



The Media and the Rwanda Genocide

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B. C. Smith

Good Governance and Development
Basingstoke/New York, Palgrave
Macmillan, 2007, ISBN-13: 978-0-230-
52566-5, 320 pp.

**United Nations Division for Public
Administration and Development
Management, Dept of Economic and
Social Affairs**

*Public Administration and Democratic
Governance: Governments Serving
Citizens*
New York, United Nations, 2007, ISBN:
978-92-1-123160-1, 359 pp.

**Penny Gurstein and Leonora Angeles
(eds.)**

*Learning Civil Societies: Shifting Contexts
for Democratic Planning and Governance*
Toronto/Buffalo/London, University of
Toronto Press, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-8020-
9119-2, 265 pp.

‘Governance’ – it’s one of those words! It is used all over the place these days, by people in all sorts of roles; but how many of us have a clear understanding of what it means? Some people seem to see it as a synonym for government. Others use it as a broader term covering a range of institutions, including government but spilling over into the wider structures of authority and the ways in which they function. Yet others use it to describe the more abstract systems of norms, rules, and regulations that underpin the functioning of societies. Governance can be used to describe modern, formal structures and institutions; yet the term is also used to describe the traditional and sometimes less visible structures and systems through which power and authority are wielded. The range of understandings allows for plenty of assumptions, imprecision, and failure of communications.

Governance affects us all. This apparently impersonal word actually refers to social,

cultural, and political phenomena that deeply shape and govern daily life and what happens within it. We all interact with and through governance on a daily basis. ‘Governance’ sounds boring, technical, something that specialists know and think about. It also sounds like an arena where ‘problems’ are solvable; where ‘solutions’ are technical. Yet in practice governance is a constantly and perpetually negotiable and contested terrain.

I like the football/soccer analogy. For a football tournament to work, all the teams need to understand and be intimately familiar with the rules of the game, and to agree to abide by them or face penalties (within a pre-defined framework incorporating an appeals process). Each member of the team has a role which interacts in particular ways with other roles, and in the middle of a match it is almost possible to forget the rules that are governing play, as they are so well internalised. The rules are validated by FIFA, the international governing body for the game, which is composed of representatives of all the countries which play the game, and recognised by national processes and national institutions. The governing body does not stop at making rules. It also ensures that there are individuals (referees and linesmen, for example) and groups or mechanisms (disciplinary committees, for instance) who will make sure that participating countries comply with the rules of the game. For every match that is played and for every issue that comes up concerning the conduct of participants such as players, fans, and national football associations, the governing body will have to carefully consider the nationality, experience, integrity, and interests of whoever will be involved in taking a decision. If the governing body is not properly constituted, it will jeopardise the game; if the rules made are not in the interests of the game, it will jeopardise the game; and if the application of the rules to any issue or disciplinary matter is not done fairly, the game is brought into dispute. Yet there is nothing ‘natural’ about

football: it is a human construct, the product of negotiation and practice over many, many years. The rules continue to evolve through negotiation to suit changes in the wider environment. Yet there is no denying that some more powerful nations, organisations, and individuals were dominant in that negotiation process. Despite the rules, there is no doubt that foul play also happens and is sometimes unpunished. There are other ball games with completely different histories and rules.

Governance is likewise a human construct, or rather a series of human constructs, subject to adaptation and change, products of history and culture, profoundly influenced by economic and cultural as well as political forces. Governance provides a 'space' or series of 'spaces' for legitimate interaction between very different players. It is clearly of interest to governments, parliaments, and political parties; it is central to the work and concerns of a wide range of national and international institutions and official bodies external to formally political processes, such as the World Bank and regional development banks, the IMF, UN bodies, judicial and bureaucratic bodies, and so on. But equally, governance is of concern to a range of non-government and citizens' organisations, whatever their area of specific focus, since the rules of the game affect all of us.

Then add a describing word. 'Good' governance – or even, 'good-enough' governance – and what do you get? A whole pile of value judgements about what works, and how things should work. The aura of neutrality which apparently surrounds the word somehow still tries to remain in place, despite the fact that notions of 'good' depend on one's particular perspective. 'Good governance' is something you can't argue with. But is it good governance for economic growth? Good governance for reducing poverty and inequality? Those two are not necessarily the same thing. Or good governance for maintaining the *status quo*? Even if 'good' is clearly intended to refer to the conditions for reducing poverty and

inequality, it rests on many assumptions about what it will take for that to be achieved. Neither does neutrality apply to the practice of governance. Governance, in practice, is criss-crossed with visible and invisible power relations, of gender, of social class, of caste, and every other kind. Yet the literature rarely makes this explicit.

So attempts to unpack and explore the complexities of governance and 'good' governance are to be welcomed. Smith's book *Good Governance and Development* is a recent example, examining the idea of good governance in the context of international development. It is a fairly comprehensive and systematic (if somewhat dry) presentation of the different aspects and contested definitions of governance, while broadly synthesising the wider literature on the subject at the same time. As such, it is a useful starting point. Political accountability, the rule of law, decentralisation, political parties and pluralism, participation, public management and accountability, and corruption are all included. The book also covers economic governance issues such as planning and policy, and poverty reduction. It also includes human rights. It does not avoid the normative nature of governance as a topic; it explores conditionality, Western imperialism, and aid; and it is explicit in laying bare the hypocrisy of Western donor countries in demanding good governance from aid recipients, while allowing domestic poverty levels to persist and their own violations of international law to go unchallenged. For Smith, this does not invalidate the notion of 'good' governance, but it does raise the issue of double standards.

Despite all the talk of poverty and poverty reduction in the book, there is very little sense of what good governance might actually be for, of what could be achieved if the conditions of good governance could be attained. Readers are left to take that step for themselves. Until the chapter on participation, the book is rather short on illustrations and examples to bring the contents alive, so imagination is called for to think beyond

the familiar and envisage something different. The concept of governance is unpacked, but ‘development’ remains unproblematised, and one is left with the impression that aid = development.

On the global scale, governance is confronted by several daunting challenges. One of them is climate change. Another is the fact that we are entering a period of global economic fluidity. Other major concerns are terrorism, unresolved regional conflicts, and the trade in addictive and illegal drugs. The ‘economies’ of some of the biggest corporations are larger than the economies of some whole countries. We are also facing some significant re-alignments of power relations between nation states. Yet global-level governance issues are surprisingly absent from this book. Governance is addressed at the micro level in the chapter on decentralisation, but at the other end of the scale the book does not address global governance. Reform of the UN and reform of the governance structures of some of the major financial institutions are surely essential elements of a comprehensive introduction to the topic. But despite these gaps, and despite some instances of sloppy copy-editing, Smith has provided a useful broad introduction to many of the central issues of governance in (relatively) straightforward language.

Smith writes from the perspective of a professor of political science. How does that compare with the perspective from within the UN, one of the key institutions of global governance? *Public Administration and Democratic Governance: Governments Serving Citizens* is a collection of papers presented by various authors at the seventh global forum on ‘Reinventing Government, Building Trust in Government’ in June 2007. Together, the papers give another broad introduction to the issues, but rather from an insider perspective, dominated by the concerns of donors. No surprises there. Beyond some focus on the Millennium Development Goals, the book as a whole distances itself from poverty issues. In this volume the politics become more explicit,

and the focus is on ‘democratic governance’. Much of the book is an exhortation, purporting to tell us how things should be done – we are urged to make and eat apple pie. We are told the generic ingredients for apple pie; but there is a lot more we would need to know, assuming apple pie is what we want to make: where to source the ingredients (and what the variations might be in the recipe, including what to substitute if cooking apples, or any apples, are not available), how they should be produced, how we can secure the quantities and quality we require, or indeed what proportions to use and how to combine them, what temperature to cook them at and for how long – these are different matters entirely. So, for example, Cheema (Chapter 2) sketches the general relationship between democracy and governance in a rather didactic manner, offering high-level prescriptions for things that must or should happen if governments are to truly serve citizens, but failing to explain why (the reason is taken as self-evident), let alone how. More concrete, real examples would have helped throughout. Only the final chapter, on participatory governance in cities, gave a taste of what might be involved in implementing ‘good governance’ in specific circumstances, thereby bringing the topic into the real world. The book would be a far more useful and even inspiring collection if this could have been achieved throughout.

In contrast, the third book in this cluster attempts something quite different. Rather than scanning the overview of governance at a high level, *Learning Civil Societies: Shifting Contexts for Democratic Planning and Governance* focuses on one element that can make or break any complex change process: learning. It also chooses just one ‘pillar’ of the Governments & Institutions/Civil Society/Private Sector governance model: civil society. It asks a fundamental question which addresses the reality that all planning for and implementation of governance is a human activity, not some disembodied ‘mechanical’ system to be tinkered with

by technicians. The question is this: how do you educate and prepare people to do things differently? The volume focuses primarily on planning processes, the contexts and dynamics, global, national, and local. It consistently connects theory and practice, and does not shy away from the complexity and diversity of human environments; it intentionally looks for practical strategies that will support the learning that humans need if they are to adapt successfully to post-colonial, globalised, and rapidly shifting complexity. For example, the skills and processes of mediation can provide practical mechanisms for addressing conflicts of many kinds and exploring possible 'new solutions'. This is an approach that moves away from the familiar 'majority group wins' basis of much democratic process practised in most parts of the 'democratic' world. Other forms of civic participation that address the needs of minority groupings are also explored.

This volume succeeds in making visible the issues of power that the other two books prefer to leave implicit and unexplored. In practical terms, how can civil societies (note the possibility of diversity in the plural) create spaces for enabling real participation, beyond the ballot box, and contributing to real change in planning processes and governance that will enable greater justice to prevail? This will take more than a particular sub-section of civil society to achieve – hence the priority of learning about making change. There has been much reference in recent years to the Porto Alegre model of participatory governance and participatory budgeting. For a change, the final chapter in this book takes the reader on a visit to Naga City in the Philippines for a different experience which, if it is new to you, is well worth considering.

Will governance ever become a topic that inspires and energises? I suspect that, in the same way that you don't find social movements organising to end poverty in and of itself (see Tony Bebbington in *Development and Change* 38 (5): 793–818), this is unlikely. On the other hand is it possible to get inspired and energised about some practical

area of change that will contribute to 'good governance'? That is much more likely.

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Didier Jacobs

Global Democracy. The Struggle for Political and Civil Rights in the 21st Century

Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-8265-1573-5, 228 pp.

Didier Jacobs has written a book that is both important and ambitious. It questions the democratic legitimacy of global public-policy decisions. Like few books in this area, it provides a readable and differentiated analysis of global governance and its democratic deficits. This analysis is combined with an ambitious programme of measures to translate global democracy into action. Whereas Jacobs' analytical overview is worth reading, his programme for realising global democracy is worth discussing.

The first part of the book elaborates upon the idea of global democracy. Jacobs departs from the assumption that we already live in a global village, which he defines as 'the set of public policies that affect most if not all people ... throughout the world' (p. 11). Today, global policy making is often described as governance without government. Jacobs, however, argues forcefully against this dominant approach. He demonstrates that the global sphere has already established a system of federative governance – at least from the perspective of most developing countries. From the perspective of the USA and Europe, however, the world appears to be merely a weak confederation, because, unlike powerless nations, the big players can make full use of their opt-out and veto rights. In the light of the quasi-hegemonic status of Europe and the USA,

the global village is practically controlled by an informal government; however, this governance displays, as Jacobs points out, structural analogies to apartheid, because most people are segregated from global public-policy making according to the colour of their passports. Against this unjust background, he promotes his idea of global democracy, which basically claims that global governance can be legitimised only by implementing universal suffrage, and by guaranteeing transparency, accountability, and participation at all levels of global policy making.

In the second part, Jacobs contrasts his idea of global democracy with current approaches to foreign policy, namely benevolent imperialism, nationalism, multilateralism, and localism. As he convincingly argues, these approaches either misrepresent actual interdependencies or they depend on international institutions which, like the UN Security Council or the World Bank, are illegitimately controlled by political superpowers. However, global democracy, defined 'as the application of liberal representative democracy to the global level of government' (p. 94), could advance legitimacy 'by developing institutional innovations already adopted by some international institutions' (*ibid.*). Jacobs particularly suggests a global extension of those international institutions which already embody some key features of a legitimate global government. Among these features he names the limitation of opt-out and veto rights, an entry test which sets Human Rights standards, the principles of equal universal suffrage and majority voting, and an independent judiciary which checks and balances common policies.

In the third part, Jacobs specifies his far-reaching reform programme. Most notably, he maps out how a global extension of international institutions could be realised. As a first step, already operating institutions like NATO and the WTO should be extended and democratised through gradual reform. Then, it is necessary to establish a general institution that bundles all issues of

global justice. At this point, Jacobs' programme for realising global democracy comes down to the idea of an extended European Union. In order to get a worldwide EU off the ground, he suggests a two-tiered institutional architecture, in which 'second-tier intergovernmental organizations should allow pioneering states to take on deeper commitments of international cooperation, while less committed states could remain members of existing, first-tier organizations' (p. 95).

Of course, Jacobs' ambitious programme will provoke criticism from many sides. Concerning the two-tiered architecture of global governance, what is particularly questionable is the source of the legitimacy of second-tier inter-government organisations, and whether institutional double standards would not destabilise rather than complement existing organisations. On the whole, it is striking that Jacobs does not consider a reform of the UN. For him, it is unrealistic to think that its democratic deficits can be amended. However, a global extension of NATO or the EU appears equally difficult, to say the least. Consider a NATO in which Europe and the USA could be easily outvoted by China. In this respect, Jacobs' vision of global democracy appears not only practically utopian, but also normatively debatable, because it reduces the understanding of democracy to the majority principle. Furthermore, how achievable, and how desirable, is such an extension of the EU?

Nationalists will demur that today's European integration is built on cultural ties. In their eyes, Jacobs' cosmopolitan outlook underestimates the significance of a shared identity for an effective political federation. This objection, however, is only a half-truth, because, as Jacobs rightly emphasises, a global human identity is continually growing. Further, he is doubtless right in pointing to the deficit of democratic legitimacy as the greatest challenge to global public-policy making today. All in all, while his vision of global democracy may appear ambitious or even utopian to many

readers, it nonetheless corresponds perfectly with the transnational structure of today's problems of global justice, which call for ambitious answers and unparalleled solutions. In this respect, Jacobs has written a readable book which will likewise inspire activists, practitioners, and scholarly debate.

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Edward Cleary
Mobilizing for Human Rights in Latin America
Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2007,
ISBN: 978 1 56 5492417, 153 pp.

This is an essential work for scholars, activists, and anyone interested in the field of human rights. The author swiftly moves through the legacies and traditions that have evolved into the struggles and achievements of contemporary Latin American societies, and the result is a work that is easy to read yet by no means superficial.

The book presents a compelling description of the unique features of the struggle for human rights in the region. Devoting a chapter to each of the most relevant issues of contemporary human-rights concerns, the author goes back to colonial times to understand the mindset and development of recent large-scale violations of human rights, and the responses to them by affected groups as well as civil society at large. Ranging from the sixteenth-century legacy of Bartolomé de Las Casas in his struggle for indigenous people's rights during the Conquest to the modern quest of Paulo Freire to empower the disenfranchised through education and liberation theology's revolutionary challenge to the role of the Catholic Church in society, the book adopts a broader perspective than others that address the same subject. The author's expo-

sition of these examples provides readers with tools and a framework to comprehend many other human-rights matters not included in the volume.

While mostly focusing on recent events, mobilisations, and current challenges in the wake of the Latin American dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s, Cleary also covers 500 years of traditions and struggles, enabling the reader to get a sense of Latin America's particular stance on human rights, most clearly when highlighting the unique position taken by the region at the birth of the United Nations, and its major contribution to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is at the core of modern supranational governance initiatives.

The end of World War II was the turning point for human rights as we know them today. Since then the field has developed, moving rapidly from a states-centred vision of security among nations to broader aspects of modern life: gender equality, the rights of minorities, justice, environment, poverty, and governance, among many others. Covering some of these dimensions in each chapter, the book begins with women's rights and ends with torture and corruption. The complex task of writing about such a vast field is made even harder with the addition of a regional perspective. Latin America, for all its common history, encompasses 22 countries and almost 600 million people, living in countries that range from some of the world's largest economies, such as Brazil and Mexico, to some of the most deprived societies in the world. Having to select examples to illustrate such diverse subjects, the author presents them through specific cases from the perspectives of particular civil-society mobilisations on the issues, or in terms of the public policies of the country dealing with them. Yet many paradigmatic movements and events are not mentioned.

The author argues that Latin America, conscious of the horrors that it had lived through during the dictatorships of the 1970s and

1980s, acted upon them once democracy had been re-established, and that this was 'a major shift away from passivity and fatalism toward empowerment or agency' (p. ix). From a Latin American perspective this comes as a surprise, since the twentieth-century fight for freedom and human rights can be traced to the days of the Mexican revolution against the dictator Porfirio Diaz in 1910, through to the Madres de Plaza de Mayo marching in front of the presidential palace, endangering their lives at the height of the military power in Argentina. The fact that most of these movements did not see themselves as human-rights groups at that time has more to do with the fact that back then human rights were not perceived in such a complex and developed way as they are today. Many groups were fighting for specific rights, rather than seeing themselves through the lens of human rights, but nevertheless in most cases the main actors in the human-rights field today can trace their origins and influences back over many decades.

While the author emphasises the role of international support for the fight against dictatorships in the Southern Cone, describing it as ushering in the human-rights era in Latin America, almost nothing is said about the international support for those Juntas provided by the United States through the US-based military School of the Americas, or its involvement in the *coups d'état* in Chile and Guatemala, among others. The same can be said of the role of the Catholic Church, which was very different from country to country: from opposition to Pinochet in Chile to active involvement with the Juntas in Argentina. Probably Latin America's difficulty in dealing with opposing demands from society through democratic processes can be linked to the legacy of the Catholic Inquisition since colonial times, with its heritage of persecution of any form of dissidence, and its disdain for any social architecture lacking rigid hierarchical structures.

On the theme of torture and disappearances during the military era, it is hard to

understand the grounds on which the cases in the book were selected. The author treats the Chilean Valech Commission as the only example of a worldwide effort against torture, and presents Brazil's *Nunca Mais* report as a blueprint on the issue. Yet the only case of a military junta being prosecuted in a trial not conducted in the context of an international war is Argentina's arraignment of its own Junta, which goes unmentioned in the book. Despite their good intentions, the cases of Chilean and Brazilian initiatives mentioned above hardly had any significant legal outcome. In contrast, the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared presided over thousands of investigations into abductions, disappearances, torture, and executions; it produced more than 50,000 pages of documentation, and its final report, *Nunca Más*, concluded with a set of recommendations which have translated into more than 1030 current trials of military and civil junta officials, with over 4000 people prosecuted and some imprisoned in common jails – a case unique in the world.

Despite some factual errors (naming Argentina's President as Norberto Kirchner instead of Néstor Kirchner, for example), the book is a gateway to understanding human rights in Latin America. The recent governments that have come to power in the region reflect the long struggle of these mobilisations. Labour rights took Lula from leadership of the auto workers' union to the presidency; the disenfranchisement of indigenous people helped coca-growers' leader Evo Morales to become President, with a mandate to redistribute Bolivia's gas wealth. These examples, and that of Hugo Chávez, who ended Venezuela's corrupt two-party system, can be better understood on the light of Clearys work.

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Jeffrey Haynes

Religion and Development: Conflict or Cooperation?

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, ISBN: 9780230542464, 250 pp.

Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen

Development and Faith: Where Mind and Soul Work Together

Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-8213-7173-2, 347 pp.

Recent years have witnessed a growing awareness among academics and practitioners alike of the need for a closer examination of the role of religion in processes of development. The need to incorporate religion into development-related thinking has arisen largely because, contrary to the predictions of modernisation and secularisation theories, religion has not disappeared from the public arena. Rather, religious-based groups and movements have proliferated over the past decades, with the post-9/11 period bringing the global spotlight on to particular forms of politicised Islam especially. However, faith-based organisations (FBOs) existed long before 'international development' was even conceived, and they have recently come to the attention of development agencies and theorists as key participants in the development process. This has led to a growing recognition of the need for a more systematic analysis of the role of religion in processes of development. Both Jeffrey Haynes's *Religion and Development* and Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen's *Development and Faith* attempt to fill this gap by calling attention to the role of FBOs in development.

The shift in development thinking from looking through a purely economic lens to a more multi-dimensional approach has been occurring gradually over the past two decades, driven partly by criticisms of the neo-liberal structural-adjustment policies of

the World Bank and IMF, which dominated development discourse and practice throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Development practitioners and critics became increasingly aware of the fact that such a singular approach to development not only did not work, but actually led to increasingly uneven forms of development. At the end of the twentieth century, calls for a more holistic approach to development began growing louder, with FBOs among the most vocal critics of approaches based exclusively on economics. Haynes begins his book by tracing this theoretical shift from an emphasis on modernisation and secularisation in the post-1945 era to the basic-needs approach during the Cold War to the neo-liberal structural-adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s, and finally to the present context in which there is a general consensus about the need for a more balanced approach to 'human development'.

Religion and Development attempts to consider the role of religion as a factor in development processes, in terms of its potentially constructive and destructive roles. In his introductory chapter, Haynes looks briefly at some of the major world religions, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity, and draws attention to some of their commonalities in terms of promoting development-related values such as justice, equality, and social harmony. Haynes also mentions the establishment of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD) in 1998, which was initiated by the then President of the World Bank, James D. Wolfensohn, in order to build bridges between representatives of faith communities and international development institutions. He goes on to consider religious resurgence at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries and connects this resurgence with feelings of ambivalence, disappointment, and emptiness related to processes of modernisation. Haynes links this trend with globalisation and considers the engagement of religious groups with such processes, in the form of fundamentalist religious movements as well as protest by representatives of faith-based

institutions against its detrimental economic and social effects.

The remainder of *Religion and Development* addresses areas in which faith-based organisations have the potential to make (and have already made) concrete contributions, including in the fields of conflict prevention and peace-building, economic development and wealth creation, governance, the environment, health, and education. In each of these areas, Haynes provides a brief introduction to the issue and looks at the ways that religion in general relates to this theme. He then provides concrete examples of faith-based initiatives from the field. For example, in his chapter on environmental sustainability, he introduces the issue briefly in terms of global initiatives to promote environmental sustainability and considers the ways in which some of the major world religions speak to the question of the environment. He then briefly outlines faith-based initiatives in Honduras, India, and Malaysia related to promoting environmental sustainability at the community level.

Katherine Marshall and Marisa Van Saanen's *Development and Faith* also draws attention to the importance of religion in processes of development by highlighting the work of FBOs in various parts of the world. This book is in many ways a sequel to an earlier World Bank-sponsored publication on the same theme (Marshall and Keough 2004). Compared with the work of Haynes, it is less concerned with development theory; rather, it is structured as a series of case studies of the engagement of FBOs in development projects around the world. The authors begin by briefly outlining the increasing interest in religion on the part of 'secular' development agencies, citing the World Bank's launch of the WFDD in particular, an initiative which Marshall herself helped to shape, as well as various other international meetings that have taken place as part of wider efforts underway since the late 1990s, to build closer ties between secular and faith-based organisations.

Development and Faith, although less concerned with development theory than with

practice, does draw out some of the difficulties of bringing faith-based and secular institutions together at the same table. The authors point to the differences in language, with both sets of institutions operating with their own registers of communication and styles of operating. Furthermore, various issues often divide FBOs from 'mainstream' development agencies, especially those that relate to women's rights and sexuality. However, Marshall and Van Saanen argue, like Haynes, that certain common humanitarian themes have the potential to bring faith-based and secular institutions together in the fight against poverty and injustice. The remainder of *Development and Faith* is devoted to demonstrating the potential for increased co-operation across the religious/secular divide by highlighting faith-based initiatives related to various development-related issues. These include the Millennium Development Goals in general, as well as case studies of groups working on HIV and AIDS, education, violence against women, the girl child, microcredit and microfinance, the provision of health-related services, disaster relief, corruption, street children, peace-building, and various other topics.

Although these two books make strong cases for a closer integration of faith-based and secular development-related initiatives, they share similar weaknesses. Haynes's work is ambitious in that he attempts to present several major world religions alongside a series of development-related themes. However, such a broad approach runs the risk of over-generalisation. For example, while drawing out the development-related themes within various religious ideologies, he is unable to deal in any depth with the complexities of each faith tradition. Furthermore, although he briefly theorises 'religion' as a concept, overall this term remains largely unquestioned in his work. In both books, what defines a religious organisation, how religion operates differently for different groups and institutions and in different contexts, and the often unclear boundary between 'religious' and 'secular' remain

unscrutinised. Furthermore, neither book deals with the competing ways in which 'development' is itself conceptualised by different faiths, and different groups within each faith tradition, choosing rather to look for commonalities at the expense of complexity. Rather, both books treat the concepts of 'religion' and 'development' rather superficially, preferring to focus on case studies of particular initiatives. While the work of faith-based organisations deserves to be highlighted, it is also essential for development theorists to analyse the way that terminology is used before such language is applied to case studies.

Furthermore, although Haynes sets out to understand the constructive as well as the destructive effects of religion on processes of development, for the most part his work focuses on the positive contributions of FBOs. He very briefly mentions the detrimental role of religion in certain conflict situations, but he does not go into any depth about the potentially harmful role that religious groups and ideologies can often play in heightening divisions between groups, justifying oppressive practices, and promoting violent conflict. Marshall and Van Saanen's work also takes a celebratory approach to faith-based development initiatives and is uncritical about the potentially negative and incendiary consequences of such efforts. Although the work of many faith-based institutions is worth praising in terms of their contributions to promoting sustainable development and alleviating poverty, it is important for academics to view such efforts with a critical eye. This does not mean that religion can be viewed either wholly positively or wholly negatively. Rather, faith-based and secular development initiatives should both be analysed carefully, critically, and contextually in order to understand the complex processes involved in reaching development-related goals.

While *Religion and Development* and *Development and Faith* make strong cases for integrating 'the religious' and 'the secular' by highlighting initiatives that have

long been neglected by 'mainstream' development thinking, perhaps because of the wide scope of their projects neither book is able to deal adequately with the complexity either of 'religion' or of 'development'. Rather, both books should be viewed as a starting point to spark further, more critical research in this area by academics working in areas as diverse as religious studies, development studies, sociology, anthropology, and political science, among others. Further, the work of these authors should raise questions for practitioners working in 'secular' as well as 'faith-based' institutions, prompting them to reflect on the values that underlie their work and their self-representation, the way they are perceived by the communities in which they work, and the effects of these values and perceptions on their ability to achieve development-related goals.

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Marshall, Katherine and Lucy Keough (eds.) (2004) *Mind, Heart and Soul in the Fight against Poverty*, Washington, DC: World Bank.

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Joy Moncrieffe and Rosalind Eyben (eds.)

The Power of Labelling: How People are Categorized and Why It Matters

London: Earthscan, 2007, ISBN: 978-1-84407-394-8, 189 pp.

As the title aptly suggests, this book investigates and offers reflections on the impact of the labels (names) and categories that we ascribe to individuals or sections of society or organisations, and the responses made to them by various actors. Labels can have positive and negative effects, although those

doing the labelling and the labelled are not always aware of them.

The labels that the book identifies include *the poor, the marginalised, sex workers, Muslim women, target population, development, the most needy, voice of the poor, empowering the poor, the destitute, meeting basic needs, and target populations*. Early on in the book, the editors present the notion that labels help us to construct our social world. By this they mean that the labels that we put on people do more than help us to identify who others are: they also help us to understand and make meaning of our social (political and economic) environment and how we engage with it. In the development context, for instance, labels help to ‘...define needs, justify interventions and to formulate solutions to perceived problems’ (p. 1).

The book makes three main assertions. First, that the labelling process involves relationships of power. Governments, development organisations, business, communities, and families produce and use labels to influence people and issues. Second, labels are made and ‘pasted’ on others for a variety of reasons that lead to certain outcomes. Some of these outcomes are intended, while others are unintended. Third, labels create relationships, determining who is responsible for what and to whom. While labels do help to set the stage for deciding who will give support to whom, they also create conditions for conflict, as people make claims to their entitlements.

The contributors to the book, in various ways and making reference to practical and historical examples, argue that development organisations, just like governments, multi-lateral and bi-lateral institutions, and business organisations, can and do create labels that positively and negatively affect people and communities. Sometimes these labels are created and popularised not because they work for those who are labelled but because they serve those who produce the labels.

In its final chapter, the book suggests how the pitfalls of labelling can be avoided.

I found the following suggestions to be the most helpful.

- *Awareness of the power and impact of labels.* Those producing and using labels must increase their awareness of how the labels affect others and themselves. Lack of awareness tends to create the blind-spot that prevents powerful or influential individuals and institutions from seeing the whole picture, and subsequently having the positive impact that they may want to have on others. Peter Senge and his co-authors in the book called *Presence*¹ provide techniques for learning to see the whole or larger picture, rather than one’s personal perspective only. This is especially essential for policy makers and development practitioners, because labels influence the allocation of resources.
- *Acknowledgement of diversity.* Labels tend to treat groups of people, communities, and organisations as if their members were all the same. But categories such as ‘the poor’, ‘Muslim women’, and ‘the marginalised’ are not homogeneous: there are differences and degrees within those general categories. Failure to notice and respond to these differences and degrees can and does result in inappropriate policy and practical responses, or inability to take advantage of existing opportunities.
- *There is more than one right answer.* There are diverse ways of seeing and working with problems. Because people or institutions that produce or use labels are often also powerful, they have a tendency to see their own preferred solutions as the only way in which problems can be solved. Dewitt Jones, in a movie² about creativity, powerfully demonstrates through his work as a professional photographer that we work best and attain optimal results when our mind-set admits and works with the fact that there is more than one right answer to a problem.
- *Policy responses and people’s own stories.* Unless policy makers and development practitioners learn to listen to people’s

own stories, their responses are likely to be off the mark and inappropriate. This is in tandem with Margaret Wheatley's argument that stories are still a useful 'technology' for identifying, understanding, and seeking solutions to people's problems.³ People must be consulted, through genuine dialogue that goes beyond the World Bank's 1999 consultations with stakeholders (p. 59). Genuine dialogue, as Otto Scharmer argues,⁴ happens when people engage in conversation after suspending their inclination to pass judgement and feel cynicism or fear and are, together, listening to what is striving to emerge.

In two ways I feel that this book could have been made even more valuable. First, considering the power and influence of business in determining where people live, their degree of access to the necessities of life, and the types of livelihood open to them, I am of the view that the book could have been richer with an article investigating how business organisations use labels to influence policies, resource allocation, and the behaviour/responses of their potential and actual customers. Second, the language could have been simpler. I struggled with the abstract and complex words and phrases used in most of the chapters. I guess this may be justified by the need to explain complex concepts, situations, and relationships. This fact notwithstanding, simple and accessible language could have helped a wider section of people who work in government and the development sector and are in need of hearing the book's very important message.

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Notes

1. Peter Senge *et al.*, *Presence: An Exploration of Profound Change in People, Organisations, and Society*, New York: Currency Double Day, 2004, pp. 21–68.

2. *Everyday Creativity* with Dewitt Jones, www.starthrower.com
3. Margaret Wheatley, *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2002, p. 3.
4. Otto Scharmer, *Theory U: Leading From The Future As It Emerges – The Social Technology of Presencing*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Society for Organisational Learning, 2007, pp. 135–142.

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Chris Beyrer and H. F. Pizer (eds.)
Public Health and Human Rights: Evidence-based Approaches
Baltimore, MD, The John Hopkins University Press, 2007, ISBN-13:978-0-8018-8647-8, 470 pp.

Until only a few years ago, public health and human rights were often considered as two distinct, almost antagonistic, sets of principles and practices.¹ Public health was understood to promote the community's collective physical, mental, and social well-being – even if, in order to achieve public-health goals, individual freedom to choose, to behave, or to act had to be curtailed in pursuit of the general good. This was, and continues to be, exemplified by the principles and practices that have guided the control of such communicable diseases as tuberculosis, typhoid, or sexually transmitted infections, where quarantine or other restrictions of rights have too often been imposed on affected individuals without any valid public-health justification.

Public-health abuses have also been exemplified by the excessive institutionalisation of people whose physical or mental health is impaired but for whom alternative care or support approaches have not been considered. And far from uncommon is discrimination in the health-care setting on the basis of health status, gender, race, colour, language, religion, social origins, or other attributes which can influence the quality of service provided

to individuals by or on behalf of the State. In contrast, human-rights laws have tended to bring into focus the relationship between the State – the first-line provider and protector of human rights – and individuals, who hold their human rights simply on account of being human. Even though people hold these rights throughout their lives, they are nonetheless often constrained in their ability to realise them fully. Those who are most vulnerable to violence or neglect of their rights are also often those who lack the power to voice this impact on their well-being, including their state of personal health.

From an advocacy perspective, claims for better fulfilment of civil and political rights have until recently taken precedence over other rights – social, economic, and cultural. Human-rights advocates recognised the negative health impact of infringements of civil and political rights – best exemplified by torture and other forms of degrading treatment.² Yet many feared that broadening the spectrum of rights advocacy to encompass the multifarious dimensions of health and rights violations might widen the focus of their advocacy and thereby weaken their claims. Thus, for a long time, health ignored rights, and rights ignored health. These two worlds remained apart until the 1980s, when reproductive-health issues and later HIV/AIDS brought to light the true nature of the relationship between health and rights.³

The fields of health and rights are illuminated by their commonalities, no longer by their differences. It is now understood that both represent universal aspirations: both are obligations of government towards their people, and each supports and requires the fulfilment of the other. It is within this context of mutuality that *Public Health and Human Rights* must be placed. According to the editors, the book and its contributors propose to ‘operationalise’ rights-based approaches to public health’ (p. 5). They seek to do this through an ‘experiential approach’ to service delivery in challenging countries/regions.

A real strength of the book is the implication that practitioners have the responsibility to further establish *how* and *to what extent* the promotion of health and the promotion of rights interact. By framing the debate in this way, the editors are arguing that activists do not have to show *why* both health and human rights are good for people. This is so because, in the relentless quest for a world where the attainment of the highest standards of physical, mental, and social well-being necessitate, and reinforce, the dignity, autonomy, and progress of every human being, the broad goals of health and human rights are universal and eternal. As such, they give us direction for our understanding of humanity, and practical tools for use in our daily work. This central argument is both powerfully and eloquently elaborated and argued throughout the book.

I find myself in broad sympathy with what the editors were trying to achieve: namely, to produce a provocative collection of essays on the complex relationship between rights and health. Nevertheless, there are some obvious weaknesses, not least relating to the organisation of the book itself. The three sections – Cases and Context, Methods, and Policy – appear slightly ill-conceived, a fact in large part exposed by the substantive overlap in the selection of case studies. For example, numerous contributors in different sections of the book use virtually the same words in describing the same issues in the same countries. Another weakness, which one would expect in ambitious projects of this type (with 39 contributors in this case), is the disparate quality of the chapters, with some being exceptionally rigorous and analytically engaging, while others are more prosaic.

In all, however, it is a good addition to the burgeoning literature on global health, and I would recommend it strongly to practitioners.

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Notes

1. V. Leary (1994) 'The right of health', *Health and Human Rights* 1: 28.
2. Article 7, International Covenant on Civil and political Rights, adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2000 A (XXI).
3. J. M. Mann, L. Gostin, *et al.* (1994) 'Health and human rights', *Health and Human Rights* 1 (1).

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Christopher Cramer

Civil War is Not a Stupid Thing: Accounting for Violence in Developing Countries

London: Hurst and Company, 2006, ISBN: 1-85065-821-8, 329 pp.

In this illuminating book, Christopher Cramer challenges the widely held view that development and peace are mutually reinforcing. He also critiques the view that free markets are the route to development, arguing that this view is not based on an accurate reading of how countries have succeeded in industrialising and escaping from poverty.

In questioning the dominant view that the spread of free markets and democracy will lay the foundations for international peace, Cramer notes that growth can be a potent cause of envy and war. Here he cites Albert Hirschman on the Biafran war and on the civil war in Pakistan, which led to Bangladesh's independence.¹ Cramer adds that there was rapid growth in Angola in the 1960s at precisely the time when the contemporary civil wars there were getting underway.

More than this, Cramer takes issue with the view – expressed most starkly by the World Bank in 2003 – that 'war is development in reverse'. Cramer emphasises that war and mass violence are not *only* about destruction: they can be engines of development. Marx's theory of primitive accumulation came precisely from the forcible acquisition of

assets: the enclosure of common land in England was a classic example. Moreover, Cramer notes – here drawing on Charles Tilly in particular² – that the institutions of modern government often emerged from the need to raise taxes for warfare; Cramer gives the example of the Union administration's financial innovations during the American Civil War. More generally, as Cramer reminds us, '... the United States was founded in revolution, developed through slavery, expanded through war with Mexico and created in civil war. Its wealth was founded on violence against indigenous people and on the rapacity of robber barons. The Civil War was a crucible of both import-substitution policy and of American barbarism' (p. 37).

He mentions a World Bank official arguing that in the 'extreme void' of a post-conflict moment, institution building is easier. Yet no country is a *tabula rasa*, and attempts to introduce free markets and democratic institutions are necessarily affected – perhaps even undermined – by prior processes and existing power relations. Cramer draws particularly on the example of Mozambique here, showing how a class that accumulated assets in the Mozambican war (through use of displaced labour, through corruption, and through a 'war tax') benefited further from large-scale privatisation at the end of the war. There was little sense among donors of any need to regulate the new private sector. Nor was the process backed by any coherent industrial policy.

Some of the most hard-hitting parts of the book take issue with the quantitative approach, which emphasises 'greed' and international commodity markets as the key cause of civil war – notably in Paul Collier's work. First, Cramer points out that the proxies used by Collier (and others in similar vein) tend to have only a rather tenuous link to variables like 'greed' and 'grievance'. Second, 'greed' may be a product of 'grievance'. Third, paying for war with international trading is not the same as economically driven warfare;

indeed, the loss of funding with the end of the Cold War often 'necessitated' such trading. Fourth, even if we reduce motivations to economic factors, there is still a major conflict between those with short-term horizons and those who look for some kind of security (and a lucrative political position within it) in order to maximise their income. Fifth, there is the case of Angola. Cramer criticises the idea that recent 'globalisation' and international commodity markets are responsible for war in Angola, giving a very compelling analysis of the deeper roots of conflict, including the slave trade; the grievances arising from forced labour and the long-standing sugar, coffee, and cotton sectors; and the interaction of these grievances with ethnic affiliations. Oil and diamonds had little to do with the beginnings of contemporary war in Angola in the 1960s, Cramer observes, although they became important later. He notes perceptively, '... rather than beginning and ending with the commodity itself, it is important to explore the social relations that surrounded, built up around and helped determine policy towards particular commodities' (p. 151).

Finally, Cramer challenges the view that poor and ill-educated people find war particularly attractive because it improves their standard of living: many are press-ganged into one faction or another; cases like the FARC rebels in Colombia suggest that there may be prohibitions on looting by foot-soldiers and that fighters' conditions may be notably harsh; and many young people engage in activities like diamond mining that are actually *disrupted* by warfare.

Apart from a compelling overall argument, the book is full of fascinating factual and analytical observations. Among those that interested me particularly was the idea that DDR (demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration) may be more risky than supporting an army at the end of a war. I was also struck by the use of inflation as a weapon of war against the bourgeoisie during the Russian civil war of 1918–1921 and by the important analysis of how Coca

Cola and other large companies undermined US sanctions on Sudan from 1997 by pressing for crucial exceptions. (Coca Cola needed Sudan's gum arabic to keep its drinks liquid when refrigerated.)

One thing troubled me a little: if war has tended to be an engine for progress and development, does that imply that what we really need is more war? Cramer is profoundly aware of the human costs of war and of violent development more generally; he is certainly not 'pro war'. But the argument that progress towards development and democracy has generally been violent might provide perverse comfort for those for whom Cramer clearly has little sympathy or patience, notably those who wish violently to export 'freedom' and 'democracy' to the (oil-rich) corners of the earth. Cramer goes so far as to state that 'Violence and war should not ... be seen as oddities, distortions or distractions but should be regarded as closely connected to progress and development' (p. 45). I suspect he shares my own discomfort with this statement; but it lies close to the heart of what he is arguing in this original, accessible, and thought-provoking study, a study that should be of considerable interest for practitioners, students, and scholars alike.

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Notes

1. Cramer cites Albert O. Hirschman, 'The changing tolerance for income inequality in the course of economic development', in A. O. Hirschman (ed.) *Essays in Trespassing: Economics to Politics and Beyond*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
2. See, for example, Charles Tilly: 'War making and State making as organized crime', in Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Peter Evans, and Theda Skocpol (eds.) *Bringing The State Back In*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

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Allan Thompson (ed.)

The Media and the Rwanda Genocide

London: Pluto Press, 2007, ISBN: 13 978 0 7453 2625 2, 463 pp.

An anguished search for answers, in order to avoid a repeat, automatically follows the occurrence of such monumental human-made catastrophes as the Rwanda Genocide. Most times a deep sense of guilt accompanies, or even informs, that quest for understanding. *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* is one of the latest books to try to wrestle with the demons that consumed the enchanting hills of Rwanda for 100 days in 1994, leaving behind some 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu dead. In more than 30 fine (if sometimes repetitive) essays, the book provides a worthwhile read concerning the role of the media in the Rwanda Genocide. It is the first such study.

Editor Allan Thompson, a professor of journalism at Carleton University in Canada and a former reporter with the *Toronto Star*, introduces the book by contending that the international 'news media could have made a difference' with early and 'more informed and comprehensive coverage' of the genocide (p. 3). Such robust reporting would have sparked 'international outcry' and consequently action to stop the genocide. The crux of the book, he says, is that while 'local hate media fomented the genocide', 'international media essentially facilitated the process by turning their backs' (p. 6). His point is that with local Rwandan media co-opted by a beleaguered regime which had turned ethnicity into an 'organising principle of state policy' (p. 25), proper coverage by the international media would have forced the world powers to act to prevent or halt the genocide. That this did not happen means that international journalists failed in their responsibility to report. Thompson, who says he first visited Rwanda in 1996, takes this personally, feeling that he should have done more to prevent the genocide. 'But

Rwanda does get inside you and, since then, I think I have been trying to some degree to make amends for not having been there in 1994', he writes in the preface.

Thompson's framing of the news media's role begs the question: where does this guilt-ridden analysis leave or take us? Reading through all four parts of the book (Hate Media in Rwanda; International Media Coverage of the Genocide; Journalism as Genocide – The Media Trial; and After the Genocide and the Way Forward), one comes away none the wiser. In fact, I ended up thinking that the power of the international news media to stop the genocide or any such event is overstated.

Western governments knew enough to evacuate their nationals within days of the start of the genocide, after the downing of the presidential plane on 6 April 1994. The international news media used the word genocide pretty early on (*Libération* on 11 April, AFP on 20 April, and BBC on 29 April), and yet the Western governments still did nothing. Actually they did something: the Security Council voted to deny the UN peacekeepers of General Romeo Dallaire the support that they so desperately needed. As Linda Melvern states, 'For three months the British and US administrations played down the crisis and tried to impede effective intervention by UN forces' (p. 209). Why so? Steven Livingstone attempts an explanation. He places American government reaction to Rwanda within the context of Somalia, from which the USA hastily withdrew in 1993 after several members of its armed forces were killed in Mogadishu. He dismisses as a 'myth' the notion that somehow, if the media had given the genocide the right reporting treatment, as Thompson and others argue, the Western powers would have acted. He argues that generally the 'media do not have the ability to reprioritize [US foreign] policy objectives' (p. 189). He says that there is no basis in fact for the argument that media coverage of Somalia prompted the first President George Bush to intervene. 'Instead,' Livingstone writes, 'the decision was the consequence of

political pressure put on the administration by key members of Congress, and even from officials within the administration itself" (p.195). It was nothing to do with the media, which 'simply do not have that capability, however understood' (p.196). As for halting killings in Bosnia, media coverage followed US involvement. Not the other way round (p. 193).

Western foreign policy is not shaped by the media. It is shaped by policymakers operating under all sorts of influence. The media simply follow. To think otherwise is to live a delusion. The USA has recognised what is going on in Darfur as genocide. The news media have constantly covered Darfur. The result? Not strong intervention from Western powers, but hand-wringing and impotent pleadings with Khartoum. Certainly, it was not the media that took the second George Bush into Iraq. To rephrase a question posed by Anne Chaon, the news media cannot do much 'when the world doesn't want to listen or to hear' (p. 165).

As many have argued, Rwanda was left to its own devices not because the media initially described the killings as tribal savagery or whatever other choice terms the West reserves for the rest, but because Rwanda (in 'deep Africa' or in the 'middle of nowhere' (p. 238) was of no strategic importance in Western capitals. Even then, *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* raises some hefty issues worth sweating over. Where does free speech end and the rabble rousing of the hate media begin? How should we deal with media that spew out hate-ridden statements in an already charged atmosphere?

This is a book for anyone interested in the Rwanda Genocide, or in genocide generally, and the attendant international legal regime; the role of the news media in conflict situations; the place of humanitarian NGOs; and the relationship between Western powers and small developing countries. Considering post-genocide Rwanda, the book calls for vigilance. The regime of Paul Kagame (who once was deputy head of military intelligence in Uganda and not the head,

as claimed by Lars Waldorf and others before him) has exploited the genocide to stifle dissent, creating a situation where 'there is less press freedom and media pluralism in Rwanda today than there was before the genocide' (p. 404).

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Kevin M. Cahill (ed.)

The Pulse of Humanitarian Assistance
Bronx, NY: The Center for Humanitarian Assistance, 2007, ISBN 978-0-8232-2716-7

John Norris

The Disaster Gypsies – Humanitarian Workers in the World's Deadliest Conflicts
Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007, ISBN 978-0-275-99365-8

Where exactly are the fine lines that separate the literary genres of memoir, swashbuckler, and propaganda? These two books about the current state of what Alex de Waal once dubbed the 'humanitarian internationale' cover the subject in very different ways, both of which, unless one happens to be an anthropologist or social worker with a special interest in aid workers, will fail to satisfy serious scholars of international relations. There is much more here for readers who are partial to ripping yarns, or hagiography, or organisational propaganda, although there are a couple of gems buried within, if you have the patience to wade through the personal and organisational vain-glorious claims that characterise both of these books.

In summary, both volumes set out to examine the performance of the international humanitarian system in the past decade, and

both conclude that while some things still need fixing, 'international humanitarian intervention' is achieving real progress in tackling the scourges of war, disease, and poverty.

John Norris writes from his own experience of working in several crises. His thirst for adventure and the romantic appeal of humanitarian relief work first took him to Rwanda as a member of the US government's disaster-response team. After sharing with us this formative experience of inhumanity, he takes us through half a dozen further exotic humanitarian episodes, the next one being in Croatia, where he soon realises that Europeans are just as capable of acts of callous brutality as Rwandans are. From there a career change takes him into a farcical exercise in 'post-conflict' reconstruction in Sri Lanka, but undaunted he moves on to Afghanistan and Pakistan, having donned a 'conflict prevention' hat courtesy of his latest career move to the International Crisis Group. Norris next turns his hand to trying to sort out Charles Taylor's Liberia, where, in the best part of the book, we get an unusual insight into how clever as well as how nasty Taylor can be, and why we should all be thankful that he is currently in The Hague, awaiting trial for alleged war crimes. In his last incarnation in this book, Norris, now a political adviser, has a close encounter with revolution in Nepal just as the Maoists make opportunistic use of the worst excesses of a demented monarchy to seal a bizarre peace deal.

I kept on asking myself: what on earth is the point of this elegantly written set of disaster memoirs – apart from impressing readers with his derring-do, scaring us with his speculations about the socio-pathological profiles of many aid workers, and entertaining us with the brisk pace and sparse style of his narrative? Could it simply be a ripping yarn to amuse the grandchildren? It was only on the penultimate page of the book's postscript that another purpose became apparent: Norris clearly wants to convince us that the post-Cold War appetite

for international humanitarian intervention has all been worthwhile, with thanks due to the complementary expertise of aid donors, the multilaterals, the Red Cross Movement, and some NGOs that warrant his approval. Norris concludes by making the following claim:

hard as it might be to believe from the daily newspapers, much has actually changed for the better in the world since the early 1990s. The number of conflicts around the world has steadily dropped. The numbers of people being killed by deadly conflict continue to decline, and often quite dramatically so. It is not an accident. Amid all the false starts and frequent disasters, the world has gotten much better at responding with both humanitarian relief and effective political interventions. Peacekeeping missions often make a real difference and, importantly, there is a much better understanding of the conditions that need to be met for peacekeeping to be effective.

So, notwithstanding the public-health disaster that is now unfolding in Iraq, the continuing catastrophe of Darfur, and the UN-era's world-record humanitarian disaster in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we should, according to Norris, rest easy in the knowledge that the international peace-building and humanitarian system is doing a great job. Norris does not identify the source for his optimism, but it is almost certainly a reference to the 2005 Human Security Report published by the University of British Columbia (now housed at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver), which has made such claims based upon its analysis of battlefield deaths. While an examination of the reliability of the findings of the Human Security Report lies outside the scope of this review, it should be noted that it has been challenged, particularly with regard to its treatment of non-combatant mortality and morbidity data that do not neatly fit the 'aid is

working' hypothesis. Suffice it to say that Norris's book sets a tone similar to that employed by most of the contributors to the second volume reviewed here. In common with the Human Security Report, both books deliver a self-congratulatory message about the organisations that do humanitarian intervention.

Kevin M. Cahill, a doctor of medicine, has collected an impressive array of authors to assist him in his task of 'taking the pulse of humanitarian assistance', the results of which are presented in 12 essays arranged in four sections, entitled Moving Targets, Military–Civilian Cooperation, Post Conflict Issues, and The NGO Perspective. His contributors would probably all describe themselves as 'practitioners' (or perhaps 'former practitioners' in the cases of Bernard Kouchner and Larry Hollingworth). Given their respective organisational and professional affiliations, one might expect the editor to have taken a tough line with the contributors, in order to eliminate any excessive or unjustifiable self-promotion. Unfortunately the volume fails in this regard.

So, rather than resembling a neutral physician examining an orderly succession of patients, *The Pulse of Humanitarian Assistance* is instead more akin to the spectacle of a doctor's waiting room in which the patients are all busy selling each other their own proprietary brands of Miracle Cure. While sometimes interesting, this can also be rather unedifying, as it becomes in the final section, which reads like special pleading by three NGOs – two of which happen to be affiliates of the Roman Catholic Church.

As with *Disaster Gypsies*, the dominant subject matter of this volume is political violence, and ways in which the international system might do better in reducing both its causes and its effects. While *Disaster Gypsies* at least provides a potted historical account of each conflict through which Norris travels, the contributors to *The Pulse of Humanitarian Assistance* tend towards the habit of making short, simplistic, and

ritualistic references to 'the root causes' of poverty, ethnic conflict, and so on. These are invariably followed by much lengthier passages on the efficacy of the treatments offered by the authors' respective agencies, all too often ending in a sales pitch on behalf of their own organisation. The book is marred by various historical inaccuracies (for example, the chapter on the humanitarian response to the Kashmir earthquake, which seems unaware that the Pakistan Army has a long and respectable record as the country's relief-coordination body) and mistakes (such as references to the 'Aretha' (not Arusha) Peace Accord). But there are also two chapters that lend the book some much-needed gravitas. Writing as a former volunteer for Médecins du Monde, Alexander Van Tulleken (he also of the 'Aretha Accord') redeems his chapter by providing a blisteringly critical account of the possible role of 'public–private partnerships' in future peace-support operations. This is nicely juxtaposed with the following chapter, written by a former soldier, Tim Cross, who goes on the offensive about NGOs' lack of accountability and their ostrich-like behaviour. Cross also describes the dramatic growth of private military contractors in the peace-support system and gives a fascinating account of their efforts at self-regulation. It is always more interesting and informative when members of the humanitarian internationale break ranks and criticise one another. There are regrettably few such lapses of discipline in this volume.

Thus, if you are looking for a wider range of perspectives about the international humanitarian system, both these books fail dismally. That neither devotes more than the most tokenistic nod in the direction of disaster survivors is both normal and shocking, coming as it does from an industry that makes a fetish of the victim yet seems habituated to top–down solutions and a management culture that takes beneficiaries for granted. It seems especially ironic that Kevin Cahill, a medical doctor, chooses a medical metaphor for the title of his book,

in which the humanitarian system is likened to the patient, while the 'beneficiaries' of that system remain silent and unrepresented. This is entirely in keeping with the photograph on the dust-jacket of *Disaster Gypsies*, which shows a beautiful blonde humanitarian aid worker (in a rather revealing MSF t-shirt) ministering to a prone African child. Would we be right to assume that the publisher obtained that child's consent to the publication of the picture?

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Karen Brock and Jethro Pettit (eds.)
Springs of Participation: Creating and Evolving Methods for Participatory Development

Rugby: Practical Action Publishing, 2007,
ISBN: 978-1-853396-47-2, 209 pp.

Sara Kindon, Rachel Pain, and Mike Kesby (eds.)

Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting People, Participation and Place
London: Routledge, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-415-40550-8, 260 pp.

Community participation begins and ends with people: the people know what they want. These two books argue that community participation and commitment are essential for sustainable development and project success: that development is more successful if communities take over much of the responsibility for improving their livelihoods, instead of leaving it in the hands of the public agencies. Both books provide helpful accounts of a range of participatory methods, based on experiences from different countries, through the use of local examples and case studies.

Springs of Participation draws on the work and reflections of a group of experienced

practitioners of participatory methodologies, in diverse situations and countries. It describes the evolution of participatory methods over time and across continents, and it discusses how these methods can assist development practitioners to understand the challenges of the effective and sustainable methods available at their disposal. The problems and risks of developing new methodology based on current participatory methods are emphasised.

The strength of the book lies in its use of the case-study approach. The editors and contributors reflect on methodologies that either enable or constrain creativity, adaptation, and innovation. They emphasise the importance of using participatory approaches that spring from a shared appreciation of the need to learn from and respect the knowledge of marginalised, excluded, and poor people. The book concludes by presenting lessons learned from the use of the techniques of Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): the tensions and trade-offs as well as the successes.

From their experiences of designing and implementing participatory methods, the contributors – researchers and consultants – record that development failures can often be attributed to a failure to listen and learn from local people. Two particular methods are discussed in the book: Reflect and the Internal Learning System (ILS). Reflect began as a tool for group work to develop literacy and critical reflection, combining principles of adult education and awareness raising with the power of visual participatory methods. The Internal Learning System (ILS) was designed to provide information for programme evaluation, at the same time as supporting community members to reflect on and change their lives, using visual images in the form of personal and group diaries. The Reflect and ILS experiences raise a number of questions: what, for example, should be the role of the initiator of a methodology during implementation? Can methodologies be adapted for different situations? How do you ensure the

quality of the method used? The book also discusses the political and institutional challenges of introducing participatory approaches to poverty reduction into government bureaucracies. It clearly highlights the challenges of designing methods to facilitate the empowerment of participants based on the Participatory Action and Learning System (PALS). It takes account of considerations of social and cultural diversity, such as gender relations and ethnicity. It is aimed at development or humanitarian practitioners, policy makers, activists, and scholars who are interested in linking theory to practice. It is easy to read in terms of content, language, and style.

Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods presents the philosophical and political underpinnings of participatory techniques, linking theoretical, ethical, and political themes with actual practice. The editors and contributors argue that PAR is still a legitimate and useful *modus operandi* for achieving social and environmental change through democratic research and action, and they illustrate how it can be used to inform thinking on new issues and new techniques.

Of course, PAR is not the only means of empowering poor and disadvantaged people: it is only one of many methods. It requires the involvement of many different stakeholders, and if not carefully conducted it can produce inequalities in marginalised and poor communities. This collection contains a lot of case studies, but it does not draw lessons from the examples taken from different contexts. How do PAR approaches and methods differ from one country to another, or from one continent to another? The book does not tell us. But – like *Springs of Participation* – it is easy to read, and its strength lies in its bridging of theory and practice.

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The Trapese Collective (eds.)

Do It Yourself: A Handbook for Changing Our World

Pluto Press, 2007, ISBN: 978-0-7453-2637-5, 306 pp.

The Trapese Collective is a popular education collective based in the UK; it has been working since 2004 with groups of adults and young people to understand and take action on issues of climate change, globalisation, and migration. Trapese is an acronym which stands for Take Radical Action through Popular Education and Sustainable Everything. The Trapese Collective comprises Alice Cutler, Kim Bryan and Paul Chatterton.

Do It Yourself, as the title suggests, is a call to get involved in hands-on practical action and reflection to create more sustainable and fairer ways of living, ways that can halt environmental destruction and bring about social justice and lasting transformation of our society and planet. In surveying ways in which people are struggling to wrest back control from the Establishment and build more equitable and just societies without the help of hierarchical and elected leadership, it explores nine themes: sustainable living, decision making, health, education, food, cultural activism, free spaces, media, and direct action. Each theme is discussed in two chapters: the first a more theoretical analysis and critique and the second a practical guide to promote the actions needed to put the theme into practice. Each chapter lists useful resources for further reading and research on the theme in question.

The book advocates fundamental change by challenging the ways in which power operates and is linked to wealth and private power in our society. In this sense it is a *Magna Carta* for autonomous, horizontal politics and a manifesto of how to move forward towards social transformation through ecological, social, and environmental justice. The guiding principles largely follow anarchist/autonomist thought and appear to rely heavily on Marxist-Leninist

social analysis. For some this may be a weakness. While *Do It Yourself* is right in arguing that the economic system is the underlying reason for inequality, climate change, and environmental destruction, I am not sure that direct action by itself is sufficient. Social transformation ought to begin with the person. As the editors admit, the best principle is to 'be the change one wants to see'. But there is no discussion of how to achieve this personal transformation, which enables one to bring about direct action for social transformation.

Of all the chapters, I found 'Why do it without leaders' by The Seeds for Change Collective both the most challenging and at the same time the most inspirational. This is a clarion call to adopt a non-capitalist, non-coercive, and non-hierarchical lifestyle. This may be a bitter pill to swallow for policy makers or anyone who believes that the law and a bourgeois lifestyle are sacrosanct. It chimed with the anarchist in me and challenged the conservative and bourgeois. But I found the chapters on health, 'Why society is making us sick' and 'How to manage our own health' by Tash Gordon and Becs Griffiths, to be the most outstanding *pièces de résistance*. There is ample evidence here to indict our insane society.

Do It Yourself is a welcome contribution to the plethora of socio-economic and political analyses of the conundrums of capitalism, globalisation, climate change, and the imperative of social transformation. Part handbook and part critique, the book distinguishes itself by its straight talking and practicality. This is not a book for the ecologically and environmentally shy. For an edited work, the book reads quite smoothly, and the range of viewpoints advanced in it blend into the overarching theme. The editors have done a remarkable job in harmonising the different voices of the contributors. The issues of horizontal, non-hierarchical, direct grassroots action in favour of social and environmental justice are well articulated and argued. The arguments are properly substantiated and read like a *vade mecum* for both the seasoned and the neophyte environmental campaigner.

The authors are driven by the conviction that the world we live in is unsustainable, and neither free-market economics nor governments have the ability or political will to make our lives and the life of our planet sustainable. They urge an 'open-source culture' which supports and promotes sharing and collective ownership. This is in stark contrast to the prevailing culture based on profit maximisation, unbridled consumerism, and consolidation of power in the hands of an oligarchy masquerading as democratically elected leadership. By the editors' own admission the book does contain important lacunae such as race, gender, class, religion, and spirituality and how these interact with the issues discussed in the book. But otherwise *Do It Yourself* is replete with a dazzling array of examples of direct action, meaning to act directly to address issues of concern, in contrast to indirect or political action. This is one of the strengths of the book – it is written by people who have walked the talk.

The book's layout is pleasing and has the bonus of doing away with erudite footnotes or endnotes that sometimes distract the reader and clutter the pages of similar works. I found the glossary of unusual words, terms, and neologisms useful and informative. The book is printed on paper accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council and is suitable for recycling. Overall well produced, it does however contain some unfortunate typographical errors which managed to elude detection: On p.131 'Sandinistas' is spelt as 'Sandanistas' while on p.139 the putative etymology of the English word 'diet' from the Greek *digitals* struck me as odd. From my knowledge of Classics I thought the etymology ought to have been Greek *diaita* via the Latin *diaeta* or way of life. 'A film starring' on p.199 should read 'a film starring'.

Finally I found the chapter entitled 'Why we need cultural activism' perceptive, but the presence of the f-word is unnecessary and gratuitous. I found 'How to prank, play and subvert the system' quite humorous but a touch too iconoclastic. These two chapters notwithstanding, the book should be a 'must'

for development experts, humanitarian practitioners, and anyone concerned about the state and future of our planet.

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Martin Medina

The World's Scavengers: Salvaging for Sustainable Consumption and Production
Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press, 2007,
ISBN-10: 0-7591-0941-9, 302 pp.

The World's Scavengers fills a large vacuum in development thought and approaches – indeed, it is a wonder that it has taken so long for a volume of this nature to be conceived. It is a wonder because not only has scavenging received very little concentrated attention from researchers and agencies, but also because it is a topic that addresses the plight of millions of disadvantaged people: people who have been marginalised and stigmatised but who can actively contribute to economic growth, social equality, and a more sustainable environment in what is now, despite the focus of many development actors, an overwhelmingly urban world. It is not difficult, then, to make the argument that this book has much to offer to a wide audience.

In general, Medina offers two related points of emphasis. The first is that scavenging is not a livelihood choice which, for the most part, necessarily provides few returns. Rather, scavengers are usually subject to systematic exploitation by a hierarchical organisational structure. This is remarkable, given that scavengers can frequently manage to earn the minimum wage, if not substantially more. Medina's second, related, argument takes the logical step of

suggesting that scavenging has many links with the formal economy on local, regional, and international scales. This point contributes to theories of the informal economy more widely but also puts to rest stagnant but resilient arguments that scavenging is a pre-capitalist form of production, operating on the margins of society.

The book has a number of significant strengths. At the outset, Medina neatly outlines eight popular myths regarding scavenging: for example, that informal recycling is a recent phenomenon. The book proceeds to address and undercut these common assumptions by presenting relevant data that are cross-referenced throughout the book. To return to the example, Medina shows that informal recycling has been a continuous livelihood option in society, by meticulously demonstrating 'scavenging from a historical perspective' in the second chapter. He provides in-depth case studies (Mexico, Colombia, Philippines, India, Egypt) which not only support this argument, but also offer an invaluable resource of lessons and methods for the wary municipal policymaker and campaigning grassroots/NGO or support agency.

Another major strength of the book is its exceptionally well-explained chapter on methodological approaches and pitfalls, which is also used to question previous research, as well as providing a framework for aspiring researchers. The chapter also includes suggested interview questions and data-collection ideas. At the very least this will save a researcher significant time and effort, while at best it will provoke 'eureka' insights. A case in point is the method of combining a local yellow-pages directory with 'snowballed contacts' to find the intermediaries in recycling chains.

More general strengths are that the author refers to wider international agreements (for example, The Rio Summit, Millennium Development Goals) in the analysis, promotes low-budget solutions in the face of technocratic options, and is not populist to the extent that collaborative opportunities with the private sector are ignored.

However, the book also suffers from a number of weaknesses, the first of which is its lack of gender analysis. The term 'gender' appears neither in the index nor the glossary, while in effect it appears twice in the text. On the first occasion (p. 123), it is listed as a suggested demographic variable in a questionnaire, and on the second occasion (p. 262) it is raised in discussion of MDG 3: *Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*. In neither instance is the term disaggregated or discussed in any depth. This is an important point, because there is fair mention of 'women' as a social group that will benefit from 'a more efficient waste management system' (p. 262), or somehow be miraculously empowered by 'microenterprises, scavenger cooperatives or public-private partnerships' (p. 262). The main issue is that these 'givens' are not questioned in relation to the concept of gender roles and, in particular, the concepts of 'time poverty' or 'access and control'.

A second weakness of the book is related to the previous one but is more general: the concept of 'poverty' is rarely given sufficient discussion space. In fact, this awkward and heavily loaded term does not appear in the glossary either. To his credit, Medina does differentiate between 'acute' and 'chronic' poverty (p. 259), but he does not define how these terms fit within the wider literature on the dynamics of poverty. He mentions the notion that scavengers are not the poorest, although they are extremely vulnerable (pp. 197, 210). However, this catch-all, in a most familiar fashion, is in danger of losing its usefulness in the book.

Furthermore, while Medina's 'model of scavenging' (p. 259) does not include a consideration of vulnerabilities or risk, it also smacks of a rather econometric approach in the way it is framed by supply and demand sides. In fact, his use of terms such as 'internalise', 'price signals', and 'perverse-subsidies' (p. 107) and his presentation of poverty as largely an income-based issue relevant to poverty lines and the minimum wage (p. 196) run the risk of alienating the more

radical theorist or practitioner such as your common-or-garden post-developmental or anthropologist.

Finally, it is worth mentioning Medina's rather short-handed attempt to address the issue of dangerous climate change. It is quite shocking to read, in a book published in 2007, a sentence beginning 'However, if global warming materializes...' (p. 90). These words, and the fact that climate change is not referred to again in the book, sum up Medina's failure to consider a very important aspect of waste management. For instance, the amount of methane released by organic matter in landfill sites is worth bringing into the argument on its own.

Overall, these weaknesses do not discredit the worthiness of the book as a whole. Medina does in fact manage to incorporate other social and environmental logic into his propositions. Also, he neither romanticises scavenging nor condemns it, but uses straightforward language and style to make a solid call for international action and recognition of the value of scavenging. The book would appeal to a wide audience – the theorist and the practitioner, the aid agency and the grassroots organisation, actors in the public and private sectors. Consequently, this unique book offers a common ground for dialogue but also a basis for serious research, campaigning, and advocacy.

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Michael Hopkins
Corporate Social Responsibility and
International Development: Is Business
the Solution?
London/Sterling, VA: Earthscan, 2007,
ISBN: 1844073564, 243 pp.

Reading Michael Hopkins' latest book is like sitting down at a dinner party with the author.

By the time the last bottle of wine is finished, dishes stacked in the kitchen, and coffee served, the guests sit back tired, compliment the chef, thank the hosts, and compliment each other (rather tongue in cheek) that, once again, all the world's problems have been solved in an evening. Just like a dinner conversation, the book is entertaining, its observations meandering between commentaries on poverty, opinions about corporate social responsibility (CSR), reflections on recent readings, critiques of politicians, reflections on past jobs, and attacks on sports utility vehicles.

Curiously lacking in analysis of either CSR or development, *Corporate Social Responsibility and International Development* presents Hopkins' views on what CSR is and should be. The table of contents is engaging enough, but the content somehow fails to provide either a full and joined-up exposition of the various topics outlined, or sufficient analysis of where debates are moving. Hopkins is absolutely right in deploring the failure of the market to provide development solutions, in arguing for the need to incorporate CSR into companies' mainstream operations, and in expressing the imperative of involving the private sector in tackling underdevelopment and poverty. But there is nothing really new in what Hopkins says. A wide body of literature already exists which argues that for CSR to be effective it has to be embedded within a company's operations, a point which Oxfam GB has raised in the past.¹

A notable exception to this criticism is Chapter 9, 'CSR in developing countries', which not only presents an informative summary of how some companies behave in developing countries, but identifies the factors, including active civil society and government, that drive these companies to engage in development. It would have been useful to learn what role these forces play. For example, national governments have a key role to play in creating an enabling environment for the development of a pro-poor private sector, and effectively

organising and regulating private-sector activities so that poor people can participate in development.

Even less space is devoted to development and poverty reduction, except to illustrate, through extensive statistical examples, how development has 'failed'. Hopkins argues that the main reason for businesses to engage with development stems from the ineffectiveness of international institutions. Where is the analysis of the causes of poverty, and an assessment of what has or has not worked? How is poverty viewed by governments and particular NGOs? By businesses? By poor people themselves? As he deals with CSR and poverty reduction and supply chains in a later chapter, one can only conclude that Hopkins' definition and treatment of poverty are purely economic. Gender, power relations, ethnicity, and an analysis of what keeps poor people poor do not figure in Hopkins' coverage of development.²

In the final chapter Hopkins discloses what, in his opinion, companies must do for development. They must work to attain high environmental and health standards, fight corruption, be visionary, and mainstream CSR; in addition they must develop skills, encourage smaller enterprises, link with communities, and invest in the places where they operate. With the rising power of corporations, now exceeding that of international institutions as well as that of many states, it is easy from a development practitioner's perspective to see why companies should engage in development. But from a corporate perspective, Hopkins himself argues that 'there is no business case' in dealing with the poor – so we are left wondering why companies would make any of these changes? And how will his recommended initiatives contribute to development? Perhaps this is a topic for the next dinner party.

In the end, the reader has learned little more than Michael Hopkins' collection of beliefs about the role that CSR must play in

development – and his strong opinions about his previous employers, certain politicians, and SUVs (p. 140). Ample entertainment for a good dinner party – but hardly insightful reading for the Head of Private Sector and Development in any government department, NGO, or corporation.

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Notes

1. See, for instance, Sumi Dhanarajan: 'Managing ethical standards: when rhetoric meets reality', in Deborah Eade and John Sayer (eds.) *Development and the Private Sector: Consuming*

Interests, Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2007, pp. 191–204.

2. Some of the author's critiques are also somewhat dated. Hopkins would have done well, for instance, to update himself on Oxfam GB's work with the private sector, and to double-check the accuracy of his text. Describing the 2004 Oxfam report *Behind the Mask: the Real Face of CSR* as a response to Shell's mis-reporting of oil reserves in 2005 leads the reader to wonder what other figures and facts may have become muddled throughout the book. And I would be surprised if Jason Clay would appreciate being referred to repeatedly as Jason Caly in references to his work, *Exploring the Links Between International Business and Poverty Reduction: A Case Study of Unilever in Indonesia* (published in 2005 by Oxfam GB, Novib Oxfam Netherlands, and Unilever).