The Companion to Development Studies

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limited impact of its programmes but has yet to demonstrate enough flexibility in its own modalities to overcome the problems described above.

NOTE

1. For citation of the relevant evidence in support of these results see Killick *et al.*, 1998, especially Chapters 2 and 3. See also Mosley *et al.*, 1995, on the World Bank; and Killick, 1995, on the IMF.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

The principal source on conditionality is Killick *et al.*, 1998. Killick, 1997 provides a more summary statement. Other useful studies include Mosley *et al.*'s study of World Bank structural adjustment programmes (1995), and Killick's 1995 examination of IMF programmes. Collier *et al.*, 1997, has proved a particularly influential critique of conditionality. For general studies of the economics of aid, which include some coverage of conditionality, see World Bank, 1998, and Tarp and Hjertholm, 2000.

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10.4 The emergence of the governance agenda: sovereignty, neo-liberal bias and the politics of international development

Rob Jenkins

During the 1990s, governance emerged as a catch-all term in both the study and practice of development. It can be generically defined as the prevailing patterns by which public power is exercised in a given social context. Official and non-governmental development agencies have sought to operationalize the idea of *good* governance by restructuring state bureaucracies, reforming legal systems, supporting democratic decentralization and creating accountability-enhancing civil societies. The notion of good governance should, in principle, refer to any mode of public decision-making that helps to advance human welfare, *however conceived*. But because of the heavy influence of aid donors, governance has come to be associated with institutions designed to support market-led development.

This built-in ambiguity finds its parallel in the imprecision of the cognate terms on which has been built the 'D&G [Democracy and Governance] Sector', the term invented by the aid business for the set of programmatic initiatives funded by foreign assistance. Development consultants deployed to overhaul failing Third World states have seized upon two suitably plastic ideas in particular: participation and accountability. Improving both, while not undermining managerial efficiency, has been the focus of intensive development intervention (Carothers, 1999).

CLASSIFYING GOVERNANCE'S MANY MEANINGS

One of the most useful ways of classifying governance's many meanings is to begin with the rather fundamental division alluded to above: the difference between the concerns of theorists and practitioners. These are not, of course, air-tight categories: development agencies increasingly cultivate internal analytical capacities and contribute to governance debates; academic theorists engage more than ever in 'applied' advisory work on behalf of development agencies. Still, the distinction is valid. While academics can explore complicating factors that explain divergent patterns of governance, practitioners do not have this luxury: they cannot hope to replicate complex historical conditions.

As Hirst (2000) argues in his survey of governance, the study and practice of development is just one of several contexts in which the term has taken root. Hirst identifies five 'versions', corresponding to the fields of: (i) 'economic development'; (ii) international institutions and regimes; (iii) corporate governance; (iv) new public management; and (v) 'network governance', the increasingly popular deliberative forums found in (mainly) Western polities that address sets of related issues through a structured process of consultation and negotiation among relevant civil society and governmental actors.

It is worth noting that, among the five categories, the experience in the field of 'economic development' has been uniquely all-encompassing. Debates on how understandings of governance can be applied to development problems by aid-recipient governments and external agencies have drawn promiscuously on ideas contained in each of the other four fields. International institutions, for instance, are expected to constrain the performance-inhibiting instincts of Southern

(and Northern) governments by subjecting them to multilateral policy 'disciplines'. And since the birth of new public management in the late 1980s, its proselytizers have been exported to the South as fast as consultancy contracts could be written. Corporate governance reforms were a later addition in many places, but the demand for them rose as access to private capital led internationally inclined Southern firms to clothe themselves in organizational forms, and present their accounts in formats, that globally roaming investors would find familiar. The resistance to 'network governance' by Southern bureaucracies, many of which still possess distinctly colonial characteristics, has not prevented a proliferation of consultative mechanisms and public–private management structures; indeed, these are a mainstay of the governance agenda.

ORIGINS AND THE SOVEREIGNTY CONTEXT

The idea that governance was central to official development assistance received one of its earliest manifestations in a 1990 speech by British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd. Over the next two years Hurd's statement was echoed by similar declarations from his counterparts in other rich countries. The shift towards governance thus coincided with the end of the Cold War. This was in fact no coincidence, as the governance agenda represented – whatever the merits of its conception or execution – a further intrusion on the sovereignty of aid-recipient states. Today, externally funded 'national' anti-corruption agencies probe the finances of key political elites in developing countries and are 'advised', often in fairly substantial detail, by foreign aid agencies and consultants. Even the courts that theoretically define the chief executive's authority are in many cases undergoing comprehensive organizational restructuring under the auspices of donor-funded governance programmes. These sorts of external intervention would have been unacceptable to Third World leaders during the Cold War when bipolarity placed more leverage in their hands by making it possible for the more capable among them to play off East against West.

In assessing the sovereignty implications of this level of external intervention, it is worth taking note of Hirst's observation that sovereignty consists *both* of states' ability to make decisions independently of external authorities *and* their capacity actually to govern – that is, to effect at least a respectable percentage of intended outcomes. This latter dimension of sovereignty had long been lacking in many countries that attained 'independence' in the great wave of decolonization from 1945–75. This has been analysed by Robert H. Jackson, whose work introduced a new term into the study of development: 'quasi-states' (1991). The term quasi-states is now routinely associated with the lost independence of action implied by foreign economic intervention in the form of World Bank and IMF policy conditionalities. But this obscures a key aspect of its theoretical relevance, which is that the advent of strings-attached structural adjustment lending was merely the second half of a larger story of sovereignty lost.

The first half was the dismal failure of Third World states at translating priorities into policies and executing them effectively – that is, at governing. Many states were not even fully in control of their territories, let alone able to regulate authoritatively, implying failure on an even less demanding definitional threshold for sovereignty. Thus, many Third World states had lost one dimension of sovereignty before the other was forfeited in exchange for continued access to international financing. The former helped to make possible the latter: the impositions of international financial institutions would have been more successfully resisted had developing countries possessed a more credible claim to having in practice exercised the governance aspect of sovereignty, defined in terms of minimal levels of societal penetration, not on the basis of how 'good' any such governance might have been.

When, from 1980, external agencies began using conditionality-based lending to pursue their policy agendas they initially controlled only policy-making, not the structures through which policies were enacted and applied. Thus the shift towards governance in the 1990s – including 'political conditionality', the conditioning of aid on the existence of liberal constitutionalism and multi-party electoral contestation – must be understood as the culmination of a larger process through which sovereignty slipped from the grasp of Southern states. By pursuing a governance agenda throughout the 1990s, development agencies were able to substantially enhance their hold over the functioning of aid-recipient states.

FEASIBILITY AND NECESSITY OF GOVERNANCE INTERVENTIONS

While the end of the Cold War made increased penetration of Southern states by development agencies more politically *feasible*, other trends seemed to make it *necessary*. Within multilateral organizations, one of the main justifications for conditioning aid on the reform of domestic agencies was that sub-optimally designed institutions were ruining otherwise sound policy initiatives. This view served several useful purposes for the beleaguered aid agencies. It helped to ward off criticism of structural adjustment's marked failure to bring results in most places it was tried: 'it wasn't the policies, but the governance framework', became part of the revised 'Washington Consensus'. At the same time, by speaking in terms of correcting perverse organizational incentives, unblocking institutional bottlenecks, diversifying civil society, reorienting the citizen–state interface, and other such 'technical' solutions, external agencies were able to disavow any interference in the 'domestic politics' of the states in which they operated. While the World Bank's Articles of Agreement prohibit such intrusive practices, they *do* permit the organization to address 'managerial' issues, to the extent that they are relevant to the effective discharge of the Bank's responsibilities as a creditor agency (World Bank, 1994). This, in effect, meant that the more technical-sounding the interventions, the more publicly justifiable they would be. Gradually, this gave way to less carefully camouflaged forms of intervention. A watershed of sorts was passed in 1997, when the World Bank, IMF, UNDP and other traditionally non-interfering institutions placed the issue of corruption firmly on their agendas, and even cut off aid to Kenya for a time, partly on grounds of the government's failure to tackle corruption.

The idea that fundamental governance reform was necessary found its way into academic writings on development around the same time that agencies took up the idea. These studies were based largely on detailed empirical investigations, rather than on abstract model-building. Atul Kohli's dissection of (1990) India's crisis of (un)governability was followed by a raft of popular articles, such as Robert D. Kaplan's 'The coming anarchy', which analysed the collapse of so-called 'failed' states in large parts of sub-Saharan Africa (Kaplan, 1994).

In short, several trends combined to facilitate the emergence of a composite notion known as governance: geo-strategic realignments, bureaucratic convenience, the legacy of previous policy failures. It would be wrong, however, to ignore the contribution of important ideological transformations. The vastly increased emphasis on market-based solutions naturally had its influence on the full range of ideas about governance. This 'neo-liberal bias' has undermined many otherwise useful insights about the nature of institutions in structuring dissent and, under some circumstances, promoting accountability (Kaufman *et al.*, 1999). Attempts to use foreign aid to build the sort of civil society that would check the power of government, without capturing it, were all but destined to fail. They did so spectacularly at times, such as when an NGO leader funded by American 'democracy assistance' programmes seized power in a coup in Burundi in 1996 (Jenkins, 2001).

GOVERNANCE IN PRACTICE: THE FEAR OF SUCCESS

Indeed, the manner in which governance objectives were pursued points to a larger pattern in the linkage between theory and practice. This is what might be called a fear of success. By seeking to recreate a badly flawed vision of how 'functional' civil societies in the West actually operate – or, even worse, operated at an earlier stage in their developmental trajectories – both social theorists and development practitioners have betrayed an instinctive reluctance to face up to civil society's inherently precarious condition and sometimes ugly character, or to let democracy do its unpredictable work (Gellner, 1994). Private associations that aid agencies for one reason or another found distasteful were excluded from their civil society 'strategic frameworks' and denied funding, just as civil society groups that upset the predictions of academic theorists were banished from their carefully constructed models. Usually, the problem concerned their contribution to undesired ends.

The same is true for other aspects of democratic governance in which both development theorists and practitioners have been involved – for instance, elections, where outcomes can be injurious to democracy's long-term health and yet still be democratic. In such instances, the international community has demonstrated a palpable fear of democracy – or at least a strong desire to retain control over what should, by definition, be a local process of conferring legitimacy. The incumbent government of Algeria was permitted by otherwise governance-conscious donor governments, and large sections of the associated development intelligentsia, to simply ignore the results of the 1992 elections, because the group widely believed to have won, an avowedly Islamist party, did not conform to the recipe for good government promoted by theorists and advanced by agency staff.

The institutional arena in which development policy is least elaborated is international and transnational governance. The fear of democracy partly explains this as well. Genuine governance reforms that would reduce the North–South disparities that characterize, for instance, *participation* within international organizations (to say nothing of the *accountability* deficit within even rule-based institutions of global governance such as the WTO) would represent a substantial challenge to the very governments that control development agencies. Even technical assistance to encourage poorer countries (and poorer groups within them) to participate more whole-heartedly in these organizations is heavily slanted away from programmes that might assist them in negotiating for such things as enhanced terms of trade, new rules for enforcing international agreements, and compensation for global environmental-protection measures.

The extreme versatility of the idea of governance will ensure its survival for the foreseeable future. But it will continue to be shaped by political constraints, including the interests of powerful actors, the changing nature of sovereignty, and the performance of development agencies and Southern states.

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES

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10.5 Strengthening civil society in developing countries

Alison Van Rooy[1]

WHY BOTHER ABOUT CIVIL SOCIETY?

The answer is that talk about civil society is shaping the very way in which we 'do' international relations today. That conversation pulls together global ideas, values, institutions and dollars in a vibrant, and sometimes violent, fashion. In many ways, civil society is the Rome of today's internationalism; wherever we may begin, we will arrive at this debate sooner or later.

Certainly, writing about the role of civil society has grown in volume and depth in the past decade. From this sphere are to come agents of change to cure a range of social and economic ills left by failures in government or the marketplace: autocracy, poverty, oppression, social malaise. Cornucopian expectations for social change have been heaped on this idea and, indeed, for some Northern donors in particular, the 'discovery' of civil society has promised a solution to the enduring problems of development and democracy. Many have devoted official development assistance dollars to a range of civil society projects throughout the world, and the number and variety of those projects increases daily.

Yet serious questions remain about the whole enterprise. What are people talking about when they use the term 'civil society'? What are the issues and implications, both for good and for ill, of this growing debate in the international aid business? This chapter poses, and begins to answer, some of these vexing questions.

WHAT DOES 'CIVIL SOCIETY' MEAN?

What do we mean, *precisely*, when we use the term 'civil society'? The term has a long history in political philosophy, and its definition has altered with Roman, Lockean, Hegelian, Marxist and Gramscian interpretations long before it was resurrected in the 1990s. Out of that long debate, what messages have we brought forward today? I think that there are at least six different elements, and at least as many dangers in turning them into policy directions.