

Swimming Upstream: Anthropology and Social Development at the World Bank

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Introduction

This presentation considers the evolution of social development in the World Bank from its origins, the most significant of which was undoubtedly socio-cultural anthropology, and its changing role in the institution, drawing some implications for the application of social science knowledge to the programs, policies, and values of international development. It proceeds, first, by discussing the origins of social development, and the early applications of social science perspectives within the Bank. The core of the presentation considers developments since Wolfensohn's accession as President of the World Bank Group in 1995, using the strategic objectives defined in the Bank's Social Development Sector Strategy as an organizing framework. These objectives are: moving the application of social science knowledge from the project to the sectoral and national policy levels; improving project design and performance; and generating an improved base of social knowledge. Then, some new themes towards which social science perspectives have contributed – social accountability, youth, conflict, and community-driven development – are briefly considered. The paper concludes by summarizing the undoubted achievements of social development in promoting pro-poor and socially progressive approaches to development, but goes on to explore the reasons for a continuing sense of institutional marginality on the part of social scientists. A final note looks towards an uncertain future with qualified optimism.

What is Social Development?

The main theme of this paper is the evolution of 'social development' within the World Bank, rather than of social science or anthropology per se. Since the principal audience for this talk is one of practicing cultural/social anthropologists (both 'academic' and 'applied'), a few words seem in order about the relation between anthropology and social development. Social development, now a well established term in development circles, has a complex intellectual heritage, but its character is predominantly normative and pragmatic (Midgley 2003). Social development has its precursors in the approaches of nongovernmental development organizations working with the poor and marginalized. In the form in which social development emerged in the international development context (most remarkably in the DFID² of the 1980s and 1990s prior to its emergence at the Bank, though also in the UN system, especially UNDESA, UNRISD and UNDP³) it was

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² The United Kingdom's bilateral aid agency, the Department for International Development, before 1997 known as the Overseas Development Administration.

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characterized by the convergence of a set of issues (poverty, gender, participatory development, etc.); a set of methods (qualitative, participatory, face-to face, action research); and a perspective on the locally specific and informal. Social Development has also, to a degree, defined itself in contradistinction to ‘the opposition’ – the discipline which has continued to dominate conventional development thinking in the agencies in which SD sought to establish itself – that is, economics. Now, focus on the local, the use of qualitative methods such as participant observation and an understanding of the norms and institutions which structure relations of class, gender, patronage, etc, all suggest a strong kinship with anthropology. Further, the majority of social development specialists recruited, at least into the 1990s, were social anthropologists with a field research background. However, social development as practiced in an agency context differs markedly from anthropological practice, and this divergence has continued. For one thing, agency social development specialists are now drawn from a wider range of disciplines: political science, the NGO world, the social sectors, and economics itself. Very often, they have intellectual roots in more than one of these disciplines. For another, social development practitioners are increasingly required to combine the use of qualitative methods with more formal quantitative approaches in order to command legitimacy in a culture which conflates numeracy and objectivity. Thirdly, SD practitioners are under constant pressure to link local insights to politics and policy at a national and international level. Of course, in an era of globalization, anthropologists do all of these things, too. However, their combination in the largely a-theoretical, and technocratic, context of development bureaucracies gives social development its distinctive flavour. Or, to phrase this in the terms of the theme of this seminar series, the knowledge which informs development theory practice and policy is co-produced by a wide range of actors (academics, consultants, civil servants, development professionals, funders, politicians, NGOs, and, not least today, ‘communities’ and ‘the poor’ themselves), through means which are at once quite highly and specifically determined, but at the same time complex, and even seemingly somewhat arbitrary. That is a theme we can bear in mind as we proceed.

Social development at the World Bank: the early years

The World Bank’s first anthropologist, Michael Cernea, joined the organization in 1974. During the period to the late 1980s, he and a small team of social scientists sought to institutionalize social issues at both project and policy levels. At the project level, entry points for social analysis were identified at the various stages of the project preparation cycle. As a result of their internal advocacy, in 1984, the World Bank adopted a directive for project appraisal that included guidance on sociological criteria for the design of Bank projects (previous versions had included only economic, financial, commercial and technical criteria).⁴ However, as was later observed, ‘compliance with the new guidelines was far from general and the institutional mechanisms for absorbing them in practice were insufficient. Simply placing new rules on the Bank’s internal guidebooks proved not to be enough for triggering the profound changes in staff work patterns that meeting the new demands implied’ (Cernea and Kudat, 1997:6). In fact, when the

⁴ Operational Manual Statement (OMS) 2.20, *Project Appraisal*, 1984.

Bank's operational policies were issued in a new format in 1994, the requirement for social appraisal disappeared without explanation.

The issues on which early Bank social scientists spent most their time, and which became the enduring legacy of this period, was the establishment of two areas of social impact which became known as 'social safeguard' issues — involuntary resettlement and indigenous peoples.⁵ The Bank issued a policy statement on involuntary resettlement in 1980; this was the first to be issued by any international development agency on the subject.⁶ An Operational Manual Statement was also introduced with the objective of protecting the interests of indigenous peoples and ensuring that they received culturally appropriate benefits from Bank projects.⁷ During these years, social scientists, as well as other constituencies within and outside the Bank, advocated attention to a range of other social issues. Gender concerns received increasing recognition from the 1980s, and in 1984 became embodied in a statement of policy on the gender dimension of development.⁸ The markedly increased involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Bank operations over the last two decades resulted in a directive on operational collaboration between the Bank and NGOs.⁹ The Bankwide Learning Group on Participatory Development achieved remarkable success in making consultation with, and participation by, affected groups (local actors, community groups, civil society, etc) — or at least a semblance of it — accepted practice in Bank operations.¹⁰

The Wolfensohn era

The Wolfensohn years (1995-2005) were a period of reinvention at the World Bank—of organizational change, diversification and opening. This was reflected in increasing willingness on the part of the Bank to engage with a wider range of stakeholders, including civil society and faith-based organizations; the institution's aspiration to become a 'knowledge bank'; the emergence of the Poverty Reduction Strategies as the guiding frameworks for development policy and assistance; and the adoption of the Comprehensive Development Framework with its stress on country ownership and

⁵ The adoption of social safeguards policies by the Bank was in part a response to public criticism of the impacts of large infrastructure projects in displacing local populations and destroying their livelihoods, as well as some infamous cases of impacts on indigenous populations.

⁶ OMS 2.23, *Social Issues Associated with Involuntary Settlement in Bank Financed Projects*, February 1980. Subsequently revised as Operations Policy Note (OPN) 10.08, *Operational Policy Issues in the Treatment of Resettlement in Bank-financed Projects*, October 1986; then as Operational Directive (OD) 4.30. *Involuntary Resettlement*, June 1990, and currently Operational Policy 4.12 *Involuntary Resettlement* 2001.

⁷ OMS 2.34, *Tribal Peoples in Bank Financed Projects*, 1982. OD 4.20. *Indigenous Peoples*. September 1991; OP/BP 4.10 *Indigenous Peoples*, July 2005.

⁸ Operational Policy (OP) 4.20. *The Gender Dimension of Development*, April, 1994.

⁹ OMS 5.30, *Collaboration with Nongovernmental Organizations*. Replaced by OD 14.70, *Involving Nongovernmental Organizations in Bank-Supported Activities*. August 28, 1989. Subsequently replaced by Good Practice (GP) 14.70. *Involving Nongovernmental Organizations in Bank-Supported Activities*. 19 March, 1998 (Good Practice statements contain advice and guidance on policy implementation — for example, the history of the issue, the sectoral context, best practice examples — which is not binding as such). On nongovernmental organizations in Bank operations, see also Cernea 1988.

¹⁰ See *The World Bank and Participation* (World Bank, 1994a), and *Participation Sourcebook* (World Bank, 1996).

partnership, and its long-term holistic vision ‘emphasized the interdependence of all elements of development—social, structural, human, governance, environmental, economic, and financial’.¹¹ These changes, for the most part favorable to the agenda of social development, were complemented by resource shifts and organizational changes. The President’s Strategic Compact, a three-year plan for fundamental reform and renewal of the Bank’s mission to reduce poverty highlighted social development as one of six key themes. The first year of that plan devoted significant incremental finances to social development activities, and permitted the recruitment of non-economic social scientists.¹² In 1997, the social development unit was elevated to departmental level, headed by a Director. At the same time, a social development network was created which linked social scientists working in the central and the regional (i.e. operational) units of the Bank.

These developments were linked to events outside the Bank. The year of Wolfensohn’s accession, 1995, also saw the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development.

The Social Development Sector Strategy – moving upstream

The process of establishing social development as a legitimate ‘sector’ within the Bank, included the formulation of a sector strategy. Drafting and negotiating the social development strategy was a three-year effort of considerable laboriousness and political complexity – the strategy was not endorsed by the World Bank’s Board until January 2005 (World Bank 2005). However, in retrospect, the strategy can be seen to have provided a platform and legitimation for much of what was to follow.

The strategy’s title – *Empowering People by Transforming Institutions* – and the definition of social development it adopted – ‘Social Development means transforming institutions to empower people (p.1)’ – signaled the break with the past to which the strategy aspired. This process of transformation was to be wrought, according to the strategy, through a transformation of societies in the direction of increased **inclusion, cohesion** and **accountability**. The strategy advanced a ‘new business model’ shifting from a ‘project by project’ approach to integration into country-led analyses. Its three strategic priorities were: (a) to improve ‘macro-level’ processes, analysis and content through engagement in policy dialogue, country strategy formulation, etc; (b) to improve investment design by mainstreaming social development into project-level processes; and (c) better grounding through improved research, capacity building and partnership. In assessing the progress of social development, I will focus most directly on the first two of these strategic objectives.

¹¹<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/STRATEGIES/CDF/0,,pagePK:60447~theSitePK:140576,00.html>

¹² By 1998, there were 155 members of the World Bank’s Social Development professional grouping (although not all of these have their primary training in the non-economic social sciences). These were staff and consultants whose primary affiliation is to the Social Development Family (i.e. professional network). A further 75 staff had social development as their secondary affiliation. My impression is that there has not been significant change in numbers since that time [chk].

The domain of the ‘macro-social’

If the SD strategy was ambitious in its scope, nowhere was this truer than in the first strategic objective of insinuating social development upstream into the field of macro-policy, erstwhile the domain of economists. The prize, so to speak, of this undertaking, is to have a say in shaping the Country Assistance Strategies (CAS), the programming documents which map out the three-to four year program of assistance for each of the Bank’s client countries, and which determine administrative and program budgets.

To date, there have been main two main vehicles for social development to accomplish this, the Country/Macro Social Analysis (CSA) and Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA).¹³

Country/Macro Social Analysis is ‘analytical and diagnostic work on the broader systemic issues arising at the regional, countrywide, or sub-national (state or within-country region) level from the underlying social, political, institutional and historical context, within which policies, development programs and projects operate.’¹⁴ In more sociological language, CSAs focus on two dimensions: social diversity, assets and livelihoods on the one hand, and power, institutions and governance on the other. Some fourteen pilot CSAs have been undertaken to date (World Bank 2006). There is considerable variation in the scope, approaches and methods of these papers, though these generally involved mixed (i.e. qualitative and quantitative) methods, and many draw upon anthropological concepts and traditions. For the most part, CSAs represent a very innovative set of studies, exploring social, cultural, and political economy and social issues to an extent unusual in Bank analytic work. However, the degree of ownership of the findings by World Bank country teams and by borrower governments has been variable, thus qualifying their potential impacts on Bank operations. Further, linking analysis of complex social, cultural and structural phenomena to specific, operational and fundable policy recommendations may be problematic. Nevertheless, there remains considerable scope for CSA as a way of bringing social issues onto the policy agenda.

Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) refers to the analysis of the distributional impact of policy reforms on the well-being or welfare of different stakeholder groups, with particular focus on the poor and vulnerable. While it does not represent a new instrument or methodology per se, the bundling and systematization into a World Bank methodological framework at the turn of the millennium is a reflection of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) approach, and of the need for a more systematic understanding of the social impacts of policies attendant on the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals. PSIA carries enormous potential to make the process of public policy generation more transparent and public, more evidenced-based, and more favorable to the poor. At the same time, it presented an opportunity for interdisciplinary

¹³ Social development specialists have also sought to influence other standard Bank analytic products where economic analysis had dominated, especially Country Poverty Assessments, by introducing participatory methods or social perspectives.

¹⁴<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTSOCIALANALYSIS/0,,contentMDK:20504395~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:281314,00.html>

work between economist and non-economist social scientists, potential collaboration which was reflected in the shared organizational responsibility for PSIA within the Bank between the social development department and Poverty Reduction and Economic Management, the main economists' network.

PSIA has become an institutionalized requirement, at least of sorts, in the World Bank. In August 2004, new policy guidelines (Operational Policy 8.60) were introduced for Development Policy Lending (DPL – previously known as Adjustment Lending).¹⁵ These required that the 'The Bank determine[s] whether specific country policies supported by the operation are likely to have significant poverty and social consequences, especially on poor people and vulnerable groups.'¹⁶ Nevertheless, this directive does not require a *formal* analysis of the social impacts of proposed policies.

About 150 PSIAs have been conducted in the Bank since 2002, covering 19 different sectors in 72 partner countries, across all regions, and a wide range of sectors (Kirsch forthcoming). A recently conducted retrospective of the first 39 DPL operations, revealed that the actual compliance with the policy on PSIA is very high, with almost 90% of all Program Documents discussing whether there are any likely poverty and social impacts arising from at least some of the country policies supported by the policy operation.¹⁷ However, these documents at times present general data on poverty and/or measures tailored to specific social groups or geographical areas, without linking this systematically to an analysis of the distributional impacts of key reforms. Further, the selection of reforms for poverty and social impact analysis remains unsystematic, with potentially significant poverty and social impacts often left uncovered. World Bank watchers have complained, with some justification, that PSIAs are not undertaken long enough in advance of policy reforms, and indeed often take place **after** they have been implemented, and often do not explore policy options that are real alternatives rather than just minor variations or mitigating measures. Public awareness of PSIA processes and fora in borrowing countries is quite low (the large majority of civil society groups involved in poverty reduction strategy debates have not heard of PSIA, let alone had an opportunity to engage in it), and reports and other outputs are not easily accessible, even

¹⁵ The Bank has two basic types of lending instruments: investment loans and development policy loans. Investment loans have a long-term focus (5 to 10 years), and finance goods, works, and services in support of economic and social development projects in a broad range of sectors. **Development policy loans** have a short-term focus (1 to 3 years), and provide quick-disbursing external financing to support policy and institutional reforms. Development policy loans provide quick-disbursing assistance to countries with external financing needs to support structural reforms in a sector or the economy as a whole. They support 'the policy and institutional changes needed to create an environment conducive to sustained and equitable growth'. Over the past two decades, development policy lending has accounted, on average, for 20 to 25 percent of total Bank lending.

¹⁶ Operational Policy 8.60, paragraph 10.

<http://intranet.worldbank.org/WBSITE/INTRANET/OPSMANUAL/0,,contentMDK:20240031~pagePK:60001255~piPK:60000911~theSitePK:210385,00.html>

¹⁷ See 'Stakeholder Participation and Poverty and Social Impact Analysis in Development Policy Lending: A Preliminary Stocktaking' World Bank (2006), unpublished background paper; and 'DPL Retrospective' Achieving Results on the Country Level with Customized Bank Assistance World Bank (2006):

to those literate in English and with access to the internet. Local ownership and technical participation may be limited, and borrower governments have begun to see PSIA as another donor imposition rather than a way of enhancing and democratizing the policy process. As regards approach and methods, the economic has tended to dominate at the expense of the social, with comparatively few cross-disciplinary initiatives. As one recent NGO-commissioned review put it:

The PSIA approach recognizes the importance of considering the multidimensional factors that influence and are influenced by reform. A certain amount of stakeholder analysis to assess winners and losers of reform has been done in many PSIAs, but it has tended to be narrowly focused. The broader political system, informal and formal institutions, incentives and powers structures are still not being seriously considered. [...] The lack of lack of multidisciplinary teams has surely contributed to weak social, institutional and political analysis in the studies themselves (Hayes 2005:9).

A sourcebook on institutional, social and political analysis recently completed under DFID-Bank auspices may help ensure to that these factors are analyzed more systematically (World Bank forthcoming). Nevertheless, there is a sense that, at least in some parts of the Bank, that the spotlight (along with the trust funds on which the first generation of PSIAs depended) has moved on, and that PSIA is now considered to have already been ‘mainstreamed’, with all that that ambiguous term implies. At the very least, it will become difficult to identify specific activities as ‘PSIA’ in the future.

Better projects?

The second strategic priority of the Social Development Strategy was to improve investment design by mainstreaming social development into project-level processes. To what extent has this proved possible? There is sound, if not overwhelming, evidence that social development issues are increasingly taken into account in project design, and that these have improved project quality. This comes from the Bank’s Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) and its internal Quality Assurance Group (QAG).

An IEG evaluation found a strong positive association between including social development themes and project success. Projects that addressed at least one social development theme were rated 3 to 4 percent higher on outcome, sustainability and institutional development impact than the overall average of Bank projects for a 30-year period. Projects that address multiple social themes concurrently perform even better on the same three ratings (World Bank 2004). On the other hand, the same evaluation also revealed that, though social analysis has been improving, often the focus is off the mark, the timing is problematic, and the findings are not used. Social development issues also received uneven treatment across regions and countries, and the report considered that more needed to be done to convince the Bank’s own staff as well as its borrowers of the potential of social development.

The ratings of the Quality Assurance Group with regard to performance on social development issues show a steady improvement by many indicators. For example, the overall treatment of social development and poverty issues received a satisfactory rating in a growing proportion of projects – from 68% to 79% to 87% to 80% to 90% to 89% for cohorts of projects approved by the Bank’s board from FYs 2000 to FY 2004-05.

New substantive themes in social development analysis and operations:

Over the last decade, several important new themes have expanded the ‘business lines’ of social development. These include social accountability, conflict, youth, and community-driven development (CDD). For reasons of space and time, I shall focus mainly here on one of these – CDD – after devoting a few words to summarizing significant developments in the others.

Social accountability is enjoying considerable favor across the Bank: the shift ‘from shouting to counting’ is both a reflection of global trends in governance, and also resonates with the new WB President’s crusade against corruption. The term social accountability refers to broad range of actions and mechanisms that citizens can use to hold the state to account as well as actions on the part of government, civil society, media and other actors that promote or facilitate these efforts. The tools of budget review and analysis, budget formulation, budget/expenditure tracking and performance monitoring are becoming increasingly widely used in investment design. This would seem a welcome development. Nevertheless, a mechanical application of these concepts runs the risks of ‘institutional monocropping’ (Evans 2004), as they become applied as off-the-shelf solutions to externally defined issues of transparency and corruption in diverse social and political contexts. If applied oblivious of such contexts, technocratic methods risk being captured, creating conflict, raising unreasonable expectations, or simply being ignored.

Conflict and violence: With many of the world's poorest countries locked in a tragic vicious cycle where poverty causes conflict and conflict causes poverty (eighty percent of the world's 20 poorest countries have suffered a major war in the past 15 years, and, on average, countries coming out of war face a 44 percent chance of relapsing in the first five years of peace), conflict prevention and reconstruction have become a preoccupation of the Bank, as of other development partners. In the Africa region, for example, a significant portion of the portfolio relates to countries emerging from conflict. Analytic work has explored a range of social issues relating to conflict and post-conflict situations, including Country Conflict Analyses in several countries, as well as exploration of the implications of conflict for policies such as CDD, decentralization, etc. Analytic work has also explored the social basis of violence in a range of situations (especially in Latin America), and the relationships between masculinity, social change and violence.

Youth There are 1.3 billion young people now living in the developing world, and they are healthier and better educated than its earlier generations. However, youth face enormous challenges, which, though peculiar to each region and country, may include unemployment (young people make up more than half of the ranks of the world’s unemployed), violence, crime, poor education and skills, reproductive health issues and political alienation. The topic of the most recent WB World Development Report (World Bank 2006), youth has taken on some of the characteristics of a ‘sector’ in the Bank. However, analysis of the youth issues within the Bank has tended to have an epidemiological rather than a political and sociological character, and its diagnosis is perhaps some way ahead of the definition and testing of viable policy solutions.

Community Driven Development

CDD is an approach that empowers local community groups, including local government, by giving direct control to the community over planning decisions and investment resources through a process that emphasizes participatory planning and accountability. Projects with community approaches increased from less than 5 percent in 1989 to about 25 percent in 2003 (Mansuri and Rao, 2004; World Bank 2005). These projects generally support both material development and capacity building. Despite their operational ubiquity, evidence on their achievements remains somewhat unclear. A recent (but highly contested) evaluation by the Bank's IEG concluded that in CDD projects the material development goals were mostly achieved, yielding benefits in access and employment, often at a reduced cost from conventionally delivered projects. However, the review raised a number of important caveats. It was difficult to reach the poorest (within or between communities) through CDD; levels of community capacity building may be negligible in the time allowed; the approach shifts costs to community; sustaining infrastructure and services has been difficult; implementation arrangements may hinder long-term development of government capacity; and it is difficult to tell whether funds were used efficiently (World Bank 2005). The evaluation's conclusions that the link between CBD/CDD projects and social capital and community empowerment is weak, and that there is 'mixed and limited evidence on the impacts of CBD/CDD projects in relation to empowerment and poverty reduction' were highly contested, as was the conclusion urged that the Bank exercise caution with future CBD/CDD projects.

It may be that both the advocates of CDD and the authors of the evaluation had over-high expectations of the scope of CDD to build institutional and social capital in the short term. Building community capacity is a long-term process, and 'sustained behavior change often does not take place within the implementation of the first project.'¹⁸

Conclusions

This cursory tour d'horizon of the globally directed, but curiously inward-looking universe of social development at the Bank no doubt raises more questions than it answers (I have left some tracks in cyberspace so that others can reach their own conclusions). Nevertheless, there is considerable cause for encouragement in the progress which social development perspectives and methods have made over the last few decades. At the level of concepts, ideas such as social capital (and even 'empowerment'), have become part of the mainstream discourse of the Bank. Pioneering areas of analysis and action (conflict, youth, etc.) have been mapped out. In project design, the social has moved beyond the classic safeguard issues to become, to a degree, routinely considered in project design, encompassing social analysis, stakeholder participation and social accountability. Perhaps most critically, but not yet decisively, social development has moved upstream to make its mark on policy analysis at the sector and national levels.

¹⁸ Findings of a Mercy Corps Mobilization Summit held in 2003 and recorded by Mercy Corps Georgia (in *Georgia Field Study: Understanding the Legacy of Community Mobilization*, Mercy Corps, July 2004).

So, social development is firmly on the map. And yet.....a sense of institutional marginalization is still felt by many social scientists in the Bank (as a perceptive outside observer, Mosse 2006, confirms). Why is this? There seem to be a number of reasons. *First*, clarity of mandate: there is still some ambiguity and confusion as to what ‘social development’ means in the Bank (social sectors? social safety nets? social inclusion, equity and empowerment? social relations? social analysis? social research methods?).

Second, while universals of the kind advocated and rehearsed in the Bank’s social development strategy (inclusion, cohesion, accountability) may be effective rallying points for constituency for change in the Bank, they may simultaneously be seen as vague and ‘fluffy’ to the more entrenched members of this ‘economics fortress’.

Third, in moving from the micro to the macro, social development has changed its relationship to the local and the specific (this has particular implications for a discipline such as social anthropology). If new social development ideas are universalized and stripped of context, made technical and bankable, the field is open for other disciplines (human capital economists, etc.) to move in and adopt them. The history of the term ‘social capital’ embodies many of the ambiguities of such ‘economics imperialism’. Of course, such competition between sectors is not unique to social development or to the Bank. However, precisely for the other reasons outlined here, SD is often not well placed to profit from such territorial skirmishes.

Fourth, while increasingly treated for some purposes as an honorary ‘sector’ (and indeed beginning to develop its own portfolio), SD lacks the conceptual and institutional clout and infrastructure of the more established sectors, and in particular the counterpart institutions in borrower countries hungry for financing, with sets of bankable projects, programs and budget lines (the weakness of institutions such as Ministries of Youth and Social Development relative to Ministries of Finance, Education and Transport, illustrates this). The diagnosis offered by social development may be holistic and nuanced – but what next? Where is the loan?

Fifth, the Social Development sector has relatively few staff trained as ‘task managers’ – those who are responsible for designing projects and negotiating them through the complex procedural hoops of the institution – a skill acquired in large part through a combination of hands-on experience and apprenticeship, and which thus tends to flow within established structures of sectoral patronage.

Sixth, the presence and participation of social development specialists on World Bank country teams, where decisions about programming and budgets for individual borrower countries get made, is relatively sparse. This is partly because of the large number of active countries (47 in sub-Saharan Africa alone) relative to social development staff in the regional operational departments, and partly because, without responsibility for the management of significant portions of the country’s portfolio, they do not have the time or incentive to become actively involved (staff time is allocated through the discipline of an internal Time Recording System which requires that all staff hours be accounted for in terms of specific project codes).

Seventh, despite the quantity and quality of analytic work undertaken by social development staff, there is no single focus for social development knowledge, and very little representation of non-economists (two out of 83 full time research staff) in the Bank's central research unit (known, indeed, as Development Economics (or DEC). The seamless link between Bank researchers and senior country program officers (chief economists, etc) on the one hand, and academia on the other, etc. has no equivalent in social development. One illustration of this situation is that, in spite of the move upstream, no Development Policy Loans have as yet been managed by social development staff (though a CDD DPL is in preparation for Vietnam).

Eighth, some regional Departments of the Bank have suffered from organizational problems which have failed to give social development a clear corporate entity, managerial capacity, or resources.

Epilogue – the future

In a recent restructuring, the first major organizational change of the Wolfowitz era, the home base of Social Development in the Bank, the Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Department (which SD shared with environment, and rural) has been combined with the Infrastructure Department (which houses transport, power, urban and water). The organizational rationale for the creation of this massive operational department is not very clear. A skeptic's interpretation, might be that with the Bank's renewed interest in 'risky' large infrastructure projects such as dams, the restructuring presages a shift towards a vision of social development as a service group to support the preparation of new large infrastructure projects, in particular in the area of social safeguards. Equally, though, the new structure will present opportunities for social development, in particular in promoting the access of the poor and marginalized to infrastructure and utilities, and the improvement in local governance in urban areas through participatory planning and social accountability.

There are other grounds for an optimistic scenario for social development including the success of approaches to community-driven Development being developed in Indonesia and applied elsewhere in southeast Asia. The Kecamatan Development Project, launched in 1998, represents a highly 'evolved' version of CDD, operating on multiple levels in many sectors, and involving both national and local institutions to allow communities to propose virtually any investment they would like, from infrastructure provision to small-scale economic activities. It is national in scope and covers 30 percent of the rural sub-districts (kecamatans) in the country. The aim of the project is fundamentally radical: to institute transparency and democracy from the bottom up in an environment where corruption and abuse of office have been endemic. The approach both makes central the shift in local power relations which is an inevitable result of giving a greater stake to the poor in decision making. It also recognizes that conflict will be an inevitable result of such power shifts, and uses intensive local analysis and accessible grievance mechanisms to address it before it becomes violent. A form of democratized anthropological analysis is one of the tools through which this is achieved (Chase and Woolcock 2005).

Returning to our earlier theme, social anthropology has been one of the main contributors to the corpus of social development. Its holism, respect and advocacy for local knowledge, institutions, livelihoods and ways of life, its reliance on qualitative methods, all have roots in the work of social anthropologists in academia and development agencies. However, anthropologists do not coproduce under conditions of their own choosing. Social development, now long, if somewhat precariously, established as a quasi-sector in international development is an a-theoretical and a-historical blend of mixed intellectual parentage, the vehicle for the pragmatic (even opportunist) insertion of perspectives, values, and assumptions from a wide variety of fields. The cocktail includes Freirian conscientization, participatory action research, liberal democratic values of transparency and political competition, colonial notions of community development, welfarist concepts of social provisioning, neo-populist visions of voice and equality, and human rights discourse. Social development's ambiguous relationship with mainstream economists -- as both a model for quantified and predictive legitimacy, and as an 'other' portrayed as less than fair or human, also continues to be influential in determining identity and ideology. Indeed, by an inverse irony, social development has perhaps become a co-producer of economics, an influence (though not always an acknowledged one) in its renewed focus on institutions, social capital, political economy and, most recently, equity and equality.

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