1st Samuel Finer "Development of Government" Conference

Tuesday, 3 November 2015

Chancellors Conference Centre

Session	Time	Title(s)	Speaker(s)
	8.30-9.00	Registration and coffee	
1	9.00-9.15	Introduction: 'The History of Government' - the lasting significance of Sammy Finer's work	Colin Talbot
2	9.15-10.00	Keynote: The Quality of Government and Development Policy	Bo Rothstein
3	10.00-11.15	Panel Discussion: Measuring government	Chair: Sharon Morgan Kunal Sen Bo Rothstein Antonio Savoia
	11:15-11:30	COFFEE	
4	11.30-1.00	Too much? The size and role of the state in developed countries	Chair: Francesca Gains Colin Talbot Diane Coyle Kevin Farnsworth
	1.00-2.00	LUNCH	
5	2.00-3.30	Too little? The challenges of public sector reform in developing countries	Chair: Leni Wild Pablo Yanguas Richard Batley Nick Manning
	3.30-4.00	TEA	
6	4.00-5.00	Plenary debate: How can we advance the understanding of the development of government most effectively?	Chair: David Hulme Richard Batley Peter Evans Anuradha Joshi Nick Manning Colin Talbot
7	7.00pm – 8.30pm University Place	FINAL (OPEN) SESSION 1st Sammy Finer Annual Lecture on Government: 'How Good Can Government Be?'	Chair: Francesca Gains Speaker: Will Hutton

PANEL 1: MEASURING GOVERNMENT (CHAIR: DR SHARON MORGAN, GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (GDI), UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER)

As the international community debates the goals and indicators in the post-2015 MDGs, there is an increasing realization that the quality of government (and more precisely, *state capacity*) is a fundamental element of long-run development and a desirable development goal in itself. However, the measurement of quality of government has posed enormous challenges, as most indicators seem to capture accountability dimensions of governance rather than the quality of government functioning. In this panel, we bring together the research of the Effective States and Inclusive Development (ESID) Research Centre as well as of the Quality of Government Institute (QOGI) at the University of Gothenburg, which address the challenges of measuring government and propose innovative new measures to measure several dimensions of governance quality that are not addressed in existing indicators.

PAPER 1: "What is the opposite of corruption and how can this be measured"?

PROFESSOR BO ROTHSTEIN (BLAVATNIK SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, AND NUFFIELD COLLEGE)

 Corruption has turned out to be difficult to define and what should be counted as the opposite to corruption remains widely disputed. To define the opposite to corruption, choices have to be made along four conceptual dimensions. These are universalism vs relativism, uni- vs multidimensionality, normative vs empirical and whether the definition should relate to political procedures or policy substance. As a result of this conceptual analysis, it is argued, a universal, one-dimensional, normative and procedural definition should be preferred. The suggested definition is that of impartiality as the basic norm for the implementation of laws and policies. Arguments for why such a norm has historically and in the contemporary world been difficult to achieve are discussed. Finally, various ways to measure this conceptualization of the opposite of corruption are presented

PAPER 2: "Governance as a development goal: borrowing from existing measures?"

DR ANTONIO SAVOIA (GDI, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER)

The increasing realisation that governance quality is a fundamental element of long-run development has led to its consideration as a desirable development goal in its own right. To contribute to such a process, this paper provides a framework to set, measure and monitor governance goals in the Post 2015 Development Agenda. First, we assess whether existing cross-national measures on governance quality can be exploited to measure and monitor aspects of legal, bureaucratic and administrative quality. Such a "quick fix" approach to measuring governance quality is fraught with challenges. The current practice of measurement is still subject to the short country coverage of most available measures, issues of comparability and legitimacy, as well as methodological shortcomings. Second, we argue that, in the long run, measuring and monitoring governance quality may require reconceptualising "good governance" and designing internationally shared measures that are routinely provided by national statistical offices, (but, international groups should also continue to make their independent measures).

PAPER 3: "Measuring fiscal capacity of the state in developing countries: pitfalls and challenges"

PROFESSOR KUNAL SEN (GDI, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER)

A central aspect of institutional development in less developed economies is building tax systems capable of raising revenues from broad tax bases, i.e., fiscal capacity. We provide a critique of existing and new measures of fiscal capacity, and argue that these measures are conceptually flawed as well as being empirically problematic. We evaluate an alternate measure that is constructed from a recent database on public sector performance in developing countries, and argue that this measure is less subject to the criticisms that can be made of other measures.

PANEL 2: TOO MUCH? THE SIZE AND ROLE OF THE STATE IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (CHAIR: PROFESSOR FRANCESCA GAINS, POLITICS, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER)

The 'size of government' question has been a central point of political debates in 'western' countries for decades. Usually couched mainly in economic terms (re taxation and public spending) it also includes debates about regulation and public organizations (and privatization). This session will explore these issues in historical 'big picture' terms, how we measure government relative to what, and the interpenetration of government and the private sector in the form of 'corporate welfare'.

PAPER 1: "The inevitability of 'Big Government'?"

PROFESSOR COLIN TALBOT (POLITICS, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER)

Surprisingly though the historic trajectory over the past century has been similar across many countries, regardless of their political histories. For example, public spending rose from about 10% of GDP at the start of the 20th century to somewhere between one third and two thirds of GDP 100 years later. Political preferences and history seem only to have shaped (a) the extent of the growth of 'big government' and (b) the precise form of 'big government created: or the 'democracy/state/market' (broadly, liberal democratic, conservative democratic or social democratic). Since they stabilized in size and scope in the last quarter of the 20th century there have been very few examples of really radical change, suggesting these are regimes with deep socio-economic-political roots. If so, is 'big government' inevitable in advanced countries and will emerging countries follow similar, if different in detail, patterns?

PAPER 2: "GDP and the mis-measure of societies?"

PROFESSOR DIANE COYLE (ECONOMICS, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER)

GDP is the common factor used for much of the commentary on 'how big is government' in OECD countries - spending to GDP ratios; tax to GDP; debt to GDP; deficit to GDP; etc. It is increasingly used for "administrative" purposes in self-imposed budget rules and also those imposed from outside eg by the IMF or EU on Greece. But - quite apart from the fact that the economics of debt sustainability are subtler than many in the political debate assume - GDP is a highly judgemental and uncertain measure of the size of the economy, making these discussions of spend/tax/deficits/ debt troubling. At best they capture only one dimension of the scope of government, and that imperfectly.

PAPER 3: "The hidden corporate welfare state"

DR KEVIN FARNSWORTH (UNIVERSITY OF YORK)

This presentation examines corporate welfare - public provision that satisfies the needs and/or wants of private businesses. After conceptualising and mapping corporate welfare, the paper focuses on the specific areas of grants and subsidies to companies. It discusses the issues of transparency and openness relating to this data and shares as yet unpublished data on the provision of direct funding for private businesses. The conclusion to the paper is both that certain areas of state provision are bigger, more opaque and configured differently than is often thought

PANEL 3: TOO LITTLE? THE CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (CHAIR: LENI WILD, OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE)

Public sector reform (PSR) constitutes an inescapable yet seemingly ineffective component of many development interventions around the world, from host governments seeking to modernise their budgeting and auditing systems to aid donors supporting the reform of service delivery ministries. The consensus around the need for PSR, however, is not reflected on any kind of agreement as to how to achieve it or best support it. For every damning report exposing a lack of results, the development industry comes up with a new buzzword or mantra to get things right once and for all. This panel shines a critical light on the thinking and practice behind public sector reform in developing countries as it currently stands: its ahistorical and often apolitical assumptions, its overreliance on research that can hardly be transformed into practice, or its orientation towards quick fixes instead of long-term transformations.

PAPER 1: "State-building vs Public sector reform"

DR PABLO YANGUAS (EFFECTIVE STATES AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER)

The challenges of public sector reform are as old as civilization itself. It is no wonder therefore that some of the most enduring contributions to our understanding of the state and public bureaucracy came from scholars who dared to delve into sweeping macro-historical comparison: Max Weber, Charles Tilly, and Samuel Finer. The intellectual legacy of these authors paints state-building as a lengthy, non-lineal, profoundly contested process: there are few things more political than the development of government. However, the development community – and in particular the aid world – is organized around a technocratic illusion which encourages a carefree neglect of politics. The response to failed interventions is not to question time horizons, political repercussions, or political economy conditions, but to shift the focus to innovations in funding modalities and project management. Results-based approaches, iterative adaptation, and transparency are now touted as the new answer to the very old question of public sector reform. But can states be built one three-year project at a time?

PAPER 2: "Good research is not always usable"

PROFESSOR RICHARD BATLEY (INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM)

Academics engaged in the study of public sector reform should not assume they have something usable to tell practitioners or that practitioners have the capacity to respond. The presentation will explore the limits of researchers' influence on practice and of practitioners' capacity to behave as if they were not embedded actors. For example, a determinist analytic approach such as that of 'organizational institutionalism' can contribute to understanding without being capable of contributing directly to policy. Complementarity depends on the adoption of an actor-centred approach by researchers as well as practitioners.

PAPER 3: "Supporting public sector management: Are we best at the things that matter the least?"
NICK MANNING (RETIRED HEAD OF GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT AT THE WORLD BANK AND FORMER HEAD OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE DIVISION, OECD)

In the development industry, the rhetoric for supporting governance reforms in general, and for improving the efficiency of public sector management in particular, is loud and strong. But there is a perverse side to this rhetoric as professionals are also told that the endeavor is more or less hopeless. This two-faced rhetoric obscures two important points. At the level of small, incremental improvements in government functioning, the development industry can offer some useful assistance. However, small is not really enough. Responding to the challenges presented by major demographic shifts, growing security threats, the unpredictable consequences of climate change and the need for services for the increasing concentration of the world's poor in fragile states argue for even higher levels of capability from governments which currently have the least. Here, on the big things, we are defeated. The carefully constructed consensus in the development industry about the right way to strengthen government functioning has proven to be a limiting constraint.

PLENARY DEBATE: HOW CAN WE ADVANCE THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENT MOST EFFECTIVELY? (CHAIR: PROFESSOR DAVID HULME, ESID & GDI, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER)

Just as the conference begins with a retrospective look at the work of Samuel Finer, it comes to a close with a prospective interrogation of how to take the development of government forward as an intellectual, academic and policy agenda. Do we need better measurements and indicators? New methodologies for identifying and attributing success and failure? A closer working relationship between researchers and practitioners? A new public narrative about the role of the state? Or perhaps a greater dose of patience for everyone involved? After very brief remarks by Richard Batley, Peter Evans, Anuradha Joshi, Nick Manning and Colin Talbot, the chair will throw the question to all conference participants.

Signing up to attend

Attendance is free of charge, but participants need to register through Eventbrite on the following links:

Main conference:

- https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/development-of-government-conference-tickets-18605956918

Will Hutton lecture:

- https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-inaugural-sammy-finer-lecture-on-governmentwith-will-hutton-registration-18094008667

Finding the venue

By Road from Scotland & the North From the M61 join the M60 following signs for Manchester Airport. Then join the M602 (signposted Salford). Follow signs for Manchester Airport onto the A57. At the roundabout take the 3rd exit (A5103), after approximately one and a half miles take a left at the traffic lights into Wilbraham Road (A6010). At the 4th set of traffic lights, turn left into Chancellors Way. Chancellors Hotel and Conference Centre is situated on the left hand side opposite the Armitage Sports Centre. For Satnav users: M14 6ZT and once you arrive at this location the hotel is signposted

By Road from the South Leave the M6 at Junction 19 (Knutsford), turn right onto the A56 and follow signs for Manchester Airport. At the roundabout, take the 3rd exit for the M56 (Manchester). Take right hand lanes to the end of the motorway and join the A5103 - keep forward (signposted Manchester City Centre). At the 5th set of traffic lights turn right onto Wilbraham Road (A6010 signposted Sheffield). At the 4th set of traffic lights turn left onto Chancellors Way. Chancellors Hotel and Conference Centre is situated on the left hand side opposite the Armitage Sports Centre. For Satnav users: M14 6ZT and once you arrive at this location the hotel is signposted

By Road from the East At the end of the M67 turn left onto the M60 (Stockport). Leave the M60 at Junction 5 and join the A5103 - keep forward (signposted Manchester City Centre). At the 5th set of lights turn right onto Wilbraham Road (A6010 signposted Sheffield). At the 4th set of traffic lights turn left onto Chancellors Way. Chancellors Hotel and Conference Centre is situated on the left hand side opposite the Armitage Sports Centre. For Satnav users: M14 6ZT and once you arrive at this location the hotel is signposted

By Bus from the City Take a bus numbered 41, 42 or 43 from Piccadilly Gardens Bus Station to Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield. Walk to the junction with Moseley Road and turn left. At the next set of traffic lights turn left into Chancellors Way and the hotel is on your left, opposite the Armitage Sports Centre.

By Train from the City Long distance trains arrive at Manchester Piccadilly Station. Either take a taxi (approximately 15 minutes) or take a five minute walk to Piccadilly Gardens Bus Station. Short distance rail service depart from Manchester Oxford Road Station and Manchester Victoria Station.

By Plane from Manchester International Airport Manchester International Airport is approximately 5 miles from Chancellors (about 20 minutes by taxi). If you wish to take the train from the airport there is a 24-hour service which runs 7 days a week, every 15 minutes during peak times and goes direct to Piccadilly Train Station. From the station either take a taxi or take the short walk to Piccadilly Bus Station and catch one of the many buses that follow the route to Wilmslow Road Fallowfield.

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