

**Paul A. Haslam, Jessica Schafer
and Pierre Beaudet (eds):**
*Introduction to International Development:
Approaches, Actors and Issues*

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Reviewed by Monika Brusenbauch Meislová

Recently, Development Studies has been brought into mainstream academics as a separate discipline. Development Studies is a rapidly growing academic field that draws on Political Science, Geography, Sociology, Economics and Anthropology. Yet, Czech readers are mostly dependent on foreign-language literature, since there has been a dearth of comprehensive Czech-written materials on development issues. The reviewed book *Introduction to International Development: Approaches, Actors and Issues*, edited by Paul Haslam, Jessica Schafer and Pierre Beaudet, is undoubtedly a valuable contribution to the development studies literature. In this edited volume, the authors seek to provide a common theoretical and conceptual toolkit applicable to the multi-disciplinary nature of development problems and thus deepen

readers' knowledge of international development theory and practice. The book takes a multidisciplinary look at the approaches, actors, and issues, providing a sophisticated picture of developing countries' social realities.

In an attempt to integrate several theoretical streams and offer miscellaneous insights, the book comprises 26 separate essays whose 28 authors represent a broad range of academic perspectives as varied as Political Science, Economics, Sociology, Anthropology, History, Women's Studies, and Geography. The team of contributors has been purposefully drawn from this variety of disciplines to reflect the multidisciplinary nature of the Development Studies field. Besides, the fact that the contributors come from North America, the United Kingdom, Europe, as well as from devel-

oping countries and most of them have been working for or advising development agencies exposes readers to diverse international perspectives.

Also the three editors themselves come from different disciplinary backgrounds — even though all of them are currently professors at the International Development and Globalization Program, at the University of Ottawa, Canada. Paul Haslam has worked as a senior analyst in an NGO *Canadian Foundations for the Americas* and his teaching and research interests span both international development and international political economy. His current research focuses on state-firm relations in Latin America, the international regulation of foreign direct investment and corporate social responsibility. Jessica Schafer currently examines the relationship between social and environmental changes in Mozambique from the late nineteenth century to the present, with a focus on forests and wildlife. Her previous research projects (at the universities of Oxford, Sussex and Victoria) include livelihoods and natural resource management in post-conflict situations, reintegration of demobilized soldiers after civil war and early childhood development in Africa. Pierre Beudet has 25 years of experience in international development as a researcher and manager of various programs in Africa, Asia and Latin America and as a consultant for Canadian International Development Agency, the United Nations Development Programme and several Canadian and international NGOs.

Each chapter includes learning objectives, discussion questions and recommendations for further reading (including internet sources). Readers will also appreciate numerous text boxes of usually well-chosen practical examples and informative case-studies from a wide range of regional locations serving as a useful device which grounds the exposition in the real world. The book further contains many graphs, charts, maps and photos to illustrate the main text. At the back of the book, a glossary of basic terms and a comprehensive list of references can be found. The book is well written in a manner that should be suitable for a wide readership. Also, complex topics are presented logically and in an accessible style.

The organization of the book is coherent and lucid. It is divided into three distinct thematic sections: 1) an overview of the history and key theories, 2) a presentation of the key actors, and 3) an exploration of contemporary issues in international development. This tripartite structure of the publication permits the reader to draw connections between theory, actors and issues and each chapter is an independent entity standing alone without requiring the assignment of previous chapters. Yet, I would recommend reading the text sequentially from the first chapter to the last.

Taking the book section by section, its first part is devoted to key concepts of development thinking and action and theoretical perspectives. It is creditable that the authors have not failed to provide historical contexts from which key

development theories emerged, since they are essential to help readers grasp the fundamentals of the discipline. The first chapter *Meaning, Measurement and Morality in International Development* is the only co-written chapter by all three book editors. It serves as an introductory chapter explaining the origins of different labels used to describe the developing world, as well as the relationship between national wealth, distribution of income and poverty. It also examines why development is considered a multi-dimensional phenomenon and identifies major scholars associated with this approach. Particularly interesting is the section addressing ethical dilemmas that often arise in the field of foreign aid and development practice (p. 18–26). The first part further includes five chapters on the causes and consequences of colonial rule; theories of development; core arguments put forward and criticism levelled against post-development scholars; different approaches and historical and theoretical foundations of the “women, gender and development” field, and impact of globalization approaches on development theories and practices. I especially appreciate the account of post-modern and colonial approaches, as they constitute the fundamental epistemology for most of the recent work in development.

Concentrating on international development actors, Part II of the book discusses various key external and internal forces which attempt to shape development outcomes. In its six chapters this part deals with the role of states, national development agencies, interna-

tional financial institutions, United Nations multilateral actors, multinational corporations and civil society. Given the fact that the role of NGOs in alleviating poverty has been steadily increasing, one wonders why this actor has been allotted only less than two pages (p. 222–224) within the twelfth chapter *Civil Society and Development* by Henry Veltmeyer. The chapter covers primarily agencies of change and development in the context of local and community-based development and although this is the perfect context to deal with NGOs, a separate chapter dedicated to this topic might have been more appropriate.

The primary focus of the third part of the collection, which is the most extensive containing 13 chapters, is issues in international development. With the foundations laid, this section applies the toolkit provided in the first two sections to a variety of issue areas. More specifically, it provides informed insight into various specific issues connected to development, namely Millennium Development Goals, debt, free trade and fair trade, democracy, the environment, rural development, health and education issues, conflicts, international migration, indigenous peoples, technology and information and culture.

The epilogue named *China, Globalization and Development* is written by a prominent radical economist and one of the discipline’s pioneers, Samir Amin. In his commentary, he reflects on the future of development in the era of globalization and on the example of China echoing many book themes.

Notably, the book's strong point is its multidisciplinary approach. Unlike most textbooks in this area which are usually anchored in one specific discipline, e.g., political science or economics, this book successfully incorporates theories and viewpoints from other disciplines which are crucial to international development. Another noteworthy feature of the book is the fact it adopts a broad geographical perspective with the examples and case-studies coming from different parts of the world, thus enabling readers to get acquainted with diverse viewpoints. At the same time, it puts individual issues into a greater context and broader scope. Readers will also appreciate that the text skilfully combines intellectual perspective with on-the ground experience of local realities. Last but not least, it is necessary to mention that the individual theoretical, actor-oriented and thematic chapters are of a comparable quality.

As a minor criticism it can be noted that the structure of the chapters is not entirely identical: some have introductions, some do not and the same applies to conclusions. It is almost regrettable that the book does not allow dealing with all the presented issues in sufficient detail. As it tries to cover such a broad

range of topics, it is inevitably general in nature. Yet, this approach is reasonable and perfectly understandable given the main aim of the book, i.e., to provide a comprehensive introduction into Development Studies and help understand a wide range of development issue areas.

To conclude, *Introduction to International Development: Approaches, Actors and Issues* presents neither a revolutionary, nor original approach to Development Studies, but offers a clear and systematic overview of most relevant and essential aspects of development theory and practice. As such, this book, rich in empirical data, can be highly recommended to readers from multi-disciplinary backgrounds with no prior knowledge of this field as a useful topical and theoretical introduction to Development Studies. As it combines theoretical, practical, and multidisciplinary approaches, it also responds to the particular needs of students of development programmes and thus can serve as a suitable text for any international development studies course. On the other hand, it can be argued that the volume will appeal neither to people with a deeper knowledge of the development studies background, nor to development practitioners.