

International Development Week: February 1-7, 2015

Engage and Make a Difference!

Development in Frame by Ron Harpelle

In recent years, pressure has grown on Social Science and Humanities researchers to broaden the impact of the knowledge they produce by disseminating it not only to their peers (in traditional venues like the scholarly journal or book) but also to non-academic audiences. Concurrent with this call for wider public dissemination is the rise of new digital media formats, which have created new audiences and have emerged as the most exciting and accessible means of communicating with them. Scholarly work across the Social Sciences and Humanities is increasingly appearing in digital formats, and a growing number of scholars are utilizing various new media as means of “publishing” research output. “Development in Frame” is a presentation about linear and non-linear documentary filmmaking as a means of connecting general audiences to academic research.

Ron Harpelle is a Latin American historian and documentary filmmaker who teaches at Lakehead University

Meeting People’s Needs through Community Based Forest Management: A Northern India Case Study by Chander Shahi

In developing countries, members of local communities living in surrounding areas of forest resources are dependent on these resources for their daily subsistence needs such as fuel wood, fodder, small timber, and other non-timber forest products. However, they do not have free access to these resources, which are generally owned and managed by the government. It has been established that exclusion of local communities from forest use/management is almost impossible, and exclusionary policies have been the main reason of deforestation and forest degradation in these areas. In the last two decades, many developing countries, including Cambodia, China, Ethiopia, India, Mexico and Nepal have tried to resolve this problem by involving local communities in forest management, and these programs are known as co-management or community-based forest management. This case study shows how community based forest management approach was used in northern India not only to restore degraded forest areas, but also to provide income generating activities for local communities.

Chander K. Shahi teaches International Forestry Conservation at the Faculty of Natural Resources Management, Lakehead University

Conservation of Wildlife in a Context of Ecosystem Services: Might the fit be better in Latin American countries? by Brian McLaren

Vicuñas, ancestors of the alpaca, were introduced into Ecuador 25 years ago. Their success is influenced in part by their assimilation with livestock. Response also varies among local pastoral people regarding the usefulness of an Andean highland reserve, its vicuñas, and its other ecosystem services. Wildlife conservation efforts much of Latin America are community-based, in part to manage subsistence hunting. Ecosystem services may be better recognized in programs for which nature conservation is integrated into farming practices, including wildlife farming; legalizing trade in wildlife is a strategy to combat illegal trade, a different approach to wildlife conservation from North America’s model.

Brian McLaren is an Associate Professor with the Faculty of Natural Resources Management, Lakehead University

Bio-innovation and Poverty Alleviation: Case Studies from Asia by Sudip Rakshit

There is a pervasive claim that new technologies, including bio-innovation, designed and intended to benefit society's welfare will ultimately benefit the poor. But the historical fact is that technological advances, generally speaking, have neither eliminated poverty nor universally improved human welfare. The emerging consensus among science, technology and society experts, and development scholars and practitioners is that while technology and bio-innovations are important and necessary components in societal welfare, including alleviating poverty, these should not be a priority as a driver or as the most critical element in lifting people out of poverty. Pathways to poverty alleviation that may involve science and technology cannot simply be technical fixes but have to handle relevant social, cultural and institutional dimensions for success. The presentation will highlight insights from some projects funded in Asia by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada and outcomes that are captured in a book with the same title and authored by Edsel Sajor, Bernadette Resurreccion and Sudip Rakshit. The presentation will delve on the need to embed bio-innovation in anti-poverty strategies.

Sudip K. Rakshit is Canada Research Chair (Tier 1) in Biorefining and Bioenergy Processes, Biorefining Research Institute (BRI) & Department of Chemical Engineering, Lakehead University

Post-Socialist Development and the Question of European Integration: The Case of Hungary by Steve Jobbitt

In spring 2004, Hungary joined the EU, and with this celebrated its so-called "return to Europe." For the governing left-liberal party of the day, Hungary's ascension to the EU represented a triumph of democracy, liberalization, and market reforms. Hungary's acceptance into the "western" stream of progress and development, they argued, would only mean greater prosperity for the nation, and an opening up of endless opportunities for its citizens. Critics of Hungary's re-integration into liberal-democratic Europe were not as hopeful, however, and raised questions about the social, political, economic, and cultural costs associated with membership in the EU. Situating the case of Hungary in a broader European and global context, this talk examines critiques of Hungarian development that have emerged over the last ten years, focusing in particular on how Hungary's post-socialist "return to Europe" has fueled the resurgence of the radical right, especially since the economic crisis of 2008-2009.

Steve Jobbitt teaches Eastern European History at Lakehead University.

Misconceptions about Contraceptive use in northern Ghana by Lauren Wallace

Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) are nationally-representative household surveys that compile data for myriad population, health and nutrition monitoring indicators in over 90 countries. DHS surveys rely heavily on aggregate measures, masking the complicated details of everyday life, which are paramount to the understanding of intimate topics like contraceptive use. In Ghana, DHS surveys cite misconceptions about contraceptive side effects as a major reason for low uptake of family planning. This talk, based on eight months of ethnographic research, examines men's and women's concerns about the side effects of contraceptives, their effects on family planning, and their impact on women's well-being in Kassena-Nankana West District of northern Ghana.

Lauren Wallace is a Vanier Scholar and PhD Candidate in Anthropology at McMaster University.

An Overview of the Challenges in Providing Primary Healthcare in Africa since Independence by Rafaela Jobbitt

Medicine figures prominently in questions about development in Africa today. One of the key challenges that governments in Africa continue to face is the need to provide and extend primary healthcare to people on the continent. During the colonial era, the European colonizers discussed the kind of healthcare that should be offered to African populations. For the most part, the provision of adequate medical services to Africans was uneven and lacking. Overall, medical facilities were concentrated in the urban areas and were mainly geared towards treating European residents. In the post-colonial period, the independent African regimes had to face this colonial legacy. It is not surprising therefore that one of the problems they faced was how to create primary, affordable healthcare that would be accessible to African populations, particularly in the more remote rural regions. The wave of optimism that accompanied independence eventually faded. Political corruption, violence, war, economic problems, as well as policies that were imposed on the continent including the Structural Adjustment Programs, meant that African regimes did not provide basic services to their populations, particularly in the areas of education and healthcare. The presentation will provide an overview of some of the challenges and policies regarding the provision of healthcare on the continent since independence. In particular, it concentrates on the ways in which both domestic and foreign factors have shaped and continue to affect the provision of primary healthcare in Africa. Rafaela Jobbitt is a PhD candidate at York University and teaches at the Department of History, Lakehead University.

Avoiding the Trap Without Being Cursed: Resource revenues and Indigenous communities in the Arctic by Chris Southcott

Northern regions have long been subject to what Harold Innis called the staples trap: a dependence on resource production where economic rents leak out of the region and in so doing prevent the region from using these rents to promote economic diversification. Yet new land claims, decolonization, new forms of self-government and other global trends are providing these regions with new tools that can stop some of these leakages and ensure that a greater share of resource rents remain in the region. This however then raises the possibility that the resource curse can then start to impact these regions. The presentation will discuss the potential for avoiding the resource curse in northern regions and the possibility of the north serving as an example to other resource dependent regions – especially those of the global south.

Chris Southcott is the Principal Investigator of the Resources and Sustainable Development in the Arctic (ReSDA) project.