Winter 2020
Tu-Th 1:00-2:20
1120 Weill Hall

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PUBPOL 676
The Politics of International Development:
Controversies and Conundrums

Over the course of several decades, scholars, development practitioners, politicians, and social activists have debated the best way to address the needs of the world's poor. Sometimes the problem of global poverty is framed in terms that are essentially economic: how can income and welfare be increased? Very often, though, the questions are explicitly tied to political concerns about responsibility, power, and the distribution of wealth and welfare. How central an issue is economic growth? Is foreign aid the solution or the problem? When a country is dependent on outside assistance, who should control its development strategy– the local government or the international bankers supplying funds? Should market prevail over polis, or vice versa?

The political and economic dimensions of poverty and development are closely intertwined, of course. Nevertheless, for the sake of understanding and analysis, and to prepare development practitioners for questions they will inevitably confront in their work, it can be useful to tease these aspects apart and focus on the explicitly political dimension. That is the intent of this course – to focus on political conundrums that relate directly to differences in values, perspectives, and power. (It can thus be thought of as a complement to Pubpol 534, Economics of Development).

Many of the core questions have been around for a long time, but they take on new life – and potentially new meaning – in different contexts. In this course we will use the current discussions around the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to guide consideration of several political, and politicized, issues.

Information about Course Policies, Readings, and Assignments (including policy project) can be found on the course Canvas site.

Course Outline

Jan 9. Introduction.

Jan 14. Controversies, Conundrums and the International *Politics* of Poverty

2 Student assignments:
1. Look up the dictionary definitions of "controversy" and "conundrum." Come to class prepared to write a couple of sentences about each. What controversies or conundrums are suggested by the Gapminder video? (You might want to watch a couple of times.)
2. Who is (was) W. A. Lewis and what is his claim to fame? (Web search on your own. Prepare to share where you found info and what made the source seem both useful and reliable.)

- Hans Rosling, Gapminder - (2009, 4 minutes)
- Legatum Prosperity Index, 2019

Jan 16. Poverty and Inequality. What defines poverty, and whose poverty matters? *[see Assignments]*

- Human Development Index (see links to FAQ and data set)
- Global Multidimensional Poverty Index. (And related 2019 op-ed in WaPo https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/millions-have-come-out-of-poverty-its-a-reason-to-hope/2019/07/16/76204c36-a7f4-11e9-9214-246e594de5d5_story.html)
- Brookings, Rethinking Poverty in 2019. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/12/13/rethinking-global-poverty-reduction-in-2019/
- Aguilar and Sumner, "Who Are the World's Poor?" *World Development*, 2020. (Canvas)
- Sumner, Global Poverty and Inequality: Change and Continuity in Late Development. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/dech.12487
- The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) http://unohrlls.org/about-ldcs/ and LDC country profiles https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category/ldcs-at-a-glance.html

Jan 21. Deep Dive into Concepts: Human Capital versus Human Capability. Sustainable Development. *[see Assignment Tab – Short Assignment]*

- Amartya Sen, "Editorial: Human Capital and Human Capability," *World Development* 25 (No 12, 1997), 1959-1961.
- IISD, "What is Sustainable Development?" (also see https://www.gdrc.org/sustdev/definitions.html.)
- Anand and Sen, "Human Development and Economic Sustainability," *World Development,* Vol 28, 2000: 2029-2040 (without addendum).

Jan 23. Introducing the SDG Project. Don't Panic: End Poverty (Concept Assignment due; no other class preparation)

Jan 28-30-Feb 4. The SDG Project. During these classes periods we will address the following questions, in sequence. (The **** line suggests logical breaks for the 3 class periods and related readings) *[See Assignments.]*

1. "What is" the SDG project? (Description: what are we talking about? How many goals are there, and what do they address, besides extreme poverty?)
2. What controversies surround the SDG project, and what conundrum(s) does it purport to address?
3. How did the SDG project come about?

- UN's landing page on the SDGs. Read the basic history. See links to Twitter or FB on this page for latest news.
- "5 things to know about governance as a Sustainable Development Goal" (Goal 16 controversies).
- Donoghue, "Negotiating the SDGs" May 2016, pp.17-19; 24; 31-35; 36-45 (scan for mention of controversies); 50-51; 58; skim 70-112 for a sense of the day-to-day negotiations; 121-123 (for the conclusion). In addition, you may want to listen to the first 30 minutes of this lecture by Ambassador Donoghue, in which he discusses the politics of negotiating the SDGs. https://soundcloud.com/trocaireireland/david-donoghue-leave-no-one-behind
- Fukudo-Parr and Muchhala, "The Southern origins of sustainable development goals: Ideas, actors, aspirations" WD, February 2020.

*************** (Jan 30, below)
4. What was the MDG project and what did it achieve?
5. Was the MDG project considered controversial?
6. How did the MDG project come about?
7. What pre-existing controversies and conundrums shaped the MDGs?

- MDG report 2015. *Spend at least 15 minutes at this site. (What were the 14 notable achievements? How many can you list?)*
- "Is Child Mortality Falling?" (Millennium Development Goal #4) https://www.gapminder.org/videos/reducing-child-mortality-a-moral-and-environmental-imperative/
- Hulme, David. "The Making of the Millennium Development Goals: Human Development Meets Results-Based Management in an Imperfect World (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.." 2007. *The MDG narrative – how the project was conceived and developed*

************** (February 4, below).
8. Return to SDG project: How are the SDGs being tracked? What are the prognostics for success? Are there any current controversies?
9. To what extent is the SDG project shaping international conversations about poverty?

- HLPF (High Level Political Forum) https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf
- SEI, "Important interactions among the SDGs under review at the HLPF 2017." (Which SDGs are identified as having greatest "interactive" effect? Do you find the analysis of "positive" and "negative" linkages to be compelling?)
- Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/ (See this analysis of VNS submitted to date and review its findings with regard to the "Leave No One Behind" commitment. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20549CDPbp201846.pdf)
- Dang & Serajuddin, "Tracking the sustainable development goals: Emerging measurement challenges and further reflections," WD 2020

- Moyer & Hedden, "Are we on the right path to achieve the sustainable development goals?" WD 2020
- Summary of the 2019 SDG Summit
  https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/25200SDG_Summary.pdf
- Crossette, "Salvaging the SDGs" PassBlue blog, September 2019
  https://www.passblue.com/2019/09/30/salvaging-the-sdgs-new-thinking-to-spur-action-takes-shape/?utm_source=PassBlue+List&utm_campaign=d93ea8e5cf-PassBlue_Fordham_Nov18&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_4795f55662-d93ea8e5cf-54986073

Feb 6. Who's around the table? Participants in the International Conversation about Poverty. Who are the "Internationals"? How do they relate to each other and how do they exercise power and influence? OECD, World Bank, UNDP, IMF, donor states, international NGOs and ...? [TIP: The websites below may prove to be useful resources for the projects we will discuss on February 13.]

- OECD, Development Cooperation Directorate. (What countries are members of OECD, and of its Development Assistance Committee?)
- UNDP – FAQ , and "UNDP at a Glance."
- UN DESA. (UN's "think tank" – website landing page)
- World Bank -- https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/sdgs-2030-agenda and for background, Goldman, Michael. "The Rise of the Bank," ch. 2 in *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization* (Yale Univ Press, 2004): 46-99. [Also optional - news item] "The World Bank is Remaking Itself" NYT, Jan 27, 2018
- The IMF and the SDGs
- Interaction, "Sustainable Development Goals." (Take a quick look at these other pages to see who belongs to InterAction and how they present their work. What is the relationship between their area of work and the SDGs?)
- *Ruggie, John. "The United Nations and Globalization: Patterns and Limitations of Institutional Adaptation," Global Governance 9 (July-Sept 2003). [this article compares the approaches adopted by BW and UN on Millennium Development Goals – read only pp. 301-308.]*
- The "epistemic community" (knowledge professionals) – see for commentary/example these two articles: "Economics' Biggest Success Story Is a Cautionary Tale" https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/10/22/economics-development-rcts-esther-duflo-abhijit-banerjee-michael-kremer-nobel/ and Jones and Tvedten, "What does it mean to be poor? Investigating quantitative-qualitative divide in Mozambique." WD, Jan 2019. (pdf in files)

Feb 11. Donor States -- and the contours of bilateral ODA programs. Which countries have international aid programs? Internationally, the term used is "ODA" – Official development assistance. Please start the readings with the short selection from OECD, providing the definition of aid used in formal accounts. As you review materials on the various national programs, look for both similarities and distinguishing features.

- OECD, "Official Development Assistance." (any surprises in the definition presented here? At the bottom of the page there is a hyperlink to another page, "Is it ODA?" You may be surprised at what you see when you scroll down that page.) http://www.oecd.org/development/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm
- USAID - "What we do."
- European Union - development assistance policy.
- Canada - ODA overview.
- China - Chinese assistance, explained. (Brookings)
- InterAction - NGO Standards

Feb 13. Discuss Course Policy Projects, individual and group aspects.

Feb 18-20. How to Help the Poor? Aid, self-help, inclusion, basic income.

- (Feb 18) Relying on International Expertise and Assistance: The Sachs-Easterly controversy. *[See Instructions on Canvas for Choice of 4 Assignments.]* The goal, here, is for you to become familiar with a debate that went on for at least 10 years. Feel free to Google "Sachs-Easterly" before you read the 3 fairly recent (final?) installments from 2013-2014: Installment #1. (2013); Installment #2. (2014);Installment #3. (2014). In their book Poor Economics (available on line via UM library, Duflo and Bannerje engage Sachs-Easterly debate, and you might find it useful to read pp. 3-11 along with their concluding chapter "In Place of a Sweeping Conclusion" (pp. 267-273.). https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/lib/umichigan/reader.action?docID=876489#

- (Feb 20) Cash Transfers (BIG). *[See Instructions on Canvas for Choice of 4 Assignments.]*
    o Ferguson, Give A Man a Fish, "Introduction" (2015)
    o You might also want to quickly review the WB's page on conditional cash transfers You might also want to quickly review the WB's page on conditional cash transfers or listen to this NPR story from 2017 How To Fix Poverty: Why Not Just Give People Money?

Feb 25. Alternatives to Aid? Options for Development Financing. *[See Instructions on Canvas for Choice of 4 Assignments.]*

- "The Present and Future of External Development Finance, Old Dependence New Challenges" (UNCTAD Least Developed Countries Report 2019) https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ldcr2019_en.pdf Read with special attention to the following pages/topics:
    o Financial situation faced by LCDs. Ch 1, pp. 7- 20 (stop at section G)
    o South-South cooperation (assistance) Ch. 2, pp. 48-53 (section D)
    o Debt sustainability Ch. 2, pp. 53-58 (stop at section F)
    o Development finance institutions. Ch. 3, pp. 81-95

- Also see Bannerje and Duflo, "How Poverty Ends: The Many Paths to Progress—and Why They Might Not Continue" Foreign Affairs, 3 December 2019. https://www.foreignaffairs.com/print/1125223

Feb 27. Governance questions. Who "owns" a country's development strategy?

- 2017 Speech. by Ghanaian Prime Minister (8 minutes)
- Chimhowu, Hulme, Munro, "The 'New' national development planning and global development goals: Processes and partnerships" WD 2019
- World Bank, Country Strategies.
- Gibson et al, *Samaritan's Dilemma*, pp. 65-68. Excerpt on "The Donor-Recipient Negotiation Arena
- UNDP-Colombia accelerator lab https://www.co.undp.org/content/colombia/es/home/laboratorio-de-aceleracion/-que-es-.html and https://acceleratorlabs.undp.org

Mar 3-5 Winter Break

Mar 10. Corruption. Is corruption a serious problem, and whose problem is it?

- How do you define corruption?. (Transparency International)
- Berkman, Steve. "'C' is for Corruption," Chapter 9 in *The World Bank and the Gods of Lending.* Kumarian, 2008: 121-138. (Canvas)
- Gans-Morse et al, "Reducing bureaucratic corruption: Interdisciplinary perspectives on what works," WD 2018. (Canvas)
- Anti-corruption political party in India. Foreign Policy 2017.

Mar 12. The Conflict Trap: A Controversial Conundrum. What is the "conflict trap" and to what extent does it represent a conundrum (for anti-poverty advocates)? Selections from the NYT and Risen suggest that it might be important to include the actions of outside parties when analyzing options for escaping the conflict trap. *[See Instructions on Canvas for Choice of 4 Assignments.]*

- Collier, Paul. "The Conflict Trap," Chapter 2 in *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It.* Oxford, 2007: 17-37.
- Bruck and d'Erico, "Food security and violent conflict". WD, 2019
- NYT, "With Bags of Cash, CIA Seeks Influence in Afghanistan.," April 28, 2013
- To be updated in March: documents to be selected from the Peacebuilding Commission and UNSC Briefing (What's in Blue).

Mar 17-19. When Multilateral Aid is the Answer: Enduring Controversies

- 2011 Busan Partnership Agreement. (policy document)
- Gibson et al, *The Samaritan's Dilemma: The Political Economy of Development Aid. Chapter 6, "All Aid is not the Same," 112-128.*
- Addison, Tony and Finn Tarp, "Aid Policy and the Macroeconomic Management of Aid." *World Development* 69 (May 2015): 1-5, and and abstract of "Assessing Foreign Aid's Long Run Contribution to Growth and Development," *World Development* 2015, 69: 6-18. (The full text is here.) *These articles relate to questions about the "effectiveness" of aid. We won't discuss in any details, but I wanted you to be aware of empirical research to address this question. (Many people have opinions about aid effectiveness, based mostly on hunches or anecdotal evidence. What can be learned from more systematic, empirical research?)*

Conditionality (March 17). *[See Instructions on Canvas for Choice of 4 Assignments.]*

- Molenaers et al, "Political Conditionality and Foreign Aid.," *World Development* (in press, 2015). See instructions for the Assignment
- Woods, "Whose Aid? Whose Influence?" International Affairs, 2008. We may not have time to discuss this in any depth, but the article addresses some changes ("a silent revolution") occurring as a result of increasing funds from China and other non-traditional donor countries.

Coordination (March 19). *[See Instructions on Canvas for Choice of 4 Assignments.]*

- Bickenbach, Mbelu, and Nunnenkamp, "Is foreign aid concentrated increasingly on needy and deserving recipient countries?" WD 2019.
- Francois Bourguignon and Jean-Philippe Platteau, "The Hard Challenge of Aid Coordination.," World Development (Vol 69, May 2015)
- CRS, "Foreign Aid: International Donor Coordination of Development Assistance.," 2013.
- UN Silos and "Lead Agencies." No readings, but consider the question: what insights do the articles on donor coordination provide about administrative silos and the designation of "lead agencies" within the UN system?

Mar 24-26 Bilateral Aid: Sweden and UK

Sweden (March 24)

- UK: CGD, UK Aid Quality Indicators, 2018. https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/uk-aid-quality-indicators-final.pdf
- CASE: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), "Capacity-Building for Participatory Management of Degraded Forests in Orissa, India" from Samaritan's Dilemma, pp. 174-183. Read carefully and prepare answers to discussion questions distributed in class.
- (as time permits). Hout, "The Anti-Politics of Development," Third World Quarterly, 33 (2012): 405-422. (In the context of this article, what is the meaning of "depoliticize"? And what went wrong in efforts by UK and Netherlands to depoliticize their development assistance?

What is the relationship between USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation? Between development assistance and security assistance?

- United States Agency for International Development. (USAID). Review quickly, to familiarize yourself
- Millennium Challenge Corporation. (US). Review quickly, to familiarize yourself
- CDG, "Focusing on Fragility: the Future of US Assistance to Fragile States," 2019 https://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/focusing-on-fragility-report.pdf
- (optional) Lebovic, James. "The Millennium Challenge Corporation: Organizational Constraints on US Foreign Aid, 2004–11.," *World Development 58 (June 2014): 116-129. This is the most difficult reading - concentrate on sections 1, 2, and 5 and scan the rest.*
- (Basic overview) CRS, "Foreign Aid: An Introduction to US Programs and Policy," updated 2019.
- *Optional additional reading: CRS report, "Millenium Challenge Corporation," March 2018.*
- *Possible additional reading on US security presence in Africa (NYT, December 2019)*

March 31. NGOs as Service Providers and Advocates

- "Island Time," *This American Life* Podcast—Act 1, 21 May 2010. Listen (25 minutes) or read transcript (both available here.)
- Brass et al, "NGOs and international development: A review of thirty-five years of scholarship" WD 2018
- InterAction reaction to Turkish border situation (2018) https://www.interaction.org/blog/interaction-members-respond-to-the-crisis-on-the-turkish-syrian-border/
- Give Directly https://www.givedirectly.org/operating-model/

April 2. Humanitarian Assistance and Mission Work.   Humanitarian assistance is often associated with religious missionaries, though the two dimensions can readily be separated. What is the distinction between "humanitarian" work and "missionary" work, and to what extent is each controversial?

- ICRC, "Humanitarian Principles: The Importance of their preservation during humanitarian crises.," 2007
- Livermore, David. "Motivation," Ch. 3 in Serving With Eyes Wide Open. Baker Books, 2006: 47-58.
- Autesserre, Severine. *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention,* Cambridge U Press, 2014. Ch 6: "A Structure of Inequality."   ("Peaceland" is the name Austesserre assigns to the international space inhabited by humanitarian aid workers.)

April 7   Reserved for Group Presentations

April 9.   Reserved for Group Presentations

April 14.   Reserved for Group Presentations

April 16.   Reserved for Group Presentations

Apr 17.   Course Debrief. – Despair or Hope?

Guide to Assignments

SHORT ASSIGNMENTS

1. Conceptual Explanation (15%) – **Due in class on January 23.**   Choose one of the options below. Based on readings and class discussions, **develop a short and easily readable explanation (or text box) presenting/clarifying one of the following concepts.**   [The point of this assignment is ensure that you understand these concepts *and* that you can explain them clearly.   Simple and clear is better than obscure and complicated. Please avoid jargon as much as you can – see below for additional comments.]

- o   Differentiate HDI and HPI/MPI.   (You should be aware of HPI but do not need to elaborate on it since it has largely been replaced by MPI. However, you will likely need to review information about HPI for a good grasp of MPI.)
- o   Differentiate human capital and human capability

Explanation of the assignment: Real mastery is demonstrated when we can explain and employ a concept - and that's not always as easy as it sounds. These concepts are important to professionals in the development field, and if time permitted, it would be worthwhile for you to complete the exercise on both sets of concepts. But that's not realistic - so I'm giving you a choice.   Policy professionals often create side-bar "boxes" to clarify a concept or illustrate a point. That's similar to the intent here. **Your own concept explanation should fit on one page.** The object is to communicate clearly, accurately, and *succinctly* – and that will be the basis of the grade. (Imagine that your readers are other Ford students not enrolled in this class. Or look through materials for any of your classes and think about what makes a short conceptual presentation effective.)   Be sure to introduce your topic (a sentence will do) and feel free to use lists, examples, spacing, etc.– whatever it takes to communicate!

2. FAQ on the SDGs (10%). Due in Class February 13.   Use the 9 questions in the course outline to develop an FAQ on the Sustainable Development Project.   In general, your answers should not exceed 50 words.

3.   Class discussion preparation.   Choose any 4 of the following assignments and see Canvas for specific instructions. It is your responsibility to keep track of your submissions, but do note that these are all due at 9 AM of the day when they will be discussed (so that I can review them before class).   (Total of 4 assignment = 10% of final grade)
>   **(2.5%) Sachs vs. Easterly.   Due 9 AM Tuesday Feb 18**
>   **(2.5%) Basic Income Grant   Due 9 AM Tuesday Feb 20**
>   **(2.5%) Development Financing Due 9 AM Feb 25**
>   **(2.5%) Conflict Trap Due 9 AM. March 12**
>   **(2.5%) Reading notes: conditionality.   Due 9 AM March 17**
>   **(2.5%) Reading notes: coherence and coordination.   Due 9 AM March 19**
>   **(2.0%) Reflection notes: On balance, despair or hope? Due 9 AM April 21.**

COURSE POLICY PROJECT

The course projects are directly related to the SDGs and have two components: a group component (class presentation) and an individual component (the main project).   They will be discussed in class on February 13, but here is a preview.

The group presentation 15%. Early in the semester, students will be assigned to one of several work groups focused on an SDG or a subset of SDGs (including but not necessarily limited to SDGs 7, 8, 9, and 12—which have been identified as priority SDGs for LDCs). During the last weeks of the semester, each group will give a presentation to the class. More details will be posted to Canvas once the groups have been formed.   In general, though, the presentations should introduce your SDG(s) and include an overview of progress, challenges, and any controversies about implementation.   Examples and case studies should relate to LDCs. **For purposes of grading**, *a group presentation in the A range must include analysis/discussion of a political controversy or conundrum.*)   More detailed advice and instructions to follow – check Canvas or ask.

Individual Projects.

Your individual projects are meant to emulate a realistic professional assignment that engages controversies and conundrums around the SDG(s) that your group is working on.   You can use the basic template below for a good project, but you are encouraged to tailor it to your interests. Alternatively, you can develop a different scenario subject to my approval by March 20.   Here's the basic template:

Scenario: You are part of an international team at the UNDP, and (from NY) you are helping 3 LDC countries in West Africa focus on and track their progress on a subset of SDGs, and potentially seek outside funding to advance them.   As a UNDP staff member, you may be able to act as a facilitator or a coordinator, but since you are not a political leader in any of the countries, you cannot actually make policy decisions or ensure implementation.   What you can do, as a UN staff member, is talk to key stakeholders and help them talk to each other -- and of course you have a much broader understanding of the SDG project than they do. (In other words, you are a kind of "broker.") In order to do this well, you need a full understanding of the issues (and the potential political landmines).

The project: Your task (assignment) is to prepare a 7-10 page (single spaced) document that presents:
- a summary overview of major projects underway in the countries and progress achieved on the relevant SDG(s);
- a preliminary analysis of factors in each country that might be impeding progress (with attention to the range of concerns reviewed in class and readings over the course of the semester);
- an inventory of stakeholders from whom you might gain useful information;
- and some potential concrete next steps that could be considered to advance the SDG implementation.

You should think of this as the first steps of a major project rather than a final analysis that leads to a published report. If you end up with many unknowns, you could swap out a couple of pages of analysis for a detailed investigative 1-2 day "itinerary" for one of your regional colleagues – anticipating who s/he should try to talk to and what questions need to be explored. [We can discuss this in class on Feb. 13.]

If you use this template, your final paper should be in the form of a memo.   And if you haven't ever written in a memo format, you will probably find it useful to review the "memo on memos" posted on Canvas.   Please do break up your text into readable sections.   I would also like to review an all-inclusive "List of Sources Consulted" (absolutely required for an A).

With this template, the project should require about 50 hours work--roughly 10-15 hours of background reading on the particular SDGs and relevant country issues, and the equivalent of a full week's professional work for the project itself.   (This is the generic standard against which I'll evaluate your project – ie, I will assume the project represents the quality of work that you can produce in one week and will assign a grade against that standard.   Please don't wait until the last minute to begin work on it! From April 7-17 no readings or other class preparation is required apart from group presentations – and this is intended to make time for work on the projects.)

The individual project will count for 40% of your grade.   You can submit it electronically or in hard copy no later than 12 noon on Monday April 27.