# Localized cosmopolitans: anthropologists at the World Bank

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## Abstract

The World Bank is a non-state institution that nonetheless generates or legitimises a kind of global policy. This policy is not framed through a democratic process but by small networks of experts including anthropologists. Anthropologists (or non-economist social scientists) in the World Bank are a marginal professional group whose 'thought work' (and so their contribution to Bank policy) is shaped by their position in the institution in particular ways, and especially by the need to protect their professional space. The effect of this is that anthropologists contribute little to practice (core driving principles or operating imperatives) but a lot to theory: they make the organisation work better without changing what it does, even contributing to the unreliable notion that the organisation is knowledge-led. Nonetheless, some of the theory (to which anthropologists contribute) may become the pretext or legitimation for action by other protagonists in other contexts. The paper examines how ideas which claim (cosmopolitan) universality are shaped by systems of relationships that are internal to organisations.

## Introduction

World Bank policy is driven a commitment to neoliberalism and growth (and poverty reduction) through participation in global markets, but also to the notion that market imperfections can be dealt with by manipulating social institutions, which allows a degree of managerialism (and the state) back into international development in what has come to be termed the post-Washington consensus. Anthropologists (or non-economist social scientists more broadly) play a part in framing such global policy through universally applicable concepts and frameworks of intervention. Having first professionalized anthropology as a discipline concerned with protecting vernacular social and cultural realms from the threats from growth-driven development and its technical interventions (particularly its large scale infrastructure projects — dams, roads etc.), increasingly non-economist Bank experts' conceptualisations of the social world aims to grasp the specific social realm (perhaps through ethnography) in order to develop technical interventions in a drive towards social transformation in terms of goals that are universal — accountability, inclusion, cohesion (cf. Li 2006). Through social development practice — engagement with the local and the universal— anthropologists at the Bank strive to be cosmopolitans. The argument of this paper is that this cosmopolitanism actually conceals the way in which the thinking of anthropologists in the Bank is, in important ways, the product of local social relations and the internal dynamics of the organisation  in which the work of Bank non-economists is as locals rather than cosmopolitans.

In this paper I am concerned, then,with the institutional context of policy work of a specific group of actors at the World Bank. Of course, anthropologists at the Bank do not think or act in isolation. They are part of transnational epistemic communities. Their work draws on and develops concepts from elsewhere — often broader intellectual movements such as the shift to participatory development; and their own ideas take on a life of their own outside the Bank. Indeed, 'international organisations, especially international financial institutions, are becoming central players' in developing social and environmental standards and in promoting compliance with these (Safarty 2003: 1792). The World Bank is, not only, as Galit Sarfaty puts it, an important 'interpretive community' for public international law, but also  possess a degree of norm-generating autonomy' (2003:1792). And 'its own operational policies become de facto global standards among other banks as well as institutions engaged in project finance' (ibid). Even those NGOs and lobby groups critical of the World Bank and who protest over controversial projects such as the Narmada Dam in India or the Three Gorges Dam in China regard its standards as "a minimum floor that any environmentally and socially sensible project should meet" (as Friends of the Earth put it in a press release). It would seem that the World Bank provides a major vehicle for anthropologists to contribute to a progressive social agenda.

The Bank is, of course, well known for its investment loans financing big infrastructure to which such standards apply. It is also well known for its development policy loans (formerly 'adjustment loans') in which lending is conditional upon policy and institutional change linked to broader goals of neo-liberal reform and, more recently, poverty reduction (e.g., through the PRSP or Poverty Reduction Strategy process). Anthropologists at the Bank have been involved in norm-setting policy in both — the social and environmental 'safeguard policies' associated with investment loans, and the 'poverty and social impact assessments' (PSIAs) associated with policy-based lending (to which I will return). And increasingly they construe their policy work more broadly in terms of promoting positive social change to make societies more 'inclusive', 'cohesive' and ‘accountable’ — the three pillars of social development in the Bank. For some this remains within a means-oriented approach to Bank social development which regards these changes as serving established development goals within a framework of economic growth. For others there is a new orientation towards defining and operationalising these values as social development ends in themselves.

In any event social development policy is part of the way in which the World Bank sets norms for global governance. Before turning an ethnographic eye towards the social conditions of the production of social development knowledge at the Bank headquarters, I want first to set this in the context of recent ethnographic work on frameworks of global governance to which Bank anthropologists contribute.

Recent ethnography of ‘global governance’ has made three critical observations. The first is that internationalised policy is not the product of some global democratic process. It is produced by transnational epistemic communities (sometimes located within non-democratic money-weighted international institutions like the World Bank, and certainly translated into the prescriptions of donors led by the World band and IMF). Knowledge production for international development and ‘global governance’ takes place within an international development regime that produces what Randeria calls ‘scattered sovereignties’ — as governments implement IFI norms, comply with credit conditionalities, execute project ‘proto-law’ or supranational legal regimes such as patent law, tax law, industrial licensing, trade liberalisation and other forms of ‘legal globalisation’ which take place outside the arena of legislative deliberation and democratic decision making’ (Randeria 2003:29,42). Even looking at the classifications and lexicons of World Bank’s benign environmental discourse, Goldman shows how ‘what counts as biodiversity in Laos [for instance] is defined by actors other than the people who live there’ (2001:207). International norms derive from the independent power of networks of expertise autonomous from government.

The second observation is that the ‘universal principles, of global governance, the singular common-sense models, the agreed international norms and standards of governance, and the financial guidelines and benchmarks, are, in various ways oriented towards the interests of selected players. Most clearly ‘free-market based solutions are institutionally underpinned and socially engineered so as to ensure that emerging markets will develop in a legal, political and economic environment embedded in Anglo-American behavioural norms and suited to Western investors, while subjugating other forms of capitalism (e.g., standards of corporate governance) (Mosse 2005b). And the third insight from recent ethnography of new global aid frameworks is that these often involve an unprecedented level of intervention and social engineering in developing countries: this includes intrusive regimes of surveillance that monitor practices in public and private sectors against 'universal principles'. Here the technical assistance that accompanies aid packages often does the political work of building compliance to external demands into the fabric of national administrative orders, while the legal character of loan agreements works to turn external conditions of IFIs into modes of self-discipline through the language of local ownership (Anders 2005). Craig and Porter in a paper on PRSPs sum up the anxiety by concluding that the ranked goals of global economic integration, good governance, poverty reduction and safety nets amount to a convergence:

> optimising economic, juridical and social governance in order to create ideal conditions for international finance and investment ... with a *disciplined* inclusion of the poor, [which] represents an attempt to generate a level of global to local integration, discipline and technical management of marginal economies, governance and populations unprecedented since colonial times.(2003: 54–55, emphasis in original)

Both the opportunities and risks of anthropologist involvement in international institutions within new aid frameworks seem greater than ever. But the point of this paper is not to debate further the global significance of Word Bank policy norms, or the interests of international capital they may serve, or even the way in which the effects of policy norms might be brought about (and I set aside the tricky question of whether or how policy is ever implemented). Rather, I turn to examine the local production of some social development policy ideas within the World Bank and the role of anthropologists in shaping or contesting them. My interest is, in particular, in the significance of the internal dynamics of the institution to its policy process. The point will be that systems of relationships that are *internal* to organisations or epistemic communities become externalised as global policy ideas: cosmopolitan goals arise from village politics. The case I am focusing on is the micro-politics of disciplinary relations at 1818 H Street, Washington DC, the headquarters of the World Bank.

Between October and December 2003, whilst a Visiting Fellow in the Bank's development economics research group or DECRG, I undertook field work of a kind in the offices and corridors, the coffee shops and canteens, the meetings and seminars of the World Bank headquarters.[1] What follows are some preliminary reflections on the position of the growing number of 'anthropologists' (or non-economic social scientists[2]) at the Bank, and specifically to suggest how the marginality of this professional group in an economics dominated bureaucracy shapes the modes of social science analysis at the Bank, and the kind of social policy ideas that are generated. The wider argument, then, concerns the relationship between policy making 'thought work' and the 'system goals' of professional survival in a large bureaucracy (cf. Heyman 1995).

One would think that things could not be better for anthropologists at the World Bank. In their short history they have increased in number from a single appointment in 1974 to some 150 trained anthropologists among Bank staff along with sociologists, political scientists and other non-economists.[3] Although absent from research department (DECRG), anthropologists are found in several of the Banks other Vice-Presidential Units (VPUs) and regional departments; in both policy and operations. They have graduated from an initially narrow focus on *ex post* evaluation or mitigating social costs (such as forced displacement) — to the present role of shaping, *ex ante*, the Bank's policy-based and investment lending.[4] When in 1996 the Bank's President James Wolfensohn promoted the concept of the 'knowledge bank', and the agency was reorganised for knowledge management creating 'knowledge-based communities' and thematic networks (King & McGrath 2004: 56-), anthropologists could come together for the first time as a professional group 'anchored' in the Bank's Social Development Department, but with a large network spreading across other sector and regional departments, including Operations Evaluation (OED).[5]

Why then was the experience conveyed to me, as I chatted over cappuccinos, one of a significant professional marginalisation of anthropologists? Why did anthropologists feel peripheral? And how did this affect their 'thought work' and the framing of social development concepts.

**Social development and institutional marginality**

The Bank is an organisation dominated by economists and economics paradigms. The framing goals, the definition and the measurement of development success all derive from economics frameworks, and the discipline is privileged in the Bank's career structure and in its streams of promotion: County economists tend to get promoted to Country Directors, and a region's Chief Economist has the status of a Vice President. Partly because anthropologists' historical route to influence was through environment-resettlement issues and 'safeguard policies', the Social Development (SD) 'family' in which anthropological expertise is concentrated, is located within the Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (ESSD) network (along with fields such as water resources and rural transport), which some regard as a strategically poor location at distance from economists in the influential Poverty Reduction and Economic Management (PREM) network.[6] While several SD staff, including the current head of the unit, are economists, there are tellingly only two non-economists (out of over 100 staff) in the Bank's prestigious research department, where I was lodged. Anthropologists are also under-represented in the career-building operational parts of the Bank.

In the Bank headquarters, the demand and institutional support for ethnographic knowledge or social analysis is limited.[7] Anthropological expertise is scattered across the organisation in a way that fails to produce a critical mass. Bank anthropologists have nothing equivalent to the strong positive loops linking research, Sector Boards and programmes that Bank economists enjoy; their perspectives or pragmatic innovations are poorly represented in the outputs that present the public face of the World Bank. The prominence of high profile economics research in publications and websites occludes their intellectual concerns and pragmatic innovations (Bebbington et al. 2004). This under-representation and misrecognition of what they do weakens Bank anthropologists' ability to explain their work, and to engage constructively with external critics or interest lobbies, who then refuse collaboration. Bank anthropologists, it seems, have few friends. While a career in the World Bank can place an economist at the centre of his or her academic discipline, the same career can virtually disqualify an anthropologist academically. While economists continue to collaborate with academic colleagues in top university departments, whose concepts and models they brought with them into the Bank, and to publish in the same peer-reviewed journals, anthropologists have to reinvent themselves, acquire new perspectives, methods and skills. They experience profound professional disjuncture.[8]

The intellectual life of anthropologists at the World Bank is also shaped by the organisation's operational exigencies as much as by the dominance of economics and the relative weakness of their internal and external networks. The jointly staffed and managed IDA (International Development Association) and the IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) — both constituent parts of The World Bank Group — have the primary mandate of making and recovering loans. While the former provides interest-free credit to the poorest 81 countries, the latter provides loans and guarantees to middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries. Organisational success has a bottom line: the net income for the financial year ending June 2003 was US$ 5,344 million, representing net return of 3.64% on average earning assets (Information Statement IBRD 2003).[9] For the operational staff running the Bank's international programme, performance depends upon preparing, appraising and delivering a portfolio of viable loans. Sector departments make commitments (to a Country Director controlling the budget) to delver a certain amount of lending, and operational staff (Task Managers) have to manage a pipeline of projects to meet lending targets, against which administrative budgets (and reputation) are allocated. The pressure is considerable and short term. As one Task Manager explained, although in theory the Bank has a 3-year cycle, the administrative reality is that it is delivery within any 12 month cycle that is critical. Only a few Task Managers (anthropologists among them) are able to carve out a space for innovation, or to reconcile the desire for attention to the complex social relationships of development with the relentless demands and short-term pressures of meeting lending targets, managing a pipeline of projects, maintaining clients and avoiding a 'delivery crunch.' And it is the exceptional case where managers have developed innovations which reconcile the need for scale and large budgets with close attention to social development goals.[10]

The operational staff I spoke with experienced such pressure as intensifying in recent years as the Bank's lending volumes decline with globally low interest rates and rising private sector investments. As one manager put it, 'the portfolio is sinking like a rock.' Finding World Bank credit less attractive, many of its biggest clients (India, China) today need the Bank less than it needs them,[11]and are newly intolerant of restrictive policy, burdensome appraisal and safeguard processes or fiduciary procedures; 'they want options not [policy] menus or blueprints' and simpler faster operating procedures which the private investors or competitor donors such as ADB (Asian Development Bank) can offer.[12]

And yet at the same time operational staff face increased pressure for rigor in conforming to internal appraisal procedures and in complying with 'safeguard' policies (some shareholder investment may in fact be conditional on the Bank meeting its commitments on environmental and other safeguards). These are enforced through monitoring by a Quality Assurance Group (QAG). One third of Bank projects are now given a QAG review, after project approval and prior to implementation, to assess the quality of supervision and compliance with internal procedures. An 'unsatisfactory' QAG grading reflects poorly on task managers and departments. But the demand for rigorous procedure gives no let-up on the time pressure on loan preparation. Indeed the reverse was clearly the case when Bank managers recently (2003) received the results of a survey that showed a correlation between QAG 'problem' projects and the length of time to approval. This made time and delay itself an indicator of inefficiency, rather than institutional complexity which was, of course, more likely.

Now, since anthropologists visibly exert influence through their policy network by building social development concerns into the Bank's operational directives — *inter alia* on involuntary resettlement, critical habitats, environmental assessments, indigenous peoples[13] — they can be seen, by those responsible for the 'real work' of negotiating loans, as part of the problem, adding not knowledge or workable solutions but hoops to negotiate. Anthropologists are part of a system of centralised directives and upward accountability that task managers perceive as inappropriately influencing project design (budgets, components) and rendering projects hard to negotiate 'in country' and difficult to implement.[14] Loans still have to meet criteria of economic returns, and finding in-country support for Bank social development concerns can be hard.[15] Even if there is backing from civil society organizations (e.g., for themes of accountability or rights) getting these past nationally recruited donor 'governance advisers' let alone government is difficult. Recent rhetoric on partnership or 'local ownership' has not reduced the accountability of operational managers for centrally driven designs that are hard to deliver; perhaps the reverse. As some see it, the 'top level opens up policy ideas, the networks (e.g., Social Development) push forward ideas, and they are in the middle having to do the business — negotiating and getting the loans out, keeping the money moving, making profits.' 'It's a struggle to get the process going' said one Task Manager, 'but in Washington people are not interested in that; their eyes glaze over, their interests is in the success of models.'[16] Managers can be heard grumbling that social development advisers (SDAs) mistakenly imagine that operational people are not already well aware of the social issues their programmes face; that SDAs rarely offer workable solutions, and that their frameworks only add to complexities of existing safeguard policies and fiduciary procedures..

However, if anthropologists make the negotiation of projects more difficult downwards (or externally) with clients, their intellectual efforts are essential to negotiating them *upwards* (or internally) in the Bank. After all, task managers have to turn loans into products that can be sold internally and that will be positively evaluated. In order to produce 'success', projects need to be able to articulate central policy models and to define programmes that will be well judged by the Operations and Evaluation Department (OED). Indeed, when 'PY' took up his initial task manager post, one of the first things his manager got him to do was an Implementation Completion Report (ICR) so that he would understood clearly what was required of a successful project; then he could turn to design. Regardless of the operational context, institutional definitions of success prevail. It is here, some operational managers explained, that anthropologists (SDAs) help to stabilise complex situations, give reconizability and credibility, defend innovation, and sustain representations such as 'empowerment', 'social capital' or Community Driven Development (CDD), through their conceptual work and its models, metaphors, or worldviews and that can be 'sold upwards as rationales for resource requests and downwards as justifications for orders' (Heyman 1995: 269). But the processes that add ideas so as to recruit supporters and to sell a project internally, also create, as one research economist put it, 'Christmas tree projects', decorated with glittering policy keywords that are difficult to execute. The most successful policy models are those that appear to reconcile this contradictions, helping move the money faster (and therefore satisfying the shareholders view of performance) while also handling the external environment (the Bank's potential supporters and critics). At various times concepts of privatisation and social funds, among others have found support for this reason. CDD is currently successful as an approach (in winning internal support) because it hits several policy targets simultaneously —participation, poverty reduction, local governance and decentralisation. It is good for public relations, demonstrating the kind of development the Bank should be doing, has top-level support, offers delivery efficiencies and the possibility of big budgets and lending at scale. However, no policy model is wholly successful in turning ideas into fields practice and operations back into policy ideas; at any given moment some policy ideas or some forms of development practice will be experienced as weakening or failing.[17] Anthropologists have to be alert to a constantly shifting policy field.

The point is that the exigencies of the World Bank reproduce a disjuncture between the operations part of the organisation and its knowledge networks; between institutional practice and authorised knowledge.[18] Anthropologists both experience and reproduce this gap. They find themselves facilitating processes of internal legitimation rather than influencing events. In their operational roles they negotiate complex relationships of power, yet are restricted in how they can represent the social processes of development. While World Bank social scientists may articulate their aim, as one put it, 'to make the complex simple while making the simple complex', their position in the organisation conspires to prioritize the upward selling of ideas for policy coherence (and viable organisational relationships), while passing contradictions downwards to under-analysed practice. Their conceptual work does not explore the particulars of donor practice and the contradictions which are the everyday experience of staff, but is constrained by a wider knowledge system that emphasises universal over contextual knowledge; a knowledge system that is deductive and oriented to general predictive models; and that constantly organises attention away from the contingencies of practice and the plurality of perspectives[19] (and which therefore marginalises anthropology as a critical and ethnographic discipline).[20]

Other factors too serve to limit learning and protect dominant paradigms: First, is the prioritising of information from the Bank's own experience (non-Bank knowledge does not command equivalent respect: '"empirical" means proven from our practice', is how one staff member put it);[21] second is the institutional marginality of evaluation (and the Operations Evaluation Department). The End of Project Report, through which Task Managers are expected to review experience, identify problems and lessons, is in practice a rather perfunctory task delegated to consultants. Ex-post evaluation studies, several suggested, were carefully structured in terms of the selection of team members, attention to 'outputs' rather than how they are achieved, and a tendency to put the failure of policy models down to context ('of course it won't work here because of the corruption in government').[22] Evaluations anyway take place late in the process, at the end of a 6-8 year project period when those involved in design have moved on (the standard Bank assignment being 5 years) and the politics of project processes and contradictions have been effectively buried.

Third, are the small, invisible, subliminal pressures and disincentives to raising problems that act on staff; the risk of being labelled as a 'non team player', as 'non-operational', and awareness of the influence of heterodox opinions on vertical relationships with bosses, and on postings or promotions. As one Bank anthropologist put it, 'You can't take a stand too many times and build a career.'[23] Correspondingly there are high rewards for loyalty and long service. Bank staff are subject to the vulnerability of the over-paid in an over-staffed organisation; captive to salaries above their market value, to lifestyles, work permits, children's education.[24] These seemed to me quite pervasive perspectives among my Bank interlocutors, although an individual's sense of intellectual freedom appeared to depend considerably on the style of particular managers. Fourth, is the disciplining effect of the Bank's Time Recording System, through which all professional staff have to give a quantified account of their activities so as to allow the allocation of costs for programme and product development to be allocated. The output orientation here fosters the manufacture of knowledge products, while the system of 'cross-support' (selling time between departments) and the division of labour around research tends towards conceptual containment and conservatism. The time-cost calculation of Bank staff also means that, as one put it, 'I'm too expensive to do fieldwork'. Indeed, social research is often undertaken by consultants who (some suggest) are easier to manipulate, or at least do not have to embed ideas in the institution.[25]

No wonder, then, that there is widespread scepticism about the Bank's transition to 'plurality and openness' and its new role as 'knowledge broker', not just from external commentators (King & McGrath 2004, Mehta 2000), but also from its own employees. For example, David Ellerman, formerly a Bank senior economist, argues that the Bank 'remains a bureaucracy in which loyalty and right thinking are valued from staff and clients', and that the capacity for organisational learning is in contradiction with the promotion of official views, 'branded knowledge', 'best practices', and 'funded assumptions' — being a church and protecting an orthodoxy (King & McGrath 2004: 94-5 citing Ellerman; Ellerman 2002).[26]

But what struck me during my stay at the Bank in Washington DC was not consensus and compliance, but the high degree of self-criticism and scepticism regarding official narratives and development recipes among my predominantly social development interlocutors. I was intrigued by how many people represented their work in terms of a tactical battle against the system. But this was not a battle that could be conducted openly. There was no authorised space for (self-) critical analysis and reflection. The complaints about editorial control or of ‘a relentless and multi-layered pressure to keep a positive spin no matter what’ were testimony to the presence of both internal challenge and constraint, indicating a clear view on the parameters that defined social development staff’s own strategic options. And it is to these strategies that I want now to turn to show how the tactics of internal battles of dissent in fact serve to reproduce the Bank’s knowledge system while shaping knowledge products for ‘global’ social policy.

**Anthropologists as bureaucratic entrepreneurs**

Anthropologists at the Bank are acutely sensitive to their institutional context — their vulnerability in face of operational constraints and dominant economics paradigms. The optimists among them will say that the Bank is an organisation constrained by size rather than ideology, and that size opens up ‘structural holes’ which can be used by bureaucratic entrepreneurs to innovate and influence.[27] The pessimists will say that the size of the holes in this ‘Swiss cheese’ organisation is shrinking rapidly. As ‘entrepreneurs’, anthropologists in the social development knowledge network have two tasks. First they have to develop and sell products — ‘business lines’, packages of concepts, models, methods or tools[28] — to their clients, who for the most part are the hard-pressed operational teams. Some spoke to me of having to provide ‘off the shelf ideas’ to assist those who might say, “Hey Peter, we want to figure out how we can take account of social capital in our programme; how we can test the strength of trust in government institutions”. Second, they have to make institutional space for themselves and create ‘systematic room for social knowledge’ (Cernea 1995:13). Their knowledge products — social analysis, CDD, social capital, empowerment — have to meet certain criteria. They have to be simple frameworks, accessible to managers, to define fields of intervention and be instrumentally important (to effectiveness in poverty reduction), to ‘have traction’, be widely applicable, predictive and prescriptive, measurable (‘if you do it you’ve got to measure it’) and subject to empirical testing and econometric analysis. And they have to be *visible*.[29] As Cernea puts it, anthropologists have to pay their way ‘in the coin of knowledge of recognisable organisational utility’ (ibid: 6). Operational mangers live in a zero-sum world in which resources for social development products have to be diverted from other things; they therefore have to be justified in terms of *efficiency*. There have to be answers to questions such as, what is the added value from investing in ‘empowerment?’ ‘What new areas of investment will social capital (or CDD) open up?’ Social development ideas also need to find supporters with a stake in the concepts, influential patrons and mentors willing to lend their authority. As a Bank consultant trying to understand the system put it to me: ‘In this wildness I am trying to work out how to influence. By stealth? By patronage? By collaboration? By transparency? Even working out who to email is a political act’ (November 2003). Success comes with entrepreneurial flair.

As well as being compatible with the operational exigencies of programme managers, the Bank anthropologists’ products have also to be consistent, first with the ruling economic paradigms which define ‘soundness’, ‘robustness’ and respectability, and, second, with the legal definition of the organisations mandate set out in its Articles of Agreement.’ They have to be negotiable with the Bank’s clients who may resist what are construed as internal political matters, and with those on its Board — Part II members[30] — who represent client government perspectives. The two conditions are related in that giving social development ideas a ‘sound economic basis’ is the means to depoliticise social development approaches (World Bank 2004:19).

Two examples illustrate the way in which anthropologists have to comply both with the ruling economics paradigms *and* with the legal definition of the World Bank’s mandate. The first concerns the idea of ‘social capital.’ In their interesting self-history of the negotiation of the concept of social capital, Bank anthropologists (Bebbington et al. 2004) have themselves revealed the stages by which a conception of the social as networks and relations was re-shaped in the metaphor of ‘capital’ through a series of epistemological and methodological concessions to a culture of ‘economics’ in the Bank. [31] The economistic notion of social as capital has received critical attention in the literature on the grounds that it encourages a de-politicised analysis of power relations and social institutions leading to conservative system-sustaining interventions (Harriss 2001, Fine 1999).[32] However, the rise of social capital in the Bank in the late 1990s reveals not the power to de-politicise the social world, but rather the structural inequality of economists and non-economists in the World Bank, and the tactical compromises of the latter professional group who constantly have to persuade those with power (task managers, vice-presidents and regional budget holders) that social relations are important to development. ‘Social capitalists’ in the Bank argue that these concessions to economics reasoning are strategic — social capital is a Trojan horse, a ‘gateway to get people in the Bank to think about context’. There has, however, always been scepticism outside, and increasingly inside the Bank, about the feasibility of exerting influence over economists through discursive frameworks (such as social capital) which, after all, are themselves the product of the power relations that produce the dominance of economics in the first place. The experience of social capital is illustrative of anthropological approaches that have been 'buried at a high level'.[33]

The second case concerns the way in which the custodians of the Bank's concept of 'empowerment' are currently trying to consolidate this as an institutionally viable operational concept. At a recent (March 2004) Bank workshop on '*Power, rights and poverty reduction'* a Bank Vice President noted that 'we have made our peace with empowerment'.[34] Indeed the Bank has specialists, websites, a comprehensive handbook devoted to the theme.[35] However, mention of *power* (as in rights or political structures) crosses 'an invisible barrier into politics',[36] contravening the Bank's Articles of Agreement, and has to be excised from Bank publications reviewed by its legal department.[37] The same is true of 'rights'. When I was in Washington the draft of the Social Development group's first Strategy Paper was returned by the legal department with all reference to 'rights' and 'rights based approaches' excised. As one social development adviser explained, the problem is not only that the concept of rights is essentially political, but also that, since rights have infinite value and so involve infinite costs to maintain, they do not fit within an economics framework, whereas 'empowerment' allows some wriggle room;'[38] it allows gradation and measurement, and is permitted in relation to, say, capacity, accountability, or identity, or as the vague outcome attributed to PRSP national planning. 'But as empowerment or social accountability[39] ideas push up against the rights/politics barrier, the contradictions of policy and institution are only too clear. As one SDA commented, the technical debates on 'empowerment' at the Bank are about as effective a diversion from the issue of politics as the instruction, "Don't look at the white bear in the corner!"

In conceptualising power as 'empowerment', anthropologists consent to instrumentalise it as a variable correlated with the achievement of poverty reduction and development effectiveness. 'For our audience we need a reductive framework' (SDA comment). Tania Li (2005) points out that social capital and empowerment are both ideas that imagine society for measurement and improvement. They allow conceptualisation of society in terms of deficiencies (and surpluses), and a mode of diagnosis that allows the expert design of technical interventions for social re-organization; invariably at the local or community level through neo-liberal (or neo-traditionalist) models of self-help and self-organisation and 'responsibilisation' (Li 2006, Rose 1999).[40] My point is that such conceptions are also — perhaps more urgently — necessary to protect the existence, position and identity of a professional group within the Bank as an organization. Here, SDAs find franchisable ways to make the social calculable and subject to technical intervention (despite their own doubts) because this is a precondition for their continued existence as a professional group. In other words, ideas of empowerment and social capital tell us something about how social development experts think, but perhaps they say more about the structures of institutional power to which they have strategically to adapt. And this structure is such that the demand for measurement itself is selective. While there is pressure to make 'empowerment' or 'social capital' measurable, the same standards of performance measurement, or the testing of assumptions, are not demanded of policy concepts such as 'sector reform' that hold a central position in the organization (comment by workshop participant). Here need for measurability is a correlate of institutional marginality; strong at the fringes, weak in the central domains of policy doxa.[41]

So, the Bank's anthropologists have to choose their language carefully if they are to sell 'the social'. Their conceptual work is not only shaped by the need to manufacture products, it also aims to mobilise existing support, to 'raise the floor rather than raise the ceiling,'[42] in order to pursue the second task of creating institutional space by building constituencies and legitimacy. Here, the work of a concept like Community Driven Development (CDD) is strategic rather than conceptual or practical; it is a type of symbolic capital important for whom it brings together rather than what it says. An idea like CDD deliberately obscures differences (e.g., between older approaches of Social Funds or Community-Based Development) to build a critical mass of support around a simple message — 'if communities control the budget and make decisions efficiency is improved' — in order, for example, to argue with the fiduciary parts of the organisation and so ensure that rules of procurement are revised or relaxed.[43] To become a 'community of practice', CDD has to become a known item, a brand name so that the sense of uncertainty or risk associated with innovation in the Bank is reduced.[44]

Of course brand names function better when endorsed by celebrities and senior people, which is why anthropologist staff confessed to analysing Jim Wolfensohn's speeches to find mention of key 'social' themes. These are the strategies of a professional group that is marginal and vulnerable, whose work is largely externally resourced through Trust Funds set up by donor governments hoping steer the agenda (especially Scandinavian) rather than from core Bank resources; people who cannot rest from making alliances, building constituencies, creating space, making visible or manufacturing products on whose marketing success their careers and survival depend.

It happened that during my stay in Washington (late 2003), social development staff were debating how to consolidate their brand name as an explicit Social Development Strategy; something that would be needed, as one put it, 'because there may be a reorganisation of the boxes in the Bank; and if you don't have a strategy paper, you don't have a box, so you might disappear.'[45] Drafting the strategy paper proved to be intriguingly complex yet critical process.

First, the strategy had to consolidate support by embracing a wide range of quite different approaches among Bank social development staff themselves. There were significant distinctions, for example, between those who favoured clarifying a distinctive SD professional space through specialisation around products such as social capital or CDD, as against those who argued for the synergies of getting social analysis into the policy mainstream; between those who saw social development as a form of 'cross-sector support' (offering its products and technical advice to others) as against those who preferred a focus on designing and managing distinctive SD project approaches (such as CDD) and creating operational domains where SD ideas could work unfettered and produce pilot project exemplars. Further differences separated *ex-ante* approaches focusing on the design of interventions from *ex-post* approaches that aimed to track reform processes through public expenditure reviews, citizen report cards or the media to monitor policy commitments to accountability; or the preference for shaping reform through positive analysis *versus* using the power of veto to resist. These and other differences (reflecting *inter alia* personal backgrounds and career paths into the Bank[46]) would not be resolved but contained in the official strategy paper. While trying to create clarity of purpose, the drafters of the SD strategy paper knew that innovation in the Bank is not created conceptually, but tactically. Keeping many people and perspectives on board, giving people a stake and the painfully slow process of building alliances required strategic vagueness, conceptual ambiguity. One commented that a brilliant analytical paper would instantly provoke resistance and set people against it.

Second, the social development strategy paper marked another level of strategic accommodation among anthropologists in the Bank in face of a new vulnerability — an awareness that the size to which the SD department had grown under the Wolfensohn presidency was not justified by the scale of investment in social development; that a 'return to essentials' and a renewed interest in big-spending infrastructure projects was in the wings. Staff spoke of a 'closing window', of existing on 'borrowed time. They anticipated a 'push back' against sophisticated regulations and pointed to the Operating Policy and Country Services (OPCS) desire to modernize, simplify and speed up policies and procedures that was supported by client governments and by managers under the rubric of 'Client Responsiveness'.[47] For a professional group whose influence had been underpinned by operational rules and procedure, the new interest in simplifying and flexibility was a threat. In response, the draft SD strategy paper gave new emphasis to anthropologists' 'upstream analytical work' allied more closely with the Bank's core policy goals such as sector reform, and to the work of anthropologists with economists in mainstream neo-liberal dialogue on the creation of opportunities for investment through broad-brush sector or country-level assessments.[48] In this way the growing operational pressure (to keep up loan portfolios) would present opportunities rather than threats to social development staff able to make rapid assessments and mould reform agendas, and improve investment choices in a way that constituted a tactical move of space making for social development in the Bank. The former emphasis on safeguards and sector-focused models was regressive. One the hand, anthropologists had been too reliant on the power of veto; their view of people as victims and their focus on 'high risk civil society' — the protestors and public interest litigators — separated them from the mainstream. On the other, their sector-based sociology had lost popularity. The irrigation sociologists' specialist interest was buried in rural development, and their products such as user groups (for long a staple of irrigation, education and other investments) had been the subject of critical evaluations (e.g., __). Anthropologists were no longer to be looking up from the village or 'lobbing bombs' from a disciplinary enclave, but were sitting at the same table in the smoke-filled rooms in which macro-budgeting and the like took place.[49] There was no less need to develop and sell SD products, but the new ones — Integrative Country Social Analysis (ICSA), Poverty and Social Impact Assessments (PSIAs) — were oriented upstream to appeal to country managers rather than operational teams and project Task Managers, and towards monitoring the process — a 'mapping approach' that 'follows the money (SDV 2003) — rather than just *ex ante* project design.[50] Still the question raised at the SD Board meeting (in this case in relation to ICSAs) remained, "It is complex; is it sellable?"

Third, as an instance of tactical space-making , the draft strategy paper shifted from a previous view of 'social development' as a *means* — serving the existing development goals through sector-focused sociology or 'risk mitigation'— towards an *ends* view in which 'forward looking' social analysis defines what constitutes a better society, and works for positive social change (as noted) to make societies more 'inclusive', 'cohesive' and 'accountable' — the three 'pillars' of social development for the Bank (World Bank 2004b).[51]

Such strategic accommodations and brand making are not without their internal detractors. Some expressed fear for what was regarded as a loss of anthropologists' 'functional agenda' and sociological skill. After all, historically social development grew in the Bank within a 'means' framework exemplified by the sectoral sociologies of the 1980s associated with investment projects in irrigation, fisheries and forestry (among others), captured in Michael Cernea's (1985) *Putting people first: sociological variables in rural development*; and as 'risk mitigation' through framing safeguard and resettlement policies that grew in the shadow of major investments (Scudder, Cernea & Guggenheim 198_). They decry the loss of clear arguments backed by (ethnographic) evidence (e.g., on the effects of displacement), or the critical edge and influence that was associated with the high profile Inspection Panels[52] illustrated in the controversy over the Narmada dam in India when senior management had no choice but to listened to what anthropologists had to say because of their evidence and because powerful political constituencies in donor and recipient countries —NGOs on Capital Hill — demanded it. Anthropologists spoke directly to the President and the Board.

Some are concerned about a value-laden, managerial perspective and the ends-oriented macro-engineering of social outcomes.[53] Others fear that as social analysis goes 'upstream', it becomes not just more visible, but more readily proscribed as 'political'.[54] Yet others have sympathy with outsiders who reflect pessimistically on the various discursive strategies that have been used to influence policy in the past, or who regard the hopelessly unrealistic social goals as largely creating an 'enabling environment' for continuing structural adjustment, merely adding capacity the 'anti-politics machine' (Ferguson 1994). Not uncommon were efforts to reconcile different (historical) approaches: 'safeguards are a Trojan horse for social development in developing countries'; current work on conflict or CDD is an outgrowth of mitigation work now addressing the problem of failed governments (or governance). Then some regional SD departments tried carving out conceptual spaces of their own, for example, South Asia where SD staff were developing a higher risk approach by moving away from *both* the 'traditional' safeguards approach *and* the new normative mainstreaming, towards an SD analysis that focused on the functioning of institutions, paying attention to the underlying informal systems and interests (e.g., patronage and incentives in government systems). They believed that it was time for the Bank to be less normative, and to examine the instrumentalities of development. 'Blue skies approaches' one suggested to me, 'are always more attractive than the analysis of failure or of institutional arrangements' (in which the Bank is itself implicated). But at the time in the climate of pragmatic accommodation these advocates of critical analysis were unpopular 'blockers', 'analysing things to a standstill'; and their efforts to 'fight the system' dismissed as naïve, sometimes by means of personal narratives of their colleagues who could say that, 'I too was a critic when I joined the Bank and thought that I would change things from inside by revealing the wolf behind the sheep's clothing, but now I am a decision maker' (SDA interview)

Finally, there was an opinion that was doubtful of the value of explicit policy statements as a vehicle for influence or survival in the Bank at all. For such pragmatists, *concealment* from policy, innovation at distance, and the documentation of success are the means to work towards the social development ends. Their point is that, in the main, documents do not push policy frontiers forwards; effective policy making is *after the fact*. They point to successful interventions, for example, in police reform or the promotion of identity cards for electoral regulation, which if framed as explicit policy/design would have been rejected as political by the Bank's legal department. A bureaucracy can hold a policy paper hostage, but is powerless to control pragmatic innovation. A policy which builds upon 7 years of (unofficialised) practice easily acquires legitimacy.[55] Community Driven-Development work in Indonesia (the KDP project) under the programme leadership of the anthropologist Scott Guggenheim is perhaps a case in point. The preparatory 'local institutions studies' for this project contributed significantly to the negotiation of the idea of social capital in the Bank in the late 1990a, and the programme itself has probably pushed further than any to turn ethnographic methods to operational ends. In doing so 'thick description' is used instrumentally to diagnose and monitor corruption and increase transparency (Li 2006). Through a ‘practice of tracking power and making networks explicit,’ responsible villagers ‘learn to reveal to themselves how power works in their own communities, and devise pre-emptive measures finely tuned to local details.’ (ibid: 21). On the one hand, this is a remarkable governmental application of social science (whose politics being confined to the community exists ‘below the radar screen” of Indonesian officials who failed to see ‘democratization initiative masquerading as an anti-poverty project’ Barron *et al.* 2006 ).[56] On the other hand, strong internal resistance to identifying World Bank operations as in any sense political (even while it is understood that in practice they routinely put the organisation in breach of its Articles), means that secondary analytical work is still needed to establish the ‘sound economic basis’ of such work in Washington DC.[57]

## Conclusions

A considerable literature now deals with the disciplining, de-politicising or governmentalising nature of development policy including its sociological concepts. The claimed universal applicability (cosmopolitanism) of ideas such as participation, civil society empowerment or social capital may quite reasonably be criticised, as can the political acts or external impositions legitimised by these terms. Rather less attention has been turned on social work of policy ideas at the point of formulation; on the institutional processes which show how the development of policy-relevant concepts is itself a socially embedded and highly localised process, significantly shaped by the position and interests of particular professional groups.

Anthropologists at the World Bank’s Washington headquarters describe their responsibilities in terms of the social aspects of development. Their concern is with safeguards against threats to people’s livelihoods (e.g., from displacement), access to employment or income; generating community capacity or social capital, participation, empowerment, reaching the poorest, and (to these ends) getting social analysis into the system.[58] But they are acutely aware of the contradictions between their professional responsibilities and the organisational exigencies of the Bank, and between the relations of practice and policy representations. They develop tactics to pursue social development goals, but their structural vulnerability in an ‘economics fortress’ (Cernea 1995:4) means that they have simultaneously to attend to their own ‘system goals’ by protecting professional space. Tactical concessions push the analytical work of Bank anthropologists towards instrumental and economistic formulations that not only remove the possibility of ethnographic insights into the nature of the contradictions of development itself, but also contribute to the knowledge system that perpetuates separation of the world of policy rationality from the contingencies of practice.

In some cases we find anthropologists subject to the organisational need for ignorance about what is going on locally, in order to save, protect and promote politically important notions, including their own products — whether participation, empowerment, social capital or CDD (cf. Quarles 1993). Arguably, the more marginal a professional group the more carefully its products have to be protected against attack (from operational people complaining of unusable complexity, or from research economists complaining of analytical vagueness). Anthropologists in the Bank need strategies, concepts, boxes or crush proof cages to demarcate their institutional space; some even hold appointments — not to mention visas, school places — that came with the rise of key products (e.g., social capital or CDD), so that identities, reputations and careers are tied up with their continuing success. The institutional conditions of a large bureaucracy are such that innovators are turned into gatekeepers.[59]

Through their need to reproduce their expertise, anthropologists at the Bank become part of a knowledge system that tailors its way of knowing the world to its own administrative rationality, leading 'to an integrated discourse in which the capabilities of the administrative "machine" and the definitions of development constitute a single whole' (Quarles van Ufford 1993: 140). Quarles' insights are extended by Mitchell's important *Rule of Experts* in which he explains the role of experts and expertise (in modern Egypt) precisely as securing a sphere of rational intention or abstract design which appears external to (and generative of) events — through writing, models and maps that erase the personal, contingent, hybrid agencies, struggles, connections and interactions of actual practice (2002:77). Experts effect artificial separations between representations and reality that 'allow reason to rule, and allow history to be arranged as the unfolding of a locationless [policy] logic' (ibid:15, 36). The disjuncture between policy and practice is not, therefore, an unfortunate gap to be bridged between intention and action; it is a necessity, actively maintained and reproduced by knowledge systems that also incorporate anthropologists as social development experts.

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## NOTES

[1] I am grateful to DECRG for the research fellowship, and to many World Bank staff in other departments for support and insights during my visit. I alone am responsible for the analysis offered here.

[2] Throughout the paper I will use the label 'anthropologist' to refer to those working at the Bank with training in non-economics disciplines including sociology, human geography and political science as well as social/cultural anthropology – including SD and gender staff/consultants and others from the non-economics social sciences as many as 446 people (World Bank 2004a:8).

[3] The Bank appointed its first and sole staff anthropologist. Michael Cernea, in 1974 and by1995 an in-house corps of 50-60 anthropologists and sociologists represented 'the world's largest group of its kind' (Cernea 1995:4).

[4] It is was work on resettlement that pushed anthropologists into a higher profile in the Bank, accelerated by major controversies and public relations disasters, in particular that surrounding the major Narmada dam project in India in the late 1980s (Cernea, pers com.). Their profile was then sustained as policy models emphasising participation or community-driven development were consolidated in the Bank.

[5] Social Development units within the regional departments have a hierarchy of posts professionally linked to the Social Development advisory group 'anchor': Social Development Adviser, Senor SDA, Lead SDA, Sector Manager, SD Advisory Group Director. Of course not all social development staff are anthropologists — indeed key staff including the head of the SD Unit, the Social Capital Coordinator among others are economists; and not all anthropologists are SDAs.

[6] Bank staff responsible for the gender theme took the strategic decision to ally with the PREM economists. The Bank's 'matrix' structure means that many staff in the SD family actually work in the regional and other departments.

[7] Outsider of Washington this can be less so, and there are isolated country programmes where ethnographic research has been incorporated into project strategies (Guggenheim 2003; Li 2005, see below). Lack or interest characterises the centre, and reportedly, the Bank-IMF library cancelled its subscription to *American Ethnologist* seven years ago (c. 1996).

[8] This disjuncture is amplified by the effective exclusion of anthropologists from the Bank's prestigious research department and an opinion among several Bank economists (with whom I spoke) that did not hold the professional standing of non-economists in the Bank in high regard. Indeed one of the commonest arguments for not recruiting more sociologists or anthropologists into DECRG was that it would be difficult to recruit individuals of appropriate calibre. A handful of Bank research economists in DECRG are interested and well read in anthropology, and it is significant that the few recent initiatives to engage conceptually and methodologically with anthropology as a critical ethnographic discipline have come from this department rather than from social development. These arise from the perceived weakness of Bank anthropologists' ethnographic research, and include the 'culture and public action' project (Rao & Walton 2004), and indeed my own short appointment as a visiting fellow.

[9] at www.worldbank.org

[10] The Kecamatan Development Project — a CDD (Community Driven Development) in Indonesia is remarkable in having run against the grain of bureaucratic practice, now stands as an exemplar of current Bank policy.

[11] In India this is less so at the state government level where an increasing proportion of loans are negotiated. But at a national level in 2003 the Indian government is repaying its IBRD loans ahead of schedule in a way that reduces profitability for the Bank.

[12] Interestingly, I also heard a counter view, that some countries find Bank conditions helpful in legitimising difficult reform agendas.

[13] See safeguard policies of the World Bank Operational Manual at: http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/Institutional/Manuals/OpManual.nsf/TOC1?OpenPage

[14] Examples of inappropriate impositions of operational directives that I was given by Task Managers include: projects in India required to have separate budget lines for 'tribals' even though these communities are socially integrated and separate treatment was divisive; watershed projects that had to be written up within the rubric of a 'focus on the poorest' when it is pretty clear that such land-based programmes are unable to deliver this (employment, social security of welfare measures would be better instruments to this end); or decentralisation policy which amounts to 'asking the weakest level of government (the panchayats) to do the most difficult thing — targeting the poorest with micro enterprise' [Task Managers' comments, Washington DC, Nov-Dec 2003]).

[15] Ultimately, the negotiation of loans was described to me as a politicalrather than a technical process; a matter of lobbying. In practice, very few projects get turned down by the Board. Indeed several Bank staff I spoke with were disturbed by the fact that because loans are repaid by national governments, the pressure to ensure economic viability could in practice be weak (and of course the Bank is never legally responsible for the outcome of a project).

[16] This Task Manager nonetheless thought that 'we may be turning the corner on this with some new political economy analysis'.

[17] An experienced staff member complained to me that rural development today lacked a narrative (cf. Maxwell 20__), and that task managers (of which he was one) had problems turning rural development into a product (the Millenium Development Goals offer little space). He pointed out that in an organisation organised into 'stove pipes' (i.e., separate departments) a concept like 'sustainable livelihoods' that was successful in DFID would not be workable.

[18] The divide between knowledge workers and those who control money flows is a characteristic of most development agencies, but may be lesser in those such as DFID that operate more through cross-sector country teams.

[19] As King and McGrath conclude from their analysis of knowledge systems across four cases— the World Bank, DFID, SIDA and JICA — these are characteristics common to large development organisations (2004:107). In the Bank as in most cases, the priority of general principle over local practice is helped the fact that every 3-4 years staff rotate our of post. According to the rules after 7 years, if staff have not moved, promotions will be affected. Promotion is always on the basis of experience in more than one continent, and in two or more regions (continents) is needed for promotion to the Sector Boards.

[20] While at the Bank I was struck by the way in which research could be arranged so as to show *how* current policy brought about poverty reduction, rather than whether current models made sense. In December 2003, I participated in a workshop to discuss the design of new research to examine trajectories out of poverty. What was striking to me from the report back of pilot work was they way in which policy assumptions had been built into research design, and, correspondingly, how little sense respondents in the pilot study could make of this. For example, research questions concerned the importance of social capital, democracy and freedom as aspects of 'getting out of poverty'. But, unsurprisingly, researchers reported that respondents could not relate to the abstractions of 'freedom', 'democracy', 'trust' or 'empowerment'. Interview questions regarding whether democracy made a difference, or whether people felt more empowered were meaningless. Ethiopian informants understood power as physical strength or perhaps 'authority'; in Romania distrust was a positive thing that successful entrepreneurs possessed; in Peru rural people least integrated into the market did better; and no study found a way of talking meaningfully about democracy or freedom. However, constrained to be useful and influential, the study was constrained to narrow its conception of poverty (the dependent variable) and to confine itself to those things that public policy can address ('Getting out of poverty workshop, Washington Dec 9-11 2003).

[21] Similarly, credibility is, to a degree, a question of who leads an idea, and how long people have worked in the Bank, pre-eminence going to those who began as Junior Processionals, and worked in operations for 5-8 years in several continents.

[22] There is a distinction to be drawn between 'project audits' done for a quarter of projects I order to assess performance against design after six months or a year, and 'impact assessments' which are fewer and more expensive, and which — despite agreements built into loan agreements — almost always suffer from the lack

adequate baseline date for proper studies. In the absence of reliable quantitative much of the focus of the impact assessments is on institutional issues. These project accounts tend to be qualitative, interpretive, and easy to read as success.

[23] As this regional social development staff member put it, 'There are limits to how much you can question things. You're a team player; either you join or you leave; perhaps with some possibility to move, to change your boss and move to a different part of the Bank… If I think the PRSP process is a sham in [country] …. it's a dilemma; [do I] take a stand and say I'm not going to be involved, or work to improve it? But if it's not redeemable? You can't take a stand too many times and build a career.'

[24] By one estimate in 2003, 50 percent of Bank staff had been employed for under 5 years, and 40 percent less that 4 years. Few had the security of long service. At the least those voicing criticism need the protection of senior mentors. High profile critics such as Joseph Stiglitz and William Easterly have been on an exit trajectory.

[25] The economists in the research department among whom I sat were in a significantly different position. While they are often accused of conserving the core frameworks supporting World Bank policy, it is also true that each of the Bank's high profile internal critics has been an economist. At least research economists could afford to be critical of the Bank's social development policy models, and it is from them that internal criticism of participation, CDD or social capital has recently emerged (Mansuri & Rao 2004). Invited to the first internal airing of the latter paper, I was struck by the strong, personal and defensive nature of the (critical) response from operational and social development policy people. The Bank's anthropologists have also written critically on these issues, but usually while away from Bank employment [Francis 2001, 2002]. Economists, with whom I discussed these matters considered that that social development staff were more vulnerable to pressure to bend concepts and research to current policy models: the department is new and has grown fast, its senior people have left, an interpretive discipline (anthropology) lacks the means to sustain criticism or alternative glosses, and there is a high dependence on external consultants...

[26] When announcing the 'Knowledge Bank' Wolfensohn proclaimed that 'knowledge ….is available to every one, everyone can contribute; there are no barriers to knowledge; there are no barriers to creativity, and so in a sense we are giving freedom to people…'; what perhaps he meant (and also said) is that 'we need to manage our knowledge as well as we manage our finances'. Wolfensohn address 2003. www.worldBank.org/ks/knowledge.html.

[27] Michael Woolcock. Presentation at World Bank/DFID Working Meeting on' Power, Rights and Poverty Reduction' March 23-24, 2004, Washington DC. http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/68ByDocName/CurrentInitiativesPowerRightsandPovertyReduction.

[28] Some of these are general obligatory tools (part of the operational directives for setting up loans), others are context-specific (conflict analysis, gender analysis).

[29] A dilemma for SD staff is that the impact of social development is not directly visible. An early draft of the Bank Social Development Strategy (October 2003) put it like this: 'Its subtle, multi-sectoral nature makes social development hard to see directly. However, its failure is glaringly obvious in civil strife, violence and war. Preventing such disasters takes constant effort, the sort of steady, quiet effort noticed primarily when it is withdrawn.'

[30] Part I IDA member countries are mostly richer countries and donors to IDA in convertible currency; Part II member countries may be donors and pay in local currency (*World Bank Annual Report 2002* http://www.worldbank.org/annualreport/2002*)*

[31] I emphasise concessions to a broad 'organisational culture' of economics, because Bank economists themselves have been among the strongest critics of social capital as a concept driven by the market for success and 'win-win' simplifications in the Bank.

[32] I have, elsewhere, examined the ways in which 'social capital' is a concession to economistic modes of thought, and commented on the analytical weaknesses of the concept as employed in the Bank in relation to the empirical material on common property and collective action in south India (Mosse 2006).

[33] Jonathan Fox commenting at World Bank workshop on 'Power, rights and poverty reduction'. March 23-24, 2004. The World Bank, Washington DC.

[34] Working Meeting on' Power, Rights and Poverty Reduction' March 23-24, 2004 -- DfID and the World Bank, Washington DC. http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/68ByDocName/CurrentInitiativesPowerRightsandPovertyReduction

[35] As with social capital, the persistent efforts to promote and publicise, and the many inches of website devoted to the theme are indicators, not of the power of these concepts, but of the political weakness of their advocates and the struggle to achieve respectability for ideas which still command little support internally.

[36] Social Development Strategy paper, October 2003 draft, p10.

[37] Section 6 of Article 5 states that Bank shall not 'interfere in the political affairs of any member; nor shall they be influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member or members concerned. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to their decisions…' (at ww.worldbank.org)

[38] Comment at Working Meeting on' Power …'

[39] for public participation and transparency of regional or national budgets

[40] Technical interventions for improvement being here in the form of 'calculable' (monitored) groups, crafted institutions, manipulated incentives, systems of rules, plans, competitive performance (Li 2006, cf. Mosse 2005 144-8). For Li (follwing Rose) these are illustrate the use of social theory (i.e., the discursive field of social capital) as a means to open a new terrain of governmental intervention' concerned explicity with with the conduct of conduct (ibid, cf Foucault 1991)'"Civil society" is another arena that has become technical" and subject to expert intervention through training or capacity building (ibid:7, Abraamson 1999).

[41] Elsewhere I have shown how the donor demand for measurement emerged at a moment of project crisis and policy change (Mosse 2005: 175-181).

[42] Participant comment at Working Meeting on' Power …'

[43] The ambiguity of such policy concepts also gives them immunity to falsification through the testing of causal relations (Manusri & Rao 2004).

[44] The route to success of policy ideas is often through high profile examples, The Indonesian KDP being a case in point. As I have argued elsewhere, the articulation of policy ideas depends upon exemplar projects — archetype applications — which provide officials, visitors, academics and others with the skills in interpretation necessary to frame and sustain policy, for instance on social capital and CDD (Mosse 2005a:163). The success of the making and marketing of CDD is indicated by the fact that 'Projects which involve community participation have increased from less than 5 percent of total Bank lending in 1989 to about 25 percent in 2003', and (more significantly) that CDD has become a development model that the Bank's management now defend against internal and external criticism (see debate within the recent evaluation study *The effectiveness of World Bank support for Community-Based and –Driven Development: An OED Evaluation*. Washington DC: The World Bank,2005. (www.worldbank.org/oed/cbdcdd).

[45] Or as another experienced SD staff member put it, 'Social Development are the new kids on the block — and may be the first to go.'

[46] The differing views of former NGO workers, sector sociologists, a preference for micro- or macro- research methodologies, and so forth.

[47] There were also moves to lengthen the project cycle with 10-15 Adaptable Programme Loans (9 percent of Bank funds in 2002). However, since resources and reputations are easier to mobilise around new initiatives than for the supervision of existing ones (which still remain transaction intensive) there other inbuilt incentives against these. (http//opcs.worldbank.org–n2002)

[48] Feeding into Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) or Bank Country Assistance Strategies (CAPs). Here SD staff also address what some Bank economists regard as anthropologists' in principle hostility to an agenda of global governance and the attendant modernising of institutions

[49] Comment by a senior SD manager.

[50] The instruments developed for upstream social analysis (PSIAs, ICSAs) were described to me as 'unpacking growth' by looking at the social/institutional context The PSIAs examine the social effects and implications of Bank financed reform at country level, to identify winners, losers, at the same time as 'desirable changes in society'. The ICSAs aim at identifying generic country-level issues around poverty, social diversity, vulnerability, economic opportunities including power relations, governance (but not at the Bank itself) and access to justice and the capacity of formal and informal civil society organisations. This intention is to go beyond *ex-ante* design and also looks at implementation.

[51] Those drafting the strategy paper suggested that these 'pillars' summarised a view from staff of what they already did in practice; it was an aggregate self-representation.

[52] Inspection panels are….

[53] SD staff who had worked in European traditions of public social policy admitted that they might be more comfortable with ideas of **social engineering** than their Anglo-American and other colleagues. But one of these Europeans, the Director of Social Development, has himself expressed concern about an international institution without democratic governance (unlike the UN, voting rights in the Bank are not one-member one vote) trying to 'design the global social policy'. On line 'discussion with Steen Jorgensen on Social Dimensions of Development Effectiveness, May 11, 2004 (http://discuss.worldbank.org/chat/view).

[54] Draft Social Development Strategy paper. Debates on how to present Social Development so as to disguise its political nature were a significant part of the run up to the SD strategy paper. Suggesting, for instance, that the

‘demand for public participation and transparency of regional or national budgets is ‘no more interference in politics than advising on public sector expenditures’ (ibid).

[55] One SDA explained how, for instance, once a body of practice existed legitimacy could be acquired, not through documentation, but by arranging an educational of ‘fact finding’ field visit for World Bank Board members and executive directors..

[56] Of course there are anxieties (internal and external to the Bank) about the dangers of micro-managing society (where the risks or error may be greater than even the largest infrastructure project). Moreover, strong-arm Bank-led social engineering initiatives might prove possible in the context of dramatic national political change, as in Indonesia, but would be unlikely to be tolerated elsewhere, in India for example, where the Bank has already begun to experience a decline in the standing it enjoyes.

[57] And what, Bank staff ponder, would the NGO watchdogs think think if the World Bank in dispersing its billions of dollars were suddenly to say that its work was political.

[58] In the Bank, ‘anchor’ staff are grouped into thematic teams reflecting these concerns, such as ‘Participation and Civic Engagement’, ‘Community Driven Development’ ‘Social Capital’ ‘Indigenous Peoples’ ‘Social Analysis’ ‘Conflict Resolution’ (in SDV), and ‘Gender’, ‘Empowerment’ (in PREM).

[59] Many Bank staff I spoke with were well aware of incentives that protect prevailing models and ensure that evaluations do not question, criticise, or worse still dismantle favoured models. Some spoke cynically of ‘fads’ and the appointments and interests that grow around them. One commented that since most fads last at least ten years there is little risk of being around (or still waiting for promotion) when the fad is discredited.