Reconceptualizing the Intersection of Urban Planning and Development Assistance

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The future is urban. Over 50% of the world's population lives in cities today, and possibly 75% by 2050, according to some UN projections. Planning for urban growth will be crucial for sustainable development and to address the most pressing urban problems – including climate change, inequality, and health. Urban planners have the potential to play a key role in facilitating innovative and necessary solutions through infrastructure planning, zoning, and other planning approaches. However, due to the nature of their day-to-day responsibilities to enforce regulations and the political impetus for short-term planning, planners are constrained in what they can achieve. Moreover, planning is currently a silo-ed enterprise, with limited integration of different disciplinary approaches to development and decision making. This is partly due to how the field has evolved and that pedagogical approaches are rooted in architecture and urban design. Reconceptualizing the field of urban planning offers the potential to establish a more pivotal role for planners to facilitate equitable and sustainable urban growth and redesign by expanding the scope of training and the role of the planner within local government. The future urban planner must be trained to facilitate projects and decision making that draw upon expertise from multiple disciplines, requiring an understanding of diverse and divergent perspectives in pursuit of solving problems. What are their skills, areas of expertise, and what do we expect from this field in a world that will be primarily urban? It is in this context, that the discipline of urban planning requires reconceptualization.

Professionals in the field of development assistance share a lot in common with urban planning professionals. In both fields, practitioners aspire to find solutions to complex problems by drawing on expertise from several fields to devise an integrated approach to addressing social and (built and natural) environmental or resource problems. Likewise, solutions must regularly be adapted to address shifting economic, environmental, and social landscapes. Moreover, practitioners must adapt their approaches and skills to the particularities of each new place where they work. However, in academic settings these two fields are rarely intersect. And, in practice, development assistance focuses on higher level

government engagement while planners are embedded in local contexts allowing limited opportunities for engagement. Given the multitude of intensifying and related challenges the world is facing today, including but not limited to climate change, health, and equity concerns, both fields require new tools and approaches and a reconceptualization of purpose. In fact, a significant opportunity exists to more strongly address issues of equity and environmental concerns and to increase opportunities for community driven project design and implementation in these the two fields. Therefore, it is an opportune moment to consider the intersection of urban planning and development for both pedagogy and practice.

The Discipline of Urban Planning

Urban planning, as a discipline, is not well-defined. The origins of modern planning traditions in Europe and the U.S. date back to land reform and mapping amid responses to the plagues of the 17th century with the intent of imposing greater legibility of land use to both capture land value and contain the spread of disease. The manifestation of planning schemes came about alongside the increasing power of the nation state. Architects drew up visions of larger and larger parcels of the city, imagining and realizing boulevards and park schemes, housing and markets. And architects and engineers designed new transportation systems to simplify movement in urban areas. As these schemes gained greater legitimacy, social scientists also joined these efforts to engage the nation state in providing services to all sectors of society. Over time, increasing complexity in terms of economic development, environmental concerns, and social demands led to an argument for the formation of the discipline of city planning.

In the United States, the first conference on urban planning took place in 1898 in New York. At this conference it was still unclear whether the profession of urban planning would be about the design of physical space or the welfare of the people living in the city. While urban planning could have developed with a focus on health or economic and social welfare, the first university to offer a degree in city planning was Harvard University in its School of Landscape Architecture (Erikson, 2012). Thus, city planning focused from the beginning on the physical design of the city over social, health, or environmental concerns. "The substitution of order in the place of chaos, the control of the urban whole required the development of a concatenated specialization: comprehensive city planning. Thus, a new set of needs came forward for which planning would be the response: to impose disciplinary order and supervisory direction over the spatial order of the American city." (Boyer, 1983, p.

63) Meanwhile, the role of the planner evolved without clarity. As Richard Babcock notes in The Zoning Game (1966), "One dominant Impression is that the planner really is not sure what he is or what he wants to be… he not only does not have a defined status, he is not himself able to provide a definition. Is he a sociologist, an architect, a geographer, a landscape architect, a land economist? Or, more accurately, is each of these a 'planner' because he deals with design or with land values, demography, or social ecology?" (Babcock, 1966, p. 79).

Moreover, there is a tension between the role of the planner in promoting public interest and the implications on private economic stakes. "The planner recognizes that each time he makes decision on the location of commercial areas he is conferring potential benefits upon some and denying them to others." (Babcock, 1966, p. 74). Reflecting on the origins of planning, and the intention of simplifying land registration to facilitate and favor private land ownership, perhaps the role of the planner in promoting the economic value of land is not so uncertain. The mapping of land is politically and administratively convenient - from collection of taxes to provision of services, a well laid out city is ostensibly easier to manage. In addition, a conveniently laid out city plan provides plots that lend themselves to attractiveness in the market. It is in this context that the role of the planner has become amorphous. Is the planner an urban designer, an aide to real estate development, or an advocate on behalf of the people residing in an urban area? For Le Corbusier, celebrated planner and urban designer in the early 1900s, planning provides solutions that a broader public cannot. "Despite the imagery, Le Corbusier sees himself as a technical genius and demands power in the name of his truths. Technocracy, in this instance, is the belief that the human problem of urban design has a unique solution, which an expert can discover and execute. Deciding such technical matters by politics and bargaining would lead to the wrong solution." (Scott, 1998, p. 113) Urban planning, as a profession, thus emerged with an emphasis on the built environment of the city and with an attitude of authority, prioritizing a technocratic approach to designing cities rather than focusing on civic engagement and more organic processes of city development.

In the current paradigm of planning, professionals in the U.S. play several different roles depending on their sectoral expertise. City planners working in local government employ the use of planning tools (such as zoning, cadastral mapping, and comprehensive planning) to effectively control real estate development and raise property tax for local development and services. Planners may also have sectoral expertise, such as transportation or other infrastructure planning, economic development, urban design, or others. While planners participate in the formulation of longer-term visions and plans, their recommendations are constrained by political agendas and short-term funding cycles. Thus, the role of the planner

is ultimately in service to government initiatives at multiple levels and planners have limited leverage over decision making. Furthermore, the approach to planning has largely been technocratic, data driven, and focused on land use in the built environment rather than on social welfare and environmental sustainability. And, as Boyer explains, "The city plan was designed to encourage commerce and to facilitate the transaction of business… The economic logic of physical land-use planning for the American city was characterized by an acceptance that efficient production and greater accumulation of capital depended upon a rational coordination of infrastructure and services to parallel production and circulation needs, an allocation of land parcels to their most profitable use and the relegation of less profitable needs to cheapen unproductive land, and the speculative hope that these higher land uses would produce an additional source of revenue and hence pay for the implementation costs of the initial improvements" (Scott, 1998, p. 79).

Planning and Development

In the developing country context, planning is even more complicated. Urban development takes place in a piecemeal manner due to the nature of real estate development and infrastructure planning, and the implications of poverty, squatting, and upgrading. Moreover, the enforcement of development regulations and building codes is weak. What does a planner do in a context that is not regulated, local plans are not enforced, and in which implementation often falls far short of aspirations and commitments? Town planners in these contexts are trained in schools of architecture or science and focus primarily on land use and the built environment. The role of the planner is not envisioned to oversee holistic planning for people and the environment. And, as in all other contexts, planning is subject to political pressure and influence. This urban governance dilemma is common across countries with variations in the particular issues that arise. However, the urban governance dilemma is even more pronounced in the developing country context where regulation and mechanisms for accountability are more politically driven than administrative and where corruption plays a significant role not only in the choice of projects, but also in the execution. Thus, there is an important argument against further centralized control over project planning and implementation.

Meanwhile there are massive needs for infrastructure in and around the fast-growing cities across the developing world, and the solution advocated by international aid agencies has been large-scale infrastructure projects. These projects are initiated at higher levels of government through national or regional (e.g. state or provincial) agencies along with the

cooperation of urban governments and often the introduction of a special agency to channel funding and coordinate implementation. Within this context, in the larger urban areas, there is a plethora of agencies – including sector-wise line department offices (e.g. water, electricity, transportation), planning and development boards, industrial development boards, and social welfare departments, among others (e.g. metropolitan development agencies special-purpose vehicles). Coordinated 'planning' or coordination of development projects is challenging in the best of situations, and project-wise development is ultimately undertaken with the national finance boards responsible for allocating funds towards the various projects. In many contexts there has been an introduction of urban or metropolitan planning and development agencies, but even the purview of a planning and development agency is limited by both the overlaps between agencies and the silo-ed approach to urban issues.

Development assistance in the context of planning has included either a focus on community-based planning or on large scale infrastructure. In the case of infrastructure, the assistance has included an infusion of costs, guidelines, contractors, and other resources to push large projects forward. Local non-governmental organizations have vehemently opposed many of these projects from conceptualization to design to implementation. These projects divide populations not only due to different assessment of needs and solutions, but also in the inequality that the projects further exacerbate in largely poor countries and the opaque and non-democratic processes that govern them. Meanwhile the focus on community-based planning provides opportunities for the public to interact the local government, however the stakes are low and the impacts are usually minimal.

Personal Experiences in Practice

I was drawn to the field of urban planning within aspiration to understand how to propose practical solutions to complex problems. I moved to Bangalore, India, upon graduation from the Department of Urban Planning at MIT with a master's degree in urban planning and a focus on international development. I carried the notion that my skills could be valuable in the pursuit of poverty alleviation and equitable urban development. I first set out to propose the development of an urban planning center – with a core focus on mapping the city to determine how to best address deficiencies in housing and infrastructure, providing a basis for decision making and advocacy. I learned quickly, with the help of local activists, that mapping the city meant providing data to the government and private developers who could then take advantage of the simplified depiction of land use to promote their real estate or large infrastructure projects. I shifted focus and worked with local groups instead to better

understand how the growth of the information technology sector and the return of non-resident Indians to Bangalore, engaging in urban governance structures, were shifting the political and economic landscape of the city. What we found was that with the major infrastructure projects (such as a new airport, IT Park, and proposed metro) along with new interventions in governance (including a public-private partnership to draft a new master plan for the city and NGOs engaged with citizen activism) had further shifted the locus of decision making over the city's land and finances from the city agencies to the State and National government (Ghosh, 2005). In addition, I played a role in assessing the process of developing a comprehensive master plan for the city of Bangalore. The city government hired an international firm to develop a GIS map of the land parcels in the city to increase property tax collection and to outline major development projects (including a new International Airport and IT park) in the larger metropolitan area. Eventually the master plan was primarily used to justify the large areas of development that would primarily serve the upper middle and upper classes in the city.

The primary lesson I came away with was that the role that I could play given my skills and background was not to simplify a complex development process, but rather to engage in deeper listening, research, and analysis to better understand the dynamics of urban growth. As Scott notes, "Land invasions, squatting, and poaching, if successful, represent the exercise of de facto property rights which are not represented on paper" (Scott, 1998, p. 49). Local knowledge is indispensable and often overlooked in the urgency to plan and implement solutions with time constrained budgets unlimited information. However, the dynamics of local development provide substantial insight into relationships between different interest groups. The solutions, meanwhile, could include sharing research and analysis, supporting or promoting local initiatives and providing a bridge between sectors, groups, and disciplines.

A few years later I provided support to country offices across Asia for an international NGO on local governance projects. Development aid has been channeled towards 'planning' at the local level primarily through programs with a focus on community driven development, participatory planning and budgeting, and social accountability. There is considerable literature on these approaches and both the benefits and shortcomings of programs. There are examples where these programs have had positive outcomes. As I developed and understanding of the various country contexts, I came to understand that local planning and development depends largely on the national decentralization policy. One needs to understand the context of decentralization to make sense of how the efforts are situated within the broader national context of planning and allocation of resources. In many cases, the limited nature of fiscal decentralization constrains local decision making on large infrastructure investments, and programs for local input into planning and development are

thereby focused on small scale infrastructure. The legal framework that mandates intergovernmental relationships is critical to the potential for local government to effectively plan, finance, and develop local projects.

In some of the countries where I was working, including Nepal, different interest groups engaged in heated debates on the appropriate structure for decentralization. I contributed to the Foundation's efforts to promote federalism in Nepal. A shift away from the unitary government structure, the potential of federalism would be to provide opportunities for communities to engage with government and for more diverse groups to influence local development decisions. In this case, careful attention was being paid to inclusiveness and legal frameworks that would determine the scope of decentralization. What is most critical to decentralization efforts is attention to the details. The motivation, process, and design of a decentralization effort will determine success across various factors.

The thrust for implementing government decentralization initiatives is largely driven by broad ideological and developmental agendas alongside evolving conceptions of governance, democracy, and economic planning. Cheema and Rondinelli (2007) describe the motivations for decentralization as development experts and governments lost faith in central planning as a catalyst for broad and equitable development. In the 1960s and 1970s governments began to decentralize their hierarchical structures in an effort to make public service delivery more efficient and to extend service coverage by giving local administrative units more responsibility. This period signified a shift away from trickle-down theories of economic growth and greater interest in growth-with-equity and participatory development. As Patrick Heller states, "Across the political spectrum, the disenchantment with centralized and bureaucratic states has made the call for decentralization an article of faith. Strengthening and empowering local government has been justified not only on the grounds of increasing accountability and participation. But to govern is to exercise power, and there are no a priori reasons why more localized forms of governance are more democratic." (2001, p. 132). Institutions of governance at the national or sub-national levels play a critical role in negotiating struggles for access to resources between a range of interest groups, thus the re-alignment of existing power structures will require sufficient incentives and a critical support base.

The more I observed the linkages between national decentralization policies and outcomes of development assistance projects focused on local planning and the more interested I became in these dynamics. Based on a four-country study I was overseeing on access to services by the urban poor, I asked whether stronger policies for decentralization lead to more innovation and/or involvement of the local government in the provision of services to

informal communities. This question is critical to discussions on decentralization since local governments are often assumed to be best positioned to provide more equitable access to services and/or regulate provision by intermediaries. The findings suggested that decentralization, combined with pro-poor national policies, provide a basis for greater innovation by local governments to address the needs of the poor. However, the sustainability and replication of these efforts may be limited. (Ghosh and Kamath, 2012)

Crook and Sverrison (2003) evaluate whether decentralization contributes to poverty reduction, and point out the tendency to conflate decentralization with democratization and enhancement of participation at "community" level underlies the belief that decentralization will lead to greater responsiveness to the needs of the poor. They claim that, "Insofar as the majority of the population in developing countries is both poor and excluded from the national elite or 'high' politics, then any scheme that appears to offer greater political participation to ordinary citizens seems likely to increase their 'voice' and hence (it is hoped) the relevance and effectiveness of government policy." (Crook and Sverrison, 2003, p. 233). However, Oates points out that decentralization does not necessarily increase the participation of the local population equitably, rather elites tend to dominate the local planning processes. "And such elites may pursue their own narrowly focused self-interest. In short, will decentralization simply involve exchanging a central "tyrant" for a local tyrant with resulting policies that do not address the welfare of the local populace?" (1993, p. 241).

Based on my experiences, I would argue that an important critique of development assistance in the context of planning is that it the assumed nature of planning is misplaced. In many countries, urban governance functions largely as an instrument of higher levels of government, and therefore local 'planning' is, in actual practice, an effort to unify a piecemeal assortment of local projects to meet the demands of political constituencies, rather than a comprehensive approach to local development (which is largely aspirational). Engagement in planning would be more effective with a greater focus on understanding inter-governmental relationships, the nature of decentralization, local politics, and local knowledge. Both development assistance and planning aspire to be participatory and bottom-up efforts, but in actuality top-down approaches predominate practice. Methodologies that take into account local knowledge and focus on deep listening and analysis of the intersection of local initiatives in the context of national incentives would serve both professions. Both urban planners and professionals and development assistance may transform their roles into providing multi-disciplinary coordination and support to local aspirations.

Conclusion

The dilemma of the planner is to find practical solutions to complex problems. How can the development needs, including for large-scale infrastructure, be realized in the growing cities of largely poor countries, and what is the role of development assistance in this context? The discipline of planning may in fact attract those who seek to make sense of what may seem like chaos. Unfortunately, in the attempt to make sense out of complex situations, there has been a tendency on the part of planners to utilize tools such as mapping to propose a legibility on landscapes that are otherwise multilayered, in flux, and being acted upon by a number of forces. As Scott suggests, "The utopian, immanent, and continually frustrated goal of the modern state is to reduce the chaotic, disorderly, constantly changing social reality beneath it to something more closely resembling the administrative grid of its observations. Much of the statecraft of the late 18th and 19th centuries was devoted to this project." (1998, p. 82). I argue that we need to shift the emphasis of planning from technocratic approaches, including mapping land use and the built environment to managing complex contexts with a multidisciplinary lens. This will require planners to more deeply engage with communities to facilitate creative and community-led solutions and support communities to navigate decision making with local and higher-level government officials.

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Ethnography and Development: Reflections on Teaching and Field Work

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About a hundred years ago Bronislaw Malinowski famously established ethnographic fieldwork as the standard research method for academic Anthropology. According to Malinowski the goal of ethnography is, "to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his vision of his world" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 24). Outdated pronouns notwithstanding, rigorous ethnographic research has remained a priority for socio-cultural anthropologists into the 21st century and is now also more widely practiced in other disciplines as well as applied contexts, including international development work. On the other hand, contemporary anthropologists tend to approach ethnography very differently than more classically minded versions of "grasping the native's point of view." Here, I will present a sort of updated "Anthropology 101" for professionals who might not be familiar with the latest trends within the discipline. Apologies in advance — the account below is necessarily over-simplified and didactic; but I hope to show how current ethnography might help move us towards a more creative re-imagining of development itself.

Classical Ethnography

First, some foundational aspects of ethnography that may not surprise anyone but are worth reinforcing.

(A) Anthropology is based on the empirical study of specific human behavior within a specific cultural context — ethnography. The behavior we study is necessarily tangible and based upon direct observation of particular people at a concrete place and time. Further, this research can best be done as the ethnographer participates in the very actions that she

observes — participant observation. As a participant, the ethnographer lives through the wide variety of inexplicit and unanticipated conditions entangled within any particular event and experiences phenomenon otherwise inaccessible to more structured, or secondary modes of research. Through the embodied experience of long-term participation, the ethnographer can trace a matrix of social relations that are not divided into disciplinary categories (e.g. economics, politics, psychology, etc.) and provide micro-analysis that is

based on Lassiter (2014)

inherently holistic (the term "culture" provides a vague umbrella covering multiple facets of behavior, belief, presentation, power, etc.).
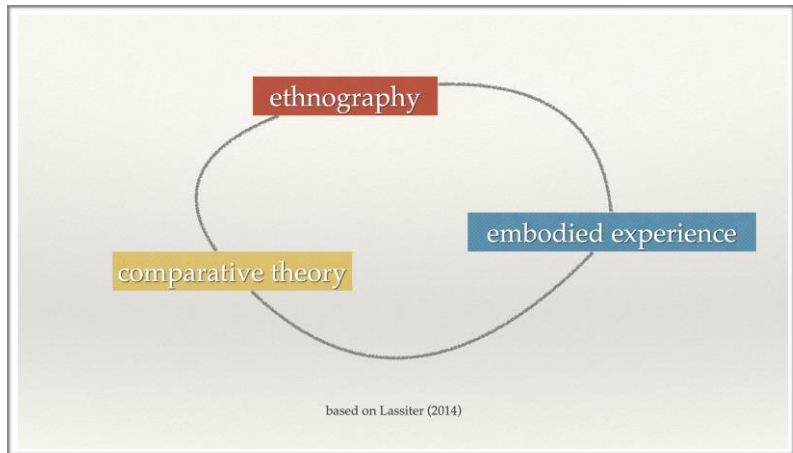
B) The micro-analysis of ethnography relies on a conceptual understanding that is necessarily comparative. The process of cultural interpretation involves not only a translation of languages, but also a translation of socio-economic conditions, landscape, politics, etc. Even basic ideas of life, death, time, space that many of us take for granted in one context are unfamiliar and strange in another. When I study a monastery in the Himalaya, I explicitly address a literature on comparative religion based on European Christianity, but I also intuitively compare living conditions, interpersonal relations and individual expectations based on my own background and current context in a small corner of the US. This comparison is not pre-conceived or straightforward, but part of what comes about organically, and usually unexpectedly, through extended fieldwork.

The inverse dimension of this comparative process is often overlooked but even more important — that is, true comparison means looking at my own cultural understanding through the lens of others. A classic example here is Margaret Mead's book Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (1935) which, though problematic in many ways, helped break down conceptions of "natural" inequality between men and women on the basis of biological sex. Ethnography not only seeks to understand and document the world of others, but it is also a process of questioning, comparing, deconstructing, and expanding my own deepest assumptions. The most significant contribution of ethnography to intellectual knowledge is thus critical engagement with our own most basic conceptualizations — critical anthropology.

Current Ethnography

In this section I would like to introduce three monographs that illustrate current trends in Anthropology. I am choosing ethnographies that we've read in recent iterations of my Introduction to Anthropology course — not because my class is especially interesting, but in order to highlight the kind of ethnography that is taught in a contemporary college setting.

A) Radhika Govindrajan's Animal Intimacies (2018) deals with the relationships amongst humans and animals in the foothills of the Indian Himalaya. Methodologically, Govindrajan follows the classic model of long-term participant-observation — living, working and talking with villagers in their day-to-day life for a cumulative two-plus years. Nothing new here. On the other hand, Govindrajan uses her ethnographic experience to engage with cutting-edge discussions of queer and cyborg theory currently vibrant in US university circles (e.g. Sara Ahmed 2006; Donna Haraway 2016). Govindrajan brings voices from the Himalaya to bear on our own understandings of gender, sexuality, biological taxonomy, ethics and care. Her ethnography shows us how the comparative aspect of ethnography is not simply a one-way project of fitting empirical evidence to a pre-determined conceptual framework, but a dynamic process in which personal experience helps question, deconstruct, and re-form primary conceptions of reality. A cow, in her ethnography, is not simply a cow; and the women of Kumaon help us understand new relationships to animals and religion as well as hamburgers and sex. Her ethnography informs student understanding not only about India, but more fundamentally about their own assumed conceptions of reality.

B) Laurence Ralph's ethnography Renegade Dreams (2014) deals with violence, injury and recovery in a gangland neighborhood of Chicago. As with much of the world labeled the 'global south', 'impoverished' or 'underdeveloped', marginalized districts in American cities (often Black or other racio-ethnically designated neighborhoods) have been the subject of extensive scholarly and political attention. This attention invariably addresses urban crime and violence as a 'problem' to be solved by exogenous (mostly white) urban planners, social workers and police. Instead of accepting this tacit expert-driven discourse, Ralph listens to local residents who insist that local gangs are not the problem, but the primary agents through which development can take place. He presents local modes of coping with violence and injury as both legitimate and productive alternatives to more institutionalized narratives of 'neighborhood development' — projects that often silence, displace, and imprison precisely the community they purport to help. By taking local gangs seriously Ralph prioritizes ethical engagement with the interlocutors of his study, treating local residents as personal, political and intellectual equals, not scientific specimens. This allows for a level of collaboration otherwise impossible with more expert-driven modes of scholarship. Ralph is not exceptional

in this regard, and his monograph is a powerful reminder that scholarship does not take place in a political vacuum (cf. Lassiter 2005). Students learn that the socio-political inequality inherent to academic research carries ethical consequences prior to any supposedly scientific/objective results.

It's fitting in this regard that the painting that begins this book — *Kehinde Wiley's work The Chancellor Seguier on Horseback (2005)* — accurately captures the spirit of what it means to have a renegade dream. Wiley's rendition blurs the boundaries between traditional and contemporary modes of representation. … Why can't urban African Americans assume the delicate harmony and militant posture reminiscent of a Renaissance master? This book seeks to similarly restage urban blacks within societal institutions of fields of power from which they are often presumed to be excluded. (Ralph 2014)


Kehinde Wiley, The Chancellor Seguier on Horseback *(2005), oil on canvas, 108 × 144 in. © Kehinde Wiley Studio.*

C) A final example from Anna Tsing is more complicated, but also more directly relevant to international development. Tsing has made a career out of studying the systems of resource extraction enabled by multinational corporations, also known as "globalization" (Tsing, 1993; 2005); but her most recent monograph The Mushroom at the End of the World (2015) extends this interest into more informal networks enabled by the global market in matsutake mushrooms. The book is wide-ranging, fragmented and unpredictable, much like

the dispersal of mushrooms in a forest. Accordingly, the primary contribution to emphasize here is the way in which Tsing helps us learn from the mushroom itself. This sounds wacky; but as the text moves through the woods of Oregon, Yunnan, Japan and back again we hear over and over of instances in which the mushroom thrives in scenes of capitalist failure and destruction (logged forests, obsolete lumber mills, unemployment). Similarly, humans marginalized by the same forces also manage to adapt and survive by paying close attention to the mushroom.

There is nothing planned, predictable, or structured about the proliferation and survival of these mushrooms and humans. Instead, the mushroom spores, the human pickers, and Tsing herself depend upon an ever-changing and serendipitous collaboration between soil, trees, climate and social conditions to eke out a living. Student response to this global multi-species ethnography is mixed; I suspect because most middle-class Americans do not fully appreciate the more devastating aspects of capitalist extraction and exploitation and still assume they will obtain stable jobs after receiving a prestigious undergraduate degree. However, as Anna Tsing argues, the classical model of investment, production, employment, and accumulation no longer works for much of the world's population, if it ever did. Anthropology, in this case, searches for alternative ways of preparing for a precarious future — a future that is less organized, less planned, and least expected, but nevertheless, all the more likely.
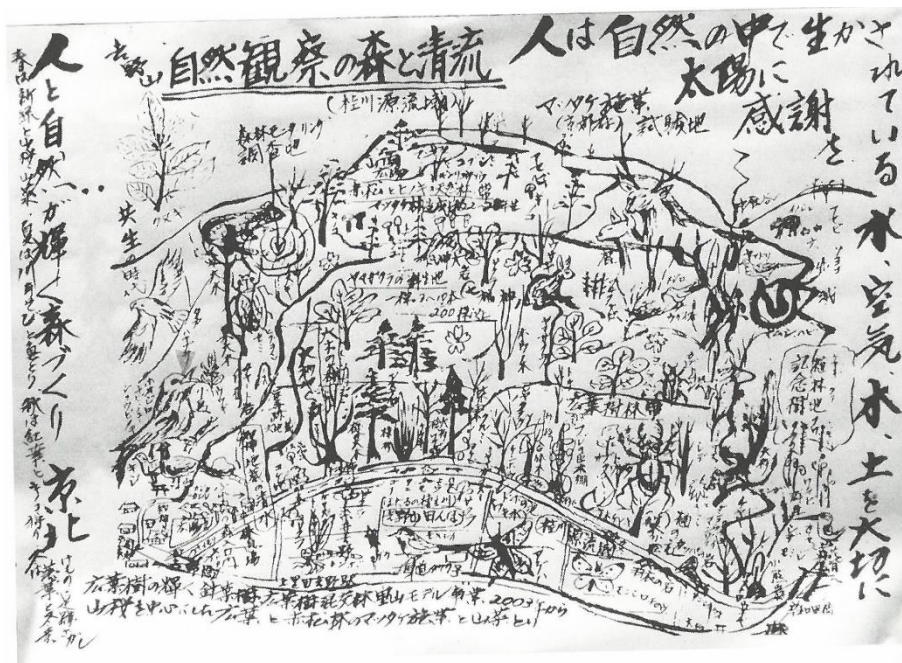
Conjuring time. Kyoto Prefecture. Mr. Imoto's map of revitalizing. This is his matutake mountain: a time machine of multiple seasons, histories, and hopes. (Tsing 2015)

Implications for Development?

I could continue with several other studies that challenge the notion of ethnography as simple documentation. I chose these texts not only because I have experience teaching with them, but also because they are indicative of broader trends taking place within Anthropology as a discipline. To recap: a) Govindrajan uses conversations with Himalayan villagers to critically address our own deepest conceptual assumptions; b) Ralph collaborates with gang members in Chicago to overtly critique standard models of urban development that perpetuate inequality; c) Tsing pays attention to mushrooms (yes, mushrooms!) as a model for surviving the catastrophic social and environmental damage already wrought by global industrial capitalism. Through these texts, my students in Portland, Oregon are learning not only from me and more eminent anthropologists, but from Himalayan villagers, Chicago gang members, and global mushrooms and their pickers. Let's follow some of these threads to see how they might help us re-imagine the professional development context.

A) There has been no lack of critique focused on the neo-liberal and neo-colonial aspects of the development enterprise (e.g. Edelman and Haugerud 2005; Escobar 1994; Kothari 2005). The conceptual assumptions carried by the term "development" itself demand inquiry — by who? For whom? Towards what end? Govindrajan and other contemporary anthropologist suggest that the best answers to these questions might not come from within the development establishment, but rather from specific contexts, local residents, unfamiliar relationships, and conversation with others. A personal anecdote to illustrate I grew up avoiding beggars in India, uncomfortable at the sight of suffering and unsure of the best way to approach what I viewed as a "problem." I come from a bi-cultural academic family well-versed in social awareness, egalitarian principles, bettering the world and so forth; but my body cringed in fear and anxiety when confronting someone I considered destitute. A random conversation with a Tibetan refugee when I was twenty radically altered my view, "We should be grateful to beggars. They give us an easy opportunity to help others and acquire merit. They are here for our benefit." Whether you agree with this view or not, the ethical reversal enabled by the conversation helped illuminate the hidden assumptions of my own so-called "egalitarian" worldview, opened up new ways of relating to individuals, and re-conceived the basic inequities of donor-recipient relations.

B) Political intrigue gives me the jitters, whether it's in America or Nepal. Many of us in academics, and I suspect many of us in development, like to think that the values we embody transcend political parties, sectarian conflicts, or all-to-common personal conniving. However, I also suspect that all of us, in the day-to-day practice of our professions, deal with

precisely these types of political tensions. Ralph and others like him (De Leon 2015; Bourgois and Schonberg 2009) suggests that scholarship (or development) is not immune, divorced, or otherwise isolated from mundane political concerns. To ignore the political, economic, and ethical forces that form our conceptual frameworks is to tacitly subject ourselves to the very structures we are trying to change. These anthropologists encourage us to view development not simply as a technocratic skill linked to objective scientific truth (cf. Ferguson 2005), but on the contrary, as a deeply moral undertaking with ethical consequences on all sides, for both donors and recipients. Again, perhaps those ostensibly in need of "development" may be best placed to address what, how, and why we should even undertake the process of developing. And yes, this may well alienate certain political parties, democratic institutions, or even, (gasp!) potential donors.

C) Finally, learning from mushrooms... I guess many of you are wondering where to go from here? I don't know! And that's precisely the point that Tsing, through matsutake, helps us realize. The precarity of our world systems, the turbulence of social, economic, political, and natural disasters, are not going away any time soon. The patchwork approach of mushrooms and their pickers may well be the de-facto operational mode of any development organization when earthquakes or floods devastate our project sites; when the entire royal family is murdered; when civil war erupts; when the government fails (again); when global pandemic strikes... or when another type of mushroom, yartsa gunbu/cordyceps sinesis, becomes more valuable than gold. All this only a cursory summation of the last 20 years in Nepal. And is it so different from contemporary Myanmar, Ethiopia, or Haiti? A matsutake mushroom would wonder why we continue to plan for stable social, economic, political, and environmental conditions when everything indicates fragility and change. To ignore, or worse, rationalize the confusion and unpredictability that comes about in genuine engagement with world is to produce what anthropologist Michael Taussig calls agribusiness writing, "Agribusiness writing knows no wonder ... Agribusiness writing wants mastery ... Agribusiness writing is a mode of production that conceals the means of production ... Agribusiness writing assumes the need for explanation when what is at issue is why is one required, and what is an explanation and how do you do one, and how weird is that?" (2015, p. 5-6). This sounds suspiciously like the last funding proposal I put together.

Unfinished

All of this remains abstract and theoretical, but necessarily so. As with the empirical priority of ethnography, these imaginings only become meaningful in specific, tangible contexts. And

as with ethnography, every development project is necessarily different, contextual and incomplete. I apologized in advance for using the model of teaching as the framework for this paper. Now it strikes me that teaching anthropology is a wonderful parallel to development — not because I am imparting knowledge to students, but because teaching is always a process of re-imaging, learning with, and coming to new understanding with my students. João Beihl and Peter Locke recently published an anthology entitled Unfinished. Many of the studies engage with severely marginalized individuals and communities, the kind of groups that are often subject to development projects. The over-arching theme of the volume (borrowed from Gilles Deleauze) is the idea of becoming, "… the subject is not a fixed entity, but an assemblage of multiple heterogeneous elements; not a given, but always under construction; not a product of an imagined interiority, but a folding and bending of outside forces. … Subjects anticipate and invent—and anticipate because they invent—in concrete circumstances, navigating between things and relations" (Beihl and Locke, 2017, p. 42). We might think of this as 'radical ethnography' in that it urges us to approach research and knowledge in a way that looks towards what might be imagined, what may come to be, what is unknown; not what is already complete and understood. But this may not be so new after all; re-imagining may simply be the humility to stop imagining that we actually know what is going on!

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Development Practice as an Open-ended Cultural Exchange that Builds Upon the Strength of Local Social Institutions

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The idea of what constitutes development and how it can best be achieved has repeatedly been subject of debates and conversations among scholars, development practitioners, and people in governments and non-governmental organizations alike. Rethinking and reimagining development has been continuous efforts among scholars and practitioners. In this paper, I would like to share what the discipline of anthropology, anthropological methodology, and ethnographic research can offer when considering such questions.

First, to broaden the discourse on what constitutes "development", I would like to offer a glimpse into the Manangi community from Northern Nepal and its extensive diaspora in Southeast Asia. The kind of development they aspire for is rather different from what is generally conceived of in development practice. Over the course of a few decades, the Manangis rose from being one of the poorest communities in Nepal to becoming one of the wealthiest entrepreneurial communities. But in their view, wealth is not an indication of their success: It is what wealth enables them to do, or, rather, what they choose to do with their wealth that is an indication of development in their community.

The unfamiliarity of their ideas serves as a mirror for reflecting upon the more common Eurocentric conception of development. Not only is their ambition different, but the ways in which they go about achieving it may also be unrecognizable. This is because their practices are embedded in multiple social institutions that may be unfamiliar to development practitioners. But it is these social institutions, and the values that are created and reinforced

by them, that enable the Manangis to thrive, both individually and as a society. The Manangis have a clear sense of their shared aspirations as well as institutional capacity to achieve them. Not all communities have this social capital. After having introduced readers to the Manangi community, I would like to invite participants of the round table to discuss: 1) How can we reimagine and revise development practice to enable us to recognize a broader array of development goals that are compatible with local values and priorities? 2) How can we develop a language or a methodology for recognizing institutional strength of a community, or identifying its absence and supporting its growth, so that the community can achieve the kind of development that they consider desirable to their community.

What Constitutes Development in the Manangi Community?

The Manangi community is a diasporic Buddhist trading community scattered across South Asia, the Himalayas, and Southeast Asia. The Manang Valley, their original home, is in the rain shadow behind a tall mountain range. Not being able to grow enough grain to support the population, the Manangis started trading in the late 19th century, between the Tibetan plateau and the Ganges Plains in India. Over time, their trade expanded to Southeast Asia, with trade routes changing over time. Not only have the Manangis traded across these regions despite competition from larger Western and Asian traders, but they also have generated sufficient economic surplus to finance grand social and religious projects, including supporting almost a fifth of their male population in monasteries.

Today the Manangis are skilled gem traders, owners of hotels, factories, and real estate in Nepal and elsewhere in South and Southeast Asia. I did ethnographic field research in the Manangi community in the early 2000s, during which I learned about their intriguing practices. In the following section, I will describe the social arrangements and idea that 1) enabled the Manangis to sustain their trade, 2) shaped what they choose to do with the money earned from trade abroad, 3) enabled them as a collective to fulfill social and spiritual purposes beyond their immediate material needs.

The discussion here is not an idealization of the Manangi community, as these social institutions and cultural ideas are not inherently 'Manangi'—static and unchanging. Rather, it is an account of how, at a particular point in history, the Manangis, as a collective, rose from one of the poorest to one of the wealthiest communities in Nepal. Part of the answers lies in the social institutions that aligned individuals' motives with larger social goals and reinforced the specific cultural logic of partnership that the Manangis deemed vital to the well-being of their community. Some aspects of these social institutions and cultural idea may have changed, but the broader insights one can draw from their practices, however, do not change

with time. The working of social institutions in the Manangi community illustrates that cooperation rather than competition and redistribution rather than accumulation of wealth can lead to social and economic prosperity—an arrangement that is alternative to free market.

Social institutions for forging partnership

During my time with the Manangis, I saw that they sought to form partnership with one another in the community to pursue social, spiritual, and economic ambitions. They constantly worked to create social institutions that aligned individuals' motives with society's goals. These institutions created and reinforced values that they deemed important to their society because they had enabled their community members to achieve their aspirations.

One of these institutions was the shared rooming houses at trading sites abroad. Even though the Manangis operated as individual traders, they traveled together and established communal residences. These houses were points of convergence where they shared information and knowledge internally about their trade and developed a system of trust. In these rooming houses, the Manangis examined their gems openly, kept the gems unlocked in their bags when they went out to trade, and stored unsold gems together at a local jewelry shop. When one trader discovered a new trade route, he shared it with others so that they too could take advantage of new opportunities. That was how their trade routes as well as their diasporic locations changed over time. Such cooperation enabled them to reduce operating costs and become competitive with other traders in the transregional market.

At home, which later was Kathmandu, the Manangis formed partnership to organize elaborate religious and social gatherings. These included merit-making ceremonies, fasting retreats, community reunions, and gambling festivals—all of which were financed by profits from trade abroad. The Manangis had a very sophisticated system of organizing and sponsoring these events. Some religious gatherings involved households signing up twelve years in advance to contribute labor and money for hosting and sponsoring the events. Hosting social gatherings often involved rotation among households. Pooling money for these events, the Manangis raised funds that were first circulated as cheap loans for investment in new trade ventures before being expended for their intended social and religious purposes.

Each year, for example, the Manangis took turns organizing a village-wide gambling festival for which everyone was required to attend, and to participate in the gambling. In some cases, gambling was a requirement according to each household's financial capability. Households that owned property, for example, were required to buy more lottery tickets than households

that rented a living space. From these gambling activities, the village kept 15% of each bet won, after which the fund was used for various social and religious projects. This gambling may thus be viewed as a way in which the community collected progressive income tax for communal undertakings as well as for circulating as loans in the community.

At an individual level, active participation in gambling brought prestige and social status. The higher the amount one bet, the more prestige the betting brought to the gambler, as the value of the bets was seen to reflect the actor's wealth as well as his willingness to part with that wealth, which signified his financial security and his readiness to take risks. In the Manangi community, being indifferent to the money lost in gambling was viewed positively, as was being generous with monetary contributions for religious activities. In this context, gambling and merit-making may be viewed in the same way—as a kind of conspicuous consumption.

In addition to this annual gambling festival, the Manangis also allocated a substantial amount of time and resources for organizing lengthy, frequent, and intense social gatherings, called 'picnic', at various social scales. These were, for example, camping trips among close friends, week-long family reunions and clan reunions. Although these social gatherings varied greatly in scale and in their apparent reasons for convening, they all were obligatory social gatherings that involved some gestures of giving according to individuals' financial capacity towards the funds that were used for organizing the events. These gatherings, like the religious gatherings, served as nodes for pooling social and material resources. The diversity of social occasions and the multiplicity of scales of gatherings enabled the Manangis to get to know one another, including their moral character and financial capacity, in a wide range of social contexts, from extensive to intimate. Such diversity of groups and scales also enabled the Manangis to access different kinds of social support network and different sizes of loans, requiring different levels of financial credibility.

Although such conspicuous consumption at home in Kathmandu may appear to stand in sharp contrast with the hard work, frugality, and accumulation of saving abroad, the two processes actually facilitated one another by constituting collective savings available for further investments in economic activities and creating social solidarities among the dispersed members of the community. The circulation of funds in the community through social and religious gatherings allowed the redistribution of surplus and the expansion of trade, which generated further surplus. This in turn facilitated social and religious practices and hence the availability of more funds to fuel the expansion of the Manangi economy. The dialectical relationship between trade and religion facilitated the expansion of both. The flow of resources between the two domains invigorated the economy while allowing the Manangis to fulfill other social and religious purposes.

Village funds, for example, were used for building community infrastructures and supporting

vulnerable members of the community. These included building new monasteries and religious monuments in Nepal, a rest house in Bodhgaya, constructing roads and schools in Manang Valley, building a home for the elderly in Kathmandu, purchasing community ambulance, and running free health and dental camps.

We have thus seen how key social institutions in the Manangi community, namely rooming houses at trading sites abroad and obligatory social and religious gatherings at home in Kathmandu, encouraged socially desirable behaviors that enabled the Manangis to sustain and expand their trade abroad as well as fulfill social and spiritual purposes beyond their immediate material needs. Underlying these social behaviors were values that these social institutions sought to create and reinforce.

The cultural logic underlying partnership and internal cooperation

All of us carry around in our head cultural ideas and assumptions that shape our thoughts and behaviors, whether or not we are aware of them. Stanley Tambiah, an anthropologist, referred to these cultural premises as a "cultural logic"—a framework of concepts—that shapes individuals' thoughts and social actions. Partnership and internal cooperation in the Manangi community also rested on a specific cultural logic about the relationship between individuals and the collective. In this section, I will give two instances that elucidate this cultural logic, which can be recognized in multiple domains of social life.

The first is an observation of how the Manangis sought to accrue religious merit together because a collective effort enabled the Manangis to achieve something greater than what each one of them would have been able to do alone. One of the most important religious practices in the Manangi community was a three-week long fasting retreat, during which the Manangis gathered at a monastery from dawn to dusk, to chant, prostrate, and count rosary beads, during which they ate and drank only every other day. This austere retreat revealed deep spiritual commitments and religious convictions.

The religious merit earned during this rigorous retreat was a matter concerning life and rebirth. Within one's lifetime, the Manangis sought to participate in the retreat for at least the full period of eighteen days. The more one could participate in the retreat, the higher chance one could avoid being reborn as a lower living being—as an insect for example. Higher rebirth in the human form was important because only humans could use their intelligence rather than their instincts to guide their actions. The counting of rosary beads, as a form of meditative practice, was a cultivation of virtuous minds, speech, and actions, all of which would eventually lead humans out of cycles of birth, rebirth, and sufferings.

Even though the Manangis could, in principle, undertake the fasting ritual individually in their own homes, they chose to do it together. In fact, they formed partnership to support those enduring the fast by taking turns to "host"—by providing labor and money to organize and served at the event. Besides supporting one another to achieve spiritual goals that were challenging to pursue alone, the Manangis also sought to accrue religious merit together because it brought greater religious merit. This was reflected in the ways in which the Manangis gauged the religious merit accrued during the retreat.

Every evening of the fasting retreat, the Manangis added up the total number of beads that each person had counted individually. At the end of the eighteen-days-ceremony, they added up the number of beads counted throughout the retreat. This number was reported to the head monk, who announced it to the community, indicating the magnitude of religious merit accrued by the community as a whole. The counting of rosary beads at the fasting retreat was, therefore, not just an individual's pursuit of an individual's goal, for an individual's accomplishment—a higher rebirth. But it was also an indication of the extent to which the Manangis could support one another to accrue greater religious merit—a process which also brought merit to the enablers. It was thus a pursuit, at once, of both individual's and community's goal. It was a

collective accomplishment to which all participants and organizers had contributed, and to whom it belonged, regardless of their unequal contributions in terms of money, labor, or ability. According to this rationale, participation and contributions according to one's ability, even if unequal, created equal ownership of the outcome among the participating members. This logic of partnership, which shaped the Manangis' collective spiritual pursuit, mirrored the kind of partnership that underpinned their trade practices.

This leads me to the second story about how a group of Manangi gem traders collaborated to bring their gems out of Burma when an army took over the country in 1962. As told by a retired trader, many Manangis had shares in Burmese mining concessions at that time, but when the military took over, "no one could leave the country without being stripped naked". Being stranded in Burma, forty-eight Manangis put their heads together trying to find a way of getting out without losing the gems in which they had invested. Eventually, one of them came up with an idea of creating a double-layered basket that could be soaked in water to make the rattan soft, after which the gems were placed between the two layers. When the rattan dried, it tightened up and the gems became invisible. In that "rattan suitcase", forty-eight Manangi traders packed their gems plus another 200,000 Indian Rupees worth of gems from a Marwari merchant from Calcutta who promised to give them 40,000 Indian Rupees if they could get his gems out of Burma.

From Mogok, a gem mining town, they walked to the Indian border—to Nagaland. But to cross

into India, they had to cross a river, but there was a guard at the bridge. At the same time, the river was neck-deep, and they would have been swept by currents if they were to walk or swim across. Again, they brainstormed solutions, after which one of them figured out a way of crossing the river in a double line, with twenty-four people forming parallel lines and holding one another's hands, making it impossible for anyone to fall or get washed away. That was how they made it across to India while hiring Naga "smugglers" to carry their baskets across the border. From there, the Manangi traders went on to Calcutta to sell their gems and distributed equally among themselves the 40,000 Indian Rupees extra from the Marwari merchant.

The smuggling of the gems and the fasting retreat shared the same cultural logic about social relations. As a collective, the Manangis could brainstorm an unusual idea and crossed a deep river with rapid currents. In that collective effort, not everyone had the same ability to contribute, but the fruits of their effort were distributed equally, signifying everyone's participation. Likewise, at a fasting retreat, the Manangis cooperated with one another to host and to pursue rigorous religious practices that enabled them to achieve higher goals than what each one of them would have been able to do alone. The Manangis also took on grand religious projects, of a magnitude greater than what each one of them would have been able to do individually. As a community, they raised funds to support six hundred Manangis to participate in a fasting retreat in Bodhgaya, to build a stupa in Lumbini, a rest house in Bodhgaya, a two-mile-long prayer wall, three fifteen-meter-tall Buddha statues near Kathmandu, and many new monasteries in Nepal, in addition to supporting almost a fifth of their male population in monasteries. In other words, the collective outcome was greater than the sum of each individual, as partnership enabled each one of them to achieve more.

To sum up, the Manangis' aspiration, what they envisioned as success or development in their community, constituted of:

1. Fulfillment of their spiritual well-being beyond meeting worldly material needs. Although the material requirements of life had initially prompted the Manangis to pursue long-distance trade, it was their spiritual aspirations that propelled the production of capital beyond meeting their material needs.

2. Becoming well-off as a community (materially, socially, and spiritually), without leaving anyone behind. The collective accumulation and redistribution of capital, and the creation of religious merit collectively, ultimately reduced internal differences in the community.

3. Social, economic, and spiritual security founded upon mutually dependent social relations. Instead of accumulating individual wealth to ensure economic security, the

Manangis formed social relations that would ensure support for the less capable and vulnerable members. Prestige and social status in the Manangi community did not come from the ability to lavish on oneself what others could not, but from the ability to enable others to do what they otherwise would not have been able to do.

Capital production and accumulation in the Manangi community has been rendered largely invisible because it was driven by cultural meanings and social values unfamiliar to others outside of their community. Given what the Manangis have achieved both in and beyond their material domains, their history complicates the narrative of the rise of the West—commonly found in scholarly literature—underpinning the ideas of "development" in the past two centuries.

The Role of Social Institutions in Development

One contribution of the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, and history is the recognition of larger social contexts that shape individuals' social actions. This avoids reductionism which demotes individuals' motives to mere economic incentives (or genes in evolutionary biology) devoid of larger social impetus. This approach resonates with that of New Institutional Economics articulated by scholars such as Douglas North, Elinor Ostrom, Avner Greif, who considered how cultural ideas and social institutions shape economic activities, from promoting economic growth to reverting the 'tragedy of the common.'

As the case of the Manangis illustrates, humans can create social institutions that establish shared social practices (or norms) that reinforce cultural ideas (or social values) that promote socially desirable behaviors. Viewed in this way, appropriate social institutions are critical for bringing about positive changes in a society. **From this perspective, development is, to a large extent, about developing social institutions that enable a community to achieve their aspirations—ones that are compatible with their values and priorities.**

Not all societies have a clear sense of their shared aspirations as well as institutional capacity to achieve them. In some societies, members neither share the same aspirations, nor have equal opportunities to voice them. In other societies, only a fraction of social members establishes social norms that hinder aspirations of half the population. Precisely because of internal power relations and the fact that social norms are often unquestionable, interactions with outsiders such as development practitioners are crucial for bringing about positive social changes—or development—in a community.

How then do we assess institutional strength of a community so that development effort can build upon it, supporting its growth and helping it mature, rather than importing institutional

arrangements from another society out of context?   Some of the questions that would be fruitful to think about include:

- How can we develop a language or a methodology for recognizing institutional strength of a community?

- Can we develop and test an index, a set of vocabulary, or a set of criteria that captures various attributes of societies that have well-functioning social institutions that facilitate and enable social members to achieve their aspirations?

- What does it mean to have a strong local social institution? Does strong mean strict, absolute, undisputable, incontestable, and punitive, or is it the opposite?

These questions are meant to prompt some concrete discussions in development discourse as scholars and practitioners seek to reshape current development paradigm and give new directions to development practice.

Exploring a Language and a Methodology for Recognizing Local Institutional Strength

Elinor Ostrom, an economist and political scientist, who challenged the idea of the 'tragedy of the commons', for example, observed eight features that were present in communities that succeeded in managing common pool of resources without private ownership or government intervention. Their self-governance facilitated cooperation, motivated people to act in the interest of the collective to which they belonged and reverted the 'tragedy of the commons'. These features, abstracted from Ostrom's research in different parts of the world, have served as guides for facilitating collective actions for governing common resources. (The list of eight principles is in Appendix 1).

- Can we similarly develop and test a set of indicators/attributes that stands for the various dimensions of institutional strength?

- Parallel to Human Development Index, for example, can we develop 'Institutional Strength Index' or 'Social Capital Index'? What dimensions or aspects of this index can be best represented qualitatively vs quantitatively?

- Within a nation, there are diverse communities with different needs and desires, and different scales of community. How can we think about different scales of local social institutions and development practice at different tiers?

- Can the methodology and index be scaled up and down?

Exploring such indicators would certainly require looking at different societies in various contexts in multiple parts of the world, testing the limitation of such indicators and refining them. Moving between the specifics and the general is precisely what is needed for developing a new framework. I see this as one crucial area of new research in development. As a starting point for thinking more about parameters that capture and/or indicate institutional strength, I have listed some key attributes of the Manangi society that have enabled them to thrive. This list is in Appendix 2. What else could and should be in the index?

Development Practice as an Open-ended Cultural Exchange

The idea of what constitutes development is far from being universal. People of different places have differing priorities and values, which drive their differing desires and aspirations. The diversity of ecological landscapes also imposes different constraints and offers different opportunities. An awareness and an understanding of these differences can enable development practitioners to genuinely serve the community. Likewise, communities—like all of us—can benefit from being exposed to alternative ways of thinking about the world, being inspired by alternative values, ambitions, and being introduced to numerous paths that other societies have taken and their lessons learned. Dialogues between development practitioners and local communities that are founded on genuine interests in learning about the other can serve as a mirror for reflecting on one's own cultural assumptions and questioning values and social practices that one has taken for granted. Cross-cultural conversations with a different other therefore leads to a better understanding of oneself and one's own society, including an awareness of internal power dynamics. A cultural exchange between development practitioners and local communities thus brings together an array of cultural resources for imagining development.

Perhaps one of the most important contributions development practitioners can bring is an insightful understanding of a community from an outsider's perspective. To provide such contribution, development practitioners need to behave like an anthropologist. On one hand, anthropologists immerse themselves in a culture to understand the subjective experiences of social actors. Such participation enables them to understand the larger social forces that shape individuals' thoughts, social actions, desires and decisions. On the other hand, anthropologists, as outsiders, observe from a cultural distance. Such observations reveal the larger social structures, underlying cultural assumptions, and internal power relations that may be less visible to members of a society. Critical engagement of development practitioners (with an awareness of their own values and cultural assumptions) with local

communities can empower local communities to become aware of how their societies work, how they are moving forward, and how community members can have an influence on the future of their societies. With a better understanding of their own society, local communities, with support of development practitioners, can brainstorm and device possible means for realizing their visions. For development practice to be a meaningful process, communication and cultural exchange must remain reciprocal. As in any two-way communication, it is not possible to know in advance what the outcome would be. But it is this openness that leaves the space for local communities to imagine their own version of development that is compatible with their needs, values, and priorities.

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Appendix 1

Based on research from many parts of the world, Elinor Ostrom (1990) identified eight following principles that guide successful self-governance of common resources:

1. Rules about who has access to what resources are clearly defined. Resources are not

free for all.

2. Rules are specific to each social and ecological context. No one-size-fits-all.

3. Users collectively participate in decision making setting and modifying rules, making punishment decisions.

4. Users monitor resource conditions and users' behaviors. Users' duty is proportional to their benefits.

5. Punishment or sanctions for those who break the rules are gradual, for example from warnings to fines before exclusion from usage.

6. Good (accessible, low-cost, straight forward) conflict resolution methods are in place

7. The common rules are recognized by local authority as legitimate

8. The governing of the commons is nested within larger networks of cooperation

Appendix 2

Some key attributes of the Manangi society.

Some of these points may not be reflected in the above discussion about the Manangi community. Writings about the Manangis can be found in the reference.

A link to a visual presentation about the Manangi community is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5xD_tb1zt0)

1. Aligning individuals' interests with collective goals

   - Individuals fulfill their goals and aspirations through collective effort, knowing that the viability of the collective serves each of them individually.

   - Succeed at identifying shared goals: in trade, religious practice, provision of public goods.

   - Majority of people participate in creating institutions such as rooming house, rotation systems for hosting fasting retreat, gambling festival, and picnic.

2. Adaptive, sophisticated because many people involved in finding creative solutions

   - The organization of rooming houses, community and religious festivals have changed according to changing circumstances

3. High tax – contribution according to means/capacity.

- Pooling of resources (knowledge in trading, donation, labor)

- Many social obligations (e.g. to share knowledge and skills in trade, sponsor religious retreats, participate in gambling)

- Different ability to contribute and differing levels of contribution is acknowledged – socially recognized, celebrated, appreciated.

4. High emphasis on redistribution, public access

- A pool of knowledge about and skills in gem trade

- Pooling and redistributing capital

- Equal sharing of responsibilities: for hosting picnics and communal religious festivals

- Communal infrastructures to support vulnerable members

5. High degree of information flow

- About individuals (amount of donation, financial credibility, moral character, kinship network, location in the diaspora) through frequent social and religious gatherings.

- Financial transparency and accountability of any collective funds. Social reputations have consequences.

6. More emphasis on equity/equal opportunities than ability/merits

- Leadership and central administrative positions are filled on the basis of rotation rather than election