

American University
School of International Service
International Development Program

MICROPOLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT
Fall 2008 - SIS 636.002

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Class Meetings: Tuesdays 5:30 – 8:00 PM
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:30 – 3:30 PM

To schedule an office meeting please call the International Development Program office at: (202) 885-1657, or send an email to: idsis@american.edu

Development involves power relations, and is thus inherently a political process. Development initiatives lead to complex sets of impacts and contradictory patterns of winners and losers. This holds true for global, national, sub-national and local community levels. These matters point to a central concern of politics and of this course: who gets what, how and why, and how do they make use of what they have; and of who does not, and why not, and how do they respond to the denial of resources and rights.

This course on Micropolitics of Development introduces key social categories that affect politics and the development process at the local or micro project level. These include class, status (including the operation of elites, bureaucrats and development professionals), ethnicity, caste, gender and differences based on culture and religion. It provides an opportunity to observe a number of case studies that illustrate the interrelationships between development activities and micropolitics.

From an applied perspective, the material in this course is intended to provide a conceptual and focused background for, and useful pointers towards, competent and informed social assessment. More specifically, reference will be made to a number of practical tools for anticipating and assessing the impact on development of the political, economic and social interrelationships discussed.

Students will be required to take a mid-term and final exam, and carry out a research project. The research assignment will allow the student to investigate a concrete development project and apply the themes and concepts discussed in class to analyze the issues at stake.

Grading for the course will be based on the following criteria:

Mid-Term: 20%

Research Project: 40%

Final Exam: 30%

Participation: 10%

Students are required to attend class and read course materials *before* each session.

The university's Code of Academic Honesty will be strictly followed. In other words, you must do your own work. Plagiarism will *not* be tolerated.

Reading Materials

- Required Book:

Robert Chambers, Whose Reality Counts? Putting the Last First (London: ITDG, 1997)

- All other reading materials will be available through Blackboard.

** Any questions or problems concerning the readings posted on Blackboard should be directed to my assistant, Enrique Carrillo Gomez, at: ec8430a@american.edu

August 26

Introduction

- Film, The Motorcycle Diaries. Directed by Walter Salles (2004).

The film tells the story of two young Argentineans who embark on an eye-opening journey across South America in 1952. Directed by an acclaimed Brazilian cinematographer, The Motorcycle Diaries introduces many of the key themes that will be reviewed in our class and offers a metaphor for understanding the journey-like qualities inherent to the development process.

September 2

Levels of Analysis: Linking the Global & Local, the Macro & Micro

Robert Chambers, "All Power Deceives," Whose Reality Counts? Putting the Last First (London: ITDG, 1997), pp. 76-101.

J. Bayo Adekanyo, "Structural Adjustment, Democratization and Rising Ethnic Tensions in Africa," Development and Change, 26 (1995), pp 355-374.

Katherine Boo. "Letter from India: The Best Job in Town -- The Americanization of Chennai." The New Yorker (July 5, 2004), pp. 54-69.

Belinda Leach and Anthony Winston, "Bringing Globalization down to Earth: Restructuring and Labour in Rural Communities," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 32:3 (1995), pp. 341-364.

William M. Loker, "The Grit in the Prosperity Machine: Globalization and the Rural Poor in Latin America," Globalization and the Rural Poor in Latin America (edited by William M. Loker) (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999), pp. 23-39.

Recommended Reading

Colin M Lawson et al, "Surviving and Thriving: Differentiation in a Peri-Urban Community in Northern Albania," World Development, 28:8 (2000), pp. 1499-1514.

September 9

Class & Status

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy (edited by Lewis S Feuer) (New York: Anchor Books), pp. 7-29.

Max Weber, Economy and Society (edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich) (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 303–7; pp. 926-939.

Robert Chambers, “Poor People’s Realities: Local, Complex, Diverse, Dynamic and Unpredictable,” Whose Reality Counts? Putting the Last First (London: ITDG, 1997), pp. 76-101.

Deepa Narayan with Raj Patel et al., “Definitions of Poverty,” Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?, pp. 30-80.

Miguel Carter, “Social Inequality, Agrarian Reform and Democracy in Brazil,” Challenging Social Inequality: The Landless Rural Workers Movement and Agrarian Reform in Brazil, edited by Miguel Carter. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

● Documentary video, Raiz Forte (Strong Roots): The Landless Worker’s Movement in Brazil. Directed by Maisa Mendonça (2003).

September 16

Ethnicity & Race

Nelson Kasfir, "Explaining Ethnic Political Participation," The State and Development in the Third World (Atul Kohli, editor) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 88-111.

Anthony Marx. “Race-Making and the Nation-State,” World Politics 48 (January 1996), pp. 180-208.

Mahmood Mamdani, When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 3-39.

Recommended Reading

Saul Newman, “Does Modernization Breed Ethnic Political Conflict?” World Politics 43 (April 1991), pp. 451-478.

September 23

Ethnicity, Race & Caste

Ashutosh Varshney, “Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society,” World Politics 53 (April 2001), pp. 362-398.

Kevin Healy, “Indigenous Challenges to the Western Modernization Models,” Llamas, Weavings, and Organic Chocolate: Multicultural Grassroots Development in the Andes and Amazon of Bolivia. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), pp. 64-94.

Jack Donnelly, "Human Rights and Cultural Values: Caste in India," Universal Human Rights in Theory and in Practice. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 125-142.

September 30

Gender

Deepa Narayan with Raj Patel et al., "Changing Gender Relations in the Household," Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?, pp. 174-262.

N. Kabeer, "Conflicts over Credit: Re-Evaluating the Empowerment Potential of Loans to Women in Rural Bangladesh," World Development 29: 1 (2001), pp. 63-84.

Carmen Diana Deere and Magdalena Leon, "The Gender Asset Gap: Land in Latin America," World Development 31: 6 (2003), pp. 925-947.

Heidi Tinsman, "More than Victims: Women Agricultural Workers and Social Change in Rural Chile," Victims of the Chilean Miracle: Workers and Neoliberalism in the Pinochet Era, 1973-2002, edited by Peter Winn (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 261-297.

October 7

Gender

David Hirschmann, "Civil Society in South Africa: Lessons from Gender Themes," World Development 26: 2 (1998), pp. 227-238.

Vidyamali Samarasinghe, "Hanging in at the Margin: Political Participation, Democracy and Women in South Asia," Democracy and Women in South Asia (1993), pp. 239-259.

Kevin Healy, "Piloting Women's Popular Education," Llamas, Weavings, and Organic Chocolate: Multicultural Grassroots Development in the Andes and Amazon of Bolivia. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), pp. 225-247.

Diane Singerman, "Engaging Informality: Women, Work, and Politics in Cairo," Middle Eastern Women and the Invisible Economy. (Richard A. Lobban, Jr., editor) (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998), pp. 262-286.

October 10

Take-Home Mid-Term Exam Due

October 14

Elites & Stakeholder Analysis

Joan Nelson, "Traditional Leaders, Patrons and Urban Political Machines," Access to Power (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 168-213.

Robert Michels on "Oligarchy," Organization and Bureaucracy (edited by Frank Fischer and Carmen Sirianni) (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

John Higley, Judith Kullberg, and Jan Pakulski, "The Persistence of Postcommunist Elites," Democracy after Communism. (Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, editors) (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), pp. 33-47.

Leigh A. Payne, "The Brazilian Rural Democratic Union," Uncivil Movements: The Armed Right and Democracy in Latin America (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 101-161.

** Jennifer Rietbergen-McCracken & Deepa Narayan, Stakeholder Analysis Module 2, Environment Dept, World Bank, 1997 (excerpts).

Recommended Reading

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee: "The Net: Power Structure in Ten Villages."

October 21

Bureaucracy

Max Weber on "Bureaucracy," Karl Marx on "The Spirit of Bureaucracy and Beyond Bureaucracy," and Michael Lipsky on "Street Level Bureaucracy," Organization and Bureaucracy (edited by Frank Fischer and Carmen Sirianni) (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984).

Deepa Narayan with Raj Patel et al., "State Institutions," Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us?, pp. 82-126.

David Hirschmann, "A Development Management versus Third World Bureaucracies: a Brief History of Conflicting Interests," Development and Change, 30: 2 (1999), pp. 287-305.

Judith Tendler, "Civil Servants and Civil Society, Governments Central and Local," Good Government in the Tropics. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), pp. 135-165.

October 28

Development Professionals & Participatory Rural Appraisal

Robert Chambers, “Normal Error,” “Professional Realities,” “The Transfer of Reality,” and “Putting the Last First,” Whose Reality Counts? Putting the Last First, pp. 15-75 and 210-237.

Recommended Reading

Robert Chambers, “Learning to Learn,” and “What Works and Why,” Whose Reality Counts? Putting the Last First, pp. 102-161.

November 4

Religion & Culture

Tim Allen, “Taking Culture Seriously,” Poverty and Development in the 1990s (London: Oxford University Press 1992), pp. 331-346.

Marvin Harris, “Mother Cow,” Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), pp. 11-32.

James Scott, “Thin Simplifications and Practical Knowledge: Mētis,” Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 309-341.

Amartya Sen, “Culture and Human Rights,” Development as Freedom. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 227-248.

Rosane Prado, “Small Town, Brazil: Heaven and Hell of Personalism,” The Brazilian Puzzle: Culture on the Borderlands of the Western World. (David J. Hess and Roberto A. DaMatta, editors) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 59-82.

Recommended Reading

John Kirby, "Why the Anufo Do Not Eat Frog Meat: The Importance of Taboo-Making for Development Work", African Affairs, pp. 59-72

November 11

Religion & Culture

James C. Scott, “The Infrapolitics of Subordinate Groups,” Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 183-201.

John Burdick, "Rethinking the Study of Social Movements: The Case of Christian Base Communities in Urban Brazil," The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy. (Arturo Escobar and Sonia E. Alvarez, editors) (Boulder: Westview Press,, 1992), pp. 171-184.

Mark Tessler, "Democratic Concern and Islamic Resurgence: Converging Dimensions of the Arab World's Political Agenda," Democracy and its Limits: Lessons from Asia, Latin America and the Middle East (Howard Handelman and Mark Tessler, editors) (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 2000), pp. 262-289.

Jonathan Fox, "How does Civil Society Thicken? The Political Construction of Social Capital in Rural Mexico," State-Society Synergy: Government and Social Capital in Development. (Peter Evans, editor) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 119-149.

Jack Weatherford, "Liberty, Anarchism, and the Noble Savage," Indian Givers (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1988), pp. 117-131.

November 18

Class Presentations

November 24

**** Research Project Document Due**

December 2

Class Presentations

December 10

Take-Home Final Exam Due