

---

# THE AGE OF DEVELOPMENT

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED OR RIP?

---

**This discussion paper summarises the evidence and debates for a ‘cup half full’ interpretation of development, which argues that poverty can be abolished within a matter of years. This abolition can be achieved while global health and education indicators are on a seemingly inexorable upward curve, along with human rights and political inclusion. In contrast, new thinking about development, exploring topics such as global climate change, inequality, well-being and human vulnerability to shocks, as well as the importance of systems thinking, suggests that any celebration of achievements is premature and much remains to be done. Readers are invited to consider how geographical research and education might contribute to these debates.**

**This paper was first published as an article in *Geography*, Volume 100 Part 2 (Summer 2015) under the same title.**

### **Oxfam Discussion Papers**

Oxfam Discussion Papers are written to contribute to public debate and to invite feedback on development and humanitarian policy issues. They are ‘work in progress’ documents, and do not necessarily constitute final publications or reflect Oxfam policy positions. The views and recommendations expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of Oxfam.

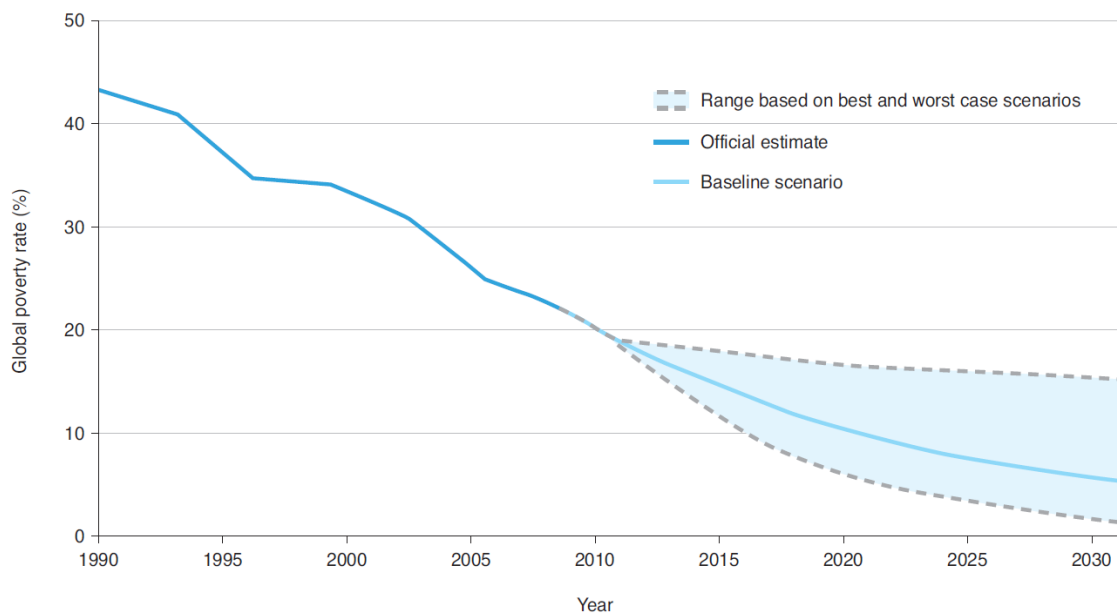
For more information, or to comment on this paper, email Duncan Green (dgreen@oxfam.org.uk)

Princeton Professor and statistics guru Angus Deaton called his recent publication (one of several ‘big books’ on development to appear in the last few years) *The Great Escape*, evoking what for him could be a great moment: the end of poverty, for the first time in the history of the species (Deaton, 2013). The economist Charles Kenny similarly titled his recent book *Getting Better*, highlighting what often fails to make media headlines or charity fundraising pitches – the steady improvement in the health and education of the majority of humanity (Kenny, 2011). Deaton, however, sees the ‘great escape’ as threatened by the growing extremes of global inequality. Others see a sticky end for our planet in the shape of looming climate catastrophe, species loss, or ‘banksters’<sup>1</sup> triggering a succession of financial collapses.

In this discussion paper, I summarise the evidence and debates that support the ‘cup half full’ interpretation of development, and the new thinking and concerns that suggest our understanding of development needs to change. I argue that celebration of achievements in this area is premature.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the article invites readers to consider how geographical research and education might contribute to these debates.

Let us start with the good news: global income poverty is falling as a percentage of the global population (Figure 1). The fall in terms of absolute numbers is even steeper, since the world’s population is still growing.

**Figure 1. Global poverty trajectory based on alternative scenarios for consumption growth and distribution, 1990–2030**

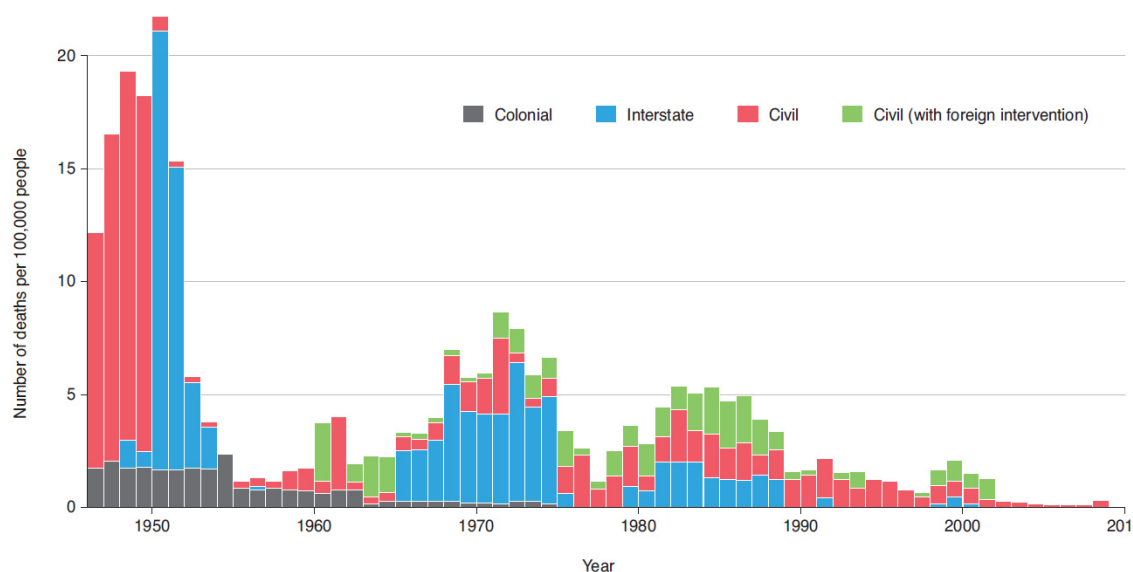


Similar progress can be seen in health and education. I find that visits to churchyards in the UK are particularly poignant because of the number of children’s graves from previous centuries. A hundred years ago, one in five US children died before the age of five, and life expectancy was just 54 years (Deaton, 2013). Nowadays all but the most broken of the world’s countries do better, even at lower levels of economic activity than the US a century ago – knowledge and technology (such as vaccines and basic sanitation) have seen to that. Universal primary education is expanding fast in most regions, and even in sub-Saharan Africa enrolment rose from 53% in 1990 to 77% in 2011 (UN, 2013).

Today’s policy makers are belatedly moving on to discuss quality as well as enrolment, along with secondary and tertiary provision. Literacy is also expanding rapidly (from 76% to 84% of all adults between 1990 and 2011), with the fastest rates among women (UN, 2013). Although the world’s political leaders and media are currently preoccupied with reducing the death toll in Syria, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, overall the number of ‘battle deaths’ (deaths from wars, be they colonial, inter-state, civil or civil with foreign intervention) is at a

historic low (Figure 2). Furthermore, beyond the very basic right not to die an untimely and violent death, notions of human rights are spreading to every corner of the globe, and expanding their remit to include those groups of people previously mistreated on the basis of their gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion or sexuality.

**Figure 2. The waning of war: world-wide battle deaths per 100,000 people**



In the sphere of formal politics, democracies are spreading and putting down deeper roots. Universal suffrage, which in 1900 existed only in New Zealand (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2014), now obtains in all but a handful of jurisdictions.

Winning the right to education or vote is just part of a wider process of women's emancipation, which includes international progress in tackling gender-based violence, increasing women's participation in the workforce, and the use of quotas to reboot women's participation in political leadership – a practice that has been introduced in different ways in some 90 countries (Quota Project, 2014).

Taken together, these advances constitute an undeniable 'age of development', an unprecedented transformation since the end of the Second World War and the completion of the decolonisation process. Nevertheless, this is hardly the end of human history. As some basic boxes of human deprivation have been ticked, our understanding of development has deepened (cf. Willis, 2014). In addition, new threats have appeared on the horizon and are approaching at alarming speed.

## WHAT IS POVERTY?

Achieving development is often equated with ending poverty, but as our understanding of poverty is far from static, this raises a series of new challenges. Research by the Chronic Poverty Research Centre and others has begun to study in more depth the lives of the estimated 1.2 billion people who live on less than US\$1.25 a day.<sup>3</sup> In particular, they draw a distinction between the transient poor – i.e. those people who move in and out of poverty over the course of a year, depending on circumstances, seasons etc. – and the chronic poor. Chronic poverty is different in both nature and degree from transient poverty: it describes a subset of poor people (up to 500 million across the globe) who live permanently below the poverty line, often over a number of generations. They consist of a kaleidoscope of excluded groups – children, casual labourers, smallholder farmers, disabled peoples, indigenous minorities, downtrodden castes, widows, remote communities, the elderly, people with mental

health problems, and often a combination of them. The standard development recipe of growth plus jobs may work for some of these groups, but not all. Issues such as social protection, and the importance of changing the social norms that perpetuate the exclusion of groups in particular cultures, e.g. dalits (formerly known as 'untouchables') in India, are just as important.

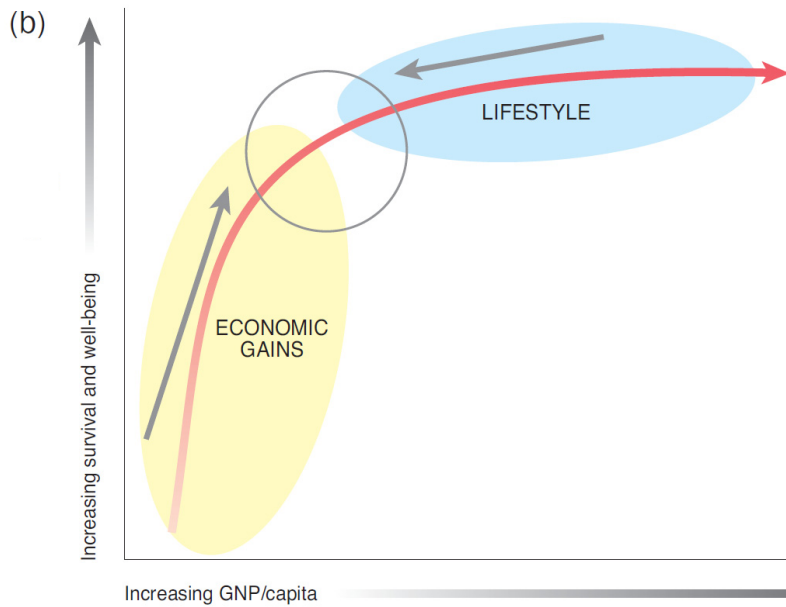
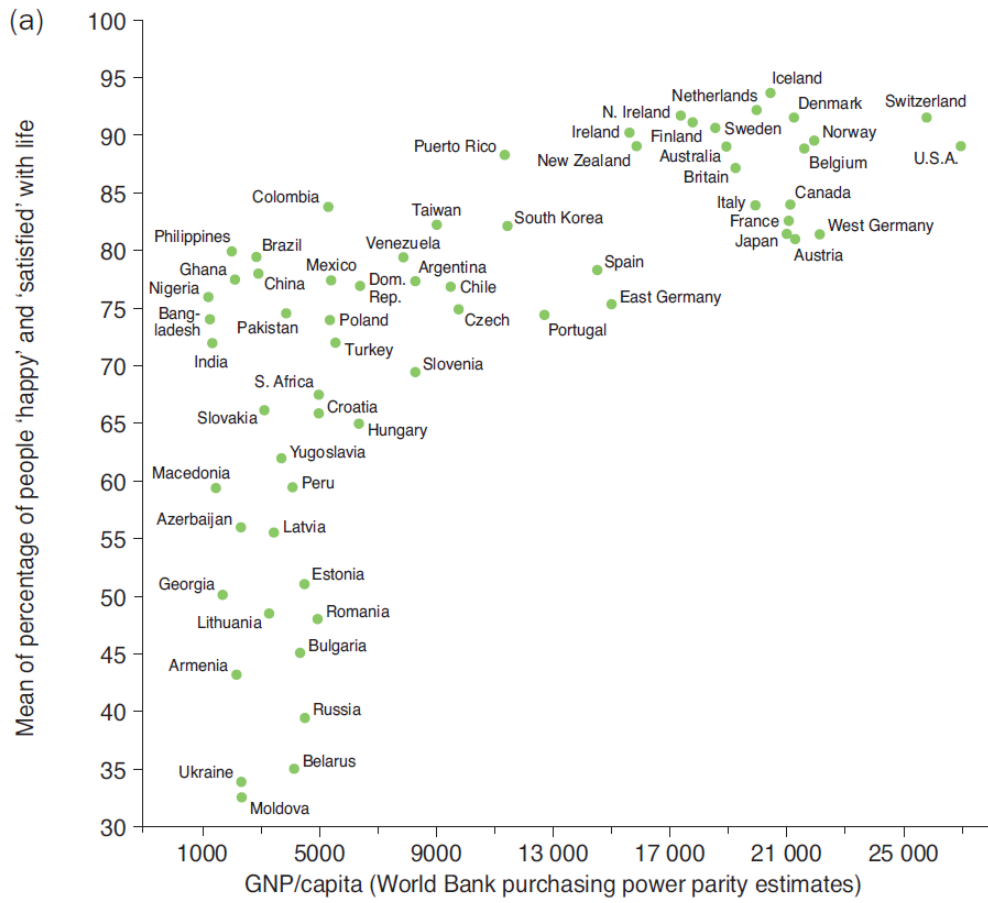
Secondly, researchers have started to listen more keenly to what poor people themselves say about their lives. In 2000, the World Bank published *Voices of the Poor*, a remarkable attempt at understanding poverty from the inside, based on discussions with 64,000 poor people around the world (Chambers et al., 2000). What emerged from these interviews was a complex and human account of poverty, encompassing issues that are often ignored in academic literature. These include the need to look good and feel loved, the importance of being able to give one's children a good start in life, or the mental anguish that all too often accompanies poverty. The overall conclusion was that, 'again and again, powerlessness seems to be at the core of the bad life' (Chambers et al., 2000).

The reverse of such 'multi-dimensional' poverty is not simply wealth (although income is important), but a wider notion of well-being, springing from health, physical safety, meaningful work, connection to community and other non-monetary factors. This is why good development practices build on the skills, strengths and ideas of people living in poverty – on their assets – rather than treating them as empty receptacles of charity.

This recognition has in turn prompted global efforts to change how we measure progress, complementing a traditional economic/income-based picture of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and poverty reduction with new metrics that capture a wider picture of human well/ill-being. Responding to the mantra 'if we can't measure it, we can't manage it', governments in both rich countries and poor are developing new well-being indicators (OECD, 2014). Oxfam has devised a 'humankind index' for Scotland, based on the perceptions of 3,000 Scottish citizens, which the organisation used to measure changes in levels of well-being in recent years (Oxfam, 2013). Geographers also have a long tradition of measuring spatial variations in well-being and mapping inequality (e.g. Dorling and Thomas, 2011).

A well-being perspective sheds new light on the role of economic growth. As Richard Layard (2011) has shown, across a range of indicators (reported life satisfaction, literacy and health), well-being rises in tandem with GDP per capita up to about US\$10,000 (the level in Thailand), but then flattens off (Figure 3). Growth thus clearly benefits poor people at lower levels, but becomes steadily less effective at higher levels, where issues such as lifestyle, quality of life and inequality become more important. This then constitutes a powerful argument for global redistribution from the rich to the poor, in terms of maximising human utility at a given level of overall economic output.

**Figure 3. The correlation between (a) reported increases in well-being as a result of (b) increasing GDP**



# SHOCKS

Freedom from fear and anxiety is an important aspect of the 'good life' sought by a move towards development, yet a feeling of security is threatened when people are vulnerable to a wide range of events beyond their control; events collectively known as 'shocks'. The last decade has seen a series of economic, political and environmental earthquakes, which have brought attention to the role of shocks not only in undermining well-being, but also in driving positive change.

The recent global financial crisis that occurred in 2007–08 was a watershed event, triggering historic geopolitical change – including the rise of the emerging powers – epitomised by the shift from the G8 to G20 as the world's informal 'steering committee'.<sup>4</sup> The economic crash highlighted the risks of an excessively 'financialised' global economy, but failed to lead to a reining in of the excessive size and volatility of 'hot money' (short-term volatile capital flows), condemning us in all likelihood to future financial crises.

More broadly, the advent of the G20 has failed to re-energise the multilateral system, with global talks on climate change and trade and arms becalmed. Some commentators are even talking of a 'G-Zero', with no-one in charge and the international community resorting to ad hoc 'coalitions of the willing' or regional bodies to muddle through.

A less publicised crisis, and one which predated the global financial meltdown yet had far more immediate consequences for poor communities around the world, was a spasm in the global food system. After decades of steady and falling prices, this spasm produced a series of price spikes and troughs that have undermined long-term progress on hunger and nutrition. In order to understand the human impact of this new era in the global food system, Oxfam and the Institute for Development Studies are conducting a four-year, ten-country research programme, using focus group discussions, interviews and data collection to explore the impact of the crisis. The first year results were summed up in the report title, *Squeezed*. The most striking finding was 'how similar the people of the post-industrial North and those in the proto-industrial South now sound: stressed and tired; juggling work and home; surrounded by selfish individualists, led by uncaring politicians; in strained relationships; constantly pressed for time; never enough money, even for the basics' (Hossain, 2013). This breakdown in the global food system has led to renewed attention for issues of farming and food security worldwide, but also some unfortunate side-effects such as 'land grabs' across the developing world by investors from rich countries.

Such shocks have made us much more aware of the impact of volatility, risk and vulnerability on the lives of people living in poverty, a situation that has been compounded by the growing frequency of extreme 'weather events', driven by climate change. While working with the Oxfam team in South Africa in 2013, we received messages from our Zambian colleagues asking for help in advising farmers how to protect their crops from frosts, a weather phenomenon previously unknown in their area. Across developing countries, 'climate chaos' (or more accurately, increased weather variability) is a better description of events than 'global warming', as increasingly erratic patterns of wind, rain and temperature have proved traumatic for farmers who traditionally depend on rules of thumb (when/what to plant, harvest, etc.) built up over generations (Regassa et al., 2010; Jennings, 2011). A growing proportion of Oxfam's programme work is engaged in helping such farmers adapt to the vicissitudes of climate change, for example, by helping to link them up to modern weather prediction technologies.

More generally, along with the need to prepare for unpredictable economic shocks, such as food price spikes, climate change has led both to a focus on tackling vulnerability by building resilience (the ability of communities not only to withstand shocks, but to build back better), as well as trying to dampen or prevent the impact of shocks in the first place. Shock absorbers, from social protection (International Labour Organisation, 2014) to food reserves (Carrasco,

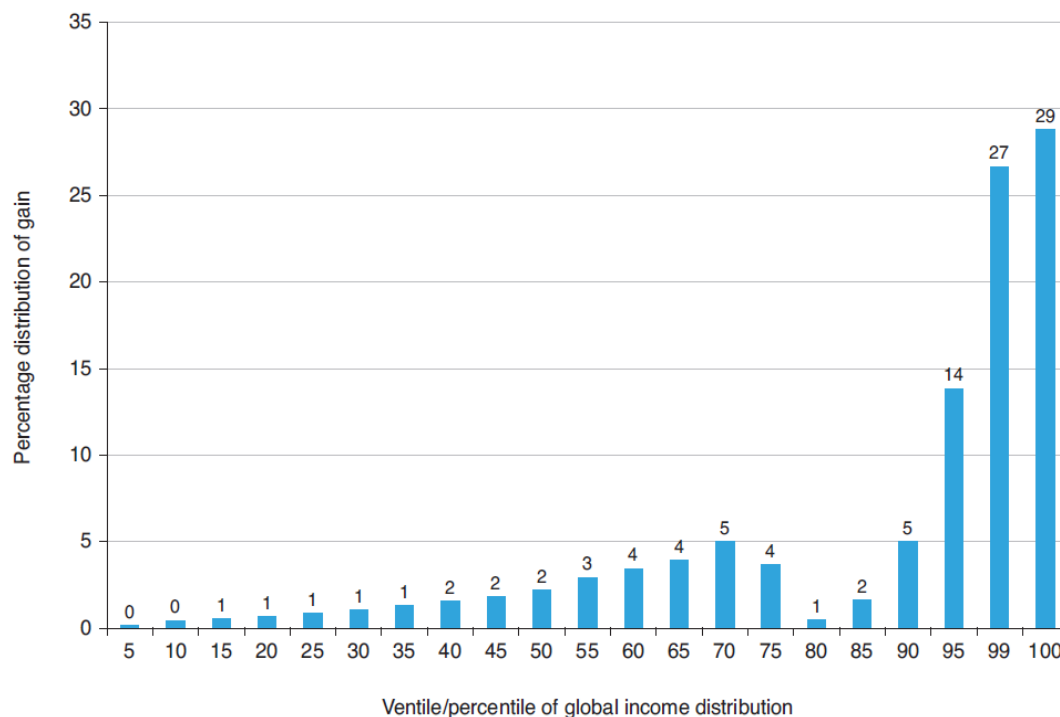
2013) to stabilisers in volatile financial markets (Gabel, 2004) have become much more salient to the development debate.

## INEQUALITY

Development is both individual and collective, and one aspect of collective well/ill-being that has increased rapidly in importance in recent years is inequality. On the campaign trail in 2008, the US President Barack Obama provoked a media storm and political backlash for suggesting, in his infamous exchange with 'Joe the Plumber', that 'spreading the wealth around' might be a good idea. However, the financial crisis, the Occupy movement and the facts on the ground have changed all that. As Angus Deaton (2013) suggests, rising concern at orthodox institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the current 'rock star' status of French economist Thomas Piketty (2014) demonstrate that the growth in inequality has now become a central political theme, with significant implications for the way governments and others manage their affairs.

The 2007–08 financial crisis has drawn attention to the extremes of the bonus culture and the way that, in the words of one banker in a previous debt crisis, 'We bankers are for the free market system when we are out to make a buck, and believe in the state when we're about to lose a buck' (Rodrick, 1988, p. 109). Analysis by Lakner and Milanovic (2013) shows that even before the crisis, the distribution of benefits from global growth were extraordinarily skewed. The distribution of absolute gains in global income (i.e. where the actual dollars went) in the two decades before the crisis, by centile of the global population, is shown in Figure 4. The richest 2% of the world's population (I think of them as the 'airport people') pocketed well over half the proceeds of recent global growth.

**Figure 4. Distribution of the global absolute gains in income, 1988–2008**



A much-quoted 'killer fact' (Fuentes-Nieva and Galasso, 2014), released to coincide with the 2014 World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, showed that global distribution of wealth is even more skewed than that of income. The world's 85 richest individuals hold the same assets as its 3.5 billion poorest inhabitants, or half the world's population. This drumbeat of concern

has had some positive impacts on policies, not least reviving interest in the distributive impact of different kinds of tax system and the need to redistribute through previously-derided 'tax and spend' policies. Advocates of redistribution have found some unlikely heroes in Latin America, historically the world's most unequal region. Bolivia and Brazil have been at the forefront of Latin America's impressive recent achievements. Over the last decade, the incomes of the poorest Brazilians have risen more than five times faster than those of the richest; women's incomes are rising faster than men's; black people's faster than whites'; and people living in the impoverished north-east region faster than those in the richer south-east (Ivins, 2013). Beyond income inequality, Brazil has made stellar progress in achieving 'zero hunger'.

Bolivians have experienced an even sharper fall in inequality than their more powerful neighbours. This stems from a seismic shift in Bolivia's social and political identity akin to the end of apartheid in South Africa. In 2006, Evo Morales took office as the country's first ever indigenous president, at the head of a new political movement. The Morales government instigated talks on a radical new constitution, enshrining a series of political, economic and social rights, including provisions for participatory and community-based governance that ensured 'people power' became a driver of redistribution. This has helped build momentum for a range of new progressive spending programmes, which the government, crucially, funded by renegotiating the country's contracts for its oil and gas. The new Bolivian government used the windfall to invest in infrastructure, targeted social programmes and increases in the universal pension entitlement. It has raised the minimum wage and witnessed an expansion of the formal economy. Crucially, the Morales government has presided over a substantial increase in public spending on health and education, which has had the biggest redistributive impact (Lustig et al., 2013) by providing the poorest with urgently needed 'virtual income' (Seery, 2014, p. 2).

## THE ENVIRONMENT

A new-found interest among policy makers in thinking about development in terms of whole systems, rather than individual components (companies, policies, individuals) is also reflected in the growing realisation that the world has entered a new epoch – dubbed the 'anthropocene' – evidenced by the planet's systems showing significant alteration by human activity (Waters et al., 2014). It is thought by some to be rapidly reaching (and breaching) critical boundary thresholds in several aspects (Rockström et al., 2009). (Indeed, next year's Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) conference has taken the anthropocene as its organising concept.)

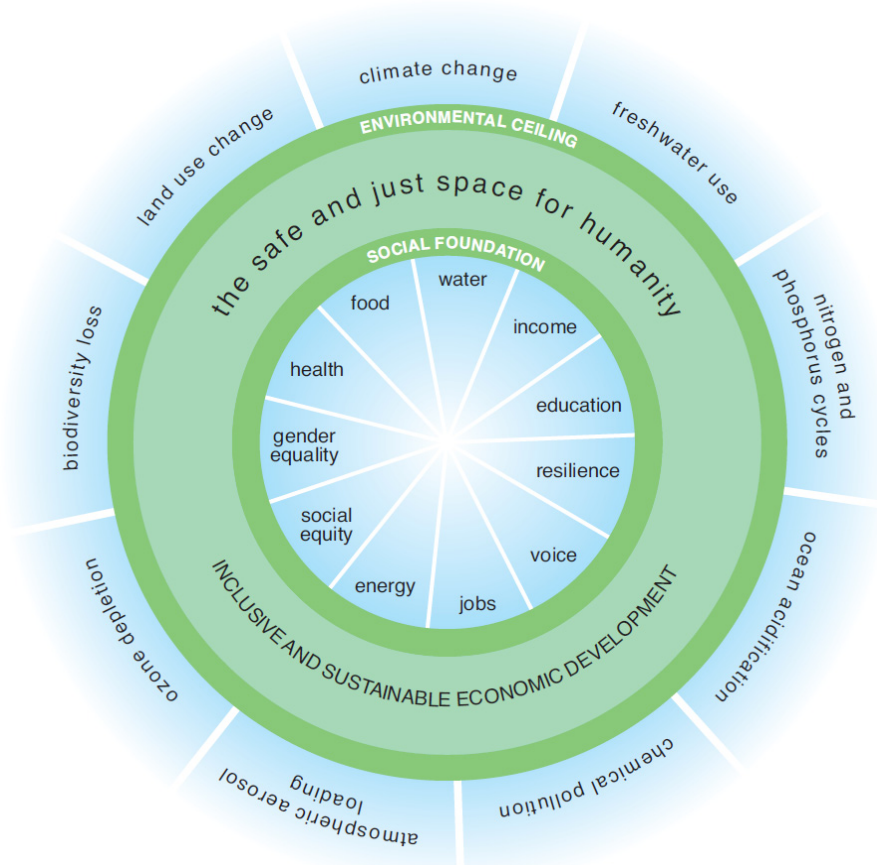
In 2009, a group of leading Earth-system scientists (Rockström et al., 2009) identified nine Earth-system processes (including freshwater use, climate regulation and the nitrogen cycle) that are critical for keeping the planet in the stable state that has been so beneficial to humankind over the past 10,000 years (the Holocene). Putting excessive stress on these critical processes could lead to tipping points of abrupt and irreversible environmental change, so Rockström and colleagues proposed a set of boundaries for avoiding those danger zones. Together, the nine boundaries constitute an environmental ceiling, with the space beneath this described by Rockström and colleagues as 'a safe operating space for humanity' (2009).

However, the economist Kate Raworth went one step further. Observing that there were no people inside the planetary boundaries of Rockström et al., Raworth added a set of minimum standards for human life, creating a 'social foundation' within Rockström et al.'s (2009) planetary boundaries. Raworth concluded:

'Between the social foundation and the planetary ceiling lies an area – shaped like a doughnut [shown in Figure 5] – which is the safe and just space for humanity to thrive in. The 21st century's unprecedented journey is to move into that space from both sides: to eradicate poverty and inequity for all, within the means of the planet's limited resources' (Raworth, 2012b).

There are similarities here with Amartya Sen's (1999) efforts to expand the understanding of development from utility to a wider concept of 'capabilities'. While the implications of this way of thinking for specific economic and social policies, or human behaviour, remain unclear, nevertheless they will be profound. Economic growth, as an exponential process, is eventually likely to be incompatible with the closed system described by planetary boundaries. Something will have to give.

**Figure 5. The safe and just space for humanity.**



Source: Raworth, 2012a

## COMPLEXITY AND SYSTEMS THINKING

The work of welfare economists such as Kate Raworth (2012a, b) and Earth-system scientists such as Rockström et al. (2009), and the new focus on resilience, are parts of a wider shift in the way we think about the world – a shift away from linear causal chains to 'systems thinking'. This approach, which draws from disparate disciplines, including ecology and biology, has deep practical implications both for the way we see the world and the actions we take to improve it (Manson and O'Sullivan, 2006). Geographers, many of whom are accustomed to thinking in terms of systems, are well placed to help other disciplines articulate this approach.

A leaked US military 'mind map' of Afghanistan's politics and society showed a complex system with so many connections and feedback loops that the effects of any intervention in the system (for example, US\$1bn of aid or the deployment of 10,000 US marines) will ripple through the system, producing an outcome that is inherently unpredictable. Such is the nature of complex systems, and such is the nature of most of the social and political systems in which aid agencies and others operate. The aid business struggles with the implications of this (i.e. that change is inherently unpredictable and when it does take place, it often cannot be clearly

attributed to any one action, whether by local people or outsiders). Instead, the aid system often relies on a chain of predictions that goes: 'if I do X, then Y will happen'. This forms the basis for many funding arrangements. Aid workers are often forced to ride two horses (never a comfortable way to travel): a complex and messy reality and the linear fairytale world of their reports back to head office.

A more promising approach appears to lie in recognising the contextual specificity of time and place, studying each system carefully before 'intervening'; in adopting iterative, adaptive approaches rather than grand designs and in retaining the humility to recognise and act on failure. As the Nobel prize-winning chemist Linus Pauling said, 'The best way to have good ideas is to have lots of ideas, and then to discard the bad ones' (quoted in Mulgan, 2006, p. 270).

## CONCLUSION

Taking account of all of the above may leave the reader drowning in a sea of despondency – increased weather variability, inequality, volatility and unfathomable complexity are a long way from the cheery (if naïve) optimism of 'Make Poverty History'. Yet, go back to my opening paragraphs and look how much has been achieved in a single human lifetime (currently 70 years and getting longer) since decolonisation. From the times of Thomas Malthus (1798), there have been voices warning of imminent catastrophe, but the efforts of poor communities and leaders – unsung grassroots heroes and legendary international figures alike – have to date always confounded the Cassandras. Over the last 70 years, a combination of economic growth, technological progress and more inclusive politics has produced astonishing progress. There have been damaging side effects (such as climate change and inequality) and an inevitable evolution in the nature of human aspiration and endeavour. If people are endlessly restless, dissatisfied and changing, so must be our understanding of development.

The coming decades do indeed pose new and seemingly intractable problems, but they always have. When I grew up in the 1970s, global nuclear Armageddon seemed inevitable. That danger has receded, although not entirely disappeared. In 1900, suffragettes faced the seemingly impossible task of getting 'the turkeys [male MPs] to vote for Christmas [extend voting to include women]'. Going further back in the 19th century, the blueprint and inspiration for just about every subsequent public mass movement – the movement for the abolition of slavery, for instance – was told that its utopian goal would destroy not only the Caribbean economy, but that of Britain, which was then reliant on slave-grown calories for its factory workers. Once again, reason and rights prevailed over pessimism. Surely the lesson for today is that, with sufficient courage, commitment and understanding, our great-great-grandchildren will be able to say the same thing about the ending of poverty and hunger and the avoidance of catastrophic climate change.

How might that happen? Here it is worth recalling the wise words attributed to physicist Niels Bohr: 'Prediction is very difficult, especially about the future'. It seems reasonable to suggest that the same combination of political courage, collective solidarity and human ingenuity that has achieved so much can once again be enough to avert disaster and press forward (although without crossing an ever-receding finishing line). If we fail, we will have no-one to blame but ourselves.

# REFERENCES

- Carrasco, I.G. (2013) 'Promoting local food security reserves in the Sahel: the case of AAE in Burkina Faso', Oxfam Research Case Study, [www.oxfam.org/en/grow/research/promoting-local-foodsecurity-reserves-sahel](http://www.oxfam.org/en/grow/research/promoting-local-foodsecurity-reserves-sahel) (last accessed 29 September 2014).
- Chambers, R., Narayan, D., Shah, M.K. and Petesch, P. (2000) *Voices of the Poor: Crying out for change*, Oxford: Oxford University Press for World Bank.
- Chronic Poverty Research Centre, <http://www.chronicpoverty.org>
- Deaton, A. (2013) *The Great Escape: Health, wealth and the origins of inequality*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Dorling, D. and Thomas, B. (2011) *Bankrupt Britain: An atlas of social change*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Fuentes-Nieva, R. and Galasso, N. (2014) 'Working for the few: political capture and economic inequality', Oxfam Research Case Study, [www.oxfam.org/en/research/working-few](http://www.oxfam.org/en/research/working-few) (last accessed 30 September 2014).
- Grabel, I. (2004) 'Trip wires and speed bumps: managing financial risks and reducing the potential for financial crises in developing economies', G-24 Discussion Paper Series, New York, NY and Geneva: UN, [http://unctad.org/en/docs/gdsmdpbpg2420049\\_en.pdf](http://unctad.org/en/docs/gdsmdpbpg2420049_en.pdf) (last accessed 29 September 2014).
- Green, D. (2012) *From Poverty to Power*, Oxford: Oxfam. Blog available online at <http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p> (last accessed 29 September 2014).
- Hossain, N. (2013) "'Squeezed": How are poor people adjusting to life in a time of food price volatility?', Oxfam Blog, <http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/squeezed-how-are-poorpeople-adjusting-to-life-in-a-time-of-food-price-volatility> (last accessed 6 June 2014).
- International Labour Organisation (2014) *World Social Protection Report 2014–15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice*, [www.ilo.org/global/research/globalreports/world-social-security-report/2014/lang— en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/research/globalreports/world-social-security-report/2014/lang-en/index.htm) (last accessed 29 September 2014).
- Inter-Parliamentary Union (2014) 'A world chronology of the recognition of women's rights to vote and to stand for election', [www.ipu.org/wmne/suffrage.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmne/suffrage.htm) (last accessed 6 June 2014).
- Ivins, C. (2014) 'Inequality Matters: BRICS inequalities fact sheet' <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/inequality-matters-brics-inequalities-fact-sheet-276312> (last accessed 2 June 2015)
- Jennings, S. (2011) 'Time's Bitter Flood: Trends in the number of reported natural disasters', Oxford: Oxfam, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/times-bitter-flood-trends-in-the-number-of-reported-natural-disasters-133491> (last accessed 29 September 2014).
- Kenny, C. (2011) *Getting Better: Why global development is succeeding – and how we can improve the world even more*, New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Lakner, C. and Milanovic, B. (2013) 'Global income distribution from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the great recession', Policy Research Working Paper No. 6719, World Bank, <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/pdf/10.1596/1813-9450-6719> (last accessed 29 September 2014).
- Layard, R. (2011) *Happiness: Lessons from a new science* (second edition), London: Penguin.
- Lustig, N., Pessino, C. and Scott, J. (2013) 'The impact of taxes and social spending on inequality and poverty in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay', Economics Working Paper. New Orleans, LA: Tulane University.

- Malthus, T. (1798) *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, London: J. Johnson, [www.esp.org/books/malthus/population/malthus.pdf](http://www.esp.org/books/malthus/population/malthus.pdf) (last accessed 29 September 2014).
- Manson, S. and O'Sullivan, D. (2006) 'Complexity theory in the study of space and place', *Environment and Planning A*, 38, 4, pp. 677–92.
- Mulgan, G. (2006) *Good and Bad Power: The ideals and betrayals of government*, London: Penguin.
- OECD (2014) 'Better Life Initiative' webpage, [www.oecd.org/statistics/betterlifeinitiative/yourbetterlifeindex.htm](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/betterlifeinitiative/yourbetterlifeindex.htm) (last accessed 29 September 2014).
- Oxfam (2013) 'Oxfam Humankind Index: The new measure of Scotland's prosperity, second results', Oxford: Oxfam, <http://policypractice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/oxfam-humankindindex-the-new-measure-of-scotlands-prosperity-second-results-293743> (last accessed 29 September 2014).
- Quota Project (2014) 'FAQs' webpage, [www.quotaproject.org/faq.cfm](http://www.quotaproject.org/faq.cfm) (last accessed 6 June 2014).
- Piketty, T. (2014) *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Raworth, K. (2012a) 'A Safe and Just Space for Humanity: Can we live within the doughnut?', Oxfam Discussion Paper, Oxford: Oxfam, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/a-safe-and-just-space-for-humanity-can-we-live-within-the-doughnut-210490> (last accessed 30 September 2014).
- Raworth, K. (2012b) 'Can we live inside the doughnut? Why the world needs planetary and social boundaries', Oxfam Grow Blog Channel, <http://blogs.oxfam.org/en/blog/12-02-13-can-we-liveinside-doughnut-why-world-needs-planetary-and-socialboundaries> (last accessed 6 June 2014).
- Regassa, S., Givey, C. and Castillo, G.E. (2010) 'The Rain Doesn't Come On Time Anymore: Poverty, vulnerability, and climate variability in Ethiopia', Oxfam Research Report, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/the-rain-doesnt-come-on-time-anymore-poverty-vulnerability-and-climate-variabil-112339> (last accessed 30 September 2014).
- Rockström, J., et al. (2009) 'Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity', *Ecology and Society*, 14, 2, [www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss2/art32](http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss2/art32) (last accessed 30 September 2014).
- Rodrick, J. (1988) *The Dance of the Millions: Latin America and the debt crisis*, London: Latin America Bureau.
- Seery, E. (2014) 'Working for the Many: Public services fight inequality', Oxfam Briefing Paper, Oxford: Oxfam, <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/working-for-the-many-public-services-fight-inequality-314724> (last accessed 30 September 2014).
- Sen, A. (1999) *Development as Freedom*, New York, NY: Knopf.
- United Nations (UN) (2013) *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2013*, New York, NY: UN, [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/mdgreport-2013-english.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/report-2013/mdgreport-2013-english.pdf) (last accessed 30 September 2014).
- Waters, C.N., Zalasiewicz, J.A., Williams, M., Ellis, M.A. and Snelling, A.M. (eds) (2014) *A Stratigraphical Basis for the Anthropocene?* Special Publication 395, London: Geological Society.
- Willis, K. (2014) 'Development: geographical perspectives on a contested concept', *Geography*, 99, 2, pp. 60–6.

# NOTES

<sup>1</sup> A portmanteau of 'banker' and 'gangster'.

<sup>2</sup> This essay is based on the text of my lecture to the Geographical Association Annual Conference in Guildford in April 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Global poverty statistics are likely to be substantially revised in light of the 2011 International Price Comparison by the World Bank (published in May 2014), which will lead both to revised estimates for GDP per capita once price differences between countries have been allowed for, as well as for revisions to national poverty lines.

<sup>4</sup> The G8 forum consists of representatives from the governments of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The G20 forum includes representatives from the G8 countries, as well as Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey. Both panels also include representatives from the European Union.

## Oxfam Discussion Papers

Oxfam Discussion Papers are written to contribute to public debate and to invite feedback on development and humanitarian policy issues. They are 'work in progress' documents, and do not necessarily constitute final publications or reflect Oxfam policy positions. The views and recommendations expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of Oxfam.

For more information, or to comment on this paper, email Duncan Green ([dgreen@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:dgreen@oxfam.org.uk))

© Oxfam GB June 2015

This publication is copyright but the text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged. E-mail [policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk).

The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

Published by Oxfam GB under ISBN 978-1-78077-874-7 in June 2015.  
Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.

# OXFAM

Oxfam is an international confederation of 17 organizations networked together in more than 90 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from the injustice of poverty:

Oxfam America ([www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org))  
Oxfam Australia ([www.oxfam.org.au](http://www.oxfam.org.au))  
Oxfam-in-Belgium ([www.oxfamsol.be](http://www.oxfamsol.be))  
Oxfam Canada ([www.oxfam.ca](http://www.oxfam.ca))  
Oxfam France ([www.oxfamfrance.org](http://www.oxfamfrance.org))  
Oxfam Germany ([www.oxfam.de](http://www.oxfam.de))  
Oxfam GB ([www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk))  
Oxfam Hong Kong ([www.oxfam.org.hk](http://www.oxfam.org.hk))  
Oxfam India ([www.oxfamindia.org](http://www.oxfamindia.org))  
Oxfam Intermón (Spain) ([www.oxfamintermon.org](http://www.oxfamintermon.org))  
Oxfam Ireland ([www.oxfamireland.org](http://www.oxfamireland.org))  
Oxfam Italy ([www.oxfamitalia.org](http://www.oxfamitalia.org))  
Oxfam Japan ([www.oxfam.jp](http://www.oxfam.jp))  
Oxfam Mexico ([www.oxfamexico.org](http://www.oxfamexico.org))  
Oxfam New Zealand ([www.oxfam.org.nz](http://www.oxfam.org.nz))  
Oxfam Novib ([www.oxfamnovib.nl](http://www.oxfamnovib.nl))  
Oxfam Québec ([www.oxfam.qc.ca](http://www.oxfam.qc.ca))

Please write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org).