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Launching the Global Governance Lab at the Institute for the Study of International Development!

The Global Governance Research-to-Practice Lab is bridging the gap between academics, practitioners and policy-makers working on global issues in international development.

Today's world is faced with increasingly complex challenges that, in a context of growing interconnections among countries, must be addressed on a global scale. There is thus a critical need to explore and design new, practical forms of governance that are more appropriate for the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Our research is dedicated to providing original, insightful ideas and knowledge, and contributing to the design of formal and informal rules and practices to promote sustainable, inclusive development and democratic governance.

The ultimate aim of the Lab is to facilitate uptake of the state of the art knowledge in international development around the themes of natural resources conflicts and trade-offs, migration and refugees, and governance by policy makers and practitioners so that they can be more effective, understanding the greater framework and the interrelated issues.

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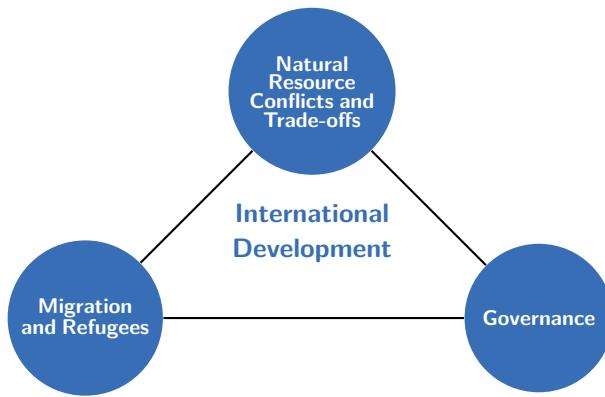
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Our activities build on the expertise of interdisciplinary researchers at ISID working across the social sciences and beyond. Our researchers are currently involved in 15 projects underway in Asia, Latin America, Africa, and elsewhere.

The Global Governance Research-to-Practice Lab is housed at McGill University's Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID). For more information, visit us online at: globalgovernance.lab.mcgill.ca/.

Development and Biodiversity: Two Solitudes?

By Timothy J. Hedges

In less than four years' time, the United Nations (UN) will be marking the 50th anniversary of the UN Conference on the Human Environment. The Conference which was convened in Stockholm between 5-6 June 1972 under the capable leadership of Canadian Maurice Strong – marked a milestone in the evolution of global environmental awareness and policy making. In a number of respects, we now can more fully appreciate just how impactful the Conference was. A core theme that emerged, variously reflected amongst the 26 principles enshrined in the resulting Stockholm Declaration, was the relationship between environmental protection and poverty alleviation. In her notable remarks in Stockholm, Indian Prime Minister Indira

Gandhi rhetorically asked: 'Are not poverty and need the greatest polluters?'

The Stockholm Conference would directly lead to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, now re-stylized as 'UN Environment') and spawn three major sustainable development summits over the intervening decades – the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992, Rio de Janeiro), the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002, Johannesburg), and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (2012, Rio de Janeiro). As well, the 1992 Conference gave rise to three Rio Conventions including the: Convention on Biological Diversity (with its secretariat hosted here in Montreal); UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; Convention to Combat Desertification.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as part of the ambitious 2030 Agenda, represent the current state of play and concretisation of the many steps taken over many years to integrate the twin concerns of environment and development.

There is little doubt that these 'megsummits' have had a profound impact on the global policy and diplomatic discourse, norm setting/treaty-making, institution-building and the raising of broad awareness of the ultimate need to reconcile economic and environmental objectives at the local, national and global levels.

However, development and biodiversity indicators have followed significantly divergent trajectories. In the case of human development, the data on poverty reduction unequivocally indicate a decline in extreme poverty. According to the World Bank, in 1990 there were close to 2 billion people living in extreme poverty. By 2015, that figure had dropped by 1.3 billion people – an average decline of 137,452 persons per day over a 25-year period. In contrast, it is widely accepted by scientists that while there have been some notable success in reversing the loss of some species, we have failed to halt the global rate of biodiversity loss.



The current rate of global diversity loss is estimated to be 100 to 1000 times higher than the (naturally occurring) background extinction rate and it is expected to grow further. Despite the effort and the rhetoric (there has been plenty of both), there is a widely held perception that one of the biggest disappointments to date under the sustainable development banner is the failure to integrate biodiversity conservation and human development in a mutually supportive manner. In the words of Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati (Chair, Forum for Law, Environment, Development and Governance) in a recent blog: 'Unlike the social and economic dimension of development where the discourse is focused and laced with strong political support, the environmental dimension of development is weak, muted and focuses on small, sectoral issues such as beating pollution, dealing with climate change, reducing biodiversity loss, reversing land degradation.' But surely, over the long term, this is not a tenable and sustainable situation for the human environment?



In my experience in negotiating and steering international environmental agreements and in developing national positions for such talks, I too have long observed the issues that generate the greatest political and public interest are most often those directly related to people's immediate environment (context) and those that promise quick and concrete improvements to human health and rapid economic benefit. Similarly, human suffering, no matter how remote from potential donors, has the power to instill considerable sympathy and support from those more fortunate and living thousands of kilometers away.

In contrast, the promise of effecting long-term improvements in the health of biodiversity is a tougher sell for environment officials urging action and seeking support from treasury and industry ministries (i.e., from the most powerful ministries). Indeed, most government bureaucracies comprise siloed institutions where ministries are often rivals for attention and funding, and where there is limited capacity and incentives to integrate.

Further, in my experience, the machineries of international government and associated governance structures are much the same as national and sub-national governments, and alas, similarly siloed. Simply put, bureaucracies of today are legacy structures and processes unsuited to anticipate and respond to complex and rapidly changing interconnected issues – such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

The slow pace of development-biodiversity integration cannot be wholly explained by failures at the bureaucratic level; there are more profound factors at play. The bottom line is that in the Western world, and in numerous other modern societies, biodiversity and nature writ large are less valued than human life. This is deeply ironic for, as noted above, humanity is dependent on biodiversity for its wellbeing and, in fact, for its survival. To paraphrase an Indigenous Elder I overheard in conversation some years ago, 'Nature can survive without people, but people cannot survive without nature.'

Despite the increasing mobilization of diverse actors (e.g., national and sub-national government, NGOs, academia, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, business, youth), large segments of the population continue to be indifferent, and deny biodiversity loss climate change. This can be explained in part by the widespread lack of long-term thinking, with many of us suffering from what has been called time illiteracy.

The global phenomenon of urbanization has doubtless compounded the apparent and literal distancing of people from nature. As well, industrial and information technologies have helped to weaken and sever our direct appreciation and understanding of humankind's reliance on the natural world.



A more profound explanation lies in modern (Western) thought. Simply put, and in notable contrast to many Indigenous Peoples' worldviews, some dominant philosophies and religions of the West project humans as separate from, and superior to, other living beings on earth, the latter put on earth for the benefit of the former. The implication of this human vs. non-human counterpoint for human development-biodiversity nexus is obvious – such thoughts and beliefs can drive wedges and work against holistic approaches.

In 2015, world leaders agreed to seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for a better world by 2030. These goals it has been declared have 'the power to end poverty, fight inequality and stop climate change'. On the face of it, the degree of integration of biodiversity/environment and human development across the SDGs is both remarkable and encouraging. A glance at Goals 1 (no poverty), 2 (no hunger), 5 (gender equality), 6 (clean water and sanitation), and 8 (decent work and economic growth) confirms these direct linkages and underscores this crucial interrelationship.

However, it is premature to determine whether or not SDG implementation is yet generating the desired synergies between development and biodiversity. Dr. Fernando Casas, a close colleague and former head of the Humboldt Institute in Bogotá, recently shared with me his deep overall concerns with the SDGs, "vis-à-vis the emerging political reality of nationalism, localism, protectionism, the politics of resentment and denial, fear of (mass human) migration, the debt collapse of financial institutions, and the intrusion of the Anthropocene...."

Alas, this paints a rather dystopian picture of today's world, but the situation is not stagnant: the SDGs do exist, as do concrete efforts at the community, national and global levels to achieve the Goals. As well, there is some evidence of adjustment in our societies towards the reality of our place in and dependence on nature. There is, I believe, especially under the lowering cloud of climate change's threats towards both the environment and development, steadily growing recognition on the compelling and accelerating need to integrate sustainable human development and

sustainable biodiversity conservation and use.

While we have a long way to go, we have come a long way since the Stockholm Declaration in 1972.



Timothy Hodges is Professor of Practice at McGill University's Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID) where his research focuses on understanding how Indigenous communities, in both the South and the North, participate in and benefit from the implementing international sustainable development treaties. He is a former career Canadian diplomat who brings to ISID over thirty-five years of experience in a wide range of international forums, including across within the United Nations System, the G7/G8, World Trade Organization, APEC, OECD, Organization of American States, NAFTA, and the Arctic Council.

Q&A with Catherine Lu, author of "Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics"

By Marie-Eve Yergeau

Catherine Lu was awarded the 2018 Robert L. Jervis and Paul W. Schroeder Best Book Award in International History and Politics of the American Political Science Association, as well as the 2018 Sussex International Theory Prize of the Centre for Advanced International Theory at the University of Sussex for her book "Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics". In her work, Dr. Lu examines several cases of colonial war, genocide, forced sexual labor, forcible incorporation, and dispossession, and demonstrates that international practices of justice and reconciliation have historically suffered from, and continue to reflect, colonial, statist and other structural biases.

**Q: What was your motivation for writing this book?**

I was previously interested in the concept of transitional justice, and the themes of accountability and reparations in response to wrongdoing in contexts of atrocity, civil war, and international war. I focused on how retributive justice is related to retributive and distributive justice after major interstate war, and how institutions of justice as perpetrator accountability are related to practices of justice as victim restoration in contexts of war and genocide.

Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics mainly arose from wanting to address certain dissatisfactions I had with that previous project. It also reflects a new interest that developed from that project, which involves how to think about justice and reconciliation in response to historical colonial injustice and its legacies in the contemporary world order, a topic that was growing in practical relevance, but marginal to the transitional justice literature.

One thing I wanted to achieve with the book is to clarify how justice and reconciliation are analytically distinct concepts that, while related, cannot be reduced to each other. In addition to conceptual clarification, I wanted the book to address questions that I think are fundamental to thinking about and assessing theories and contemporary practices of justice and reconciliation, but which are largely ignored in the transitional justice literature. While most of this literature is focused on accountability and reparations for wrongdoing, my book focuses on questions that have to do with the structural injustices and alienation that produce or were produced by colonial practices, and how to think about the responsibility of contemporary agents for the perpetuation and persistence of structural injustices in domestic, transnational, and international relations.

How is redress for colonial injustice related to theorizing and realizing contemporary global justice? Under what conditions might agents be reconciled to the social/political institutions that enabled or produced social and political injustices, and which still may constitute so many of the options and limits of their lives? What implications does the pursuit of justice and reconciliation in response to colonial injustice have for

the development and transformation of international and transnational order?

Q: Your book is based on a critical examination of the historical record on a variety of colonial conflicts of the twentieth century. What was the most challenging aspect of working with this historical material?

One challenge of using historical material for me, as a political theorist, is that my use of such material is filtered through historians! As a consumer of what historians produce, I have to be careful about the reliability and validity of the historical evidence being presented. I find it useful to adopt a 'Rashomon' strategy when reading the work of historians, to remind myself that history is multi-perspectival.

The other challenging aspect has to do with how to select historical cases, and how to narrate them, to aid in the normative and philosophical inquiry. I used a somewhat dialectical process that involved reading historical material about colonialism generally in order to generate some normative and philosophical questions about or challenges to existing approaches to theorizing justice and reconciliation. Then normative and philosophical analysis helped me to refine the selection of historical material, and to organize their narration in a way that I hope helped to illuminate the theoretical arguments being made.

For example, when reading about the case of the Japanese war-time military system of forced sexual labour and slavery, I realized that there was a disjuncture between the interstate politics, starting in the 1990s, of acknowledgment and reparations for mainly Korean women who were victims of that system, and the historical record, that shows a clear pattern of victimization affecting poor, rural, and working class women, and the complicity of many Korean entrepreneurs and officials in producing that pattern. This made me realize that structural injustices within Korean society, based on class and gender, were normatively significant and ought to inform our theories of responsibility for such colonial injustices.

Q: You argue that structural injustices revealed



in colonial international history, and reproduced in contemporary structures of international hierarchy, should be fundamental topics of concern to anyone interested in justice and reconciliation in international and transnational relations. According to you, how are these structural injustices reflected in today's North-South relationships, and how do they affect development issues?

In the book, I note that one problem with official development assistance as it is currently conducted has to do with its reproduction of the civilized–barbarian divide that structured colonial international order. The effect of decades of development assistance has not been to support the renewal of the agential capacities of those who continue to face the effects of cultural disruption and devastation but to reproduce the dependency, marginalization, and vulnerabilities to elite corruption and market distortion characteristic of colonial times. I think that if "developed" countries appreciated the colonial nature of contemporary structural injustice in the global economy, it would be difficult to uphold the conventional self-congratulatory narrative that "developed" states tell about their aid to "underdeveloped" or "developing" societies.

We also need to raise critical questions about disjunctions between international, domestic, and local receptions of dominant practices and discourses of human rights, self-determination, good governance, transitional justice, humanitarian intervention, development, and even sustainable development and climate adaptation. Development scholars, such as those who have worked on climate adaptation strategies pursued by city planners in developing countries, have also found that such strategies typically fail to protect the interests of vulnerable, indigenous, and poor populations from negative consequences such as displacement, while disproportionately prioritizing the protection of elite group interests. These outcomes reveal clearly the operation of deep structural injustices, with colonial origins, and focusing on them also reveals the limits and dangers of state-centric development initiatives in many postcolonial contexts.

I argue in the book that one strategy to dismantle contemporary structural injustices is to decenter practices of governance. Politically, decentering is a relevant task in the movement to reform and create more legitimate international and domestic governance institutions, processes, and practices that can respond effectively and appropriately to the demands of marginalized and oppressed agents and perspectives. Formal inclusion of the oppressed in decision-making structures and cooperative schemes, however, is not enough, since under unjust background conditions of structural domination, the principles of consent and mutual advantage are not sufficient for overcoming structural domination and injustice.

Q: What do you think are the biggest lessons that governments and/or international agencies should take from your work?

With regards to Canada, I hope that the government continues to support the conditions for Indigenous resurgence, and to fulfill its responsibility to rectify contemporary structural injustices – discursive, institutional, and material – that continue to place Indigenous peoples in social positions of structural indignity. The Canadian government has recently adopted the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. How far will it go to repudiate Canada's genocidal past? And what will it do to promote fundamental structural change, both domestically and globally, so that Canada can avoid a genocidal future?

Q: What new research or projects are you working on now?

I have new and continuing projects. One is an extension of this project and involves a study of the concept of self-determination, and what implications decolonizing the concept has for revising international institutions and principles, such as states' territorial and border control rights. I also have a short book project that I'm hoping to make progress on next spring, examining the question of how we can maintain an ethical orientation in the face of a world that is not fair.



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ISID's Projects in Myanmar

By Franque Grimard

ISID researchers are participating in Canada's Knowledge for Democracy Myanmar initiative. This program is an IDRC and Global Affairs Canada partnership that seeks to support democratic transition in Myanmar through policy research.

As part of this program, ISID members will participate in two projects for the next three years. The first project is on **supporting capacity building for researchers and policy analysts in Myanmar** and the second one is a research project on understanding **Barriers and Working Pathways to Women's Political Participation in Myanmar**.



Photo: Capacity Building in Knowledge Production at the University of Mandalay

The first project, **Capacity Building for Professionals and Researchers Working in Quantitative Social Sciences in Myanmar**, involves providing training

workshops and continuous support to the University of Mandalay as well as the Myanmar Development Institute (MDI) in Nay Pyi Taw. Expanding the research and analytical capacity of these stakeholders requires offering a targeted approach to take into account the differences emanating from their mandates, roles and nature.



Photo: The Upper Myanmar Economics Team at the University of Mandalay

The Myanmar Development Institute is a government office that targets policy analysis by government officials to guide ministers in their policies, whereas the University of Mandalay has a general mandate of education and broad research. The training needs of the personnel are also quite different, with the University of Mandalay requiring broad analytical skills in social sciences and MDI officials more specific training in econometrics and impact evaluation. Working in collaboration with colleagues from Chiang Mai University in Thailand, McGill researchers will travel to Myanmar as well as provide a supporting role through the web.

Besides training, McGill researchers are also involved in a research project on women's empowerment in Myanmar. Over the next three years, they will collaborate with colleagues from the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok and the Gender Equality Network (GEN) of Myanmar to understand and analyse **Barriers and Working Pathways to Women's Political Participation in Myanmar**. This will be an interdisciplinary effort, with economists, political scientists, sociologists and CSO analysts that will



combine quantitative and qualitative research in the field to assess better the role of women in the political process in Myanmar at both the state and federal levels.



Photo: Training session at Nay Pi Taw by Professor Franque Grimard from McGill University

Franque Grimard is an Associate Professor of the Department of Economics at McGill University and the president of the Canadian Development Economics Study Group (CDESG). Operating with an IDRC grant, CDESG is the main research group on development economics in Canada organizing policy panels in the area of development economics, sponsoring developing country scholars to come to CDESG conferences to present their work, building a community of researchers in Canada and abroad to produce research and applied policy in development economics for policy makers in Canada and in developing countries.

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