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Canadian Aid Policy in the New Millennium: Paradoxes and Tensions

Introduction

David R. Black, Dalhousie University

“Historically, Canadian aid policy has been the focus of a long tradition of scholarly analysis and debate. This work persisted through the dismal decade of the 1990s, when some of the most important and enduring scholarly contributions emerged, notwithstanding a ‘real world’ context in which Canadian aid was cut in half as a percentage of GDP and the very future of the international aid regime was brought into question.

“Ironically, the volume and level of scholarly debate about Canadian aid policy has declined significantly since the start of the new millennium, even as the Canadian government initiated a sustained re-investment in development assistance and renewed efforts to reform aid administration and strengthen effectiveness. To be sure, individual scholars have continued to make useful contributions, and non-governmental organizations — notably the umbrella Canadian Council for International Co-operation—have provided important ongoing analyses and commentaries. Nevertheless, it is fair to say that Canada’s aid program has been subject to considerably less academic scrutiny and debate, even as the salience of development assistance has risen sharply within and beyond this country ...

“This thematic section is conceived as a partial corrective to this trend and, we hope, a stimulus to renewed analysis and debate. The five articles together provide wide-ranging treatments of key dynamics and trends in Canadian aid policy-making and the role of its principal architect and agent, CIDA ...”

The Canadian International Development Agency: New Policies, Old Problems

David R. Black, Dalhousie University

Rebecca Tiessen, Dalhousie University

The Canadian International Development Agency is confronted by an extraordinary range of cross-pressures that have prevented it from sustaining a coherent mission, stable policy priorities, and long-discussed administrative reforms. These cross-pressures are in the first place normative — between more cosmopolitan and more sovereignty-affirming orientations. They are then traced through three levels of analysis: transnational, governmental, and state-societal. Particular attention is given to the pivotal theme of “partnership,” which illuminates normative and institutional cross-pressures at both state-societal and transnational levels. Neither the 2005 International Policy Statement nor the subsequent election of a Conservative minority government has given any clear indication that these cross pressures can be effectively accommodated.

‘Creating the world’s best development agency’? Confusion and Contradictions in CIDA’s New Policy Blueprint

Stephen Brown, University of Ottawa

Analysis of Canada’s International Policy Statement as a blueprint for radically improving the work of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The overarching objective and motivation of the Statement’s chapter on development — improving aid delivery, not only to combat poverty abroad, but also to serve Canadian interests, including the provision for Canada of a more prominent role in international affairs — is examined. The principal means of achieving this goal are analyzed: influencing policy priorities in developing countries, improving aid effectiveness through greater selectivity in the choice of recipients, disbursing more aid to fewer countries and in fewer sectors, and attaining greater coherence with other Canadian government policies. The Statement’s confusion and contradictions, it is argued, coupled with the relatively modest increase in resources it foresees, make it unlikely to have a transformative effect, let alone a significant positive impact on either Canada’s development aid program or CIDA’s international standing.

CIDA in the Americas: New Directions and Warning Signs for Canadian Development Policy

John Cameron, Dalhousie University

Examination of the policy implications of the Development chapter of the Canadian government’s 2005 International Policy Statement through a specific focus on Canadian development assistance to Latin America. An analysis of the IPS through the regional lens of the Americas raises important questions about broader aspects of Canadian aid, including the Canadian International Development Agency’s failure to explicitly address economic inequality within developing countries, the extent to which aid allocation remains closely linked to foreign policy interests, and the ways in which CIDA conceptualizes both development assistance and developing countries.

Canada’s Approach to Good Governance in Bangladesh: Exploring the Dynamics of Social Change

Fahimul Quadir, York University

Exploration of the meaning and significance of Canada’s governance framework. The distinctiveness of Canada’s governance approach is identified by taking a closer look at Canada’s governance activities in Bangladesh. Canada’s governance framework, although it draws on the dominant liberal philosophical tradition that focuses on the promotion of both procedural democracy and the free market, recognizes the synergy among democracy promotion, market reform, and social development. Despite its innovation, Canada’s governance framework does not ground the challenge of governance and human development in a comprehensive, more distinct theoretical base, leading to analytical and policy problems concerning its approach to state–civil society relations in particular.

From Inter-Dependence to Conflation: Security and Development in the Post-9/11 Era

Erin Simpson

Debates about the interconnections between security and development are not new. Following the attacks of 9/11, however, the security-development nexus shifted from abstract interdependence to political justification for the conceptual and practical conflation of the two fields. The security-development nexus is shifting the terrains of development: official development assistance is being used to strengthen the security and counter-terrorism objectives of donors; growing lists of weak and conflicted states (“failed and fragile states”) are being targeted for multi-pronged state-building projects involving Western military forces; and humanitarian action is being used by governments to strengthen military and political strategies. Development discourse, development resources, and the public support for development are at risk of being hijacked by an agenda that, in reality, has little to do with development. It is transforming development and enabling a broader transformation of Canadian foreign policy.

Articles

Ownership and Participation: The Limitations of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Approach

Mia Mouelhi and Arne Rückert

In recent years, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have shifted their policy orientation away from a focus on economic growth alone towards a greater emphasis on country ownership and civil society participation. This found expression in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper approach introduced in the late 1990s. However, this new approach does not yet represent the fundamental change necessary to foster meaningful ownership reflective of country priorities and circumstances. In support of this argument, the inherent contradictions and constraints of the PRSP approach are examined, drawing on several developing country experiences with poverty reduction strategies.

La situation des diplômés de la formation professionnelle sur le marché du travail au Maroc : Une analyse sexo-spécifique à l'aide des modèles de durée

Brahim Boudarbat, Université de Montréal

Graduates of Morocco's vocational training system remain in a very precarious position on the labour market, despite improvements to the system over the past 20 years. Data from a 2000 study of the career paths of graduates are analyzed to determine the factors favouring or hindering employment. The analysis is based on duration modelling applied to the length of unemployment before the first employment. Results confirm the disorganized state of the labour market in Morocco. Training geared to informal economies offers a greater potential for employment. Soliciting help from parents and friends increases access to employment, particularly for girls, as do using training centres or consulting employment ads in newspapers, although comparatively less so than personal connections. The father's profession is instrumental. Children of managers and skilled trades are more likely to find employment. Finally, internships are shown to be more helpful for girls than boys.

Research Note

Exploring the Wellbeing Index as a Measure of Development Diversity

Kim Naqvi, Thompson Rivers University

Review of Robert Prescott-Allen's Wellbeing Index, as applied in a multi-country study. Designed for policy and planning, the index has two dimensions: an index of human well-being and of ecosystem well-being. As such, it creates a unique perspective by identifying diverse relationships between the dimensions. Though logically constructed, and easy to interpret and manipulate, it incorporates assumptions that invite further exploration. Two of these, the relationship between income and human well-being, and the social value of fertility rates below replacement, are tested to see how they affect the index and the resulting world map of well-being.

Reviews

Fair Trade Coffee: The Prospects and Pitfalls of Market-Driven Social Justice, Gavin Fridell

Ian Hudson, University of Manitoba

Bread and Stones: Leadership and the Struggle to Reform the United Nations World Food Programme, James Ingram

D. John Shaw, former economic adviser and chief, Policy Affairs Service, World Food Programme

Pakistan: Social and Cultural Transformations in a Muslim Nation, Mohammad Abdul Qadeer

Farzad R. Khan, Lahore University of Management Sciences

Sortir l'Afrique du gouffre de l'histoire : Le défi éthique du développement et de la renaissance de l'Afrique noire, Yao Assogba

Nuah M. Makungu M., Université du Québec en Outaouais

Democracy and Civil Society in Asia (2 vol.), Fahimul Qadir and Jayant Lele

Syed Serajul Islam, Lakehead University