

# Emerging Ideas

The Newsletter of The International  
Development Studies Program

## FROM THE ROCKING CHAIR OF DR. LI

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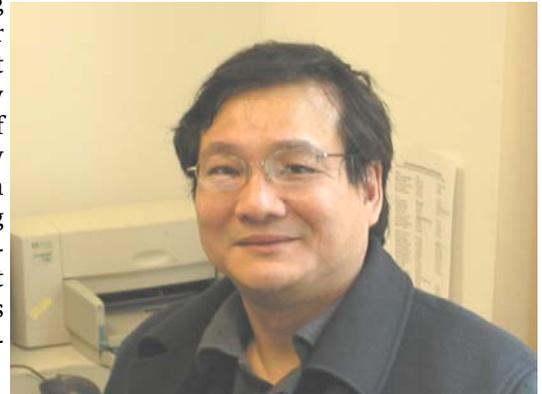
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**EMERGING IDEAS**

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During the spring break, on a typical early spring Sunday afternoon, I was sitting in a rocking chair in the front porch of my house, enjoying the sight of budding greens on trees and shrubs in my neighborhood. Birds were chirping around me as if they liked my company on that still a bit chilly day. As I was trying to relax myself to the rhythm of the rocking chair, my mind was instead drifting into a deep reflection on a theoretical question relating to international development: "Is it true that Wallerstein's world system theory is no longer as relevant as it used to be to international development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world economy?"



My memory brought me back to last August when I attended the annual meeting of American Sociological Association and joined in the debate on the withering of the world-system paradigm in the new era of globalization. I took the position that we might be in a paradigm shift in theorizing about development, namely that the Marxist theories that emphasize the opposition between North-South economic interests were giving way to more Weberian-driven theories pointing to mutual or multiple beneficial relations in North-South economic exchange. The rise of Asia, particularly the East Asia region, in recent years, convinced me that a win-win situation for both North and South might be a trend for the 21<sup>st</sup> century world economy. However, I started to question this paradigm shift when I found myself caught up in a cross-fire argument in my pro-seminar class last quarter.

My memory zoomed in on a class scene in the Yamada house seminar room where the class was engaged in a heated debate on the issues raised by Michael Maren in his book, "*The Road to Hell: the Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity.*" I was taken aback by how vastly different the views of American students were from the views of international students (mostly from developing countries). More specifically, the two sides were poles apart in how they viewed the North-South economic relations. While the American students tended to see Maren's claim controversial, the international students strongly supported Maren with their own eyewitness accounts of what was happening to their countries. That class was one of the few most exciting ones I have ever had since I began teaching at OU. When the debate was over, I was left with a tough question to ponder: Is it really true that Wallerstein's world system theory has now run out of steam and largely lost touch with the current global reality as some have claimed?

Birds were still chirping around me on that early spring Sunday afternoon, but I was no longer in the mood to keep them company. I pulled myself out of the rocking chair and walked back into my tiny study where I sunk into an office chair and picked up Amy Chua's "*World On Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability,*" which had been resting without any interruption on my bookshelf for a year...



The spring quarter has come. It is a crucial time for second year students to finish their theses or grant proposals, and for first year students to establish their research projects or internships. It will be best if students are well prepared from the beginning, as there are many procedures which will take time and energy.

Second year students must submit their theses or grant proposals by May 26. Graduation will be held on June 9, 2006. If a student has a problem regarding a thesis or grant proposal, he or she should ask Dr Li for further assistance immediately. Moreover, students need to check with Jill McKinney for the status of their credit hours. This is important for graduation because International Development Studies has core, methods, development and disciplinary elective course requirements. If students need to extend their academic year until the end of the summer, they should speak to Dr Li as soon as possible.

First year students should have some ideas for summer. Generally, there are three options: take summer classes, do an internship or do research. It is best if students already have an idea for their capstone projects. In addition, an internship can count as an elective course, and first year students may apply for a financial award from IDS for their summer endeavors. Students from Southeast Asia and students who wish to do research in Southeast Asian countries can also apply for a financial award through the Southeast Asia Department.

For students who are doing research, these are some steps to be done before going into the field:

1. Take one or two methods courses to know what the most important aspects are when doing research. (Quantitative, Qualitative or both).
2. Consult with Dr Li what about what your research is on.
3. If possible, find your committee chairperson to help guide your focus
4. Make a research proposal because some committee members will ask you to defend your project before you go into the field, and it will help you to focus your project. If you have questions about writing a proposal, do not hesitate to ask a second year student
5. You can use your proposal to apply for financial awards for field research
6. If possible, ask your source in the field to give you a recommendation for award applications. It will also be useful when you take care of the International Review Board (IRB) requirements (see above).

!Remember to book travel tickets early as they will be more expensive the longer you wait!

### **International Review Board (IRB)**

Students, who do field research (either quantitative, qualitative or both) have to obtain permission from the IRB. Students can not go to the field before they have IRB approval.

There are some steps to getting IRB approval. You can access information at: [http://www.ohiou.edu/research/compliance/HUMAN\\_IRB\\_GUIDE.DOC](http://www.ohiou.edu/research/compliance/HUMAN_IRB_GUIDE.DOC)

You can also find a link on the IDS website under 'research'. If you still have questions, contact a second year student or a Graduate Assistant (GA).



**The first thesis group meeting in the Front Room**

### **Thesis Group Work?**

One assumes that a thesis is an individual activity, but some second year students have another opinion. (from left) Winnie, Takashi, Anna, Patrick, Neelam and Ezki think that the thesis process should be considered group work. The group meets to share and give each other input every Thursday night in the Front Room, Baker center or in the library. The first meeting was February 23, 2006. The group shared challenges such as how to narrow down their theses' topics, how to limit sources and how to formulate research questions.

**Being in Athens with My Family By: Haajima Degia**

When I heard that I had received a Fulbright scholarship, I was on top of the world. However, there was one drawback. The scholarship board was sending me to Ohio University, located in some rural town called Athens!! I had my sights set on New York University. I have friends in NY, and my plans were to have my friends help with the children, and for my husband to visit us during vacations (its only 4 hours by plane from Barbados to NY).

Well, we had to make some tough decisions and I decided to leave my children in Barbados while I came and settled down in Athens. It was especially tough because the children were so young (3 years and 20 months) but I told myself that I had received a scholarship and I could not just give it up. My husband has a large extended family and they helped look after the children. I came to Athens at the beginning of August, and fortunately, by October, I was reunited with my family.

The process of bringing the family to Athens went pretty smoothly. It only required getting J2 visas for everyone, which in itself was not so difficult. My husband made a tremendous sacrifice, though, by giving up his job and coming to Athens to takes care of the children while I pursue my degree. The children have adjusted very well, although on cold days, my son Abdullah says he wants to go back to sunny Barbados. Now I think that Athens is the perfect place for me to be with my family because the pace of life is slow and it is a beautiful, natural place. Furthermore, I would never have chosen to visit a typical American small town, so I am happy to be able to observe the social dynamics and culture of rural America. On days when I am not too busy, we like to take walks. We have visited the Kennedy Museum of Art and the Athens County Museum, too, and it's just amazing to see how the town has developed.

My husband is Barbadian and I am the daughter of Indian immigrants who came to Barbados from Northern India in the 1960s. Nevertheless, I remain committed to Barbados' development, and its culture, and I plan to return home and make a positive contribution there, especially in helping to preserve the uniqueness of Barbados' culture. Barbados is more than just a place 'where the sun always shines.' It is a middle income country, with a highly skilled and literate population (98% literacy). People from Barbados are called Bajans. Although English is officially the lingua franca, most Bajans speak a dialect which has its roots in African language because the population is mostly made up of descendants of African slaves.



**Aminah, Abdullah and Haajima**

We had no cultural or language problems adjusting to America since Barbados is a western society and most of the mainstream norms and values of Barbados mirror those of the USA. Yet, Bajan culture is still very unique in many ways. For example, we have our own cuisine, a creole cuisine ('creole' designates an acculturation process of different cultural groups), which I believe is very similar to North Carolina and Louisiana creole (some similar ingredients are okra and cornmeal). Traditional Barbadian cooking also utilizes ingredients that are commonly used in West African food such as yams and plantains. We buy those specialty foods in Columbus where there is a larger African population.

Being in Athens is a great experience for my whole family. We have met people from all over the world, and many people who did not know Barbados even existed can now even find it on the map!

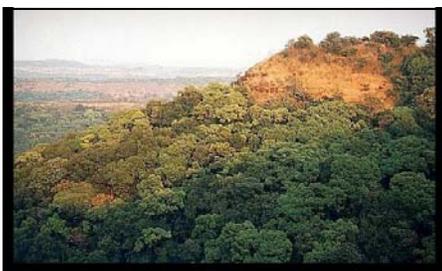


## Neelam's research: Sleeping with the ticks By: Neelam Singh

One December afternoon in 2005, a four hour bus ride took me to the quiet, beautiful village of Tamini. I was finally in the heartland of the western Indian state of Maharashtra – the site of my thesis field work. Some school children greeted me at the bus stop with shy smiles and directed me to the house of my contact person (who had no idea that I existed. The lack of a telephone in the village meant that I couldn't make any prior contact). The name of the contact person had come from someone who had visited the village a few years before. My first hour in the village was spent trying to somehow convince the people of my motives in a language that they didn't understand. I had been over-enthusiastic and had decided to go to my first site alone while my translator, Vinay, was supposed to join me a day later. As it was not proper for a girl to wander around when she didn't even know the language, I was advised to go back to the city and come with someone later. Eventually I was allowed to stay and wait for Vinay. That was the start of my field work. Fortunately, the experiences in the subsequent days were not as shocking – neither to me, nor to my various hosts.



The Western Ghats is a mountainous region running parallel to India's western coast. The Pune district, where my field work was based, is towards its northernmost end. The Ghats are home to an immense biodiversity, some of which is protected, or at least contained, by sacred groves. Sacred groves are patches of forest that, as the name suggests, have been set aside by a village in honor of a local deity or ancestral spirit. A number of restrictions apply to the use of these groves which, in effect, assist in protecting the biodiversity within them. I selected four such groves and tried to understand some of the factors that might influence their condition such as the people's beliefs and perceptions, their nature of their dependency on forests and their accessibility to other forests.



**Bhimashankar Sanctuary**

I spent a few days in each of the four villages conducting interviews and making rudimentary botanical observations along a trail in the sacred groves. A typical day would begin early with extra sweet tea. Then Vinay (or Manoj, my friend and translator during the second half of the field work) and I set out to talk to men and women in their homes before they were too busy preparing to leave for work in the fields or to go to the forest to collect fuel wood or to take their cattle out for grazing. As the day progressed, we would shift the focus to the grove where I took my transect measurements. While I worked Vinay would search for various species of snakes and scorpions and Manoj would admire the birds and the majestic trees, try to catch a nap in the shade or enjoy the "bucolic" charm of the place. When possible, we would go to nearby fields to gather information from the villagers or set-up appointments for the evening. Evenings would be devoted to conducting interviews with people in their homes, on porches, next to the path, on the temple steps, or near the stream.



**A villager collects sap from a sacred grove to make a local alcoholic drink.**

Some memorable experiences include sleeping in the same room/shed/house with cows and buffalos (sleeping in the same shed as a cow with a bell around its neck was especially challenging), washing clothes and utensils in a stream, going for days with the knowledge that ticks were living on me but not getting enough privacy to get rid of them (taking a hot bath combined with plucking works!), and completing the field work with the help of a translator.



**Aceh: Why reconstruction is going slowly By: Ezki Widiati**

“Will we still live in this tent next year?” This question came from Sobari, a twelve-year-old boy, who was living in a tent with his family. Sobari is a survivor from the December 26, 2004 tsunami in Aceh. The tsunami also hit other parts of Indonesia, like Nias, other countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and The Maldives, and some countries in Africa such as Tanzania and Kenya. In Aceh there were nearly 180,000 people killed by the tsunami and some 500,000 houses and buildings were destroyed. Sobari asked this question because it had been a year that he had been living in a tent and going to an alternative school.

It is an interesting situation because when the tsunami devastated Aceh, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and international, national and local communities promised to rebuild Aceh quickly so that the Acehnese could return to their normal lives as soon as possible. Yet, the rebuilding effort has gone slowly, and there have been many unexpected obstacles. For example, there have been religious and cultural misconceptions, a lack of quality human resources, poor security guarantees, and concerns about the credibility of the Indonesian government. Yet the most significant factor is poor coordination among the NGOs. Even though the government established an agency to work as a mediator and a facilitator of reconstruction, uncoordinated NGO efforts are still hurting the efforts to rebuild.



**Lamno Children in Aceh who have been living in tents for one**

Another big challenge has been in deciding which human resources will work best in Aceh. This is an essential issue because Aceh has been in conflict for almost thirty years, and conflict has deteriorated the quality of human resources because of poor education. Then, NGO programs overlap each other. NGOs have similar programs and they have unskilled and unprepared management structures.

One of the biggest issues is rebuilding housing, which has gone too slowly. 1,000,000 houses should have been built in the last year, but, until now, only 30,000 houses have actually been built. Acehnese Internally Displaced People (IDP) have been staying in tents since last year. This was supposed to be the government’s responsibility, but many NGOs and organizations, such as the European Union, USAID, the UN and World Vision, have promised to build houses, too. Houses, however, have not been built because it has been difficult to obtain raw materials. Raw materials have to be bought from outside Aceh and they are, thus, very expensive. Another reason why rebuilding has been going slowly is because of the lack of trust from international communities regarding the Indonesian government. Since the Suharto regime (1968 to 1998), for example, it has been well known that Indonesia is the sixth most corrupt country in the world.

My conclusion for progress toward solving these issues is that NGOs should have an evaluation schedule for their programs, and there should be both internal and external evaluation. In addition, international NGOs should ‘step by step’ give opportunities to national and local organizations to run the projects. It will be helpful not only for the organizations to learn new professional skills, but it will also empower native people.

Finally, the funding agencies should be careful in choosing their partners because competition among NGOs is sometimes unfair, they compete over project proposals to the same funding agencies. Therefore, it is important to know about a partner organization’s management and its board members, volunteers, staff, mission, goals, and self-evaluation schemes.



**ISU Research Symposium**, On February 17, 2006, Winnie Terry, Troy Johnson and Ezki Widiarti participated in a research symposium conducted by ISU at Baker Center. Winnie presented her research on micro finance for women in Tanzania. Troy explained how youth Islamic organizations in Indonesia were looking toward democratization, and Ezki gave a presentation on why reconstruction in Aceh is going slowly. It was an interesting exhibition because students brought up good questions and participants were well prepared with insightful answers. Troy also showed some interesting pictures, such as a Muslim demonstration in Jakarta, which were taken when he was in Jakarta and Yogyakarta.



**Troy Johnson explaining his research to OU students**



### **Quiet Zone!**

IDS would like to thank our dear Joan Kraynanski for her invaluable collaboration, insight, and organization during the 2006 IDS application process. There was a large and strong field of about 70 applicants from around the world. Joani helped IDS immensely with a successful and smooth application selection process.

### **Summer Institute on Peacebuilding & Conflict Resolution**

The Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT) is offering The Summer Institute on Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution (IPCR). IPCR is a 3-week program is offered in Santa Cruz, Bolivia on June 10 - July 1, 2006, and in Jakarta, Indonesia on July 22 - August 12, 2006. For more information, visit the ACT website at <http://www.conflicttransformation.org> or email [ipcr-bolivia@conflicttransformation.org](mailto:ipcr-bolivia@conflicttransformation.org) (Bolivia) or [ipcr-indonesia@conflicttransformation.org](mailto:ipcr-indonesia@conflicttransformation.org) (Indonesia)

### **Register and Visit 2006 Ohio University Student Research And Creative Activity Fair**

Last year 2005 IDS graduate Francisco Perez received the first place prize for social sciences (graduate students) for his thesis titled "Effects of Land Legalization in the Agrarian Dynamics of the Indigenous Communities of Alta Verpaz, Guatemala." Maybe this year we can repeat 1st place! For more information got to <http://www.ohiou.edu/research/students/>. Registration deadline: March 31, 2006.

### **Tropical Disease Research and Workshop In Ecuador**

Interested in spending the summer in beautiful Ecuador? Dr. Mario Grijalva of the OU Tropical Disease Institute is accepting applications for assistants in his research on Chagas disease in Ecuador. For more information see: [http://www.oucom.ohiou.edu/dbms-grijalva/Tropical\\_research2006.htm](http://www.oucom.ohiou.edu/dbms-grijalva/Tropical_research2006.htm). After the research, Dr. William Romoser is offering the 14th annual Tropical Disease Biology Workshop from August 5th to the 19th. For information see: <http://www.oucom.ohiou.edu/tdi/Ecuador2006/Workshopsummer2006.htm>

### **Botswana HIV/AIDS Program**

This is great program where you can spend the summer in Africa working on HIV/AIDS issues and get OU credits for it. For more information contact Mandi Chikombero at 593-4469, [chikombe@ohio.edu](mailto:chikombe@ohio.edu)

### **Fulbright Information**

If you haven't stopped by one of the Fulbright information sessions, you are missing a great opportunity to have the chance to compete for a Fulbright fellowship. The Fulbright foundation offers fellowship for US citizens to conduct research overseas, teach English, complete professional training in the creative or performing arts, or even take graduate classes. Contact: Elizabeth Clodfelter at [clodfele@ohio.edu](mailto:clodfele@ohio.edu) or 593-2302.