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Gillette Hall and Harry Anthony Patrinos (eds.)

Indigenous People, Poverty and Human Development in Latin America

Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, ISBN: 978-1-4039-9938-2, 308 pp.

In 1994, one year after the start of the first UN International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, the World Bank's education economist Harry Anthony Patrinos, with his colleague George Psacharopoulos, published the report *Indigenous People and Poverty in Latin America*. The current book, co-edited by Harry Anthony Patrinos and Gillette Hall, another World Bank colleague, updates the earlier findings with new information on indigenous poverty, and deeper analysis of human-development trends in Latin America. The book comprises a balanced mix of empirical data and analysis of traditional poverty indicators (education, health, income, and access to basic services). The index is exhaustive, and the bibliography rich in references on the socio-economic status of indigenous peoples in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru.

The first chapter presents the political gains that marked the Indigenous People's first Decade in Latin America and summarises the main research findings. Chapter 2, which discusses the controversial business of determining who is indigenous and who is not, is followed by five chapters discussing the relative poverty of indigenous and non-indigenous people in each of the five countries selected for this study. These chapters are structured around main indicators of human development or human capital, such as the rise or fall of poverty rates among indigenous peoples since 1994; income poverty; health and education; and access to basic services, including national social and poverty-reduction programmes. A useful and detailed appendix on research methodologies and data sets presents the statistical models

used in measuring poverty. The appendix also explains how countries were chosen and target populations defined, and the differences between household surveys conducted in each of the countries analysed. The concluding chapter, written by the two editors, summarises the main policy recommendations.

The five country-specific chapters start from the premise established in the previous research, which is that indigenous peoples were poorer than non-indigenous peoples before the general rise in social spending in Latin America in the 1990s. Basing themselves on a 2002 Inter-American Development Bank report, Hall, Layton, and Shapiro note (p. 11) that whereas social spending throughout the region had remained at a constant 40 per cent of total spending during the 1970s and 1980s, it rose on average to 45 per cent between 1990 and 1995, and to 54 per cent between 1996 and 1999, except in Peru, Guatemala, and Ecuador, where it rose respectively by 21, 26, and 32 per cent. Whether these measures of social welfare have equally benefited indigenous and non-indigenous peoples is the central research question addressed in each of the country-specific chapters. By investigating the change in inequality between indigenous and non-indigenous people over time, the authors hope to provide insights into 'the distinct hurdles that indigenous peoples encounter when attempting to escape poverty' (p. 107), as well as to identify the most effective social-expenditure targeting for closing the indigenous/non-indigenous poverty gap.

Comparing the social and economic gaps that persist between indigenous and non-indigenous households in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru is no easy task. Not only does the quality of national surveys and censuses vary significantly from country to country, but two serious methodological difficulties have to be addressed: identifying indigenous peoples, and measuring poverty. To start with the latter, it is the existence of so many definitions of poverty and resultant poverty indicators (some more quantitative, others more qualitative) that makes measuring

poverty such a challenge. For education, the authors selected health and family indicators that fit the concept of poverty centred on human development, or lack of it, as closely as possible, while still retaining the notion of a poverty line (consumption-based for Ecuador, Guatemala and Peru, and income-based for Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Mexico), which allows for the disaggregation of indigenous and non-indigenous poor people. In addition to an examination of independent variables used in profiling the poor, the authors also used a multivariate model 'to standardize the many factors that simultaneously affect the probability of an individual being poor' (p. 248). This model, they claim, allows them to deepen their understanding of the determinants of poverty, especially when compared with measures of labour-market outcomes.

Chapter 2, which starts with a clear statement of the first methodological problem ('being indigenous is a social construct that varies according to the historical epoch, cultural context and location'), offers an excellent overview of the very different methods used to define a surveyed individual or household as 'indigenous' and to calculate the size of an indigenous population. Each method has its strengths and its shortcomings, which explains why the authors decided to use three different factors to identify the reference population: the principal language spoken, self-perception or self-identification, and geographic concentration. The research methods appendix offers a useful table (Table A1, p. 243), summarising the various definitions of ethnicity used in household surveys in each of the five countries. These countries were chosen not only because of the large size of their indigenous populations, but also because their governments have produced statistical data containing ethnolinguistic information, which facilitates the task of estimating the size of these populations.

The editors examine the country studies further in Chapter 8, in order to define key areas for action. Their main message is

that, although there have been real improvements in terms of legislation and political representation, a large proportion of Latin American indigenous people still receive poorer education, health care, and social assistance than non-indigenous people. Moreover, their employment conditions show clear signs of straight discrimination. Although the quality of education, including job training and the transfer of other important skills, is better today than it was at the beginning of the 1990s, indigenous people are still not able to convert their skills into higher earnings or to increase their standard of living in relation to non-indigenous people. Low income and low resources are mutually reinforcing. To remedy this situation, Hall and Patrinos recommend the design and implementation of improved health programmes for indigenous children (especially as regards birth-related care and nutrition). They also recommend that further research be carried out to study how discrimination works in practice, as well as research on education *quality*. Having noted that differentiated programmes may be useful in some cases (education), but not in others (conditional cash payments), they call for a renewed international effort to collect accurate, detailed, and comparable data, which alone will allow researchers to establish the true socio-economic circumstances of indigenous peoples, and to determine whether differentiated programmes for indigenous peoples produce better results than general, or non-differentiated, ones.

The book approaches poverty as a set of material conditions to be evaluated exclusively in quantitative terms. Hall, Layton, and Shapiro justify this (p. 3) on the grounds that quantitative analyses of poverty constitute the most effective way to convince policy makers to do something about the historical exclusion of indigenous people, which continues to result in low levels of human capital and limited access to productive land, basic services, and financial markets. I disagree with the conviction expressed by

some authors that indigenous poverty can be documented and analysed from a single disciplinary perspective and still produce useful results or recommendations. If Shapiro remarks (p. 147) that '[d]ifferent definitions of who is indigenous produce widely varying estimates of the size of the indigenous population and how poor indigenous peoples are', Trivelli (p. 202) rightly points out that the key issue for analysis is that not all indigenous peoples are poor in the same way, or for the same reasons. To dichotomise Latin American citizens country by country in two simple categories has a range of pernicious effects, not least of blinding researchers to intra-community and inter-regional variation. I have worked in indigenous communities where some families are much wealthier than others: in areas where Black people, for instance, are far worse off than indigenous people, and in regions where indigenous communities, classifiable as extremely poor in terms of access to state-provided education and health services, or in terms of paid employment opportunities, own very substantial natural-resources assets, and enjoy thriving and unique ways of life. To class all these different communities as 'indigenous' and hope to protect or enhance their well-being through the implementation of identical state policies would be a mistake. Daily activities are not guided by a general and unchanging indigenous/ non-indigenous dichotomy, contrary to what some analysts seem to think (p. 23). Because economics is never simply descriptive, but often implicitly normative, it is essential that research on the link between being poor and being indigenous take the form of integrated research programmes combining various social science approaches. Single-minded quantitative measurements tend to be ethnocentric. In this book, for instance, several authors refer to home birth (see p. 98, for example) and earth floors (p. 187) as unhygienic and dangerous to human health, taking their occurrence in indigenous communities as indicators of material deprivation and socio-economic inequality.

An inter-disciplinary approach would correct such unfounded cultural bias. It would also shed light on interesting contrasts in migration flows and monetary returns; show the real benefits of bilingual education beyond instrumental uses; and help to envisage education projects that would truly support the human development of the poor in Latin America.

More importantly, inter-disciplinary research would start from what this book excludes: the links between land, identity, and well-being; and the perception, so common among indigenous peoples, that their cultural and spiritual values enrich not only their own communities but also the national societies to which they belong. Indigenous territories, and indigenous people's capacity to manage their space of vital reproduction, have a key role to play in fighting poverty and exclusion. As the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development has found after years of research, what really matters for the development of indigenous communities are *sovereignty* ('when Native nations make their own decisions about what development approaches to take, they consistently outperform external decision makers, on matters as diverse as governmental form, natural resource management, economic development, health care, and social service provision'); *institutions* ('for development to take hold, assertions of sovereignty must be backed by capable institutions of governance'); *culture* ('successful economies stand on the shoulders of legitimate, culturally grounded institutions of self-government. Indigenous societies are diverse; each nation must equip itself with a governing structure, economic system, policies, and procedures that fit its own contemporary culture'); and *leadership* ('nation building requires leaders who introduce new knowledge and experiences, challenge assumptions, and propose change'). The second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People will end in 2015, the same year as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiative. Without the ambition of mobilising

pro-poor social capital and direct resources to indigenous communities so that they can manage these resources in accordance with their own visions and philosophy, it is unlikely that the MDGs will be attained in Latin American indigenous communities.

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Shannon R. Speed, Aída Hernández Castillo, and Lynn M. Stephen (eds.)

Dissident Women: Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas

Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2006, ISBN: 978-0292714403, 280 pp.

Dissident Women: Gender and Cultural Politics in Chiapas is a collection of essays by women academics from Mexico and the USA, including two Native Americans, on the organising of indigenous women in Mexico, primarily in Chiapas and also Oaxaca, and the participation of these women in national and transnational networks. The book is a timely and refreshing contribution to a subject that is as yet little explored. It constitutes a form of 'talking back' both to mainstream feminism, which tends to regard indigenous women from Western and mainly urban middle-class perspectives, and to indigenous movements, which tend to gloss over the oppression and mistreatment of women. The authors also seek to bridge the gaps that often exist between academia, political commitment, and gender engagement.

One of the greatest strengths and innovative strategies of the book is that it starts from the indigenous women themselves: their ideas, demands, needs, and interests. By first and foremost highlighting indigenous women's agency, and within that context exploring issues of racism, class, and gender oppression, the contributors give a very different reading from the usual representations in feminist literature of

indigenous women as victims of 'triple oppression'. This is done in two ways: by opening with a series of key documents by and/or about indigenous women, such as the Zapatista Women's Revolutionary Law, and the address of indigenous Zapatista Commandante Esther to the Mexican National Congress in April 2001; and in the approach taken by each of the contributors. By seeking to understand how indigenous women understand their reality, and questioning their own assumptions as researchers, the contributors enter into dialogue with the indigenous women themselves and they also engage with current academic, feminist, anthropological, and political debates. The authors maintain that indigenous women are de-centring these debates, and suggest that '...indigenous women have emerged as creative political forces in Mexico, providing new models for governance, for conceptions of citizenship and rights, and for economic development and cultural autonomy' (Introduction, p. xviii).

The authors describe indigenous women's courageous insistence on their rights, and their fight for participation and voice on different fronts: in the family, in community organisation, and in the military ranks of the Zapatista army (EZLN). Curiously, it is in the latter where indigenous women have come furthest, to the point where they represent more than one third of its military leadership, despite having fallen far behind in the pro-Zapatista civilian community councils and assemblies. They also chart the participation of indigenous women – sometimes in tense dialogue, sometimes closing ranks – with the national women's and indigenous movements. Maylei Blackwell's chapter describes the process by which indigenous women have begun to move between local, national, and international spaces, which enhance one another and become mutually enriching.

To capture the way in which indigenous women unsettle the perceptions and demands of indigenous and feminist movements, the authors name them '*Dissident Women*'. This

is of course a representation that the indigenous women themselves would probably neither use nor even identify with. And it is precisely this creative space and tension that gives the book its richness. It is not an attempt merely to 'reproduce' the way that these indigenous women see and represent themselves, but rather a reflection by politically committed feminist anthropologists on the contributions of these pioneer women, both in daily life and in theoretical terms. This portrayal is probably quite different, too, from the way in which indigenous intellectuals may see, understand, and represent indigenous women's agency. This brings to the fore the importance of the writers' vantage point: 'where one speaks from', or, as several of the authors say, the need to explicitly 'situate my knowledge' (Zylberberg).

The contributors seek to challenge prevailing assumptions; for example, Aída Hernández questions feminist NGOs which assume that they have the answer to indigenous women's problems and organise training sessions to 'enlighten' them. Instead, she argues, feminists need to really listen to indigenous women and understand that common ground and alliances between women can be achieved only when the differences between them are recognised and respected. Contesting the often dichotomous debate which creates a divide between individual and collective rights, and more particularly women's rights and collective indigenous rights, Shannon Speed argues that indigenous women are claiming both, and that they provide us with 'an alternative way of thinking about rights that has powerful implications for resistance to neoliberal logics and forms of rule' (p. 204).

Aída Hernández refutes the well-known premise of 'practical gender needs' versus 'strategic interests':

This paradigm once again proposes a division between poor women who mobilize around practical interests and feminist women who mobilize around strategic interests. Practical interests

are defined as those based on the satisfaction of needs emerging from women's position within the gender-based division of labor; strategic interests, as those involving the demands for transforming unequal gender relations. Here, strategic interests are the only interests considered intrinsically political in nature and potentially transforming. (Footnote 5, p. 72)

This is an interesting angle on the debate, coming from a feminist perspective; however, in the context of development work, it remains valid to get away from projects that merely reinforce women's traditional role in social reproduction. The problem, therefore, is not whether to support, say, vegetable gardens or maize-grinding mills, but rather whether support for such projects contributes or not to indigenous women's processes of empowerment, autonomy, and decision making, and how these connections are made.

Another of the book's strengths is the exploration of internal differences between indigenous women and the ways in which specific local contexts and histories mark and shape their agency. Lynn Stephen, Sonia Toledo Tello, and Anna María Garza Calagaris document indigenous women's historical participation in social struggle, and the tendency for such participation to be erased by mixed organisations, academics, and analysts. They also analyse the tendency of the state and state-law to exclude women from previously more gender-inclusive forms of indigenous authority; a clear example is the process by which previous forms of joint male and female indigenous leadership, bringing together the political and religious, gave way – after the Mexican revolution and land reform – to exclusively male leadership. They argue, too, that current social movements build on past histories of organisation: 'Although the Zapatistas employed new forms of political action, their language, images, and symbols were based on the

history of peasant organizing in Mexico' (Toledo and Garza, pp. 103–4).

Through this historical approach, they illustrate the ways in which indigenous women are currently achieving greater recognition and status: 'While [the 1980s indigenous peasant organisation] CIOAC widows marched because they were obliged to do so by their circumstances, the Zapatista women had high political and military standing and were carefully selected as spokespersons for indigenous women' (Toledo and Garza, pp. 106–7). Many of the chapters illustrate how 'a combination of women's local ethnic-based skills and leadership knowledge and their experiences in newer forms of local and regional organization permits them to broaden their participation in local politics and to create more egalitarian gender relations of power' (Stephen, p. 158). Exploring local history and organising gives witness to the depth and diversity of indigenous women's struggles; this is particularly important because indigenous women are often represented and even stereotyped as a homogeneous whole.

Several of the chapters illustrate the differences between different generations of indigenous women. However, whereas older women are sometimes seen to be more conservative, stressing women's duties and obligations and not solely their rights (Millán), others, such as Forbis and Stephen) argue differently: 'Often older women served as an important bridge between women, facilitating communication and setting an example' (Forbis, p. 192). Violeta Zylberberg describes the specific types of problem that impede indigenous women in the communities from taking full advantage of the new possibilities open to them: 'Lack of time, fear, and concern about what others will say are some of the reasons women put forward to explain their reluctance to use the newly opened spaces of participations. Rumors and gossip, as manifestations of power relations, have had a hand in keeping women from participation beyond their housekeeping tasks'

(Zylberberg, p. 231). The 'dissident women' portrayed in this book have indeed had to battle against the odds to achieve greater participation and voice.

Dissident Women is a pioneer in its genre, and an excellent introduction in English to indigenous women's organising and demands, particularly in Chiapas; it also constitutes an inspiring contribution to current debates on rights, culture, multiculturalism, and autonomy. Although the writers resort to some specialised language and academic terms, and the weight of more lengthy and circuitous Spanish expressions comes through some of the translation, *Dissident Women* is an accessible book for the larger public: a fascinating read for all those concerned with women's and indigenous movements, development, and cultural diversity. I thoroughly recommend it.

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Clare Weber

*Visions of Solidarity: US Peace Activists
in Nicaragua from War to Women's
Activism and Globalization*

Lexington Books, 2006, ISBN: 978-0-7391-1718-7, 153 pp.

When war raged and the goal was peace, grassroots solidarity in Nicaragua was relatively clear-cut: it focused on the urgent need to end the violence. But when the war was over and the causes of suffering became diffuse and global, how did peace-minded organisations recalibrate their focus and actions? Clare Weber explores this challenging question by studying the transformation of two US-based organisations from anti-war activism in Nicaragua to anti-globalisation activism, showing how these organisations have struggled to answer the question and re-frame their work.

US citizen-opposition to official US support for the Somoza dictatorship in

Nicaragua and the subsequent counter-revolutionary war resulted in the formation of two US-based organisations, the Wisconsin Coordination Council on Nicaragua (WCCN) and Witness for Peace (WFP). WCCN connected citizens of the North and South to challenge US policy on Nicaragua, while WFP offered US citizens as unarmed bodyguards for Nicaraguan activists who were under threat. Both organisations' anti-war activism rested heavily on the privileges of white, middle-class, US citizenship.

But the war ended in 1990, and neo-liberal economic globalisation was becoming the new foe of the poor, who lacked the means to engage meaningfully in political and economic arenas. In these new times, WCCN and WFP were forced to re-examine their purpose and adjust their strategies. Together with their Nicaraguan partners, WCCN and WFP began to see that it was no longer sufficient (if indeed it had ever been) to concentrate on challenging imperialist US foreign policy. Rather, they had to connect oppression abroad to oppression at home. Unwittingly, perhaps, they also began to discern the influences of race, class, and gender within their own organisations.

Visions of Solidarity describes the transformation of WCCN and WFP, using personal accounts from leaders, members, and partners in both Nicaragua and the USA. The author, a human-rights activist who has worked in both countries and has intimate knowledge of the two organisations, strives to understand the makeover of grassroots transnational activism in the new age of globalisation. She emphasises the influences of privilege derived from a biased concept of citizenship, and considers how that privilege shapes solidarity from the Global North to the Global South. The book investigates the benefits and drawbacks of using white privilege to access political power, and the difficulty of framing activism across national borders.

Ultimately, Weber makes a convincing case that the two organisations were struggling to move from gender-neutral, anti-war

activism (which was ultimately defined by and understood through masculine frameworks) to activism that recognised the gendered effects of neo-liberal economics. Within this struggle, WCCN and WFP had to challenge internal disparities of power between men and women, between white people and people of colour, and between those who were richer and poorer. The author maintains that such negotiations are difficult precisely because they demand a personalised reflection on oppression *within* a society, not solely across North–South borders.

Nevertheless, working through this challenge and transforming organisations can lead to more rewarding transnational activism. With successful re-framing, organisations can maintain their relevance in the new global context, where it is no longer enough to focus on oppression in the Global South without understanding its parallels and ties to oppression in the North. The author posits that for WCCN and WFP both the process and outcome of rethinking their work have ultimately led to more equitable North–South organisational relationships that are successful in advancing justice as a necessary element of peace.

Alas, Weber's treatment of what ultimately is a very interesting subject—the cross-gender, cross-race, cross-class, and cross-border negotiation of solidarity—is narrowly focused on Nicaragua and becomes rather lengthy and somewhat tedious. Given her personal experience with the US–Nicaraguan solidarity movement, one imagines that she could recount many anecdotes that would illustrate her points and at the same time add more depth and texture to the book. The use of testimony from other people involved with WCCN and WFP is valuable, however, and lends legitimacy to her study.

Visions of Solidarity will appeal most to activists, practitioners, and scholars with some knowledge of Latin American and/or international social and justice movements. Such readers are likely to find themselves making connections from the experiences of

WCCN and WFP in Nicaragua to other situations. Regrettably, Weber only touches upon such connections and barely considers how other solidarity movements around the world may be shifting. Indeed, if solidarity movements are beginning to realise that their internal practices are as differentially oppressive as global politics and economics, and are beginning to change their strategies as a result, one hopes that Weber's next book will venture into her thesis more deeply. There would certainly be messages for justice and peace activists to consider.

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Robert G. Finbow

*The Limits of Regionalism: NAFTA's
Labour Accord*

Aldershot and New York: Ashgate, 2006,
ISBN: 9780754633372, 300 pp.

A form of globalisation and regional integration dominated by neo-liberal ideology and agency at both national and transnational levels marks the contemporary world. However, because ideology is always contested, states contend with the restlessness of labour in alliance with social-issues activism as they strive to be globally competitive. Labour rights and standards have surfaced again and again at forums to advance competitiveness and free trade. The new economic regionalism has been affected by the agency of labour and civil society, with the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation (NAALC) being one of the significant developments in the American hemisphere. NAALC involves three states (USA, Canada, and Mexico) with significant differences in political institutions, state capacity, and economic histories. Finbow's investigation of NAALC as an important event in the effort to improve labour rights and standards at the regional level is a worthy contribution to debate.

The book is divided into three parts. The first, composed of three chapters, explores the linkage of labour rights and labour standards to international trade, in both theoretical and historical respects. It identifies competing perspectives in the debates on the need to observe labour rights and standards in international trade within the context of the new regionalism. This part closes with an analysis of NAALC's structures and institutions as a political compromise. The second part, made up of five chapters, investigates the workings of the NAALC institutions by considering various cases from each of the three countries that have been handled over time. The final part of the book attempts to assess the possibility of deepening integration and establishing transnational norms on labour matters in North America arising from the experience of NAALC. It identifies common ground within the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) derivable from the co-operative, networking, and research activities around NAALC.

Finbow's analysis suggests the possibility of theoretical consensus that labour standards and rights are good for the market and development from the various ideological standpoints. The real problem, therefore, is that in practice there are no agreements on the nature of core rights, or mechanism for their enforcement at the transnational level. Varying levels of development ensure that common standards will have different consequences across countries, leading to differing choices in policy and practice.

One way to surmount the practical difficulties of establishing transnational labour regimes is to pursue labour rights within the new regionalism and regional trading systems. The thrust has been to go beyond the limitations of the legislative approach of the International Labour Organization (ILO), with the multilateral enforcement model of NAALC as one of the most innovative in Finbow's view. NAALC is 'a limited mechanism for cooperation and scrutiny of the enforcement of domestic labour laws'

(p. 69) that neither establishes enforceable transnational standards nor specifies direct legal rights of workers. It does, however, establish 11 principles for the advancement of labour standards and rights.

The author explores the Realpolitik during the NAALC negotiations, as well as the institutions and process created for the treatment of labour principles as outcomes. National institutions embedded in national bureaucracies such as the National Administrative Offices (NAO) are established in each country. The NAO is a domestic agency empowered to rule upon complaints about labour practices in other countries. It holds public hearings on complaints or submissions made to it in a city close to the border and makes public reports of its reviews. Submissions are filed by organisations or individuals in one country, alleging failure by another country to enforce its labour laws. The receiving country's NAO will then begin the process of consideration. NAALC involves two transnational institutions: the North American Commission for Labor Cooperation (NACLCO) and the Council of Ministers of Labor (CML). The former assembles public data, provides reports on labour relations, and conducts special studies as directed by the CML. It also facilitates information sharing and law-enforcement co-operation programmes among NAOs. There is also the Evaluation Committee of Experts (ECE) and the Arbitration Panel drawn from the three countries. In general, there are three levels of treatment of submissions. The first level consists of NAO hearings, co-operative activities, and ministerial consultations. The second involves an evaluation by the ECE that studies and makes recommendations on issues not resolved by NAOs and by ministerial consultation. The third and final level of treatment is by a five-person Arbitration Panel, which is empowered to apply trade sanctions or fines. Core rights such as freedom of association and the right to organise, the right to bargain collectively, and the right to strike cannot go beyond the first level. In its 12 years' existence, NAALC has not pursued

any case up to the Arbitration Panel level, a fact which indicates the limited promise of the accord, and reflects a degree of labour subordination.

The author shows that mutual learning, sharing of best practices, standardisation of measures and concepts, and training and outreach opportunities for protecting labour rights or measuring and interpreting labour standards produce desirable regionalising effects that may spread to the areas covered by the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Yet prospects for a strong labour dimension in the continental trade regime are limited by reliance on national bureaucracies, 'North-South divisions, asymmetric and rigid domestic institutions, neo-liberalism and corporate dominance' (p. 268).

Despite a few typographical errors that might affect the pleasure of reading it, the book is a useful contribution from an institutionalist perspective to understanding efforts to promote, develop, and defend the social dimension in the new regionalism. It reveals the opportunities, gains, difficulties, and contradictions of transnational activism within complex institutions in that regard. Anyone interested in the evolving patterns of industrial relations and social conditions within the context of the new regionalism and globalisation will find it a useful book to read.

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Jonathan Goodhand

*Aiding Peace? The Role of NGOs
in Armed Conflict*

Rugby: ITDG Publishing, 2006, ISBN:
1 85339 632 X

If Jonathan Goodhand were a painter, I would say he was a Velázquez. He paints a comprehensive picture of the political and philosophical issues on a large canvas, but colours in with equal care the day-to-day details of a nuanced reality. I found his book densely written in the very best sense: it is

comprehensive, impressive in scope, and written with great thoughtfulness and attention to detail.

Goodhand consistently packs a great deal into his writing, so although reading it requires concentrated attention, the application is rewarded. The introduction presents the two questions that he seeks to explore: what impacts do NGOs have on the dynamics of conflict and peace building in areas affected by armed conflict? And what are the main factors that determine NGOs' ability to work effectively in (or in relation to) conflict?

The book answers both questions well, challenging some of the current aid-centric ideas that, although they have facilitated good critical analysis of NGOs' potentially negative impact, do not necessarily provide the necessary context, or present that impact in perspective. Goodhand convincingly argues that NGOs have only limited impact on conflict. He uses examples and analysis effectively to demonstrate that their impact on both conflict and peace building is more nuanced and layered than can be portrayed through logframes and project indicators, challenging us to remember the complexities of processes of change, particularly violent ones.

To answer the central questions that he poses in the introduction, Goodhand analyses the literature on NGO intervention, aid, and the dynamics of peace and conflict, examining how these play out in seven case studies: Afghanistan, Armenia-Azerbaijan, Krgyzstan, Liberia, Moldova, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. I have mixed experiences of books that are collections of case studies, often finding that the studies themselves are interesting and informative but that the format generally fails to allow for sufficient comparative analysis, thus losing much of the potential for rich learning. This book takes a different tack, as Goodhand identifies the case studies early on, gives an abbreviated summary of each, and then illustrates his points by reference to them all throughout the book. It is an excellent example of weaving a tapestry of examples into the

broader fabric of analysis, featuring NGOs that are operating in the same conflict as well as NGOs working in different conflicts.

Goodhand writes equally well as a political analyst and as an NGO worker who obviously cares deeply about the integrity of NGO work. As a result, this book provides us with three things: an exceptionally good analysis of aid, conflict, and intervention; a thoughtful multi-layered analysis of the factors that influence NGOs' response to these, separating unhelpful analysis from the realities of practice; and a well thought-out summary of the implications for theory and practice that is actually useful and relevant for NGOs.

First, Goodhand does an excellent job in constructing an analytical framework in Chapters 2–4 on aid, conflict, and intervention. The writing is comprehensive in scope, distilling the different theories currently in debate, highlighting what he finds to be helpful in different analyses, and drawing it all together in relationship to NGOs. He weaves together strands from an impressive range of the foremost thinkers about aid and conflict today, such as Mark Duffield, David Keene, Philippe LeBillion, and Joanna Macrae. He writes critically but respectfully. As a professor, I would make these first three chapters required reading for any class on humanitarian aid in conflict situations.

In answering the second question, the factors that determine NGOs' ability to work in and on conflict, Goodhand draws on his profound experience of NGO work and an understanding of its layers. For example, he grants that donors have been partially willing to make NGOs 'agents of liberal peace', but then takes that argument apart and shows how it can be both true and not true at the same time. He convincingly argues that NGOs' impact on peace building and conflict is far more dynamic and multi-layered, harder to quantify, and more tenuous than is sometimes assumed.

The book deals honestly with the fact that despite what NGOs must post on their

websites as successes for the purposes of fundraising, sometimes the best peace building that NGOs can do in conflicts is to hold space. This observation reminded me of a discussion among international NGOs in El Salvador when the peace accord was signed in 1992. Someone asked, 'So many people have been killed and will never see this. What has all our work and funding done over the last ten years?' Another person answered, 'A movement of community and labour organisations is here; enough people survived to give it shape and life, and they are here now. That's what we helped to do: keep some of them alive.'

Goodhand uses 'snapshots' sparingly to illustrate differences in how NGOs work in peace building and the results of these differing methodologies. I would have liked more of those examples, as they put real meat on the bones of his excellent analysis. He is skilful at taking examples of NGO work and drawing out the key points of contrast in the activities of NGOs in one conflict, and the activities of NGOs in different conflicts.

This book does a wonderful job of breaking new ground by demonstrating how the changes in the geo-politics of donors in the 1990s brought profound changes to bear on NGOs, and how these changes in turn affected work on the ground. I have not seen this put together so well, brought right down to a consideration of how logframes can limit understanding, and the impact of Western managerial styles on NGOs' capacity for wise response to conflict. However, while I found the book very relevant, thoughtful, and useful, I must say that it falls short in gender analysis. Goodhand gives gender a few paragraphs in the beginning, identifying it as a cross-cutting theme – which apparently means that it never has to be mentioned again. Unfortunately, this is a fairly common characteristic of most of the writers included in his analysis, many of whose political analysis is excellent except for this one consistent omission. (For an analysis of the problem, and examples of some of the few authors who do incorporate

an analysis of gender relations in their understanding of armed conflict, see my review essay, 'Women, gender, and conflict: making the connections', *Development in Practice* 16 (3&4): 342–53.)

Goodhand is very honest from the outset about the realities that governed his choice of case studies, although the depth of the book prompts me to wish that it had covered a broader spectrum of conflict, particularly another conflict in Africa, other than post-war Liberia. However, the central message is not so much about the impact of NGOs on peace building in specific conflicts but about how to interpret what affects the way in which NGOs work in conflicts and peace building. Goodhand continually underlines the importance of analysing place and understanding context, driving home the need to realise that there are no universal tools that can be replicated across conflicts without being adapted appropriately.

Goodhand clearly makes the point that NGOs are not the main movers that they often see themselves to be, but he is not cynical about this. Rather, his book tries to help NGOs to see how they can best recognise and take advantage of those windows, spaces, and moments when they can put either stones or pebbles into the mosaic of peace. It is an extremely useful book for academics to use in teaching, and I can only wish that managers, directors, and presidents of NGOs involved in work on conflict and peace building all get it for their birthdays and read it assiduously.

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John Janzekovic

The Use of Force in Humanitarian Intervention: Morality and Practicalities
Aldershot and New York: Ashgate, 2006,
ISBN: 0-7546-4850-8, 238 pp.

The debate about forceful humanitarian intervention is as alive today as it has been for

many years. The challenge of Darfur, the campaign for an international 'responsibility to protect', and living memories of atrocity and genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda keep this question at the forefront of international politics. And yet, political and military answers to the question remain as complicated and circumstantial as ever. Frankly, using force in international affairs is a difficult business.

John Janzekovic's book is a strong moral plea for armed force to be used more often than it is to put a stop to mass killing and civilian suffering. By 'force' he does not mean a robust peacekeeping force, but the determined use of concentrated military might to seek out and destroy those forces responsible for atrocity and suffering. In short, Janzekovic is interested in disabling and stopping oppressive and violating forces, not simply deterring and inhibiting them. He is unapologetically talking about war as a means of civilian protection. In this respect, Janzekovic's book is refreshing and unambiguous. One gets the sense that when he talks intervention, he means invasion. The great majority of interventionist campaigners on the question of Darfur, for example, are seldom this frank in military terms and usually fudge their positions as soon as they have taken them.

Janzekovic's approach is also refreshing for his focus on the victims' experience as the starting point of any moral and political discussion, as opposed to the difficulties of the potential interveners' position. Rightly, he points out that most discussions of the use of force are biased towards the interests and preoccupations of the possible intervener. This is a useful corrective. If Darfur is difficult for members of the UN Security Council, it is surely much more difficult for the people of Darfur. It is Janzekovic's explicit purpose to make less of the objections of interveners and more of the imperatives and rights of victims. He feels strongly that with a primary focus on victims, innovation and determination would soon overcome or dissolve many of the objections to action.

In other respects, however, Janzekovic's book is frustratingly superficial. He raises a lot of the right 'difficulties' about military intervention, but he discusses them only in general terms – with the exception of a bolted-on case study of the Balkans at the end. In policy terms, therefore, he addresses the international community with a lot of 'musts' and 'shoulds', while avoiding very detailed discussions of real cases and possibilities that might examine what international politicians 'could' realistically do.

Beyond a lack of examples and textured political and military analysis, there are other significant gaps in the book. Published in 2006, it is surprising to find in this book no reference to or discussion of Nicholas Wheeler's important 2000 study, *Saving Strangers* or Martha Finnemore's 2003 book, *The Purpose of Intervention*. Equally surprising is the apparent lack of awareness of *The Responsibility to Protect* report of 2001, and its subsequent take-up in United Nations discussion and documents. It is as if Janzekovic's text was written some time ago but not updated for publication.

Janzekovic sets out his ethical approach clearly in Chapter One. He argues that there is such a thing as international society and international morality. He regards the morality of violence as determined by its objectives and its context. The use of force is neither essentially good nor bad. Thus, violence can indeed serve a good cause like the stopping of atrocities. He then takes this consequentialism further, in the form of 'welfare consequentialism', which requires that consequences are not merely 'preferable' to what went before but must go further to be in the practical interests of most people, so responding to their welfare needs. Victims' conditions must be thoroughly improved, not merely ameliorated.

In Chapter Four, Janzekovic rightly notes that the main objections to intervention hinge on the three points of practical feasibility, moral acceptability, and political viability. Problems of cost, casualty, intention, legality, consensus, political risk, and the

likelihood of a successful outcome are indeed the crux of the matter. Here he sketches out the discussion, but adds little to new thinking about how states might confront and overcome these objections.

In his enthusiasm to show that objections can be overcome, he also seems reluctant to face the fact that sometimes an intervention could indeed be deeply unwise for a single power (like the USA, for example) and politically impossible for the UN or a regional organisation which is politically split in its alliances and ideologies. Like many others, he seems to chide the UN for incompetence over its differences of opinion, instead of recognising that member states have genuinely different interests, allies, and political philosophies. Reading the transcripts of any recent UN Security Council debate on the responsibility to protect makes it obvious that many states today simply disagree with the principle of interfering within other states and tampering with their inevitably bloody processes of state-formation.

This is a passionate and heartfelt book, which is rightly determined in its efforts to make the case for armed intervention to protect people from war, genocide, and oppression. In doing so, it is also important in its attempts to demystify conventional objections to intervention and emphasise victims' difficulties over interventionists' difficulties. However, this is not a book which deals in the detail of the difficulties that it describes. Nor is it one which takes account of significant recent international discussion of the subject.

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Philip Marfleet

Refugees in a Global Era

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006,
ISBN: 0-333-77784-0, 324 pp.

While I suspect that many readers will disagree with some of the arguments put

forward by Philip Marfleet in *Refugees in a Global Era*, I also suspect that few will finish the book without agreeing with the author's conclusion that refugees today are subject to global injustice. This reader, for example, remains unconvinced that inequities in capitalism underlie the flight of refugees; that modern nation-states are necessarily abrogating their responsibility to respect the rights of refugees; that the treatment of refugees amounts to a situation of 'racism without end'; or that the answer to the problem is open borders. But equally I was convinced by the end of the book that refugees are a manifestation of global disparities; that their treatment by host states has deteriorated in the past 50 years; that they face increasing hardships in travelling to and surviving in countries of asylum; and that something has to be done.

Part of the reason for this apparent 'disconnect' is that Marfleet has explicitly framed his book as a critique of modern capitalism, globalisation, and the contemporary nation-state. While his analysis of the empirical realities for refugees today is refreshingly lucid and objective, his analysis of the underlying causes of their plight is less so. Another explanation is that the book offers insufficient explanations of the links between underlying global causes and individual local outcomes: how and why, for example, do uneven flows of capital manifest themselves as desperate families leaving their homes?

Yet it is precisely because *Refugees in a Global Era* is likely to provoke debate of the sort alluded to above that it is such a significant book in the multi-disciplinary field of refugee studies – a field that has been dominated by empirical case studies in which economic and historical perspectives have been particularly mute, and a field that has focused on immediate policy implications and rarely seen the bigger picture. Against this background, three features of this book stand out. One is its historical perspective: contemporary refugee movements are viewed as a modern version of forced migration, spanning slavery, indentured

labour, and imperial diasporas; the rights of refugees today are shown to have their origins in the concept of sanctuary and the foundations of nation-states. A second outstanding feature of the book is its global outlook: not only in the attempt to explain refugee movements through an uneven process of globalisation, but also by reminding us that refugees affect every part of the globe and embody ethical and moral issues that are of global significance. Perhaps most important, thirdly, the book develops a theoretical framework for explaining refugee movements, and also for understanding the links between movement and the experience of settlement.

The book's broad sweep is judiciously balanced with a wealth of fascinating empirical examples, drawn in many cases from the author's own fieldwork, especially in the UK and Egypt. The book also has plenty to say about the USA, Australia, and continental Europe. Its coverage of contemporary refugee issues is truly comprehensive: from refugees 'in orbit' to migrant smuggling and human trafficking; from urban refugees to transnational communities; from interdiction at sea to detention. At the same time, readers of this particular journal should probably be aware that 'development' is not a major theme in *Refugees in a Global Era*. Marfleet is not directly concerned with debates about how disparities in development can cause refugee movements. Neither does he address, other than in passing, the impacts (positive or negative) of refugees on host communities. The contribution of refugees to development in their countries of origin – through remittances or return, for example – also largely falls outside the scope of his book.

Nevertheless for students and scholars of refugee studies, from whatever discipline, I would consider *Refugees in a Global Era* to be essential reading. The only other book on refugees that I can think of which has similar theoretical ambition and global scope is Aristide Zolberg's *Escape from Violence*, a seminal but dated work, in some respects updated by *Refugees in a Global Era*. I hope it will also attract a wider,

non-expert audience, as it explodes many of the more popular myths about refugees and asylum seekers, and is written in a language and style that are appropriately accessible. Finally, it will reinforce advocates and policy makers in their commitment to addressing the problems of refugees, but they will not find easy answers in its pages.

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Peter Rosset, Raj Patel, and Michael Courville (eds.)

Promised Land: Competing Visions of Agrarian Reform

Oakland, CA: Food First Books, 2006,
ISBN: 978-1567513585, xvi + 380 pp.

'While it was inconceivable that land could be redistributed through a willing buyer–willing seller approach at the beginning of the Cold War', write the editors of *Promised Land*, 'by the Cold War's end it was inconceivable that it could be done in any other way' (p.18). They thus nicely encapsulate the ironies inherent in the fact that the economic power of the old landlords was broken in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan after 1945, but that the same did not happen in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, or in Zimbabwe in 1980, or South Africa in 1994.

I approached this weighty volume with a certain fear – that it might turn out to be little more than a prolonged polemical rant against the usual suspects. I was very pleasantly surprised. It is in fact a compelling collection which seriously interrogates 'competing visions of agrarian reform', as promised by its subtitle.

The overarching theme is to scrutinise the only model for land and agrarian reform that is still seriously on the table: the World Bank's market-led policies. This is done most effectively in a brilliant general analysis by Jun Borras, and in a series of case studies which analyse alleged Bank successes in Thailand, Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia.

These follow historical chapters on Guatemala, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and India, and are in turn followed by chapters on 'alternatives and resistance', featuring Cuba, Venezuela, and Brazil. There is also an excellent piece on indigenous peoples, but a very disappointing one (little more than FIAN propaganda) on gender and land. One of the editors, Peter Rosset, concludes with a chapter on agrarian reform as part of food sovereignty, reflecting the book's origins in the Land Research Action Network (LRAN) and its heavy Latin American focus (but where are Nicaragua and Bolivia?).

Promised Land's three editors credit the (post-Cold War) World Bank with 'making legitimate again the call for land reform' (p. xiv) but also with ensuring that debates are focused on economic growth and increased GDP, rather than on 'justice, food sovereignty, equality or rural transformation' (p. 7). They regularly test whether the Bank's practice matches its rhetoric of wanting 'an efficiency- and equity-enhancing redistribution of assets' (p. 107).

Aside from particular pertinent observations, such as whether the famous Thailand land-titling programme was really necessary, since Thais already had secure tenure, the dominant overall critique is that the market approach simply ignores history and existing power relations, assuming some mythical 'level playing field' in which the powerful and the powerless can negotiate on equal terms in a 'free market'. As a result, all too often land-reform 'beneficiaries' have found themselves marginalised, in every sense, and frequently heavily indebted. 'Before I had nothing and owed nothing. Now I have nothing and owe money. I have land, but a debt too', reported a farmer from Matto Grosso, Brazil (p. 190).

There is much to savour and learn from here: chapters on agrarian reform in Cuba after the fall of communism (where private land had earlier been expropriated, the state sector was dramatically downsized, and people suddenly remembered the virtues of previously forbidden intercropping of sweet

potatoes and maize); on the MST's practical implementation of some of Paulo Freire's ideas in Brazil, and the often authoritarian practices of the Cedula da Terra programme there; a snapshot of Hugo Chávez's attempted land reforms in Venezuela; and the neat dissection of Thailand's 'success story', which has benefitted sharp urban speculators but ripped apart common lands and left 'the poorest farming groups in the country...in a precarious legal position' (p. 144). It is good to be reminded that 'agrarian reform cannot be labelled as conservative or revolutionary *per se*; it is a tool, and what makes the difference is who controls it' (p. 267). The general conclusion is that 'there is mounting evidence that these policies are unlikely to significantly improve access by the poor to land or give them more secure tenure. In fact there is good reason to believe these policies will actually worsen the situation in many cases' (p. 303).

There is an acknowledgement, right at the end of the book, that the rural world is in crisis. This is blamed on current global trade patterns which focus on access to export markets, rather than protecting local markets, and which encourage large-scale, chemical-intensive production, which is degrading some of the world's best soils and in some cases leading to their being abandoned completely.

A few quibbles. The very first source cited (Wood 2000) does not appear in the references, which was troubling but, I think, a minor blip in what is generally a well-edited collection. It was disappointing that the Zimbabwe story here ends at 2000, since a fair bit has happened since then.

This is a book which can be strongly recommended to anyone engaging in land-reform programmes led by the World Bank. I can also commend it to some of my former colleagues at Oxfam GB who decreed that land rights should no longer be a priority for the organisation.

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Tina Wallace with Lisa Bornstein and Jennifer Chapman

The Aid Chain: Coercion and Commitment in Development NGOs
Rugby: Intermediate Technology Publications, 2006, ISBN: 1-85339-626-5, 199 pp.

The authors of *The Aid Chain* focus on a matter of no small importance. Researchers from Johns Hopkins University estimated operating expenditures in the NGO sector in 2002 at \$1.6 trillion. Reporting on this in 2005, the *New Statesman* describes it as 'a multi-billion dollar industry' (p. 52). The authors set out to explore where NGOs seek and find funding, what conditions are attached to that funding, and how those conditions are shaping the ways in which NGOs work with their donors, staff, and partners.

The study provides a detailed view of funding conditionalities, describing an almost universal shift towards concepts of rational management. The effect of this shift is a chain of dependence of small NGOs on large ones, increasingly uniform behaviours, and a reduction in everyone's ability to respond flexibly and appropriately to poverty.

In a revealing final chapter, people from the three main organisational groups studied in the research give their reactions. NGOs from Uganda and South Africa are impressed, saying that the study shows how they are forced by their need for funding into doing things that they do not believe in. The new insights highlight the dangers of dependency and could encourage more radicalism. International NGOs and donors in UK are more hostile. They feel that they are being unfairly criticised, given their continued efforts to create accountability to taxpayers and to the people for whom the funds are intended.

For the Southern organisations, the numerous case studies and interviews illustrate just how overbearing are the regimes to which they submit in order to get funded. Acquiescing in the use of project-cycle management

tools (especially the logical framework analysis, or logframe), staff of these NGOs dutifully fill in pre-formatted plans and reports, while admitting that they find the tools difficult to comprehend and of little practical use. They dispute the value of being held to predicted outcomes in an unpredictable natural and political environment, and they complain of the time it all takes, and the distortions and lies that it generates. They admit that the donors' forms can be useful to clarify the logic of projects and programmes, but they say that the forms are often completed by managers at HQ who have learned the requisite arcane language. They suggest that this inhibits participation by the people whom they serve and support.

Are alien concepts and time-consuming reporting systems preventing successfully nuanced development from working? Are the solutions more open-ended approaches, more community participation, and more learning inside organisations? The donors argue that their management tools are misunderstood, they already allow for participation, politics, flexibility, and learning. But the book sets up the rational management regime as the enemy of the good, and repeatedly suggests that participation and context-specificity are the solution. Sadly, no direct evidence is presented for 'good development practice' or for the impact of a more participatory or localised approach. It is not easy to tell whether fair participation and flexible accountability would be possible or effective in the conditions of clientilism that seem to be the norm.

There is a chain of resource-shortage that shackles donors, international NGOs, local NGOs, and communities together in a relationship of patronage and power. The authors note that 'the reality of donor power and the urgent need of local NGOs to access scarce funding means that most people at every level have an interest in buying into the dominant paradigm' (p. 38). Despite the use of words like *partnership* and *co-operation*, relationships in the chain are mistrustful and resentful. Donors, pressed to

spend more money accountably while lowering transaction costs, use standardised paperwork and minimal face-to-face interaction. NGOs, competing with one another for donors' funds, seem unable to resist the standardisation.

Are NGOs not being disingenuous in blaming donor conditionalities for their often ponderous and sometimes exploitative approaches? The authors assume a hierarchy of hegemony headed by the donor and the donor's money. But the game is being played by all, and the compulsion to comply is as much about economic interests and status for everyone in the game as it is about commitment to development. Among the most interesting organisations mentioned in the study is a South African training group called CDRA. This NGO does not conform in the use of management tools dictated from outside, but it does perform and it is much respected. It focuses first on what it wants to do and how to do it. It gets copious funds on its own terms. It suggests that there are ways around the hegemony of the aid system.

The authors of this useful book do well to demonstrate the strong impact of funders on NGO behaviour. But I wonder if they have not missed an opportunity to encourage greater responsibility across the board for the resulting distortions in the aid system, and also to look for solutions outside the cosy confines of that system. The reality is the powerful attraction of resources within a highly lucrative and intensely political industry, worth \$1.6 trillion. Channels of accountability are too narrow, and radical ideas are too few. The new agenda should be to find means of real political engagement for the millions who need routes out of poverty to challenge not only their governments but also all the local and international agencies that claim to be on their side.

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Stephen Barley and Gideon Kunda

Gurus, Hired Guns and Warm Bodies: Itinerant Experts in a Knowledge Economy
Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004, ISBN-13: 978-0-691-12795-28, ISBN: 0-691-12795-6, 342 pp.

At first glance the title (*Gurus, Hired Guns and Warm Bodies*) and cover illustration (a depiction of a business man in the style of a Da Vinci technical drawing) did not tell me much about the subject of this book. However, on closer inspection I recognised that the content, describing the lives of 'Itinerant Experts in a Knowledge Economy', might have some parallels with my own interest in the lives and work of consultants (contracted professionals) in the international development sector. 'Gurus', 'Hired Guns', and 'Warm Bodies' refer to the various levels of professionals hired into companies – from highly skilled experts to people brought in to carry out routine but necessary tasks.

Over the past couple of decades in the USA, and in many other countries, the idea of a 'job for life' has been overturned by the increasing use of contract workers. Technical professionals (white-collar workers) previously felt secure from layoffs at times of necessary belt-tightening, but they are no longer immune. A major impetus for hiring professionals on contract rather than as staff on the company payroll has been the need to boost the status of firms on the stock market, by demonstrating a low ratio of permanent staff against income. The costs of hiring contract workers can simply be 'lost' in project budgets and become 'invisible'.

The authors, together with some of their research students, spent two years (1997–1999) conducting an in-depth ethnographic study of the market for engineers and software developers hired on contract by high-technology companies in the Silicon Valley area of California. They set out to understand the phenomenon of contracting as experienced by all the key

actors involved: the 'itinerant professionals' (contractors) themselves, who moved from contract to contract; the hiring managers in the client companies; the permanent staff in client companies alongside whom the contractors worked; and the people in the staffing agencies who brokered deals between the contractors and their clients. They felt that previous studies had not sufficiently allowed the contractors to tell their own stories of contracting. Furthermore, studies of temporary employment to date had concentrated on the low-paid sector.

The authors spent time accompanying the work of three employment agencies, constructed life histories of more than 70 contractors, and conducted in-depth interviews with other workers involved in the market. The authors make full use of their interviewees' testimonies throughout the book.

The book opens by introducing the reader to a number of professionals whose different working lives illustrate a range of motives for engaging in the business of contracting in the first place, and the roles that contractors may play within companies. It provides some background to the world of work in the USA from the years after the Great Depression (in the 1930s) to the present, illustrating how the idea of 'a job for life' has become obsolete. The authors derive their term 'itinerant professionals' for technical contractors from the itinerant stonemasons of the European Middle Ages. These craftsmen would move from cathedral to cathedral, plying their craft as demand opened up. In present-day Silicon Valley the 'experts' move from project to project, rather than cathedral to cathedral.

The rest of the book is divided into four main sections. Section One describes why and how client companies take on contractors, the different motives that led individuals to enter contracting, the roles they play, and the nature of the brokers positioned between clients and contractors. Section Two illustrates the steps involved in identifying, negotiating, and closing deals. Section

Three describes the tensions produced by bringing in outsiders who are often ostensibly better paid than the permanent staff to do similar work. Section Four highlights the three key resources that contractors have to get to grips with if they are to succeed at contracting: time, skills (human capital), and professional networks (social capital).

The final chapter draws together the issues raised in the rest of the book. Readers would be advised to look at this chapter first, to help them to chart a way through the mass of detail and lengthy testimonies of the preceding chapters. Here the authors emphasise that their objective was to write more than a straight ethnography, because, in their view, 'contracting is a manifestation of the groundswell of change that...is shaking the foundations of work and employment in the United States'. Linked to their contention that there is a rebirth of organisation along occupational lines, as in the case of the craftspeople of the Middle Ages, are suggested policy changes that could improve the lives of professional contractors, particularly in relation to tax and benefits.

Some of the key points of the book may be summarised as follows:

- Contractors have to be happy with the work, and especially the 'selling' involved in organising their business, as well as actually doing the technical work of the project.
- Time must be invested in finding the next contract, maintaining technical skills (human capital), and maintaining networks with other professionals, employers, and brokers (social capital).
- Contractors are paid more than permanent staff (routinely from one and a half to three times more) because of the extra expenses that they incur in running their business, and the insecurities inherent in contract work.
- Without developed social capital, which relies on refined social skills, even the most well-qualified of contractors will find it difficult to win contracts.

- In practical terms, there is scope for associations of contractors to negotiate better terms for insurances and benefits.

The authors document a serious study of a specific community: the high-technology IT world of Silicon Valley at the height of the 1990s boom years. While the book is not a guidance manual for contractors or consultants, the dilemmas, contradictions, and

situations recounted by the different actors would resonate and provide useful guidance for consultants and hiring managers in the development sector. Despite its potential relevance to a wider readership, however, the sector-specific vocabulary and lengthy testimonies do not make for a smooth read.

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