the primary benefits of government spending. The rise of the Tea Party in response to the Wall Street Bailouts – and parallel anti-tax conservative movements throughout Europe provide chilling confirmation of O'Connor's predictions. O'Connor predicted that tax revolt would lead to a shrinkage of the state. In the Global North this is painfully true.

*“Read James O’Connor and weep.
Then look for hope
in the economies
where the tax revolt
is the weakest.”*

What does this mean for the Global South?

- Austerity based slowdown in the Global North deprives the *whole world* of growth.
- No infrastructure and no education strangles development in both hemispheres.
- The Global South is the harbinger of the future for the North. The rising inequality and collapse of state effectiveness associated with neoliberal reform will become a fact of daily life in the Global North.

Read James O'Connor and weep. Then look for hope in the economies where the tax revolt is the weakest.

For Further Reading:

Cohn, Samuel. 2012. "O'Connorian Models of Peripheral Development – or How Third World States Resist World Systemic Pressures By Cloning the Policies of States in the Core." Pp. 336-344 in Salvatore Babones and Christopher Chase-Dunn, (eds.), *Handbook of World Systems Analysis*. New York, Routledge.

O'Connor, James. 1970. *Fiscal Crisis of the State*. New York, Saint Martins Press.



The Invisible World of Work in Chile's Agribusiness: Rising Inequality and the Creation of Permanent Seasonal Workers

by Tamara Heran, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, France

Historically, the concept of development has been marked by an economic approach and often equated with economic growth. Equally important transformations in society, culture and the environment are often overlooked. Chilean economist Max-Neef proposed the concept of an "invisible world" to place society, culture, community and identity as equal to the economic level, and not merely sub-

ject to it. This concept opens research possibilities to analyze the practices and strategies of the relationship between economic practices, social organizations and cultural characteristics and view them as equal contributors to social transformations in developing societies.

The neoliberal development model in place since the 1970s has made Chile a "model" of development and international trade integration. Chile has become a pioneer in terms of establishing free trade, export agreements, privatizations and labor flexibility. These policies have impacted the rural and agricultural world. The physical landscape, and the environment, society and culture in rural areas,



as, were upset by strategies for the modernization and industrialization of agriculture. It created big agribusiness companies and the establishment of a seasonal work force.

Forty years have passed since these transformations began. Although studies have been made with *temporeros* and *temporeras*, the name for Chile's seasonal agricultural workers, their current status is little-known. How is seasonal agriculture work configured now? What are the current differences in job flexibility and precariousness among the *temporeros* and *temporaras*?

My research analyzes the socio-economic transformation and identity of the invisible world of seasonal agricultural work in Chile's Limarí Valley. This valley is located in the Province of Limarí, in the Coquimbo Region, 400 km north of Santiago. It is an agricultural area whose main activity is exports. Among the major export crops produced in this valley are table grapes, citrus and avocados.

I studied the key players inside and outside the work sphere, using a gender perspective. The theoretical approach is based on the premise that development is a construct made by different actors and/or authors who think that neoliberal development leads to a desirable future.

Given the difficulty in accessing the actors of this activity and the lack of reliable data, this research used a methodological framework consisting of several interlacing qualitative research techniques: participant observation, non-structured interviews and questionnaires with key players in the

labor market. I talked to seasonal and seasonal agricultural workers, agribusiness representatives and agriculture labor contractors.

The Rise of Inequality and the Creation of the Permanent Seasonal Worker in Chile

In Chile, the agricultural sector has been the target of numerous development projects. Over time, strategies have changed how the means of production are controlled, especially with regard to land ownership. These development strategies have transformed the entire social, economic and political system deriving from the agricultural production process.

To understand how we got here, I offer a brief history. Before the colonial era, the economy and the social structure of many indigenous peoples living in Chilean territory were based on agriculture. During the period of Chile's colonization and independence, local societies were forcibly dispossessed of their land and of the people who worked the land. From the early eighteenth century, a diminishing labor force, due to the overexploitation of workers together with an increase in the number of mixed-race people, led to the transformation of this structure into a system of large estates.



This system fell into crisis in the 1930s that lasted for decades thereafter. In 1962, the first agrarian reform law was enacted in order to accelerate the development of agriculture by redistributing to farmers state land acquired from the landowners. In 1965, reforms led to land expropriations and the unionization of farm workers. To make these changes more effective, new allocations were made to administer the land reform under the government of Salvador Allende. Most of the large estates were redistributed, which transformed Chile's territorial layout.

The expropriation of the large estates was followed by a climate of violence. This violence was the preamble to the 1973 military coup that ended the reform process and led to a counter-reform and the privatization of agriculture. A new agrarian structure based on private property and the promotion of agribusiness emerged. Beginning in the 1980s, the land remained in the hands of a few

owners, and the development of farm workers was neglected. This became a new agrarian structure that transformed the rural world, affecting the socio-economic dynamics, identities and territories.

The farmers, dispossessed of their land or without the resources to exploit it, turned to agribusiness for jobs, triggering a proletarianization in which peasants were forced to become seasonal workers. These are the *temporeras* and *temporeros*, who satisfy the demand for work by the agricultural export industry. This work has been characterized as temporary, mobile, precarious and informal and is marked by the significant participation of women *temporeras*, who make up about half of

this workforce, in contrast with only 35% participation of women in the national workforce.

The Invisible World of Seasonal Agricultural Work

Today's invisible world in Chile's unequal agrarian structure has three main players. At the top of the stratification ladder are the agricultural entrepreneurs and management personnel who are the land owners, administrators

and production managers. They come from companies that have experienced sustained growth in surface land area as well as in production. Another category are the agricultural labor subcontractors, the *contratistas*. They have emerged as a solution to the demand from the companies for a year around, flexible workforce. Backed by agribusinesses, the contractors have set up specific strategies for the management of seasonal labor. The seasonal laborers are the *temporeras* and *temporeros*. More than half of them are single men and women, and almost two-thirds have children. About half are heads of households -- one third are women -- and almost half have not completed compulsory education.

There are three main strategies of seasonal agricultural work and dynamics: extension of the time period for seasonal work; employment agreements that regulate the labor market; and new gender relationships both at work and in the domestic sphere.

The diversification of production led to an extension of the time in which seasonal work is conducted. Until the early 1990s, agribusinesses focused on specialized production. Since then, companies have diversified their production in order to offer a more competitive choice and a wide range of



crops. This diversification led to a continuity of activity throughout most of the year: there are many activities at different times of the year and even year round. The temporary aspect of farming is no longer temporary.

Farming is now a multi seasonal activity. As a result, the seasonal labor demand may now cover ten months or a whole year. The annual average work time is about seven months, and over 40% of seasonal workers say they work from ten to twelve months a year. Seasonal work time can be expressed in three categories: seasonal-seasonal, intermediate-seasonal and permanent-seasonal. Seasonal-seasonal represent a third to a half of *temporeros* and *temporeras*, who work strictly by season for three months a year at most. In this category are students and employees who work during the summer holidays. Intermediate-seasonal represents about 15% of seasonal workers and they are those who work for an irregular period of the year, which can range from four to nine months. For them, seasonal agricultural work is an important source of employment and income. Finally, permanent-seasonal represents between a third and a half of the seasonal workers, and they are those who work throughout the year. For permanent-seasonal, agricultural work is often their only source of employment and income.

“This creates a paradox: Seasonal work is no longer temporal, but the contractual working arrangements are still built on temporality.”

This creates a paradox: “Seasonal” work is no longer temporal, but the contractual working arrangements are still built on temporality. Today the type and duration of the work agreements define the temporary nature of this work, with contracts that cover a specific activity or task. For the agricultural season 2007-2008, 80% of seasonal workers had between one and three labor agreements. Over 90% had five or less, with an average of 2.7 work agreements per year. The vast majority of seasonal agricultural workers sign a limited number of annual agreements.

Often, this permanent agricultural work is done within the same company that still considers their workforce as “seasonal.” To maintain this state of affairs, companies use a special formula to keep their seasonal employer status. They alternate the management of labor agreements with subcontractors, so they do not have to draw up permanent contracts, thus avoiding the costs and additional responsibilities of this kind of contract.

This also entailed two important changes in gender relations. The first is in the job sphere. While before there was a gender distribution of tasks according to "feminine qualities" such as attention to detail, care and delicacy, now the different work areas are mixed. For example, if the packaging of fruits was previously an exclusively female activity, now many men perform these tasks, too. Tasks that were reserved for men, such as palletizing, are now also carried out by women.

"The case of temporeras and temporeros offers a perspective on the conditions and dynamics of development..."

A second transformation is in the domestic sphere. Domestic tasks are shared today between men and women and other members of a family group, unlike the double workday analyzed in previous studies. Although 29% of female seasonal workers report having a double workday, 15% of them shared the housework with the other members of the family group (such as mothers, sisters, but also men) and 54% reported that these tasks are not carried out by themselves, but by other members of the family group.

Conclusion

Development processes cover multiple factors, disciplines, methodological techniques and theoretical views, and as such this research took an interdisciplinary and mixed method approach to understanding social transformations in agricultural society in the developing world. The case of *temporeras* and *temporeros* offers a perspective on the conditions and dynamics of development; in particular, the insecurity and vulnerability of workers vital to Chile's economy yet who are also among Chile's most disadvantaged occupational groups.

This study of seasonal agricultural workers also shows how a highly flexible regulatory framework contains gaps and voids left by both labor standards and job inspections. A complex recruitment, management and payment mechanism for agricultural seasonal workers arose in the shadow of regular practices and processes. Chile, a country that has been a laboratory for the neoliberal model, has a 40 year history of labor flexibility. This is an opportunity to study other countries with a similar context.

Individual Modernity of Rural Women: Impact of Microcredit in Bangladesh

Habibul Haque Khondker, Zayed University, UAE

Bangladesh played a pioneering role, thanks to the initiatives of Professor Muhammad Yunus's Grameen Bank, in using microfinance as a tool for socioeconomic development targeted at changing women's wellbeing. Alongside, Grameen Bank, a number of local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as BRAC, ASA, Proshika and others have successfully implemented microcredit projects. Yet, microfinance in Bangladesh and elsewhere has also come under some criticisms. In Bangladesh the heavy-handed approach in recuperating loans from the rural poor led to criticisms of the microcredit providers. I conducted a study to examine not to measure the economic impact but to understand the social impact of microcredit projects on rural women in Bangladesh. The study was aimed at understanding - not to establish causality - the impact of microcredit on the attitudes and behaviors of women in rural and peri-urban Bangladesh.

The study used the framework of individual modernity in examining the changes of attitudes and behaviors of the respondents. Individual modernity in this study is used as a conceptual construct, a framework for understanding changes in the values, attitudes and aspirations of rural women. Viewing modernity as a social and cultural syndrome

characterized by such characteristics as future-orientation, individualism, equity, tolerance of diversity, rationality, a mark of which is a favorable attitude towards technology and science-based knowledge, this study examines whether trends towards such modernity at the individual level can be observed or not. This study contributes to an understanding of the trends towards modernity. It does not establish causal relationship between variables or measure modernity on a psychological scale. This study combines both qualitative and quantitative methods and largely premised on the assumption of qualitative sociology where the focus of the study is an understanding of the phenomena and not establishing a cause-effect relationship between variables. The study used a household survey of pre-selected samples mostly drawn from rural and some selected peri-urban households in Bangladesh. The study was based on both survey as well as such qualitative methods as in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

“Bangladesh played a pioneering role... in using microfinance as a tool for socioeconomic development targeted at changing women's wellbeing.”

The villages in Bangladesh have been heavily impacted by both various governmental as well as non-governmental programs of which the microfinance institutions feature prominently. The original aim of the study was to examine the impact of microfinance programs on individual modernity. As the study progressed, it was evident that it is difficult to isolate the impact of microfinance institutions among the assorted non-governmental organizations on the changing attitudes and behaviors of the respondents. From our answers received we compared responses of the recipients of the microcredits with those who were not borrowers of microcredits. The differences between these two groups on modernity indicators were negligible. This similarity is one of the findings of this study. However, such comparisons are unjustified because those who did not take loans from microcredit

“... this study concludes that microcredit is one of the contributing factors towards creating a culture of modernity in both rural and peri-urban areas in Bangladesh.”

institutions are likely to be a special group who are not in need of microcredit. This study concludes that the impact of modernity as assessed through the changes in their values and attitudes with regard to future orientation and favorable views towards science and technology - both indicators of rational thinking, educational aspiration and career of their children, especially of female children -- the respondents showed clear signs of modernity. However, when it came to their preference of age of marriage of their daughters majority of the respondents chose age 16, which coincides with the high school graduation of their daughters. Often the respondents identified the problem of insecurity in the villages as a reason for marrying their daughters early.

The borrowers of microcredit show a slightly higher educational aspiration for their daughters' education. In terms of beliefs in superstitions and other issues – another indicator of modernity - they are not indistinguishable from the non-borrowers. The study, despite its original intent, is not strictly comparative between borrowers and non-borrowers since majority of the respondents are borrowers of microcredit.

Based on both quantitative and qualitative data, this study concludes that microcredit is one of the contributing factors towards creating a culture of modernity in both rural and peri-urban areas in Bangladesh. Our respondents, women of sampled households were future-oriented, had high aspirations for their children's' education - both males and females - and were aware of the key developmental issues. They had opinion about intrusion of new technology in their communities and they articu-

lated their opinions on both the positive and negative impact of such technologies as satellite television (so-called “dish television”) and mobile phones. As a large number of the respondents were not fatalists, they believed that it was their actions that played the most important role in determining their future. These responses showed some underlying tendency towards rationalization of their world. Modern ideas seem to have affected the entire community.

In our focus group discussion we found that our participants, comprised of community leaders, NGO activists, schoolteachers, and the common people who were ready to share their opinions articulated a clear understanding of the major issues affecting the development of Bangladesh. During our discussion, some of them highlighted the negative side of the NGOs, often a rehash of the left-leaning critique suggesting that NGOs were “the agents of the Western (imperialist) powers”. Some respondents pointed out the heavy-handed approach of some of the Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs) in collecting their outstanding loans.

The majority of our respondents in the focus-group discussions, in the end, recognized the overall positive contributions of the NGOs. They singled out the positive role of the MFIs in bringing about social changes in rural Bangladesh by making it possible for women to come out of their household roles into public domains. They also recognized that it was not the failure of the MFIs rather the failings of some individual borrowers who misuse the funds that bring misfortune to them and in the process tarnish the image of the Microfinance institutions. The ultimate responsibility lies with the individuals. Some of them used the loan for personal consumptions and even indulgences such as gambling; others made productive use of the funds to change their situation. In our in-depth interviews, we probed some of the cases of loan-default and the circumstances that led to it. Sometimes extreme poverty and vulnerability were causes of loan-default. It was the lack of social safety net and the extremely vulnerable existence that changed the lives of some villagers from poverty to destitution with a minimum shock, say, an illness in the family or a theft of their means of income.

“The majority of our respondents in the focus-group discussions, in the end, recognized the overall positive contributions of the NGOs. “

The subject of the role of the government often came up in the focus group discussions. Our

participants often identified politicization of the administration, corruption of the public officials and absence of the rule of law as the key problems inhibiting the development process in their villages. The issue of illicit drugs as a menace came up repeatedly in the focus group discussions. There was a great deal of anxiety at the adverse impact of narcotic drugs in village society. Others often pointed out the adverse impact of mobile phones in rural society. Their valuations were framed in terms of their views of morality and cultural traditions. In the end, their views of the changes in technology were mixed. Some identified the positive role of new agricultural technology; others were apprehensive of the role of satellite television in the villages.

It is possible to argue that the services of the NGOs and especially, the microcredit institutions have played an important role in changing the mind-set of the people in rural Bangladesh. One of the key features of modernity is individual responsibility. The spread of modernity in the villages of Bang-

“While displaying a certain degree of modernity in their attitudes and preferences, the respondents also showed that they were highly religious.”

ladesh has made the rural people more responsible. While displaying a certain degree of modernity in their attitudes and preferences, the respondents also showed that they were highly religious. They scored high on both religiosity and tolerance of “others”. Our respondents were more tolerant of people with different faith than people of their own faith who were deviating from religious practices. The respondents showed hardly any preference for politicians either as neighbors or as career path. Hardly anyone surveyed identified politician as a career of their children. Even as neighbors, most of the respondents, preferred not to be neighbors with politicians.

On the matter of awareness and knowledge of the key issues of national importance the respondents are at par with the debates and discussions at the national level. Their views suggest a broad national consensus on the key problems faced by the nation. Although they showed a great deal of dependence on the government they also showed some pragmatism and valued self-reliance.

This study was not set out to measure “modernity indices” but to shed light on the changes of the attitudes and values of the respondents. The study is exploratory in nature and not aimed at establishing cause and effect relationship between variables. However, it is highly recommended that a more comprehensive comparative study be undertaken involving two regions of the country or a cross

-cultural study involving two or more members of the South Asian Association Regional Cooperation (SAARC) be conducted. The present study may be considered as preparing the groundwork for more sociological studies of the social and cultural circumstances of the rural Bangladesh and the assess directions of social change and development in Bangladesh. This study may also contribute to balancing the highly skewed nature of current scholarship dominated by the economic analyses of problems of development/underdevelopment and benefits and costs analysis of microcredit intervention alone.

I am optimistic on the positive impact of microcredit interventions in Bangladesh. Changes in the values and behaviors are of utmost importance for sustainable economic growth in Bangladesh. In the end, it is not just economic growth that should be the only concern of the policy makers and development experts. The key issue is to create an enabling environment for the people to grow by realizing their own potential. The shifts in the development of thinking from a narrow measurement of per capita income and other growth indicators to social conditions that help the citizens flourish despite the difficult circumstances they are presently situated.

A full version of the study can be found on the website of the Institute of Microfinance, Dhaka, Bangladesh (inm.org.bd). Working paper No. 29.

Member Books

[The Politics of Reconstruction and Development in Sri Lanka: Transnational Commitments to Social Change](#), published by Routledge (2014) in the Routledge/Edinburgh South Asian Studies Series. Author: Eva Gerharz.

Sri Lanka's conflict and peace processes have gained global attention during recent years. This book presents a comprehensive insight into the politics of reconstruction and development in Sri Lanka, focusing on the ceasefire which was negotiated between the Government of Sri Lanka and the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in 2002 and which lasted until 2006.

Based on extensive empirical fieldwork, the book provides a unique ethnographic account of this specific historical period of peace. It explains how development was shaped by interplay and co-

“This book presents a comprehensive insight into the politics of reconstruction and development in Sri Lanka...”

operation, but also by the disparities and conflicts between a variety of local and intervening actors, including local organizations and civil society, LTTE, Government of Sri Lanka, international development cooperation and the Tamil diaspora. Starting from an interdisciplinary viewpoint, the author integrates findings from development sociology with new perspectives on transnationalization and the migration-development-nexus. This provides a fine grained analysis of the emerging development visions and perspectives in relation to transnationalization and global interconnectedness.

Making an innovative contribution by linking the analysis of local reconstruction with contemporary phenomena of transnationalization, diasporization, and globalization, this book will appeal to those with an interest in to scholars interested in social transformations and the sociology of development.

Member Announcements

Cross-national Studies: Interdisciplinary Research and Training program (CONSIRT), a collaborative endeavor of The Ohio State University and the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN), announces a new Working Papers Series in cross-national social science research, and invites scholars of social transformations and the sociology of development to consider submitting a working paper.

CONSIRT Working Papers are high quality, cross-national, comparative, English language scholarly work that communicates new ideas and has clear contributions to the social sciences. We see a need for scholars to access the latest in cross-national comparative research. Our mission is to promote these works in an open, electronic forum for the benefit of the international social science community.

The working papers series is co-edited by Małgorzata Mikucka, Université Catholique de Louvain, Laboratory for Comparative Social Research, and CONSIRT, malgorzata.mikucka@uclouvain.be and Dr. Joshua Kjerulf Dubrow, an Associate Professor at the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Project and Labs Coordinator of CONSIRT.

The working papers are available on the CONSIRT website, consirt.osu.edu/working-papers-series. Posting a Working Paper on consirt.osu.edu does not preclude simultaneous or subsequent publication elsewhere, including other working papers series.

Current Working Papers include:

Bartolini, Stefano, Francesco Sarracino and Laurent Theis. 2014. "Do People Care for a Sustainable Future? Evidence from Happiness Data." *CONSIRT Working Papers Series 4* at consirt.osu.edu.

Abstract: There are two answers to the question about who is the responsible for the unsustainable pattern of economic activity: the people or the socio-economic system. The first answer claims that people are inter-temporally greedy. According to the second answer instead, people would prefer a more sustainable path of the economy but some failure of the socio-economic system prevents this outcome. We test the degree of people's concern for the life conditions of future generations. We derive this information by estimating the relationship between people's current subjective well-being and their expectations about the living standard of future generations, i.e. a future far enough to concern only future generations. According to the first view, people's expectations about the future should have weak or null influence on people's current well-being. The second view implies that such influence should be positive and remarkable. We use various international and national survey data to estimate a standard happiness regression augmented with people's expectation about the future. Where possible, we account for possible endogeneity between expectations about the future and current well-being. We find that expecting the worst (the best) for future generations has a very large negative (positive) impact on subjective well-being. This conclusion supports the view that current problems of sustainability are due to some failure of the socio-economic organization, rather than to the inter-temporal greed of human beings.

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