

This emphasis on the need for proactive policy on FDI in order to reap its benefits is among the central messages that come out of this book. In relation to the academic literature on FDI and development, this does not really constitute the 'rethinking' that the title of the book promises. The need for proactive policy has been emphasised in this literature for some time, for example, in the work of Ranjeesh Narula. As mentioned, I would argue that the book largely accepts the orthodox academic literature on how FDI should be understood and analysed. Also, it is unclear what sustainable development means in this framework of this book, and how FDI gets us there (beyond transferring 'green' technology and not polluting more than domestic firms).

Nevertheless, as an assessment of Latin America's experience with FDI, the book represents a timely and valuable contribution. The argument that governments need policy space to develop proactive policy for fostering spillovers is an important one, and it is also one that comes out of some of the research that I have been involved in. This is inherently a critique of the common sense that has dominated thinking under the Washington Consensus; that governments should liberalise, get out of the way, and spillovers would be generated automatically. Whether or not actual policy has ever been that simplified, the book is probably correct in its assertion that Latin American governments have missed valuable opportunities by not being more selective about FDI, and by not implementing appropriate policy in relation to FDI. As this book makes clear, FDI is not an end in itself, but it can be a means to economic development if it is accompanied with the appropriate policy.

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**Gay, D.,** 2009: *Reflexivity and Development Economics: Methodology, Policy and Practice*. London: Palgrave MacMillan. 224 pp. £65.00 hard. ISBN: 0-230 22016-9.

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The book asks the questions: what is 'reflexivity'? and why does it matter for development economics? Whilst the term reflexivity has a number of different definitions, one prominent meaning refers to the attempt by the researcher or examiner to put herself in the shoes of the object of examination; to examine her own background and predispositions rather than to imagine that she has a 'neutral' or 'unbiased' stance. Reflexivity rejects one-size-fits-all blueprints that inform policies advocated to developing countries. It acknowledges that the challenges and opportunities to development differ due to the wide variation across developing countries and inherent subjectivities of certain kinds of 'objective' knowledge. Therefore, development economics should be context relevant, and open to revision of ideas and self-criticism.

The book is divided into two components. The first half engages with modernism and post-modernism in social theory; theories of reflexivity; reflexivity in development economics; and offers a taxonomy to inform development economics and methodology. The author includes case studies of Singapore and the South Pacific island of Vanuatu to dialectically engage with and draw lessons for development methodology and policy.

The major strength of the book is that it educates economists subscribing to the mainstream orthodoxy as well as those discontented by the hegemony of 'economics' in development thought and praxis. The author calls on economists to engage with and reflect on the methodological underpinnings that have informed development orthodoxy in recent years – in the form of Washington Consensus and the deceptively similar post-Washington Consensus. The author reminds

us that the discipline of economics is not a study of atomic individuals devoid of time and space but that of social relations. A multitude of distinct and overlapping debates prevail within the discipline. Economists such as Keynes, Kalecki, Hirschmann and Sen can contribute immensely towards transcending the ongoing, bipolar debates between modernism and post-modernism in economics and in the social sciences in general.

The importance of being reflexive and finding a balance between the subjective and the objective are central themes that the author not only advocates to agents of the development process but also puts into practice throughout the book. Rather than simply criticising modernism, post-modernism and the Washington/post-Washington Consensus, he offers a taxonomy to inform successful development praxis. The taxonomy calls on development agents: to reflect on external assumptions and values; be cognisant of local context; recognise the limitations of economic methodology; and allow for theory to be revised if proven inadequate or obsolete over time. Simultaneously, he argues in the spirit of reflexivity that the taxonomy cannot claim permanency in overcoming the methodological division between modernism and post-modernism, on the one hand (pp. 13–37). On the other hand, the taxonomy was developed alongside the case studies, and the case studies are far from ‘objective’ and natural tests of the taxonomy.

Relatedly, he qualifies his choice of empirical comparisons by pointing out that comparative research can benefit from focusing on countries where one has lived in and is able to recount the economic life, the impact of political decisions and economic trends (pp. 59–95). Such nuanced details would not always be obvious to those relying on ‘objective’ criteria alone (such as per capital gross domestic product [GDP], population and size of economy) as a basis for case study selections. Nevertheless, a comparison

between Singapore (pp. 146–77), one of the more monetised economies in world, and Vanuatu (pp. 108–45), where a ‘*kastom*’ (meaning based on custom) economy coexists with a cash-based one, is also interesting and relevant from an objective point of view. While Singapore’s transformation from a low to a high-income country has important lessons for the ‘Anti-Crusoe’ economy of Vanuatu, he argues that the level of political freedom and ‘subjective happiness’ that citizens of Vanuatu enjoy reduces the gap in human development (defined as beyond economic growth) between the two countries, and offers important lessons for the ‘lionized city’.

The major weakness is that the author risks depoliticising development in at least three significant ways. First, the author shies away from sufficiently politicising the ‘state’. As the author points out, despite differences in initial conditions which no doubt aided in its process of economic growth, Singapore was blessed with an embedded and simultaneously autonomous state/governing elite that was able to: handpick winners; discipline industry; bargain effectively with external partners; constantly reinvent its economic policies in light of new challenges; and negotiate social contract that entailed relinquishing political freedom for economic well-being (pp. 156–62). In comparison, the major policy agenda of the Asian Development Bank-led ‘Comprehensive Reform Program’ (CRP) in Vanuatu was that of rolling back of the state, which further crippled an already debilitated bureaucracy and governing elite. The nature of the state in Vanuatu – fragmented by inter-island politics and restricted to the urban areas – is only discussed in passing (pp. 125–28).

Second, the author risks romanticising ‘local people’ and ‘consultations’ in his discussions of Vanuatu, in particular. He argues that one of the major reasons why CRP failed and/or led to outcomes which were diametrically opposite of what it intended to achieve, was because local people were

not consulted during the formulation of the CRP (p. 133). The author posits that polices post-CRP are proving to be more successful precisely because local people have been better consulted. But anyone who has worked in Vanuatu will agree that the development agenda post-CRP, although arguably more 'consultative' than before, has become even more inarticulate and less visionary. The 'Priorities Action Agenda' and the subsequent 'Planning Long and Acting Short' agendas include all the latest concepts in development vogue inserted to appease the donors and the many disjointed grievances that the differently situated local actors living in urban areas have, and effectively excludes 95 per cent of the 'local people' who live in rural areas and were not part of the consultation (p. 142).

Finally, the book does not explain why modernist economic methodology has prevailed and continues to inform development policy in the form the post-Washington Consensus? This is in spite of plurality of epistemologies within the economic discipline. Perhaps indulging in these questions is going beyond the scope of the book. But some insights would be helpful in conceptualising alternatives, and moving beyond the current economic orthodoxy.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the book exposes the epistemological and practical fallacies of polices preached by the economic orthodoxy in developing countries. It greatly contributes to the imperative task of self-reflection needed within the economics discipline, and is particularly timely in light of the recurring financial crisis from the Asian to the current. While this is a largely theoretical and methodological undertaking, the chapters on Vanuatu and Singapore are a must read for professionals concerned about development.

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**Higate, P. and Henry, M., 2009:** *Insecure Spaces: Peacekeeping, Power and Performance in Haiti, Kosovo and Liberia*. London: Zed Books. xiii + 189 pp. £65.00 cloth, £18.99 paper. ISBN: 9781842778869 cloth, 9781842778876 paper.

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With the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January 2010, the recent International Court of Justice ruling that Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia was not illegal and the ongoing controversies surrounding the war crimes trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor, a book bringing together all three of these cases is more than opportune. Focusing on the oft-ignored audiences of United Nations (UN) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) peacekeeping missions and based on an intertwining of critical theoretical frameworks and qualitative fieldwork, *Insecure Spaces* offers a welcome and grounded contribution to debates regarding security, power, peace and humanitarianism. Impressively researched and lucidly written, this interdisciplinary account of the daily practices of peacekeeping personnel should be of interest to scholars of development studies, international relations, peace studies and political geography. Moreover, given its straightforward and engaging style, this slim volume is approachable to both scholars and practitioners in these fields.

Based on ethnographic research conducted between 2004 and 2007, empirical material from Kosovo, Liberia and Haiti is interwoven into theoretically themed chapters. Whilst this perhaps compromises the utility of the text for policymakers, it ensures that the cases speak to each other and that the book contributes to debates beyond these individual contexts. In outlining the political history of each case, a balanced mix is achieved between contextual information and the authors' personal experiences of these post-conflict spaces. The rationale behind focusing on these particular cases in terms of missions from

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