



**THE CULTURAL RELATIONS OF
NEGOTIATING DEVELOPMENT:
DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE AND CREATIVE
ECONOMIES AT THE BRITISH COUNCIL**

J. P. Singh

Schar School of Policy and Government
George Mason University

J.P. Singh is Professor of International Commerce and Policy at the Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University (USA), and Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin. Professor Singh has authored five monographs, edited five books, and published over one hundred scholarly articles. His books include *Cultural Values in Political Economy* (Stanford 2020), *Sweet Talk: Paternalism and Collective Action in North-South Trade Negotiations* (Stanford 2017), *Negotiating the Global Information Economy* (Cambridge 2008), and *Globalized Arts: The Entertainment Economy and Cultural Identity* (Columbia, 2011), which won the American Political Science Association’s award for best book in information technology and politics in 2012. Professor Singh has advised or consulted for international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization. The International Studies Association recently named him the 2022 Distinguished Scholar in International Communication.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The British Council has historically presented international development efforts with a cultural relations approach. This approach builds trust and reciprocity with (and among) local partners. The Developing Inclusive and Creative Economies (DICE) programme launched in 2018 is a bold entrant in this space. It refines our understanding of development through a deeper look at cultural relations as causal elements or the theory of change to improve human well-being. DICE further breaks down its theory of change into a results chain. This starts with inputs and resources for DICE networks, and hypothesises outcomes and impacts in the short and long-run.

The most challenging debate in international development currently is the paternalism inherent in any external intervention. Paternalism is an infantilising narrative, and directed from the Global North to the South in international development efforts. DICE presents international development through cultural relations as a way of building trust with participants and overcoming problems of collective action. Like any development effort, DICE will have paternalistic connotations but its cultural relations approach is equally sincere in attempting to reduce power hierarchies.

DICE values creativity for assisting the poor and marginalised in finding a voice to connect with the global economy. It goes without saying that the payoffs for everyone in such ODA (Official Development Assistance) practices are enormous.

All development interventions at their core are narratives or stories about people's lives. DICE is a recent entrant to this space. However, its narrative shows that dramaturgically incomplete stories can be told with great effect about confidence, voice, creativity, collaboration, and results.

The breakdown of the three parts of DICE may be described as follows:

The cultural relations approach adds to the ongoing narrative about the role of culture in development. It shifts the focus from a formulaic approach to development to an emphasis on processes. Both formulas and processes lead to outcomes, however cultural processes are more attuned to the values, beliefs and practices of participants than formulas that operate at a high-level of abstraction.

- DICE also showcases the creative outputs of culture: its endeavours emphasise social entrepreneurship to the marginalized globally.
- As a model for development, DICE refines our understanding of the institutional context of development: it shows how development actors both adapt and negotiate development interventions.
- DICE operates with an ecological understanding of development, in that the relationships among parts are important to the overall desired change. However, DICE also presents what Albert Hirschman (2014) called the trait-taking and trait-making aspects of development. Trait-taking refers to things that cannot be changed and trait-making to those that can be. Negotiations and trust among partners are key to trait-making.

DICE IN BRIEF

Launched in March 2018, Developing Inclusive and Creative Economies (DICE) aims to address economic and social exclusion by supercharging homegrown creativity, enterprise, social purpose, and bold, generous and genuine collaboration. DICE's primary focus is to work with and for women, young people, those disabled by society, and those otherwise excluded from economic opportunity.

Experimental, systematic and consultative in approach, DICE does so by connecting entrepreneurs, artists, intermediaries, investors, funders, journalists, researchers and policy makers in Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, South Africa and the UK. DICE creates, convenes and supports interconnected activity – including training, capacity building, policy events, research, and experimental grants. Underlying that activity, DICE is exploring how creativity, generosity, unconscious bias, vulnerability and human connection affect how we can best nurture our curiosity, creativity, communities, enterprises, policies, ideas and the environments in which we live.

DICE is joining other programmes, organisations and efforts in working toward Sustainable Development Goals 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 17.

The £7 million DICE programme was rolled out within two months of being funded in January 2018 in five countries – Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan and South Africa – in collaboration with the UK. Since then, the programme has involved creative social entrepreneurs, intermediaries and experts including educational institutions, and policy maker and institutions. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, DICE worked with approximately 16,000 people through three 'tiers' of interlinked activity: development of individual entrepreneurs; development of intermediaries and policy development. This centerpiece of DICE

included the £2 million DICE Fund, connecting 28 UK intermediaries with 28 counterparts overseas. Their 'collaboration projects' encompassed business techniques, community and network development, crafts, dance, fashion, recycling waste, theatre, and storytelling and publishing.

DICE was a pilot programme which came to an end on 31 March 2021, but its innovative approach and legacy are helping to inform the British Council's ongoing work.

1. INTRODUCING DICE

At its core development is about positive changes to human well-being. The story of development featured here showcases global change through the British Council's 'Developing Inclusive and Creative Economies' (DICE) programme. The British Council's cultural relations approach – situated in trust, knowledge, exchange, and reciprocity – acts as the causal element for change.

Development thinking has undergone several mutations in the post-Second World War era to become aware that ideas informing development practices must not be just vertically top-down but also bottom-up, and need to horizontally flow across development actors and networks. Cultural relations foster collective understandings and trust among these actors and networks. With its record of addressing cultural issues in development, the British Council is uniquely positioned to address the current challenges in development (British Council 2012a, 2013, Jenkinson and Wright May 2014).

This research study explains how DICE has responded to the challenges of cultural relations and development. The first section presents the historical context for understanding the moment when projects like DICE step into the international development space. The next section documents DICE's development methods and practices. These *methods* offer a unique theory of change for development practices worldwide (Gertler et al. 2016): situated in cultural relations, DICE promises dense networks of interaction that foster trust. In doing so, DICE veers toward an ecological approach that favours relations among sub-parts rather than the isolation of a magic formula that would deliver only on specific or isolated concrete outcomes. The final section presents the theoretical importance of DICE cutting across its ecology, institutional context, and the dialogues and negotiations among its participants.

Abstractions are always useful for understanding the importance and implications of development interventions. Max Weber's notion of an *ideal type* offers a useful abstraction. Ideal types are cases that are suitable or adequate representations of a variety of contexts and conditions. DICE is an ideal type to understand the challenges of aligning international development with a cultural relations approach. DICE features culture in two ways. As outlined above, the DICE approach is embedded in cultural relations. Second, DICE brings in creativity, representative of a culture, and entrepreneurship as important elements of development practice.

As an ideal type, DICE allows for an exploration of many development concepts and cultural relations literatures. Its holistic nature is especially suited to examining the sociological, and cultural elements embedded in development projects that address institutional analysis and adaptation (IAD) (Ostrom 2005, North 1990). Its successes to date meet another condition of unintended consequences that Albert Hirschman (2014) was to call 'the hiding hand' or the ability of development planners to not foresee obstacles to then later problem-solve them.

Some explanation is necessary for the main title of this project: The cultural relations of negotiating development. DICE is responding to what Elinor Ostrom (2005) terms an 'action situation' that features habits of argumentation, negotiation and deliberation: actions situations are 'spaces where individuals interact, exchange goods or services, solve problems, dominate one another, or fight.' This theatre of negotiation offers a deeper engagement with questions of trust and reciprocity in cultural relations. Cultural relations values such as exchange, reciprocity and dialogue are negotiated both in functional and constitutive ways, borrowing from the description of cultural values David Thrsoy (2020) provides. Functionality is about everyday practice and strategy. In a functional sense, building trust and reciprocity can lead to

a greater impact in international development projects. Trust and reciprocity also comprise collective understandings in a constitutive sense. Whom to trust and what kind of trusts often precede their functional purposes, which translate the trust into outcomes. DICE offers a glimpse at the functional and constitutive meanings of cultural relations as applied to international development. Finally, negotiation implies that there is no pre-fixed 'price' or value. Instead, there is a weighing of alternatives. Analysing cultural relations with a negotiation framework allows for values to stay dynamic and evolutionary.

2. DICE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND IMPORTANCE

At the turn of last century, international development shifted its focus from a rather technocratic and mostly economic focus to a more local and cultural level. In the language of development literatures, this meant a participatory and cultural turn to include societal actors in design and implementation, and special care to local contexts. This section outlines both the historical context of these developments for DICE and, more importantly, how DICE extends them further. DICE accords special attention to the creative aspects of the cultural turn and connects the local actors with their global

(other local) counterparts. In doing so, the DICE programme extends the culture of creativity to those excluded from economic opportunity in society. At the same time, it mobilises a global network across several layers of actors from grass roots entrepreneurs to policymakers in high places, and the possibility of the grassroots and high-placed groups co-designing incentives and initiatives.¹

2.1 THE CULTURAL VOICE

A cultural approach to development takes into account people's ways of life in an anthropological sense while also accommodating the aesthetic symbols and artifacts that speak to those ways of life. A way of life is never static, therefore a cultural approach to development must accommodate evolution and syncretism.

The existing DICE documents (British Council January 2020, 4) and DICE landing pages on the Internet pronounce this cultural approach to development upfront: 'DICE supports a growing network of individuals, enterprises, and institutions in exploring how creativity, generosity, unconscious bias, vulnerability and human connection affect how we can best nurture our curiosity, creativity, collaborative ethos, communities, enterprises, policies, ideas and the environments in which we live.' The statement recalls understandings of the cultural contexts that have evolved to inform international development.

¹ Author's reflexive note: A previous draft, referred to 'those excluded from economic opportunity' as 'those excluded and marginalised.' A perceptive remark from the British Council, following important input from South Africa, was that 'marginalisation' calls attention to the marginalisers and the structural difficulty of addressing the environmental factors (see below) in a project. As a scholar from the Global South, growing up in several marginalised communities and someone who writes on racism and paternalism, the critique of the terminology resonated. To call someone 'marginalised' can be paternalistic. However, only calling attention to economic exclusion in a project that takes an ecological and cultural stance is also problematic. The counterpoint is that the World Bank is often critiqued for only presenting humanity in economic categories. We need better terms but the term 'marginalisation' does have non-paternalistic connotations. For further nuances and counterpoints, see Ballard et al. (2005) who use the terms 'socially excluded' and 'marginalised' in South Africa. See Scott (2009) for a provocative essay on whether British news coverage of Africa marginalises the continent.

The cultural turn in development is recent (Singh 2019). In the post-Second World War era, development was imagined in the minds of technocrats and global experts, and international development was offered as formulas the developing world could adopt including such things as shifts from agriculture to industry, increasing savings for investment, or reducing population growth for national well-being. The cultural turn in development theory would emphasize the importance of the local context: a bottom-up approach that began to be articulated by the 1980s. This narrative began emphasising people's ability to problem-solve their circumstances rather than become recipients of ideas that did not speak directly to their lives, what Paulo Freire termed the 'embankment approach'. Instead a problem-solving approach would allow the oppressed to find a cultural voice to name their world 'as a limiting situation they can transform' (Freire 2018, 49). Therefore, a cultural approach to development is inherently participatory and seeks to localise development (Mansuri and Rao 2013).

The British Council's approach toward DICE incorporates local contexts in three major ways. Prima facie, DICE comes in the form of development aid designed and packaged in London with several institutional partners that are located in the United Kingdom. A closer look shows that, prior to its launch, the programme was co-created through the British Council offices in several countries especially those situated in East and South East Asia and, post-launch it was co-designed in the UK and the five DICE countries (Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, and South Africa). It leveraged the British Council's existing relationships in many countries and the selection of the five countries was predicated on these relationships. Narratives from the ground about the project in British Council documents provide a nuanced picture of self-discovery among the participants and learning among the institutions involved. Second, there are horizontal relationships among the three

layers of the DICE programme – enterprises, intermediaries, and institutions – that are important and will be explained later. Third, a top-down approach implies pre-existing formulas with less scope for problem-solving or serendipity. The project brought together major thematic in the British Council about social enterprises, creativity, technical capacity building, and strengthening relationships. Part of the problem-solving of a development project lies in making disparate elements work. In his classic, *Development Projects Observed*, Albert Hirschman (2014) calls this the 'Hiding Hand' of development that allows the development designers to believe in success until challenges come up forcing the practitioners to problem-solve.

The cultural turn to development is both accepted and challenged in the places where it found a home. Internationally, the agenda can be traced to agencies such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and the UNDP, though in the last two decades it has taken hold several global fora. The 1982 World Conference on Cultural Policies, or Mondiacult, held in Mexico City tried to forge this link through an anthropological focus on culture. In 1987, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary General of the UN, responded to pressures from the Group of 77 (G-77) developing countries to declare 1988-97 as the Decade for Culture and Development. The idea of a World Commission on Culture and Development originated from this decade. *Our Creative Diversity* from the World Commission on Culture and Development (1995) reflects the dual impetus to bring culture into debates on economic development, while being starkly aware that culture must be understood in a liberating sense of an ethic that allows for diversity, pluralism, and freedom. The 1998 Stockholm Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Sustainable Development marked the end of the World Decade for Cultural Development and followed the work of the World Commission on Culture and Development.

2.2 THE CREATIVE VOICE

Creativity, often in the form of aesthetic expressions, represents cultural voices. Creative industries – including film, television, and music – began to be emphasised in economic development starting in the early 1990s. DICE extends the emphasis in creative industries in the direction of inclusion, diversity, and social entrepreneurship that had been missing in the emphasis on creative enterprise. The programme extends the 'creative' from 'creative industries' applies it directly to forms of social entrepreneurship among the discriminated and oppressed. The application of creativity and entrepreneurship to these contexts is another value-added to development thinking from DICE.

At the national level, the pioneer was United Kingdom. Prime Minister Tony Blair specifically included creative industries in speaking of the 'Third Way' that transcends simple divides between government and industry. In 1997, Blair also established the Creative Industries Taskforce with a primarily economic mandate. While creating indirect government incentives for creative industries, the Blair government also allowed the newly constituted Department of Culture, Media and Sport, earlier known as the Department of Cultural Heritage, to directly fund these programmes, which evolved into thinking about 'Creative Britain.' The 1998 DCMS report known as the *Creative Industry Mapping Document* pushed the importance of creative industries at a national level and outlined industries that contributed most to the national economy in terms of revenues and employment. While speaking of creative expressions and industries, DCMS also avoided, to a large extent, linking all creativity with culture, focusing instead on the economic potential of these industries. The report was seen as an exemplar for other countries. Blair himself declared in 2007 that he had fostered a 'golden age' for the arts in Britain increasing funding for the arts from £186 million in 1997 to £412 million in 2007. The critics noted

Since these early efforts, participation and culture have become important elements of development. Both the Millennium Development goals (2000-2015) and Sustainable Development Goals (2015-) from the United Nations either explicitly acknowledge the role of culture or that of involving local actors effectively. Processes of inclusion, explicitly named in several goals, are especially fundamental to SDGs, while sustainability of goals is embedded in local processes. The British Council highlighted both the opportunity and the challenges that SDGs afforded in a prescient report in 2014 acknowledging that SDGs 'demand much more complex design, planning and delivery to bridge the gaps between grassroots innovation and institutions, and between cultural practice and policy. It requires the ability to shape and integrate diverse initiatives, to make them replicable in other contexts and develop scale through partnership working' (Jenkinson and Wright May 2014, 3).

While national and international development agencies move toward a cultural and participatory development, important critiques of these efforts provide some reflection. First, participation itself may be manufactured and paternalistic. Critics note that powerholders do not move out of the way and involve the local merely as passive subjects after designing the projects themselves (Hickey and Mohan 2004, Singh and Flyverbom 2016). Second, empirical evidence shows that participation needs institutional context to succeed and to be replicated. In practice that means that local political parties and institutions and community mobilisation can provide spaces for deliberation, as was the case with the much vaunted participatory budgeting processes in Porto Alegre, Brazil (Baicocchi, Graizbord and Rodríguez-Muniz 2013, Sanyal and Rao 2018).

that cultural and economics values underlying creativity were not the same, and that Creative Britain prioritized economics over culture (Throsby 2001, Pratt 2008, Gross February 2020).

Creative Britain also spawned various other programmes within the UK many of which continue to inform British Council endeavours including DICE. The British Council's social enterprise programme, that would later inform DICE, is an example. *The Global City Challenges Report*, that describes the British Council's social enterprise and DICE programmes, provides the synthetic narrative: while noting the economic contributions of the creative economy [£91.6 billion and employing two million people], the report addresses the 100,000 social enterprises with two million employed that contribute £60 billion to the economy. Social enterprises are micro-enterprises, often with fewer than 10 employees, but draw from and connect members of a community in common endeavours.

Most importantly, DICE extends both the creative and cultural thinking not just toward thinking afresh about the C of the creative but also the I of the inclusive. Aspirationally, the creative economy thinking was supposed to apply to the marginalised, whether in thinking of providing griot singers in West Africa means to earn a livelihood, or recognising the economic roots of the carnival in Brazil's favelas. The reality remained different from the aspirational: technology and resources moved to areas where cultural industries were located:

Shenzhen, Mumbai, Bogota. The lives of the *favelados* did not improve significantly, the rural remained left out, and the marginalised groups only witnessed small gains. DICE seeks to bridge this gap. Its 150 programmatic activities reach the slums and the favelas, they involve marginalized populations such as women, disabled groups, and LGBTQ populations. DICE also finds creativity in people's frustrations and anxieties. The following statement from British Council report *Global City*

Challenges: The Creative and Social Economy Solution (2019) provides a glimpse. Consider the following section (p. 9):

With no voice, and no outlet for their creativity, some young people resort to expression through graffiti. At its worst, this can become art at its most nihilistic. Destruction rather than creation. But what if those seeds of creativity could be nurtured and encouraged? French graffiti artist, JR, transformed a favela in Brazil into a giant work of art. What if a city had the ambition to become the world's biggest piece of art, or the world's most colourful city? What if artists were challenged to work with the community with the entire city as their canvas? Buildings could be transformed, not through a handful of competing tags, but from rooftop to pavement. Monuments illuminated by digital artworks, constantly changing as young artists upload their designs. People would travel from across the world to visit and live and work in that place.

In many social sciences, human beings are often presented as fully formed with a known set of preferences and interests. Psychology tells us otherwise. In its inclusion work, DICE begins with the latter understanding. The confidence to recognize the creativity within oneself and then find a network of people and resources come through repeatedly in DICE reports and videos. This intimate immediacy to DICE provides a way for thinking about creativity in disparate contexts and through various means.

2.3 THE GLOBAL VOICE

As the 'international' of development efforts would indicate, development in the post-war era was articulated through a global voice. Abstracting from historical experiences of Western Europe or the Soviet Union was a global effort, albeit a top-down global voice. However, something about the global voice has changed

now. Along with the technocratic formulas from the experts the global voice is joined in the choir with bottom-up and lateral voices.

Aiding these global voices are flows of ideas, peoples, and technologies that produce 'sites' of interaction.

The global voice is cultural. The anthropologist Arjun Appadurai introduces the notion of global 'scapes' embodying networked interactions that simultaneously include existing meaning and production systems around the world while allowing for various forms of imaginary capacities to arise, especially from below (Appadurai 1996). Scapes are suffixes for factors – techno, ideo, finance – changing the character of globalization. Culture then becomes 'a dialogue between aspirations and sedimented traditions' (Appadurai 2004). Global imaginaries allow for both 'politics of recognition' (Charles Taylor's term) and 'capacity to aspire': 'As the imagination as a social force itself works across national lines to produce locality as a spatial fact and a sensibility, we see the beginnings of social forms without either the predatory mobility of unregulated capital or the predatory stability of many states' (Appadurai 2000, 7).

Cultures are processes: they evolve, they are syncretic, and they can be contradictory. The notion of scapes offers a site to understand global cultural evolution. However, scapes-led interactions can also produce anxiety and information overloads. Anthropologist Ulf Hannerz writes of 'information overload' and 'information anxiety' as processes of disruption that make it hard for people to 'manage the relationship between the entire cultural inventory and their reasonable personal share in it' (Hannerz 1996).

Development projects are often predicated toward noticing only the positive impacts. However, cultural interactions also bring anxieties. The sites for these interactions that Appadurai calls 'scapes' provide information on

contradictions and anxieties that are present in any project. Many of the participants in the 28 projects of the DICE Fund, for example, note the anxiety about participation or interacting with external partners. *The Stories of Change* from the ground have a global scape; participants from Brazil, Egypt, and Pakistan note how participation in DICE increased their confidence about being an entrepreneur. Nevertheless, interviews and narratives also indicated 'performative failures' in interaction. Appadurai cites gender theorist Judith Butler's work to show that unless performances have been repeated over a course of time, they can result in 'misfires' (Appadurai 2013). We will return to this point later. For now it is important to underscore that a project like DICE must be prepared to deal with anxiety, assist people with self-realization and creativity, while moving them toward collaboration. It is a tall order for any development enterprise!

3. DICE AS METHOD AND PRACTICE

DICE's place in the historical context of international development both benefits from and pushes forward the importance of culture and creativity with a global focus. This section outlines the methods and practices that address the core of the DICE projects: the logic of its design or the theory of change, the creativity of its participants, and the story that DICE narrates about its development efforts. The causal logic of DICE's efforts rests in the British Council's cultural relations approach, but DICE goes further in thinking through elements of dialogue and trust that bring together the ecology of its networks. Their collective endeavour is then described below in terms of negotiations that are at the heart of any dialogue or deliberation. Finally, all development efforts are stories about the world: social science is now according attention to narratives as the glue to collective endeavours

(Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle 2014, Singh 2017a, Shiller 2017). DICE's self-awareness carries over into narrating a story about itself. As this section shows, it's a dramaturgically incomplete story but, nevertheless, one that allows the participants to locate themselves in it.

3.1 THEORY OF CHANGE

The British Council approach to engagement is situated in cultural relations, a term it invented in the 1930s at its inception, to demonstrate a new way of approaching international relations. Cultural relations supplements international relations that imply interactions among nation-states; cultural relations brings in non-states actors. Power configures as a central element in thinking about inter-state relations, and in the liberal version exchange and reciprocity are key elements. For international cultural relations, the central concept is trust. Cultural relations' broad definitions includes key terms such as dialogue, reciprocity and trust among cultures. A recent review of cultural relations from the Goethe-Institut and British Council (2018, 7) adopts the following definition of cultural relations:

Cultural relations are understood as reciprocal transnational interactions between two or more cultures, encompassing a range of activities conducted by state and/or non-state actors within the space of culture and civil society. The overall outcomes of cultural relations are greater connectivity, better mutual understanding, more and deeper relationships, mutually beneficial transactions and enhanced sustainable dialogue between people and cultures, shaped through engagement and attraction rather than coercion.

An approach situated in understanding, relationship, dialogue and engagement implies trust. A great deal of the British Council's work in cultural relations focuses on this. Two aspects are

important here: macro trust in the British Council as a partner, and programme level trust among the participants of DICE. Collective action problems in DICE are resolved through trust especially as the project evolves globally and often involves arms-length transactions. Sociologist Anthony Giddens (1990) notes that trust in modernity is abstract and often develops out of faceless or arms-length transactions. Trust then must follow from a series of commitments that can involve 'facework' and 'access points' in large networks, but the following is important: '*Trust in systems* takes the form of *faceless commitments*, in which faith is sustained in the working of knowledge of which the lay person is largely ignorant.'

The elements of trust in the British Council and DICE are evident in its data and practices. Several reports in the last decade, starting with the notable *Trust Pays* (British Council 2012b, Campbell-Cree and Lotten 2018) all highlight not just the value of trust in relationships that the British Council cultivates but also instrumental pay-offs to the UK of such relations. Recent data confirm that the UK is the most trusted country in the world, even as countries such as the U.S. and China decline in rankings (MacDonald 1 July 2020).

DICE was rolled out within a couple of months of receiving ODA funds in January 2018 at an ambitious scale in six countries including the UK. The value of creating trust was challenging with the timing of the rollout and the expanse of its scale. Part of the answer to delivering trust lies in the kind of abstract and impartial expertise that Anthony refers to above. Once the funding was in place, DICE was co-designed with colleagues globally, but prior to its official launch or go-ahead, its scaffolding was co-designed in the UK by gender, creative economy, social enterprise and civil society in-house experts. Expertise was embedded in DICE at many levels. The ecology of the action situation benefitted DICE in several ways. The UK and British Council

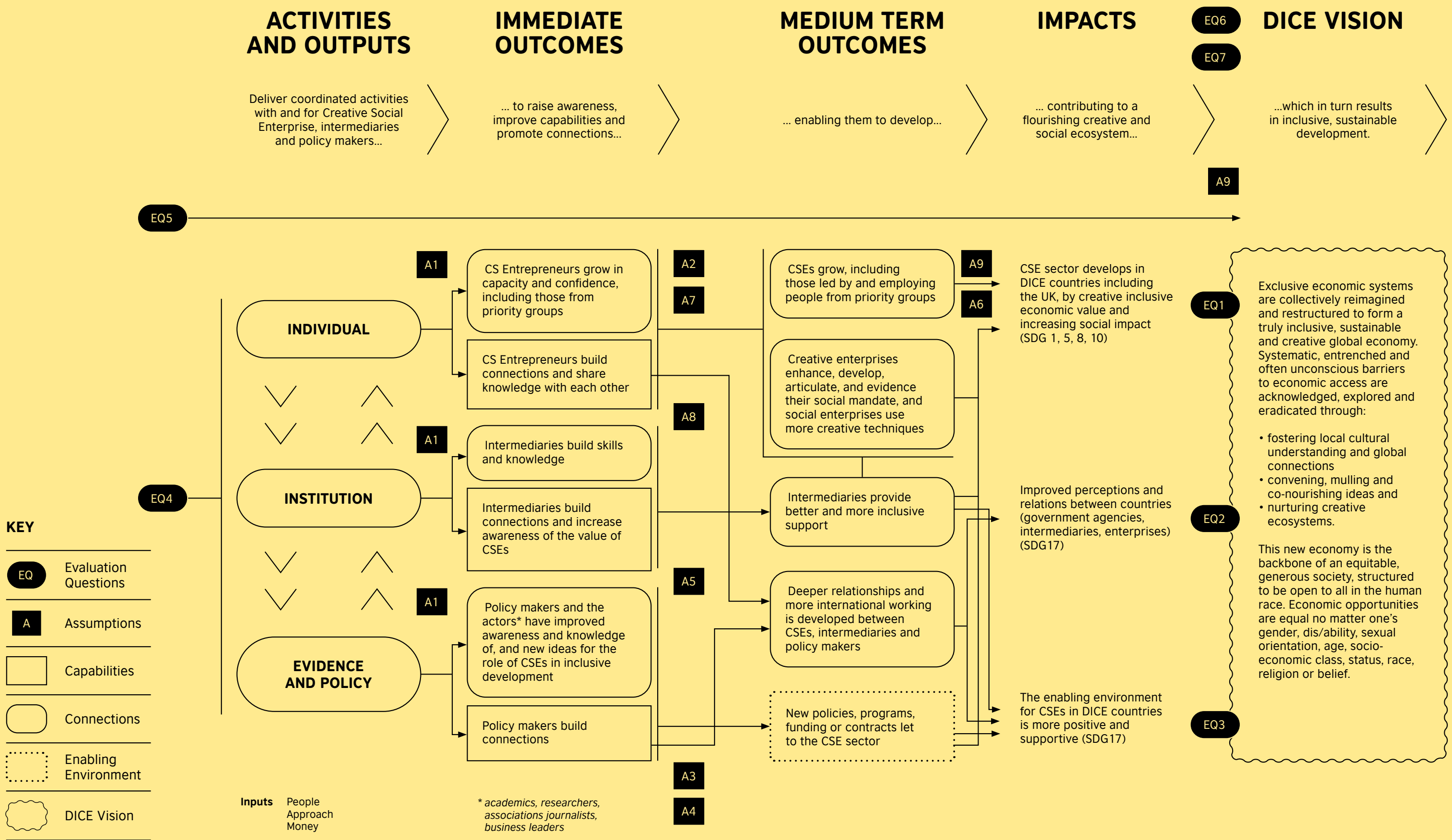
are held in high regard; this despite the history of colonialism in the very countries in which the British Council operates – three of which are in DICE (Egypt, Pakistan and South Africa). The history and legacy of colonialism are the elephants in the room with North-South engagements. That the UK is highly regarded evidences the ability of societies to move into trustworthy relationships; that the elephant is still in the room means that there are still difficult negotiations ahead (Singh 2017b).

The theory of change must be distinguished from the results chain in any development project. The latter provides a series of inputs that are then hypothesized to deliver a set of outcomes and results in the short, medium, and long term. Figure 3 details the results chain for DICE. The theory of change is the causality through which outcomes are expected and this is where the logic of the results chain must cut across all short and long-term steps. The following quote from *Impact Evaluation in Practice* makes the logic clear (Gertler et al. 2016, 32)

A theory of change is a description of how an intervention is supposed to deliver the desired results. It describes the causal logic of how and why a particular program, program modality, or design innovation will reach its intended outcomes.

Figure 3 provides validity for the cultural relations causality: validity statistically means that a hypothesis, in this case about the impact of cultural relations, is verifiable through evidence. Most of the hypotheses address building relationships and connections, collaborative activities, and sharing knowledge. This is cultural relations. The British Council's notion of trust is rooted in culture, whereas institutional economics views it in legal and contractual terms. Both posit trust as the condition delivering on collective action positively in one-off or repeated interactions. Iterative interactions produce further trust in the system.

The theory of change or the causality in DICE is trust that develops from repeated interactions in a cultural relations network and programme. It can also be understood as the causal element of the many contractual relationships in DICE.



3.2 CREATIVITY

Another major explicit conceptualization and operationalization in DICE is around questions of creativity as evident in Figure 3 above. The C of the DICE program addresses creativity. This creativity appears in relation to social enterprise and the global economy to which these enterprises related. The following questions are relevant:

- what does creativity mean for the those excluded socially or economically in various regions?
- what policies and institutions best encourage this creative entrepreneurship?
- what role can the global networks and institutions play in bridging social enterprise with the creative economy?

DICE attends to creative questions at all levels of the questions posed above. Numerous conversations and interviews with the DICE director and staff reveal the depth of thinking about creativity in DICE from helping the social entrepreneur find a confident creative voice to collaborative work that leads to connections with the global economy.

Creativity begins with first a voice for which DICE employs techniques from art. Paulo Freire (2018) in his powerful book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* notes the process of consciousness awakening that allows the participants to name their world, as opposed to finding it named for them. Colonialism literally named the world for the colonized: Dilli became Delhi, Chattopadhyia became Chatterjee, Mumbai was Bombay. Participants could not keep their names, let alone trying to name the world. DICE brings in performativity and play into its activities to allow participants to find a consciousness about creativity. These creativity techniques are well-studied in behavioural and cognitive psychology,

and neuroscience. Many well-received workshops helped the social entrepreneurs and DICE staff find a creative voice including the following:

- use of acting techniques for developing presence, listening, and intercultural skills in London
- bringing in musicians to support team development in Edinburgh and Egypt
- using drumming techniques for learning synchronization in Pakistan
- role play through puppetry in Lahore to find inspiration in creative work.



Figure 1(From L to R) Camelia Harahap (Indonesia), Saba Ehsan Pakistan), Kate Gardner (South Africa) and Effie Vourakis (Brazil), DICE team members at Museum of Puppetry, Lahore

These forms of creativity go beyond finding a voice. After all, finding a voice and naming the world is also about finding oneself to be human. Oppression is about dehumanization. Feeling human through creativity is, therefore, transformational. Further, many of the social entrepreneurs work in creative and artistic endeavours.

The end of creativity is to problem-solve. That is the difference between accepting the naming of oneself or one's world from an external agent versus naming the world oneself through

problem-solving. These techniques are applicable to thinking about creative entrepreneurship. Albert Hirschman (2014) writes about similar moments of serendipity in development projects when practitioners come across unanticipated problems or hurdles and must find solutions. He calls this phenomenon the *Principle of the Hiding Hand* in development: 'Creativity always comes as a surprise to us; therefore we can never count on it and we dare not believe in it until it has happened' (p. 11). Hirschman's point is that the difficulties and challenges of a development project are often not anticipated but once the hiding hand reveals them, creativity begins to appear. Most development projects are designed comprehensively and with 'imitation techniques' or formulas. The hiding hand enables the thinking that project goals are achievable but once the challenges become visible, creativity is useful: 'when a venture has gone through considerable teething trouble as a result of the intervention of the Hiding Hand, it is likely to deserve a higher ranking than one with a similar return but no such experience' [p. 25]. Hirschman compares the Hiding Hand to the habits of a repentant sinner who is to be preferred to the ever righteous human.

3.3 NARRATIVES

DICE makes a bold pronouncement in seeking to shape a new narrative about itself. As noted above, this narrative has exciting protagonists: the role of creativity, the change through cultural relations, the focus on the marginalised and oppressed groups. The self-awareness about

this narrative comes through the emphasis on storytelling in DICE. Its programmatic element includes training journalists and storytellers to document the DICE story through textual and multimodal techniques, including poetry. The DICE Young Storymakers include a cohort of 14 journalists: "They provide invaluable reporting capacity and locally informed perspectives on the creative social enterprises and intermediaries that DICE is supporting and the complex, interconnected issues that DICE is exploring."

Narratives are creative endeavours that allow people to imagine themselves in the story as part of its plot structure. This may be DICE's paramount contribution to inclusivity and underscoring the power of performativity. Irving Goffman (1959) describes society in his famous book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* as a performative space in which every participant has a role to play in the presentation of a societal performance. A well rehearsed performance comes from a society where every actor has internalized the role such that no one give away any cues. Goffman calls it "dramaturgical discipline" [pp. 216-218]. DICE is different: all the world's a stage but dramaturgical discipline would be impossible in such "an action situation" (explained below, also see Ostrom 2005). Therefore, DICE brings along and trains its own storytellers to record the cues and the facts for the performers as they are revealed and performed. It's as if the walls of the stage have been removed to show the backstage and present a common deconstructed space in which the play is enacted.²

² I am one of the DICE storytellers. My original commission for the story told in this report was "Why DICE? Why Now?" It was a hard commission. As noted earlier, I work on paternalism, but also believe in humanizing interventions. Therefore, this story was one of discovery – of a Weberian 'ideatype' project that is instructive for international development both for its merits and challenges, and especially for a cultural relations approach to development.

4. THEORISING DICE

The preceding sections outlined the historical context and the processes underlying DICE. This section turns to the conceptual or the theoretical ‘So what?’ questions: what is DICE an example of theoretically, and how should we assess this theoretical importance? DICE is an opportunity to consider the broad ecological and institutional context within which development takes place. Ecology is a biological term implying that the meaning of the object (or the body) must be understood through the relationships among the subparts. In that sense, DICE returns us to metaphors or the human body in classical political economy. This ‘return’ described in some detail below is strategic: the implication is that development needs to resurrect and refine the old metaphors.

DICE highlights the institutional contexts within which development happens, both as a constraint and an opportunity. In the former sense, programmes like DICE must take some parts of the institutional context ‘as given’: in other words, DICE (or development projects in general) cannot change features of the broader political environment not just in the five countries where it operates but also in the United Kingdom. As an ODA programme, DICE must also take some ODA matrices and constraints as given. Nevertheless, the opportunity to change institutions rests in the ‘action arena’ within which DICE actors operate and negotiate each other.

The economist John Maynard Keynes was right to note that even ‘Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back.’ Keynes meant that the words and action of policymakers and authority figures can be traced back to some ‘intellectual influence’ and he specifically refers to economists. The analysis of DICE provided so far reveals, or can be interpreted, from the perspective

of various intellectual influences. DICE pushes forward the thinking about culture and development and creative industries. Its ecology and mechanisms can be understood from the perspectives of development and institutional economics and sociology.

4.1 THE ECOLOGY

All DICE documents emphasize its ecology of development. The word ‘holistic’ is often used along with the following statement: ‘DICE takes an “ecosystem” approach to nurturing economic inclusion, with a focus on women and girls, young people, disabled people and other often excluded groups.’ The terms holistic and ecology indicate that the DICE architecture and impact may be greater than a sum of the individual parts. Such an approach has precedents in both classical and current political economies.

4.2 BACK TO THE FUTURE

The origins of political economy lie in a worldview that would be termed ‘ecological’ in current times. Understanding the importance of the physiological metaphors that define the ecology of classical political economy can help with outlining the theoretical importance of DICE.

Scottish Enlightenment philosopher Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* is widely viewed as pushing extant ideas of moral political economy toward an academic discipline that would later become economics. Like his contemporaries, but far more notably, Adam Smith examined the sources of wealth creation and attributed it to a division of labour: ‘It is the great multiplication of the productions of all the different arts, in consequence of the division of labour, which occasions, in a well-governed society, that universal opulence which extends itself to the lowest ranks of the people’ (Smith 1982/1776, Book 1 Ch1). The division of labour

was the mechanism through which wealth would be produced and accumulate. The deeper political economy of that division of labour lay in a moral philosophy.

The moral philosophy gives a sense of the ecology that guided Adam Smith. As his mentor, Frances Hutcheson at the University of Glasgow introduced Adam Smith to Barnard Mandaville’s 1705 text *Fable of the Bees*, but placed it in a far more ‘virtuous’ context than Madaville intended. The latter’s book contains elements of the bees working together to maintain a hive or community, with each full of vice and wanting to defect from the community (*Fable of the Bees* created a religious scandal!). For Adam Smith self-interest was contained in social norms and conveyed through what his senior contemporary David Hume called ‘moral sentiments.’ Following Hutcheson, Adam Smith also noted self-regard and self-love, rather than vice, as motivations for action. Division of labour and commerce flourished in a culture that allows human virtue to flourish. Nicholas Philippon provides a supportive account for Adam Smith’s senior David Hume: ‘Here was the Scottish spokesman for a culture that held that commerce had the power to civilize, that its roots lay in the modern world and it required new political institutions and a new culture to support it’ (Phillipson 1989, 31) For both then the political economy, even the prescription of looking after one’s own interest, lay in moral sentiments that define society. The ecology of Scottish Enlightenment define the notion that the actions of one part depend on the other and that leads to greater good and prosperity.

Adam Smith also borrowed from another ecological metaphor. This was the biological language to speak to the economy or politics. There are numerous references in Adam Smith’s writings to the body politic, the general health of an economy, and the need to facilitate economic flows from one part of production to next – whether through a division of labour

for a product or for international commerce – much like the blood flows of a human body. The body metaphor in part came from Adam Smith’s reading of the French physiocrats for whom the ability to reinvest surpluses from land created wealth. Smith engaged with François Quesnay whose book *Tableau économique* in 1758 showed how surpluses from one activity on land went to another to enable that person to produce more. The *Tableau* was the predecessor to current econometric national input-output tables that are employed in most economies for predicting national growth rates. Quesnay provided a value chain or a division of labour for the agricultural economy: one person sells the surplus grain, another bakes the bread, and both generate surpluses. Adam Smith extended physiocrats’ obsession with land to manufacturing in general, imagining the contributions of the body politic and society (Meek 1951). The human body metaphor continues to find currency (Gallagher 2009).

4.3 BACK TO THE PRESENT

The moral political economy of 18th century was situated in systemic contexts, in which the human body and its functions were important. The move toward formulas in the micro contexts of neoclassical and Keynesian economics were not new in the 19th and the 20th centuries: economics has always fashioned its vocabulary from multiple disciplines including the sciences: alongside the systemic view was the mechanistic one driving its legitimacy from Sir Isaac Newton and Galileo. If in the 18th century, physiology provided the dominant metaphor for political economy, it was physics in the 20th century.

The ‘return’ of systemic contexts now lies in broad thinking about culture and relations, and the networks they nurture and contain, but now the ecology of processes sits alongside the mechanisms of formulas. Especially institutional economics has expanded the understanding of

the cultural context in which economic activity takes place, while outlining mechanisms that can propel economies forward. Douglass North (1994)'s Nobel prize acceptance speech in 1993 is representative:

It is culture that provides the key to path dependence – a term used to describe the powerful influence of the past on the present and future. The current learning of any generation takes place within the context of the perceptions derived from collective learning. Learning then is an incremental process filtered by the culture of a society which determines the perceived payoffs, but there is no guarantee that the cumulative past experience of a society will necessarily fix them to solve new problems.

Mary Douglas (1986) brings in the Durkheimian tradition in sociology to note that individuals have social origins, as opposed to society being an additive condition of individuals. At one point, Douglas cites Howard Becker (1982) on the art world's noting that the individual effort of an artist is at a sociological level a collective effort.

The cultural context is acknowledged in the quote above, and there are supportive traditions in social sciences. For example, Elinor Ostrom, another Nobel laureate in economics, though a political scientist by training, outlines the constraint and possibilities from the socio ecological system (SES). Ostrom's idea of nested small organisations working within large networks of actors is equally important (Ostrom 2005). Ostrom's concepts help us understand decentralized and networked governance systems: they are robust and over time the users begin to develop great degrees of trust and reciprocity among themselves. As an example, DICE participants regularly acknowledge forms of learning from each other's practices. Another one is articulating personal and professional insecurities to seek help toward becoming a creative entrepreneur.

4.4 ACTORS AND INSTITUTIONS

Economists and sociologists who work on institutions provide a bridging language to discern the mechanisms that make an ecology work. Without specifying these mechanisms, ecological thinking sounds ambiguous (or even wishful). Institutions are formal or informal conventions or contracts that constrain or incentivize human action. Institutional economists note how institutions can cut transaction costs of action and resolve collective action problems (Williamson 1985, North 1990), while sociological work is important for understanding the meaning of that action and how trust develops (Douglas 1986, Giddens 1990). Several theorists bridge the gap: Greif (2006) shows how trust develops in economic coalitions. Putnam (1994) shows how civil society is founded on trust.

Understanding institutions and trust is the key to coding (or decoding, if you prefer) the language of DICE. The programme can be viewed as an institution that seeks to enable collective action among the three levels of immediate participants – social enterprises, intermediaries, and policymakers – that are connected with the broader ecology of the British Council and British government's ODA practices. There are two ways in which DICE enables collective action toward the common endeavour of making social enterprise and cultural relations grow.

First, DICE helps cut transaction costs among the participants. Transaction costs are over and above the 'material' costs of action as cost of land or capital. The cost of producing anything is also a transaction among the producers and includes legal costs of enforcing a contract (even in the simple exchange of buying something with a legitimate currency unit), or implicit knowledge for completing a task, or the search for a market. Providing business management training, skills training, or access to a market appear are a part

of DICE and help us understand the incentives – or the reduction of transaction costs – for collective action among DICE participants.

Another way of understanding how DICE enables collective action is via the Institutional Analysis and Development Framework that Elinor Ostrom (2005) provides. In the IAD framework, actors and institutions interact through a variety of implicit and explicit rules for conduct. Ostrom also offers a way of connecting the IAD framework with broader socio ecological systems (SES). Ostrom focuses on the notion of an action arena – that can be a home, a market, of a network – that is affected by a set of external factors or variables [See Figure 1]. The action situation participants produce outcomes through successive interactions with each other. The unit of analysis for (Ostrom 2005, 32) is this action situation: 'Whenever two or more individuals are faced with a set of potential actions that jointly produce outcomes, these individuals can be said to be 'in' an action situation.' Figure 2 provides the breakdown of an action situation: the participants have been assigned roles, and provided information about their roles. Their control over the outcome can vary from none to absolute. They must then assess their payoffs (costs/benefits) to influence the outcome. The latter then is a function of the roles assigned, information about roles, the control over outcomes, and the payoffs.

The relevance of the action-situation for DICE can now be explained. The three sets of players – enterprises, intermediaries, and policymakers – are part of environmental or external factors constraining the action situations. This includes the boundaries that define DICE, the material conditions of the participants, the attributes of the communities in which they live or work, and the informal or formal rules that shape their conduct. These external conditions can be referred to as the 'trait-taking' conditions that Albert Hirschman (2014) describes as not being

conducive to change with a development project. The possibility to influence outcomes within an action situation is something that Hirschman calls 'traitmaking'. Such traitmaking is central to the creative agency of the participants in an action situation.

Figure 1
A Framework for Institutional Analysis.
Source: Adapted from Ostrom (2011)

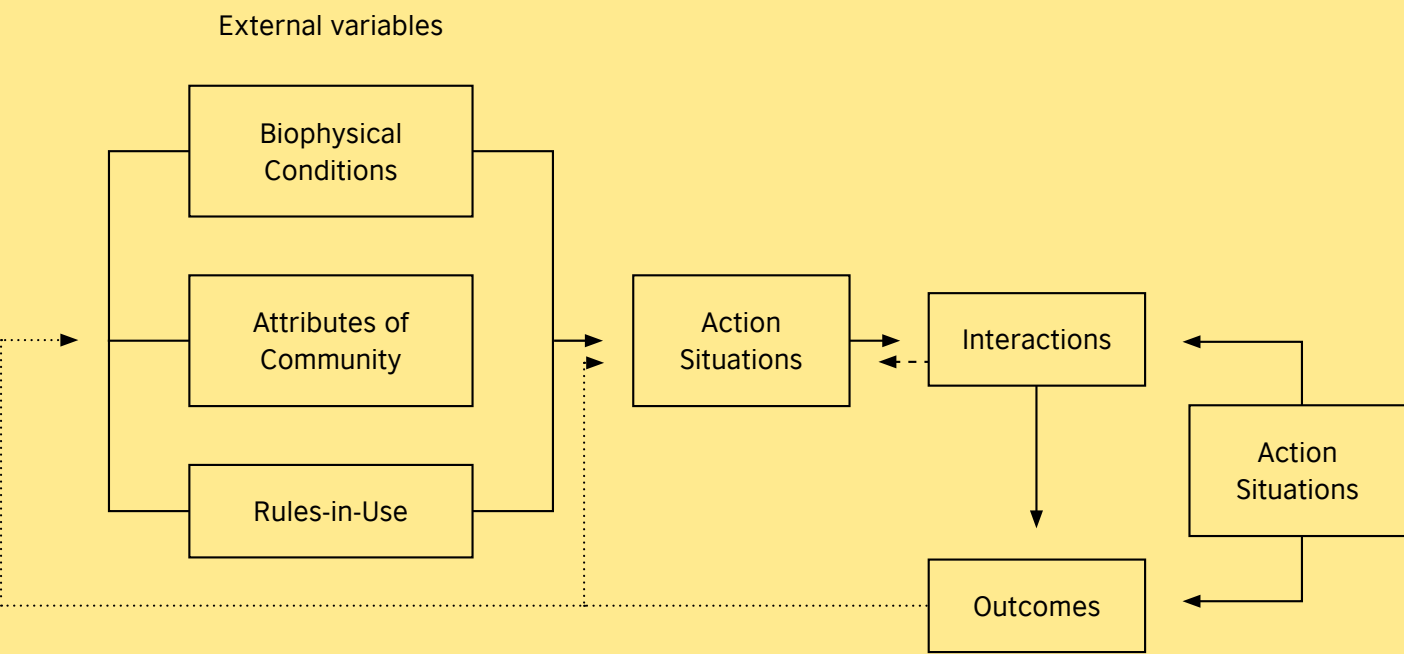
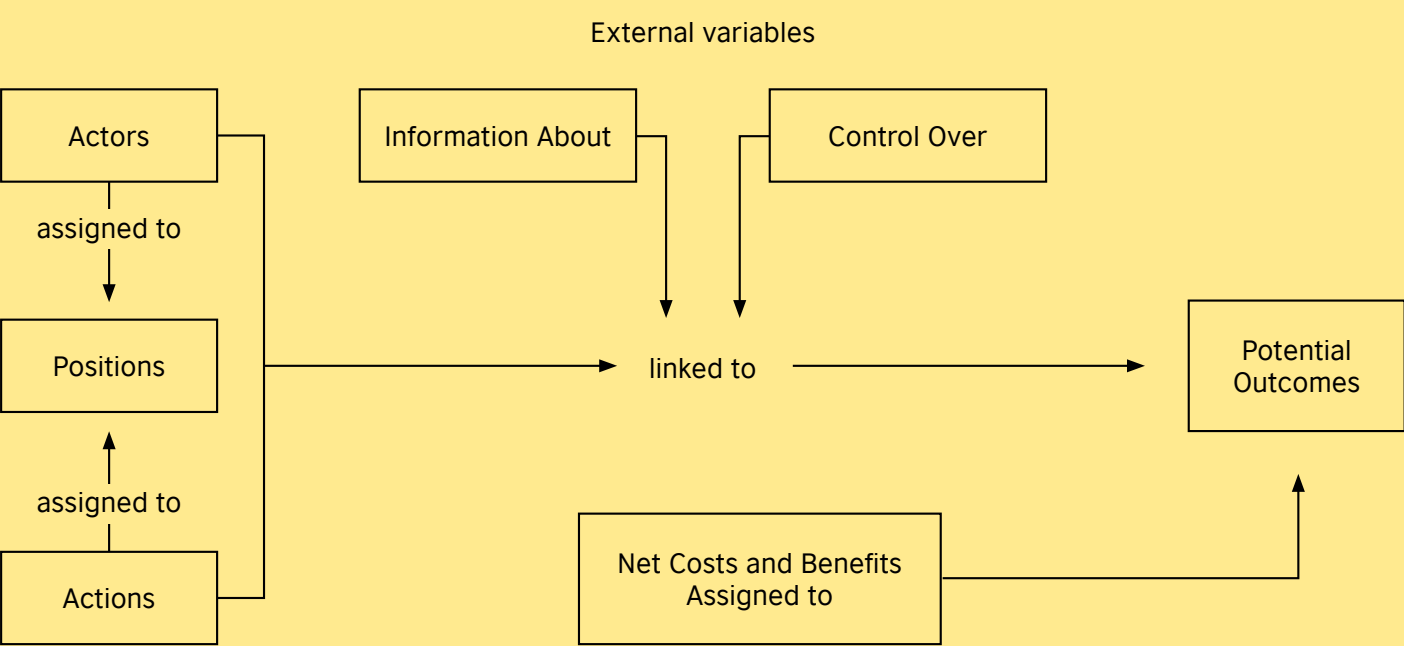


Figure 2
The Internal Structure of an Action Situation.
Source: Adapted from Ostrom (2011).



4.5 NEGOTIATIONS

Elinor Ostrom describes the ability to influence outcomes in an action situation in negotiation terms. Participants with their roles defined through external factors have varying degrees of ability to influence outcomes. The key determinant is ‘the payoff matrix’ that defines the bargaining motivation for the participants. Bargaining here must be understood broadly. For example, imagine that a social enterprise owner has been asked to attend a skills training workshop. There is an ‘ask’, and the entrepreneur needs to decide whether she would attend the two-day workshop which takes her away from selling fruit on the street. The payoff she assesses would include tangibles such as expected future earnings, being part of a network of social entrepreneurs in a community, and global connections.

In a negotiation scenario, the mechanism that helps a participant decide is known as BATNA or Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (Lax 1986). The fruit seller would need to weigh her alternatives to decide in favour of (or against) attending the skills training. Especially as the alternatives include intangible and intangible factors, the choice entailed in making sense of alternatives is not easy.

The economist’s sense of these alternatives posits a rational actor, the economic human being (*homo economicus*) who acts alone in determining the course of action. This is where the negotiation situation in an institutional and ecological framework is different. Any actor’s payoff is dependent on those of others through a series of interlined choices that can both provide more information to the participants (e.g. on how others fared with similar skills training) or mitigate risk (e.g. though embedding the entrepreneur’s risk in a society). More broadly activities in an action situation cannot be readily understood just from an economic perspective. Returning to the quote from the introduction of

this report, an action situation in DICE features habits of argumentation, negotiation and deliberation: actions situation are ‘spaces where individuals interact, exchange goods or services, solve problems, dominate one another, or fight’ Ostrom (2005).

Hirschman wrote of status quo traits of the environment that resource or time-bound development projects cannot change versus those that they can. The former can include structural poverty, political regimes, or climate change. Development projects, in Hirschman’s words, speak to both ‘trait taking’ and ‘trait making’ (hearkening the language of firms that may be price takers or price makers). The status quo alerts us to features of environments that are often ignored to propose magical formulas that do not work in practice (‘trait taking’). Pritchett, Woolcock and Andrews (2013) warn about ‘looking like a state’ where developmental capacities are mismatched with functions or desired outcomes. Understanding the action situation then also means understanding the limits of trait-making.

To summarize, this section has described the conceptual models that can analyse how participants in an action situation like DICE will make decisions and try to influence outcomes. While DICE represents an institutional understanding, the participants are also part of a broader ecology that is somewhat external to the action situation before it begins but motivates or limits agency among participants. The next section describes this missing piece or the methods through which DICE itself facilitates participation and decision-making in a network.

5. CONCLUSION

This essay narrates the role DICE has played in the shift in development thinking from formulas to flows that can be traced back to the Scottish Enlightenment. Scottish Enlightenment philosophers were thinking of the flows within the human body that work beautifully if allowed to do so – in the words of Adam Smith with the force ‘an invisible hand’. They also believed in the importance of the social context or milieu or what was then called moral political economy.

A return to the flows model brings together the following themes that are important to DICE

- cultural relations that emphasize flows of trust as the causal linkages of the DICE story
- creativity of endeavour and expanse in bringing social entrepreneurship to the marginalised globally
- narratives that show that dramaturgically incomplete stories can be told with great effect about confidence, voice, creativity, collaboration, and results.

The most challenging debate in international development currently is the paternalism inherent in any external intervention – whether from the World Bank in Washington, DC, or the China Development Bank in Beijing. DICE is an exciting institutional intervention in international development, presenting cultural relations as a way of building trust with participants, and overcoming problems of collective action. It presents a model situated in creativity for assisting the poor and marginalized in find a voice to connect with the global economy. It goes without saying that the payoffs for everyone in such ODA practices are enormous. The development communities in the UK and elsewhere will take notice.

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