



BOW STREET BULLETIN

News and Ideas from the
Harvard Center for Population and
Development Studies

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Painting a Picture of Older Africans

A large new study led by the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies (Pop Center) aims to shed light on how people in Sub-Saharan Africa are faring as they age, given that both infectious and non-infectious diseases are becoming increasingly chronic, with people surviving longer but having to cope with long-lasting ailments. The study will paint a broad picture of aging, health, productivity, and well-being among thousands of people in Sub-Saharan Africa.

with, and understand what both the determinants and consequences of living with those conditions might be.”

The three-year HAALSI Program Project—Health and Aging in Africa: Longitudinal Studies of INDEPTH communities—is being funded by a \$3 million grant from the National Institute on Aging. The interdisciplinary team of collaborators includes Berkman; three experts from HSPH’s Department of Global Health and Population—David Canning, Richard Saltonstall Professor of Population Sciences and professor of economics and international health; Till Bärnighausen, associate professor of global health; and Joshua Salomon, professor of global health—and colleagues including Stephen Tollman, professor from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, and the INDEPTH Network, a global network of health and demographic surveillance systems based in Ghana.



“We know very little about chronic disease and aging in Sub-Saharan Africa,” said principal investigator Lisa Berkman, director of the Pop Center and Thomas Cabot Professor of Public Policy and of Epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH). “We assume that people have infectious diseases, but in fact the world has shifted enormously. Now people are living with chronic conditions, either infectious or not, in a way we don’t understand very well. We want to characterize and understand the conditions people are dealing

A range of assessments

Researchers will begin their work in Agincourt, South Africa in 2014; in subsequent years they plan to extend the study to other INDEPTH communities, including Navrongo, Ghana, and Ifakara, Tanzania. In each community they will establish a cohort of 4,000 men and women aged 50 and over. They’ll assess participants’ health and well-being through surveys and

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Foreclosures Harm Neighbors’ Health

Sometimes solving problems in public health and urban planning takes more than the usual tools of the trade. Sometimes it takes changing the conversation about the problem.

That is exactly what Mariana Arcaya is doing with her ongoing research into the effects of foreclosure on community health. At a time when public opinion was staunchly against doing anything at all about foreclosed properties—because it was widely believed that those in foreclosure had “brought it on themselves”—Arcaya found a new way of looking at the issue, a way that removed the reasons for not doing something.

That new way was to focus on the effects of foreclosure on the neighbors, specifically the health effects. By illustrating the effects on the people who live next door to foreclosed properties,

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BOW STREET BULLETIN

THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR
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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Celebrating 50 Years of Progress and Empowerment

This is an exciting time to be at the Pop Center. As the Harvard School of Public Health celebrates its centennial, we have an anniversary of our own of which we are very proud: The Pop Center is 50 years old.

To mark such an occasion, on April 28 and 29 we will look back on the accomplishments of our past, as well as the key milestones in our field that have helped shaped who we are and the work we do today—and will continue to do in the future. Our academic symposium will shine a light on the issues and initiatives that the Center is currently pursuing (see page 3 for the details). Our celebration dinner will honor three individuals who have made a tremendous impact on the Pop Center: Sissela Bok, a key scientist here since 1992; Lincoln Chen, former Center director; and Mary Paci, Pop Center Partners Council member and daughter of Founding Director Roger Revelle.

In its 50 years, the Pop Center has benefited from the passion, drive, and dedication of too many to be named here. But the spirit of all will be felt and acknowledged gratefully in our April celebrations—and well beyond.

As we celebrate our own past, we cannot overlook the watershed moments from the past decades that occurred around the world, moments that we participated in and were effected by. Two such moments took place in 1994, and, in my view, forever changed the landscape on which we work.

January 1994 brought us the landmark book on women's empowerment, *Population Policy Reconsidered*. Initiated at the Pop Center and edited by then-director Lincoln Chen and two other affiliated scientists, Gita Sen and Adrienne Germain, the book was ground-breaking in its discussion of women's health and empowerment from a number of interdisciplinary and policy perspectives.

Later that same year, the United Nations coordinated an International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. Often known simply as the "Cairo Conference," the event covered a variety of population issues, including immigration, infant mortality, birth control, family planning, the education of women, and protection for women from unsafe abortion services. This conference resulted in a monumental worldwide shift in women's rights and women's health.

There is no overstating the impact of *Population Policy Reconsidered* or the Cairo Conference. They are, in a sense, emblematic of the work the Pop Center—and centers like it around the world—have been doing for half a century. At our core, we have always been dedicated to studying the problems of our world's population and implementing solutions based on rigorous research and cross-cultural communication.

At the Center's launch, our main focus was the challenge of overpopulation, and the resulting problems in health and other areas. Decades later, work done by the Pop Center, and centers like it, has led to fertility control and increased life expectancy.

I am honored to be part of a center—and a field of study—that has had such a tremendous impact on the world. And like my colleagues, I know that pride in past accomplishments will not keep us from continually striving to solve the issues of our day.

The field we work in and the problems we face force us to continually imagine a new world and come up with innovative solutions to our most pressing challenges.

I look forward to seeing you all at our festivities in April.

—Lisa Berkman

Harvard Pop Center Marks 50 Year Anniversary

On April 28–29, 2014, the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies will host two events marking its 50th anniversary.

Faculty, fellows and staff will host an **open house** at the Pop Center on Monday, April 28. Tours, poster presentations by postdoctoral fellows, tea, treats, and all around good cheer will ensue from 4:30 PM to 6:00 PM. Everyone is welcome to attend.



The following morning, April 29, from 9:00 AM to 1:30 PM, the Center will host a **symposium** entitled “Reimagining Societies in the Face of Demographic Change.” The objective of the symposium is to celebrate the Pop Center’s achievements, reflect on current demographic challenges facing societies and communities, and delve into the Center’s current exciting initiatives and activities. Distinguished speakers and guests include:

- Julio Frenk, dean, Harvard School of Public Health
- Sissela Bok, senior visiting fellow, Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies
- Lincoln Chen, president, China Medical Board, and former director of the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies
- Sir Michael Marmot, director, University College London Institute of Health Equity
- Babatunde Osotimehin, executive director, United Nations Population Fund
- Mary Revelle Paci, Pop Center Partners Council member and daughter of Founding Director Roger Revelle
- Jack Rowe, professor, Department of Health Policy and Management, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

The symposium location will be the Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School, 77 Avenue Louis Pasteur, Boston, MA, 02115. The event is free and open to everyone, although RSVPs are requested to popcenter@hsph.harvard.edu.

Complete details on the agenda can be found on our website at www.hsph.harvard.edu/cpds. ■

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measurements of biomarkers that indicate disease. They’ll look at participants’ social and economic conditions and how they function in their daily lives; how much they get around, how much contact they have with friends and relatives, and how their health conditions impact


as many colleagues in the INDEPTH network.

Canning, who leads a project on productivity in the HAALSI program, said, “HAALSI is a transformative study providing path-breaking new information on infectious and non-infectious diseases, physical and cognitive functioning, and work and well-being at older ages in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study will help us improve both the health and economic conditions of populations in Africa as they face the coming demographic transition with increasing numbers of Africans living successfully to older ages.”

Berkman added that the HSPH study is part of a set of large global sister studies of health and aging in low-, middle- and high-income countries around the world. The HAALSI study will be harmonized with studies in India, China, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union.

“In these studies, we ask the same questions in the same way whenever possible, so that we can truly compare data,” Berkman explained, adding that data gleaned from the studies become publicly available as soon as possible to enhance researchers’ ability to analyze data across countries. “Over time, we’ll be able to understand country-level differences in health and, ultimately, be able to pinpoint the policies that promote population health.” ■

—Karen Feldscher,
Senior Writer/Project Manager at
Harvard School of Public Health
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“HAALSI is a transformative study providing path-breaking new information on infectious and non-infectious diseases, physical and cognitive functioning, and work and well-being at older ages in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

both their families and their ability to work. The researchers will also try to identify how social, economic, and labor policies influence adult health in each community.

The research team includes sociologists, clinicians, economists, and epidemiologists from the larger Harvard community, including Harvard Medical School and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, as well

Arcaya operationalized the idea that “we’re all in this together.” The results of her work are now informing policy and planning regarding the revitalization of foreclosed properties.

With policy in mind

A Yerby Postdoctoral Fellow based at the Pop Center, Arcaya explores how geographic and social contexts affect health via three complementary streams of research: 1) estimating the effects of residential context on health; 2) evaluating the health impacts of planning-related policies and interventions; and 3) utilizing methodological innovations to test novel applications of existing methods and to develop new technical approaches that advance the study of place and social context vis-à-vis health.



Mariana Arcaya

Arcaya prefers not to limit the focus of her work. As the manager of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council’s Public Health Division, she tackled a broad range of community-based health concerns, including healthy eating, tobacco cessation, and public safety, and her research has laid the groundwork for some of the Council’s intervention programs.

Key in her approach to this research—and all of her work—is to consider how research can translate into policy. “If I find something and it gets published, how would I want my studies to be useful to a policy maker or someone making a policy related argument?” says Arcaya.

“Mariana represents a unique category of scientists working at the intersection of urban planning/policy on one hand and public

health on other. I think the remarkable thing is how effectively she straddles, literally, the active political world of policy and planning and the more intellectually isolated environs of academia,” says SV Subramanian, Professor of Population Health and Geography at Harvard School of Public Health and Arcaya’s faculty mentor.



“As the housing market collapsed, the foreclosure crisis started to influence the way families and local governments thought about public safety, municipal services, transportation, and more.”

The faults of foreclosure

Arcaya’s foreclosure research began as a partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, which was closely tracking the foreclosure crisis and its effects.

“I got started on this topic because my background is in urban planning, particularly in housing, community, and economic development,” says Arcaya. “As the housing market collapsed, the foreclosure crisis started to influence the way families and local governments thought about public safety, municipal services, transportation, and more.”

Arcaya’s contention was that as the neighbors of foreclosed properties dealt with some serious concerns (e.g., “Did I just pour my life savings into a house that’s going to be worth nothing?”), it might be taking a toll on their health. “You know anecdotally that these things are weighing on people’s minds, and mentally and physically affecting them,” says Arcaya. And she wanted to determine if those effects could also be detected in the data.

Arcaya decided to focus her study on Massachusetts given that she had both comprehensive real estate transaction data and an existing health study (the Framingham Heart Study) with which to work.

As she predicted, the study revealed that

foreclosures were having a negative effect on the neighbors. The resulting paper, “Effects of Proximate Foreclosed Properties on Individuals’ Weight Gain in Massachusetts, 1987–2008,” which was published 2013 in the *American Journal of Public Health* found “a robust association between living near foreclosures and BMI, suggesting that neighbors’ foreclosures may spur weight gain.” A second paper on the impact of foreclosure on blood pressure is in the works.

An informed plan

In reaction to her findings, the Federal Reserve Bank worked with her to complete a piece on feasibility of transitioning foreclosed properties into affordable rentals. The resulting policy memo took into consideration multiple social objectives to pinpoint areas in which such transitions might make the most sense. By identifying areas with good transit access, proximity to jobs, and a lack of affordable housing, it proposed a framework for getting foreclosed properties back into productive use.

As she continues down this research path, Arcaya hopes to contribute new information to housing and planning professionals, information that creates more impetus for positive change. ■

—Mariana Arcaya holds a ScD in Social and Behavioral Sciences from the Harvard School of Public Health and a Master of City Planning from MIT

For more information on the topic on foreclosures and policy, we suggest:

Federal Reserve Bank of Boston:
www.bostonfed.org/commdev/necd/2012/issue1/new-ideas-for-old-reos.pdf

Brookings Institution:
www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2009/02/foreclosure-crisis-mallach#

Harvard Pop Center News Briefs

We pleased to announce a number of staff changes that have occurred at the Pop Center over the past few months.

Retirements



Martha Fay, MPH, research analyst and former director of the Pop Center's research core has retired to Florida after serving at Harvard for 33 years.

After joining the Center in 2007, Martha developed and established the research computing infrastructure needed to support its faculty and other affiliated scientists. This included hiring a new team of analysts and spearheading many new projects.

Prior to joining the Center, she worked at the Harvard School of Public Health in the Department of Environmental Health. She was a key scientist in the landmark study, "An Association between Air Pollution and Mortality in Six U.S. Cities" published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that found a direct association between air pollution and death from lung cancer and cardiopulmonary disease. In the early 2000's, she spent considerable time in the Middle East on the Harvard Kuwait Project.



Mike Levin, PhD, has retired to Hawaii after extensive travel around the globe collecting, processing, and analyzing census and survey data. As the Pop Center's senior census trainer,

Mike has consulted with most of the Pacific Islands countries and territories and a dozen African countries throughout his career. Prior to arriving at the Center, he spent eight years in the East-West Center's Population Program, followed with 27 years at the U.S. Census Bureau.

An anthropologist by training, he has published many articles and several books, including the *United Nations Editing Handbook* for the 2000 Census, *Alaska Natives in a Century of Change*, and the co-authored *Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States*.

Promotion



Laura Price, the Pop Center's program director, has been promoted to deputy director. Price joined the Center in 2007, managing all training initiatives such as the RWJF Heath & Society Scholars and Bell Fellowship programs, plus events and communications. In her new capacity, she'll maintain oversight of those same areas, as well as finance, HR and operations. Previously in her career, she served as the associate director of the Morrison Center for Entrepreneurship at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, and as a program manager for a number of federally funded projects at John Snow Inc. in Boston.

New Faculty Member



Susan T. Stewart, PhD, is a research specialist at the National Bureau of Economic Research. She works with Harvard economist David Cutler as part of a team of researchers who are developing a Satellite National Health Account for the United States. An overarching goal of this account is to measure the output of the health system in terms of quality-adjusted life expectancy. Susan has been the lead analyst and author of the publications on health assessment for this project.

She received her PhD in Gerontology and Public Policy from the University of Southern California Andrus Gerontology School. A former postdoctoral research fellow from the University of Southern California Health Outcomes Assessment Program, Susan worked with Dr. Robert Kaplan to measure utilities for health states associated with prostate cancer.

New Hires

Nicole Goguen has begun work as the Center's new communications coordinator after a number of years working in both nonprofits and the corporate world. She was senior marketing specialist at Sensitech, Inc., where she managed and wrote content for their website, and developed strategies for better branding. At the Pop Center, she will execute new communications directives as well as oversee the Center's website, the Work-Family Health Network website, and promotional materials.

Livia Montana, PhD, joins the Pop Center as research scientist for the Health and Aging in Africa: Longitudinal Studies of INDEPTH communities (HAALSI) project. Livia is a graduate of the Harvard School of Public Health doctoral program in global health and population. Most recently she served as the senior technical officer for the Measurement, Learning and Evaluation project at the University of North Carolina Population Center, where she oversaw the evaluation activities in Kenya and Uttar Pradesh, India. In her new capacity, Livia will oversee all aspects of the HAALSI project (see page 1) including the development of the survey instrument and fieldwork phases.

Katie Naeve, MPP, a former policy advisor for Oxfam America, joins the Pop Center in a joint venture with the Harvard Kennedy School of Government (KSG). She will serve as research manager for the India Human Capital Development Initiative. Katie will oversee a number of Professor Rohini Pande's India-based research projects and will work to develop new collaborations between the Pop Center and KSG's Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) program.

Kayla Rachlin Small, the Center's new program and training coordinator, comes to us by way of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston where she served as human research coordinator. In her new capacity, Kayla will administer the RWJF Heath & Society Scholars and Bell Fellowship postdoctoral programs, as well as execute all the logistics involved in the Center's numerous seminars and special events.

Upcoming Winter 2014 Events

POP CENTER SEMINARS

Pop Center, 9 Bow Street, Cambridge, 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

These Monday sessions are open to everyone: faculty, research scientists, postdoctoral fellows and students. No RSVP required.

DATE	TITLE & SEMINAR LEADER
February 10	In the Wake of Traumatic Events: Population Health Consequences and Their Causes Sandro Galea, Anna Cheskis Gelman and Murray Charles Gelman Professor of Epidemiology and Chair of Department of Epidemiology, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University
*February 24	The Psychology of Scarcity Sendhil Mullainathan, Professor of Economics, Harvard University <i>*Co-sponsored by the Program on the Global Demography of Aging</i>
*March 10	FEATURED SEMINAR The Contours of Contemporary Fertility Declines: A Fresh Assessment John Casterline, Robert T. Lazarus Professor in Population Studies, Department of Sociology, and Director, Initiative in Population Research, Ohio State University <i>*Co-sponsored by the Department of Global Health and Population at HSPH</i>
March 31	Understanding Community-Level Health Disparities through Estimation and Decomposition of Small Area Health Statistics Wenjun Li, Associate Professor of Medicine (Biostatistics), University of Massachusetts Medical School
*April 7	Let's Talk about Equity: Coverage of Maternal and Child Health Interventions in India Diego G. Bassani, Assistant Professor at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, and Epidemiologist, The Hospital for Sick Children <i>*Co-sponsored by the South Asia Institute at Harvard University</i>

FEATURED SEMINAR



The Harvard Pop Center and the Department of Global Health and Population at HSPH are pleased to welcome John B. Casterline, Robert T. Lazarus Professor in Population Studies, Department of Sociology, Ohio State University on Monday, March 10, 2014.

His seminar is entitled “The Contours of Contemporary Fertility Declines: A Fresh Assessment.” There has been intense debate for decades about the relative contributions to contemporary fertility declines of decreased demand for children vs. more success in achieving fertility desires. His talk will discuss how he and colleagues have, in country-level cross-national research, revisited this debate with a reproductive model that improves on previous research and with more comprehensive representation of the period from 1970 to the present.

Join us on March 10, 2014 from 4:00 PM–5:30 PM at the Harvard School of Public Health, Building 1, Room 1208. A reception will follow. ■

ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION HEALTH & SOCIETY SCHOLARS SEMINARS

Harvard Pop Center, 9 Bow Street, Cambridge, 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

These Thursday sessions are open to faculty, research scientists, and postdoctoral fellows. No RSVP required.

DATE	TITLE & SEMINAR LEADER
January 30	Cross-National Comparisons of Social Inequalities in Health Jason Beckfield, Professor of Sociology, Harvard University
February 27	Spreading the Health: Americans' Estimated and Ideal Distributions of Health and Healthcare Michael Norton, Associate Professor of Business Administration and Marvin Bower Fellow, Harvard Business School
March 13	Emotion and Decision Making Jennifer Lerner, Professor of Public Policy and Management, Harvard Kennedy School of Government
March 27	Title TBA Todd Rogers, Assistant Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School of Government
*April 3	Title TBA Susan Dentzer, Senior Policy Analyst, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. <i>*Co-hosted by the RWJF Scholars in Health Policy Research at Harvard</i>
April 10	Title TBA Kevin Volpp, Professor of Medicine and Health Care Management and Director, Center for Health Incentives and Behavioral Economics, Leonard Davis Institute, University of Pennsylvania

POP CENTER SPECIAL EVENTS

DATE	TITLE & SEMINAR LEADER
March 12	Special Lecture: "Women and Health: A Cause for Optimism?" Rebeca Grynspan, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations, and Associate Administrator, United Nations Development Programme. The presentation's overarching theme will concern the Sustainable Development Goals after 2015, with attention to new movements within reproductive health, the gender dimensions of universal health coverage, experiences from HIV and emerging pandemics such as noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). The event is sponsored by the Women, Gender and Health Initiative at HSPH. Co-Sponsors include: Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies; Harvard Global Health Institute; Harvard School of Public Health Women & Health Initiative; Mary Horrigan Connors Center for Women's Health and Gender Biology; and FXB Center for Health and Human Rights. 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM, Harvard School of Public Health.
April 11	Exploratory Workshop: "Applying Social Science Insights to Improve Public Health." Hosted by Ichiro Kawachi, Professor of Social Epidemiology and Chair of the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard School of Public; and Christina Roberto, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health & Society Scholar. Location: The Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, 9 Bow St, Harvard Square. 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Details can be found at www.hsph.harvard.edu/cpds
April 28	The Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies 50th Anniversary Open House 9 Bow Street, Harvard Square. 4:30 PM - 6:00 PM. Tours, poster session by postdoctoral fellows, tea and treats.
April 29	The Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies 50th Anniversary Symposium: Rethinking Societies in the Face of Demographic Change. Location: Joseph B. Martin Conference Center at Harvard Medical School. 9:00 AM – 1:30 PM. Details at www.hsph.harvard.edu/cpds

Berkman Testifies at Senate Hearing on Life Expectancy and Poverty

Harvard Pop Center Director Lisa Berkman testified at a November 20, 2013, U.S. Senate subcommittee hearing that investigated the widening gaps in life expectancy and health disparities based on social and economic status. Titled “Dying Young: Why Your Social and Economic Status May Be a Death Sentence in America,” the hearing was convened by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Primary Health and Aging, which falls under the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP). Berkman was one of five witnesses invited to speak by the subcommittee chairman, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT).

“It was an honor for me to testify before the U.S. Senate, particularly as a member of such an interdisciplinary panel of witnesses,” says Berkman. “We came together as medical doctors, social work scholars, political economists, social epidemiologists, and at-risk citizens to discuss these complex issues from a multi-disciplinary and integrative approach.”

Introducing Berkman was Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), who noted that “[Berkman’s] research, both in America and internationally, has helped us better understand the role that social inequality plays in people’s health.” Indeed, Berkman started her testimony by sharing the findings

of a recent National Academy of Science Panel on which she participated. That study revealed that life expectancy in the U.S., particularly for the poor and women, is now ranked at the bottom of 21 developed,



Lisa Berkman

industrialized nations, and that the gap in risk of death between those at the bottom and at the top has widened.

Rather than just focusing on the downward trends in life expectancy and the unequal distribution of death by socio-economic status, Berkman chose to highlight the potential solutions that can be derived from adopting a more preventative approach. She focused on work policies because, according to the results of several recent studies, employment is almost always associated with better health and it is an area

in which federal and state governments can set policies that can reduce health disparities. Berkman cited three examples that could lead to improved health, especially for low-wage workers and their children:

- *The earned income tax credit program*, which can improve infant and mother health (associated with higher birth weights and decreased smoking) and the employment status of mothers.
- *Maternity leave for expectant and new mothers*, as it protects employment and leads to better labor market outcomes and subsequent improved health for infants and mothers throughout their lives.
- *Pro-family work policies*, such as managers being attentive to workers’ family issues, which help to mitigate the stress of balancing work with family responsibilities. Studies have shown such policies result in improved physical health, including lowered risk of diabetes and lowered blood pressure.

“Part of the mission of the Pop Center is to produce evidence-based research on pressing population issues and disseminate the compelling results to policy makers who have the power to positively influence global health,” Berkman states. “Testifying before the U.S. Senate on such urgent population issues was a professional and personal high point for me.” ■



Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies

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