SOCIAL ANALYSIS IN DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS: POLICY ARTEFACT OR CONSTRUCTIVE TRANSFORMATION?

SUSANNA PRICE*

ABSTRACT

Recently attention has focused on the role of social researchers in the processes of construction and transmission of knowledge about global poverty and its reduction. This paper examines some of the formative efforts by pioneering social researchers in development institutions to step into the realm of policy making to construct processes for project preparation and management through social analysis. Before 1970 development planners invoked 'social' or 'human' factors only as an excuse to explain away project failures – they designed and implemented development projects in the absence of any strategies or regulatory frameworks for managing their social impacts. Recognizing that project investments represent induced change and constitute a social process in themselves, pioneering social researchers constructed policies and procedures to introduce sociological content and method into the project cycle and so re-order social outcomes. Were such constructs merely policy artefacts? Even as the constructs helped to shift the statements of the development discourse towards 'people oriented' poverty reduction, new modalities appeared which tested the limits of the agreed methods. Institutions may forget, neglect, contest or re-write the documents if in perceived conflict with the institutional 'core business'. Yet those pioneering efforts created institutional space for, and understanding of, social analysis, with a measure of flow-on international recognition. Tracking social analysis in several international institutions and in a significant emerging economy, China, this paper highlights not only a history full of lessons to be learned where social analysis is not practiced systematically but also outlines some future challenges.

Keywords: induced development, social analysis, social impact assessment, resettlement, social safeguards, social management system.

INTRODUCTION

DECONSTRUCTION OR CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL PROCESS?

Social researchers, through their close encounters with communities impacted by development policies and projects[1] are especially well placed to deconstruct the disjunctures and ambiguities of the development discourse – disjunctures between

* Correspondence address to Susanna Price: College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, Canberra; e-mail: Susanna.Price@anu.edu.au.

[1] A project may be defined as a set of interrelated expenditures designed to achieve, within a designated period, specific objectives.

underlying narratives; objectives; strategies; and the selection, rollout and outcomes of projects and programs in specific social contexts (de Sardan 2006). Social researchers may privilege such deconstruction as the basis for their critical engagement with development – or, alternatively, they may step purposefully into a constructivist orientation of social transformation (Green 2011).

Recent attention to 'aidnography', or the anthropology of development professionals, has focused on a new site for ethnographic endeavour: the processes of knowledge creation within the development institutions themselves and the 'transformations that occur as social scientific practices cross and re-cross the boundaries of policy making' (Mosse 2011: ix). This paper focuses on the role of several pioneering social researchers who, not content simply to deconstruct those projects which had failed to acknowledge social process, or to translate as knowledge brokers between communities and aid professionals, set about to transform social ordering through consciously remoulding knowledge, methods and resources in new forms in development institutions. Pioneering social researchers at the World Bank have long recognised the potential for transformation due, specifically, to the premeditated nature of development interventions. For example, they contended that 'while spontaneous development can only be observed and described by sociologists, an induced change is one that social scientists can influence, through knowledge and the direct participation in the design of programs' (Cernea and Kudat 1997: 6). Social scientists would, in their view, achieve this direct participation by acting upon sociological and anthropological knowledge, as embodied in social analysis, to assess and design goal-directed development programs.

PROJECTS AS A SOCIAL PROCESS

There was no shortage of failed project cases. When state sponsored projects or private sector corporations overlook the social context of their projects the consequences can be dire, both for the project returns – for example, increased costs and delays[2] – and for the project area population. 'Socially-blind' investments risk jeopardizing their own success and sustainability – missing opportunities to engage local support; mis-matching with local conditions; misunderstanding social dynamics; risking impoverishment of people affected; and triggering other unintended and unwanted impacts. Projects directed towards poverty reduction objectives specifically risk overlooking the multi-dimensionality of socio-cultural dynamics, so bypassing the social factors of poverty.

[2] An early study by Kottak reviewed 68 World Bank rural development projects and found that 'attention to the issues of socio-cultural compatibility' presented pay-offs to projects in significantly increased economic rates of return; conversely, initial socio-cultural mismatch resulted in lower returns (in Cernea 1991).

Pioneering social researchers set about reversing such outcomes. Drawing lessons from such failures they re-ordered the objectives, content and method of development practice, recognizing that the social context in which development investments are to be implemented is indispensable for their successful contribution to both economic and social development goals. This required social analysis during the earliest stages of investment selection, preparation, and design to inform the process of implementation and completion as well as to inform evaluation and feedback to future investments. It meant recognizing and engaging with stakeholders from the earliest stages right through the investment cycle. Forms of social analysis, originally conceptualized institutionally as tools for planning and appraisal, have, from the beginning, encompassed sociological content and follow-on actions.

SCOPE OF THE PAPER

How did pioneering social specialists tackle the difficult ask of translating social science constructs into operational policies and procedures? How did they define the specific role and craft the methods for doing social analysis? How well did they bring to bear the approaches of engaged, systematic, direct field immersion to obtain empirical data, into application in institutional space? How well did they translate the theoretical development thinking from conceptual constructs into constructed realities? I examine the way in which social researchers defined and mapped social issues, championed methodologies for social analysis, generated social policies – and endeavoured to obtain recognition and resources for their application and oversight in development institutions.

Review of pioneering policy and procedures of the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) reveals certain key elements that were critical to their effectiveness: supportive statements of objectives; use of case studies to demonstrate how 'socially-blind' projects fail and may additionally wreak havoc on the social fabric; elaboration of sociological content and method; timing of steps matched to the key points of the project cycle; and specification of requisite social expertise. Such documents formed a medium through which many social researchers interact both with development institutions, and with social actors at the micro-level.

Are these policies and procedures merely cosmetic – simply elaborate policy artefacts, denied effective agency? Whereas writing the documents and securing support for their approval presents one very significant challenge, securing the necessary changes in work practice to achieve outcomes for people affected by development projects constitutes another – turning the 'text' into 'effect' (Bebbington et al. 2006). Problems in application include differing development constructs and priorities within institutions, together with differing expectations among stakeholders which result in tokenism through limited time, skills and resources in institutions and among borrowers. Organisations may forget, neglect, contest or re-write the documents if the requirements appear difficult or interfere with perceptions of 'core business'.

A dynamic and evolving development discourse shifted from economic growth objectives towards the social agenda, opening up opportunities for social analysis. Yet, perversely, new lending modalities appeared, in the interests of agency 'core business' which tested the limits of the agreed methods. This again challenged social analysts to formulate innovative approaches and instruments for social analysis that go beyond traditional project packages.

China emerges as a significant site for attention as the government and private investment fuel rapid growth, both in China and, increasingly, abroad. China's bourgeoning development assistance aid program utilizes project investments as the primary modality for delivery. Increasingly, China recognizes officially the need to balance between economic and social development objectives yet strong pressures persist for economic growth, especially among local governments. What might this mean for policy and practice for social analysis in this complex country context? This article endeavours to illuminate emerging practices in social analysis in China, bringing to a global audience the recent work of Chinese scholars on this topic.

FORMULATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SOCIAL ANALYSIS

ABSENCE OF REGULATION FOR SOCIAL RISKS AND IMPACTS

Engaged social research has longstanding traditions in sociology and anthropology. The US National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) of 1969/70 formally linked the prediction of social impacts to the process of investment planning in a regulatory framework, requiring analysis, before approval, of likely project impacts on human and cultural, as well as physical environments (Burdge et al. 2004). With this step NEPA opened the door to the possibility of widening investment planning beyond technical and economic criteria in an environmental impact statement. It posed the question of how people and communities would react to planned investments in advance, creating a space for integrating the methods and tools of the social sciences in planning investment projects, utilizing anthropological and sociological techniques and variables (Burdge et al. 2004)[3].

[3] The NEPA decision was based on recognition that negative impacts from investments could reduce or outweigh their benefits, jeopardizing success and degrading environments on which communities depend. NEPA required the application of the social sciences, as well as the natural sciences, in advance to predict these negative effects.

Where practiced consistently, SIA[4] coalesced into a series of broad stages with associated methods. Yet most practitioners contend that SIA has fallen short of its full potential for decision-making – for determining which interventions should proceed and how they should do so. This is due to a potent combination of legal and administrative uncertainty underscored by lack of understanding, time, resources and expertise[5] and perceptions that SIA is a subset of environmental impact assessment, rather than a process in its own right.

By the late 1980s many governments in were establishing their own frameworks for environmental impact assessment (EIA). In most cases the EIA framework included at least a requirement for social and economic data – but full SIA requires countries to enact the necessary institutional regulations that assign responsibilities and resources for SIA application. Very few developing countries have taken this important step towards formalising social criteria in planning and management – and for those that have, SIA may be dependent upon physical impacts as a trigger. This relegates SIA to a reactive step applied to pre-determined projects, rather than being a key element in decision-making for selection of projects. SIA practitioners have continuously explored ways to help SIA meet its full potential in global investment decision-making and preparation[6], including advocating that public or private sector proponents or communities could, in a wider understanding, initiate and lead such a process for SIA as 'an adaptive management approach that is embedded in the culture of companies, governments and communities' (Vanclay and Esteves 2011: 5).

Most projects in developing countries take place in the absence of SIA – there are no formal, national regulatory framework for identifying and managing the project social impacts and risks. Instead, an exceptional few investments may benefit from the practices of some civil society sponsors or private sector entities adopting policies on corporate social responsibility; whilst others may be subject to

[4] Legal cases tested the scope of SIA in specific contexts (Burdge et al 2004). NEPA's explicit addition of SIA during the 1970s more systematically documented, this requirement. Environmental and social practitioners formed an international impact assessment association in 1981, and prepared SIA Guidelines. For example the Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment prepared a 1994 *Guidelines and Principles for Social Impact Assessment*.

[5] Barrow 2000, Burdge 2002, 2993a, Burdge et al. 2004, Esteves et al. 2012, Vanclay and Esteves 2011. Practitioners of social impact assessment have described it as a poor relation compared to environmental impact assessment, a discipline with credibility issues; and subject to 'myths and misunderstandings' (Burdge 2003b).

[6] See Barrow 2000, Burdge et al. 2004, Mathur 2011, Vanclay and Esteves 2011, Esteves 2012. The International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA) launched *International Principles for SIA* (Vanclay 2003), which, whilst still supporting SIA regulation, also advocated efforts outside a regulatory framework by communities, governments or corporations to undertake their own SIAs as a participative planning exercise shaping and addressing their own development objectives (Becker and Vanclay 2003: 2–3). The International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA) developed new *Social Impact Assessment International Principles* (2003) that also widened the definition beyond the project level to encompass any social change process.

the policies and procedures of bilateral or multilateral institutions, which I review in the next section.

DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENTS: FORMATIVE STEPS IN PROJECT APPRAISAL

Development institutions have for many decades packaged investment projects as a key form of intervention in developing countries – many with significant contextual social issues that were initially barely recognized and little understood. Social researchers asked: were the 'social' or 'human' factors to be recognized only as an excuse to explain failure (Apthorpe 1970: 7)?

The first social specialist recruited within the World Bank, Dr. Michael Cernea, found that the normative instructions (1971) for preparing and appraising projects required only economic, financial and technical analysis – there was no mention at all of social or institutional analysis, no institutional role or position for people skilled to do social analysis (Cernea pers. comm. June 2012). Within this 'economic fortress' the challenge facing Cernea was to translate theoretical sociological knowledge into something palatable in organizational terms – knowledge for action that encapsulated both sociological content and methodology. That necessitated intensive perseverance to garner the necessary project based evidence that would demonstrate what disasters unfold when projects are 'socially blind'; lobbying to enhance understanding and to secure the high level commitment to change the Bank's 'ground rules' for project appraisal, as the final step in before approval that would still allow modifications in the project design prior to implementation.

This change took the form of a conceptual breakthrough that named 'sociological aspects' as an integral element of project appraisal, along with economic, financial, technical, commercial and institutional aspects. The instrument that formalized this requirement was a statement set in the Bank's central 'rulebook', the Operational Manual which took on the status of an operational policy known as OMS 2.20 (World Bank 1984). Whereas earlier Bank appraisal methodology (1971) aimed only to make a maximum impact on the economic development of its member countries, the new policy set objectives that enunciated the importance of both economic and social development amongst its borrowers, thus logically augmenting the earlier narrow focus with sociological and institutional analyses.

OMS 2.20 set a requirement for sociologically-directed efforts to localize projects, before their approval, by understanding the socio-cultural and demographic characteristics of intended beneficiaries – a requirement that called for innovations in both content and method. Firstly, the OMS 2.20 required an understanding of the 'size and social structure of the population in the project area, its density and stratification patterns, including ethnic, tribal and class composition' (World Bank 1984: 10). This would be essential to project success since social actors were expected to accommodate project interventions, often changing their behavior to support project goals. It also permitted targeting for social groups with specific requirements such as ethnic minorities, resettled populations, and women. Secondly, the OMS required analysis of the social organization of productive activities of the population in the project area;[7] and, thirdly, understanding of the cultural acceptability of the project and its compatibility with the behaviour and perceived needs of the intended beneficiaries, to assess whether it would be understandable, agreed to, and capable of being operated and maintained by them[8].

Finally – an essential forward looking strategy and method for the rest of the project investment cycle – this analysis would result in a social strategy to elicit and sustain beneficiaries' participation during project implementation and operation. The appraisal team had to verify that the beneficiaries 'were involved in project identification and preparation and that they will continue such participation in project implementation, maintenance, operation, monitoring and evaluation' (Ibid.: 11). Special efforts to ensure participation of intended beneficiaries generally in implementation and operation and women's participation and benefits in particular were needed[9].

OMS 2.20 represented a catalytic change in that it obliged Bank staff, for the first time, to recognize and act upon the concept that investment projects, in themselves, constitute a complex socio-cultural process that could be engaged through clear steps during preparation and, by logical extension, during implementation and completion. In the context of such induced social change these steps could profoundly shape project acceptability to social actors, and hence, determine project outcomes, returns, and impacts. The OMS 2.20 widened the decision-making process to bring in sociological knowledge at a key decision point in the organizational dynamics of the project cycle: before approval, when efforts could be taken to redesign – even to halt – certain projects which had not satisfactorily addressed the steps.

[7] Analysis of the social organization of productive activities included assessing how the intended beneficiaries have access to, make use of, and exercise control over productive resources; how the prevailing structure of the household and of the family systems affects the development potential and constraints, labor availability and ownership patterns; whether small producers have reasonable access to, and information on wider markets and regional economies; and how land tenure systems and usage rights, as well as alternative employment opportunities, may affect intended beneficiaries' interest in the proposed project activities (World Bank 1984: 10).

[8] This involved a judgment taking into account the values, customs, beliefs and felt needs of intended beneficiaries.

[9] For projects which the appraisal team considered to be highly risky in social terms, the OMS 2.20 required consideration of either a pilot project or postponement of the project. Technical, administrative or other aspects that made a project socially not feasible would have to be modified or eliminated. The timeframe should be realistic, with mechanisms for the expected behavioural responses to occur, and sufficient flexibility for making design changes in response to socio-cultural information obtained during implementation.

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST: THE WIDER CASE FOR SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Whereas the OMS 2.20 was an internal Bank document, in 1985 Cernea edited a published volume, drawing together the experience of a number of social analysts, that advocated a compelling theme: 'putting people first' as the 'starting point, the centre and the end goal of each development intervention' (Cernea (ed.) 1991: xiv). This volume contextualized and elaborated upon OMS 2.20 through theoretical analysis, practical approaches and case studies, with particular attention to rural-based projects. Sociological knowledge provided the necessary tools and methods to illuminate social dynamics through conceptual frameworks for action research, and 'a set of procedures, rules and approaches that instituted field assessments, information exchange and structured interaction between local and outside experts' (Cernea 1991: 26).

The book made a broader point. It linked the repeated failures plaguing many development programs, due to being 'sociologically ill-informed and ill-conceived' (Cernea 1991: 1), with a reconceptualising shift in development policies away from 'trickle down' theories of economic growth towards poverty alleviation through developments aimed specifically at 'target groups' which encompassed the poor and vulnerable (Cernea 1991: 2). This reconceptualization led directly into policy making in three broad, mutually-reinforcing directions in applying sociological knowledge to development interventions (Cernea 1995, 1996, 1997). The detailed, project-specific methodologies for social analysis would form the basis for deriving wider principles which would, in turn, form the basis for formulation of social policies. The social policies would, again, require detailed procedures for social analysis for their implementation in each new case, procedures which would be drawn from sociological knowledge, to formulate social policies.

SOCIAL ANALYSIS GLOBALLY

Bilateral donors (for example, AusAID 1989; ODA 1995) and other international institutions[10] began to act upon the concept that social analysis formed an integral part of project planning and management. In the Asia Pacific's regional multilateral development bank, ADB, for example, Dr. Sam Rao and staff produced official *Guidelines*[11] that opened by echoing the theme that '*people* are the center of development and that development is for *all* people' (ADB 1993: 7). Widening of ADB's development objectives beyond economic growth to encompass poverty reduction, the improved status of women, and human resource

[10] See also Harrison, J. and T. McDonald 2003 for a discussion of SIA in the Caribbean Regional Development Bank.

[11] ADB *Guidelines on Incorporation of Social Dimensions into ADB Operations* (1993) drew upon an earlier consultant's report; it was followed by ADB *Handbook for Incorporation of Social Dimensions in Projects (1994),* Manila.

development[12] called for new approaches, and alluded to project failures where social actors had been ignored. The *Guidelines* identified and mapped the social content: a set of social dimensions in operational terms that would allow a greater focus on people through poverty reduction, enhanced role for women; human resources development and protecting vulnerable groups (Ibid.: 2–4, 8–10). Methodologically, new and mutually reinforcing analytical processes would link the social dimensions to planning and implementation: participatory approaches, gender analysis, benefit monitoring and evaluation, social analysis and co-operation with NGOs.

The *Guidelines* mapped operational steps throughout ADB's lending activities. Macro and sector analyses would expand to address questions such as the distribution of benefits; equal opportunity; and social participation. At the project level incorporating social dimensions was intended to achieve socially responsive projects, with more effective implementation, minimizing social risks, and more equitably distributing benefits, whilst building upon socio-cultural characteristics, to underpin screening, processing, appraisal, management, and evaluation (ADB 1993). In particular, the *Guidelines* proposed an initial social assessment, a scoping exercise conducted early for every project that raised certain questions: who were the target population? What were their needs, demands and absorptive capacity? Which institutions could be utilized, especially at the local level? Was more detailed social design necessary?

The *Guidelines* shared some similar features to OMS 2.20. They aligned social analysis with newly crafted, supportive strategic objectives that emphasized social as well as economic development. Through the social dimensions they constructed and categorised sociological content. They gave operational validity to certain new methods of sociological endeavour. Yet they went further than the World Bank's timing of steps before appraisal – they situated social analysis in the broader terrain of macro and sector analyses, project selection, project implementation, completion and ex-post analysis. ADB's set of formal case studies was less developed, and the *Guidelines* said little about the requisite social expertise, but ADB was, in fact, in process of recognizing the designation of social development specialist and recruiting such expertise, in small numbers, creating institutional space for sociological knowledge in a Social Development Unit. When first introduced, the *Guidelines* were conceptualized, rather tentatively, as 'an overall framework to assist policy makers and practitioners' (ibid. v). Some key elements, such as the initial social scoping, had to await a stronger mandate through Board-approved policies on resettlement (ADB 1995), indigenous peoples (1998) and gender and development (1998); whilst other elements awaited a 1997 Operations Manual section entitled *Incorporation of Social Dimensions into ADB Operations* (revised in 2007 and subsequently – ADB 2010a).

[12] The ADB's Strategic Framework 1992–1995.

SOCIAL ANALYSIS FOR SAFEGUARD POLICIES

Social analysis formed an essential component of policies prepared at the World Bank on involuntary resettlement (1980), to protect people in the way of development projects and, in 1982 on indigenous peoples (Davis 2004). These two policies coalesced to become the social safeguards, which depend, in each new application, upon detailed forms of social and economic analysis. For example, the World Bank requires detailed resettlement planning and implementation arrangements in each new case of displacement, based upon direct, interactive, participative fieldwork[13].

EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CHALLENGES IN PRACTICE

Were these policies and procedures applied? Or were they simply policy artefacts, an analysis of discourse, devoid of effective agency? Whilst stand-alone, thematic evaluation of the application and outcomes of social analysis is rare, reports hint at various impediments that determined a slow pace of adoption: limited awareness, commitment and expertise not only amongst institutional staff but in-country; time constraints in the processing cycle; and resource constraints. Where procedures were followed, they often risked a kind of on-paper tokenism.

A full decade after OMS 2.20, Cernea and Kudat (1997) reflected upon the expanding use of social analysis in World Bank operations, and its demonstrated value adding for all stages of the project investment cycle; and, increasingly, for policy based work and country analysis. Presenting case studies in utilities investments – water supply, sanitation, urban transport and energy – from a new client base of Russia and the Central Asian Republics, they contended that social analysis[14] provided a rich avenue of enquiry to engage with stakeholders in this hitherto unfamiliar, and now socially dynamic, territory.

Yet social analysts clearly had to deliver incrementally more to achieve recognition – to ‘pay their own way in the coin of incremental bodies of knowledge

[13] This includes land survey; census and socio-economic survey of the people to be displaced including their population parameters, their forms of organisation and settlement, resource use, networks and productive activities; structured interactions to inform and engage those people in resettlement planning decisions; setting of eligibility criteria and resettlement entitlements; feasibility assessments for resettlement sites and for livelihood improvement; and plans for involving displaced people during the resettlement process and its aftermath (World Bank 2004). The IFC also encourages community outreach, and has a manual for stakeholder engagement (IFC 2007).

[14] These studies utilized a range of sociological methods at different times in the investment cycle: quantifiable social surveys, focus groups, individual interviews, in-depth case studies, secondary data review, participatory processes such as stakeholder workshops, poverty assessments, affordability analysis. They involved a wide range of social actors.

and operational recommendations, clearly additional to knowledge supplied by other analytical tools' (ibid.: 5). Many projects had no sociological appraisal, and 'compliance with the new guidelines was far from general'. The reasons? The authors cited inertia, technocratic or econocratic approaches, lack of awareness about the power of sociological investigation, traditional mindsets or obsolete development paradigms. This highlighted the gap between guidelines and practice: in that 'placing new rules on the Bank's internal guidebooks was not enough for triggering the profound changes in staff work patterns' (ibid.: 6) that are necessary for full implementation. New rules could even be forgotten – the sociological component had been left out of a revised appraisal procedure format in 1994, necessitating counter-action by a central social policy group (ibid.: 6).

Similarly, the challenge for full implementation of the safeguard policies is ongoing[15]. Whilst the World Bank, for example, seeks to strengthen the ability of borrowing countries to apply safeguard performance and monitoring, and to involve and consult with stakeholders, such as the general public and NGOs, it recognizes that safeguard policy implementation 'is a highly complex activity, much effort is needed to build capacity in developing countries at various levels ranging from government agencies to civil society' (World Bank 2012).

Compared to other social issues, however, social safeguards have been viewed as privileged in the competition for scarce institutional resources. A lead social specialist at the World Bank found that:

The external noise, and the consequent internal reaction to enforce compliance and full mitigation… has led to a crowding out of attention to other social domains… This dilemma has not been unique to the World Bank… Although ADB requires all projects to undergo an initial social assessments, more detailed work tends to be commissioned primarily when significant adverse impacts, such as resettlement is identified (Dani 2003: 11).

Yet an ADB evaluation found that, even for projects with resettlement issues, generally, initial social assessment and subsequent social preparation was inadequate (ADB 2000). Whilst ADB began recruiting social development staff in the early 1990s, their role structurally was an advisory one; whilst the lack of formal mechanisms for social analysis, SIA or social safeguards presented a range of challenges for application in each country. Project team leaders knew they would continue to be judged primarily on the speed with which they could process loans – ADB's 'core business' of lending. Key steps in loan processing remained at their discretion, including the time and effort spent on the now mandatory social scoping, and subsequent preparatory work.

[15] The World Bank's recent Learning Review on *Implementation of the Policy on Indigenous Peoples* found issues that needed further improvement to achieve full compliance (World Bank 2011).

CREATING INSTITUTIONAL SPACE

Despite uneven application, however, these policies and procedures had major impacts in policy dialogue. OMS 2.20, for example, triggered policy discussion within the institution, among borrowers, and among social actors in different contexts. For a formative period during the Bank's history the OMS 2.20 represented an enabling policy for work on social dimensions (Davis 2004). It articulated and legitimized a balance in the Bank's objectives between economic and social development – thus logically demanding tools and approaches to support social development. It linked poverty alleviation with sociological as well as economic variables. It was the first formal Bank policy to focus on the importance of women during project appraisal, on their potential role in project implementation and on project impacts upon them (Davis 2004). It was the first formal policy to focus on the importance of beneficiary participation and local organizations during project preparation, and to require a strategy to engage them, not just during preparation, but through the life of the project. Amongst others, it stimulated further work on gender, participation, local level organizations, social factors of poverty and benefits distribution. In this sense the OMS 2.20 provided an internal conceptual and organizational mandate both for project level actions and for enriching and extending sociological knowledge more broadly within the Bank's development models – it provided an essential early step towards the Community Development Framework (CDF), as discussed below. The OMS 2.20 created institutional space for sociological knowledge, called for more social specialists as professionals in appraisal, and began to generate a flow of social information that, in itself, led to new questions and new lines of enquiry.

The spread of the World Bank's policies on involuntary resettlement (1980) and indigenous peoples (1982) in forms adapted to other and international financial institutions such as ADB and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) (1998) coalesced as an international benchmark for a 'social safeguard'[16]. The resettlement benchmark spread to bilateral donors through *Guidelines*[17] of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 1992); and to the United Nations through the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* which encompass development-forced displacement amongst other forms (United Nations 2004).

Private sector entities doing business with financial institutions such as ADB or IFC must meet the safeguard standards of those institutions. Leveraging extends the policy reach – for example, all the components of a project which is jointly-

[16] The current form of the World Bank's policy on involuntary resettlement is referenced at World Bank 2002; and on indigenous peoples is at World Bank 2005. ADB approved policies on involuntary resettlement (1995) and on indigenous peoples (1998), both subsequently revised in 2009.

[17] 'Guidelines for Aid Agencies on Involuntary Displacement and Resettlement' of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (OECD 1992). Some bilateral donors have prepared their own policies on resettlement in accordance with these principles.

financed with the World Bank must comply with World Bank policies, including those components financed by other agencies, whether from the public or private sector. Private sector entities such as the Equator Principles for financial institutions have also adopted, voluntarily, codes based on these standards (Cernea 2005). The Equator Principles, with over 70 signatory financial institutions, now claim approximately 70 per cent of international project finance debt in emerging markets. Signatories undertake only to lend to projects which are both willing and able to comply with the Equator Principle standard on social and environmental policies and procedures (Equator Principles 2012). The procedures, based on the newly revised (January 2012) Performance Standards of the IFC, draw upon World Bank policies and procedures, and encompass environmental and social management systems, labour and working conditions, community health, safety and security, land acquisition and involuntary resettlement, indigenous peoples and cultural heritage, amongst others (IFC 2011)[18]. Social management systems link policy objectives with institutional priorities, implementation strategies, stakeholder identification and engagement, resource deployment, monitoring and evaluation. Casting social analysis into a business management process, for example, IFC's Performance Standard 1 envisions that private sector clients will establish an effective Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) as a dynamic and continuous process initiated and supported by management… involves engagement between the client, its workers, local communities directly affected by the project... Drawing on the elements of the established business management process of "plan, do, check, and act", the ESMS entails a methodological approach to managing environmental and social risks… and can lead to improved financial, social, and environmental outcomes (IFC 2011).

WIDER POLICY IMPACTS – PERVERSE REVERSALS IN PRACTICE

The phrase 'putting people first' assumed a new prominence in global policy statements, as the discourse of development widened. In the United Nations' (UN) World Summit for Social Development (1995), for example, governments reached 'a new consensus on the need to put people at the centre of development pledging to make the conquest of poverty, the goal of full employment and the fostering of social integration overriding objectives of development' (United Nations 1995). This work paved the way for the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2001) which reflected both income and non-income poverty reduction targets, and would be ratified by governments and agencies around the globe.

Increasing scrutiny, intensifying during the 1990s by civil society groups, parliamentarians, and non-finance ministry officials in both borrowing and funding

[18] The IFC also encourages community outreach, and has a manual for stakeholder engagement (IFC 2007).

countries placed multilateral and bilateral development agencies under pressure to widen the policy agenda.

ADB adopted explicit objectives of poverty reduction complementing policies on social safeguards, gender and development, co-operation with NGOs, and social protection. The World Bank's CDF had the expressed intention to put people and poverty reduction at the centre, prioritizing partnerships and promoting knowledge (Kagia 2005). Building upon the World Bank's social safeguard policies the CDF broadened the social development agenda drawing upon the work of internal social development specialists (Davis 2004). The CDF encompassed, but looked beyond, the project cycle to an 'empowerment agenda' involving community driven development, civic engagement, and social accountability, which delivered huge loans directed under innovative governance arrangements towards local levels of government and civil society (Ibid). Social analysts began to develop new analytical tools for different levels of social reality: local, meso, macro, regional or global. The multi-dimensionality of poverty required social analysis. This entailed social analysis at three levels: firstly, macro-social analysis of the 'socio-cultural, institutional, historical, and political context carried out upstream as inputs into the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) process, or to support policy formulation and sector strategies' (World Bank 2003b: 7). Secondly, sociological appraisal addressed the 'opportunities, constraints and likely impacts as an integral part of project appraisal to judge whether the project's social development outcomes have been clearly identified, the project is socially sustainable and Bank support is justified' (ibid.). Thirdly, social assessment would be 'undertaken by the Borrower for the purpose of obtaining the views of stakeholders in order to improve the design of the project and establishing a participatory process for implementation and monitoring (ibid.). Social analysts advocated taking social analysis to proactively select and design strategic poverty reduction interventions, together with economic analysis (Dani 2003: 2) through Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA) (WB 2003a). An evaluation in 2009 found that, whilst some PSIA had been very effective, overall the approach had been limited, requiring new financing and invigoration (Dani and Beddies 2011).

Whilst objectives were shifting to emphasise people-oriented poverty reduction and social development, in a perverse reversal the institutions, concerned about undermining the core business of lending began to explore faster lending modalities. Earlier policy and procedures on social analysis, focused as they were on projects investments with identifiable populations in a zone of impact, particularly for rural-based projects, had limited application to new modalities such as the World Bank's structural adjustment, sector-wide approaches, programmatic and policy based lending and a shift from infrastructure to social sector services. As a result, in 2003 a Senior World Bank Social Analyst wrote: 'Most staff today are not even aware about the existence of … OMS (2.20)' (Dani 2003: 8–9).

ADB based its overarching poverty reduction policy (ADB 1999) on the twin pillars of economic growth and social development. Current ADB policy and operational procedures build upon this foundation to articulate links between social analysis, social development and the achievement of ADB's overarching goal of poverty reduction. These procedures apply to ADB's public and private sector projects and programs (ADB 2007, 2010) – yet, in another disjuncture between policies and practice, the procedures are not reflected in conceptual, operational or financing strategies in ADB's current Long Term Strategic Framework 2020 (ADB 2008). This framework does not refer to social development.

ADB in 2005 officially linked a stagnation in loan approvals[19] with a need for 'new products and less arduous procedures' including safeguard 'improvements' (ADB 2006: 7). It proposed an Innovation and Efficiency Initiative that would reduce transaction costs, streamline and simplify business processes and developing new financing instruments and modalities to become 'more client- and results-oriented, and efficient' (ibid.: 11). New financial instruments such as the multitranche financing facility, mainstreamed in 2008, would move more money faster, involving less scrutiny since most sub-projects were to be prepared and approved only after Board approval.

CHINA: NATIONAL PERSPECTIVES AND CHANGING SOCIAL SPACES

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

China's steps towards forms of social assessment for investment projects is occurring as China tempers its focussed pursuit of economic growth with explicitly articulated concerns for the social costs of that growth – and as China shifts from 'command and control' modes of governing to modes of governing that open up new social spaces and opportunities (Price 2007). The national government has formally replaced a focus on GDP growth as the single most important performance indicator for local government officials (Zheng and Fewsmith (eds) 2008) by a concern with growth that balances economic and social development.

The transition from a centrally planned state to a socialist market economy has involved the selective transformation of the state and its processes to support the market and to align more closely with a range of international standards. This entailed new modes of governing through extensive reorganisation of state government, especially during the period of Zhu Rongji's reforms (1998–2000). Administrative reorganisation, decentralisation, industrial and financial reform now permit new forms of interaction between market and state, and new forms of networking through the information society (Ong and Zhang 2008). Concepts of

[19] ADB's loan approvals had stood at about \$5.2 billion a year over the previous 10 years. Ordinary capital resource (OCR) disbursements had declined steadily, with a 38 per cent drop in ADB's gross annual income (ADB 2006: 6).

government versus governance have been compared and debated, between ‘power of government operating from top down… primarily through orders, statutes, bureaucracy and coercion’ and ‘power of governance’ which operates ‘mutually… primarily through collaboration, coordination, negotiation, social networking, identity and consensus’ (Yu 2002 in Jeffreys and Sigley 2009: 12). Xu (2009: 40) credited the World Bank and United Nations with a recent shift from ‘letting the market decide’ to correcting ‘market imperfections’ by ‘paying more attention to social aspects of the market economy, especially through governance’.

Managing the market in the context of growing decentralisation and inequality poses significant challenges if benefits are to be shared equitably. Whilst poverty overall has been significantly reduced in China, there are growing inequalities within cities, between cities and the countryside, and between regions (Xu and Zhang 2010; Sutherland and Yao 2011). Large investment projects can entail significant technical, environmental and social risks, as evidenced in recent the rise in recorded civil disturbances (CSSA 2010), the vast majority of which were caused by land acquisition, resettlement compensation, and environmental pollution related to project investments. Similarly the use of the *xinfang* (letters of complaint) has increased, a mechanism for lodging complaints with higher authorities and seeking justice, especially focusing on corruption and land acquisition problems (Perry 2010).

ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL COSTS OF TRANSFORMATION

With the new spaces and increasing complexity in China’s social fabric, the leadership has been exploring strategies to address the social costs of transformation, and to foster a balanced and harmonious society. For example, by 2003 the leadership had articulated a ‘new development perspective’ (*xin fazhanguan*), that broadens objectives beyond economic growth in favor of ‘putting people at the centre’ (*yi ren wei ben*) (Gransow and Price (eds) 2007: 4). Whilst retaining ambitious economic growth targets, for the first time the 11th Five-Year National Plan for Economic and Social Development recognised certain limits to economic growth, and introduced the idea that improving life quality matters. The 12th Five-Year National Plan for Economic and Social Development (2011) continued these themes. Recognizing that income increases had lagged behind economic growth, the Plan expressed a core goal to build a fairer society by spreading the wealth more evenly among China’s 1.34 billion population, by boosting spending on education, health care and public housing, and initiatives intended to narrow the wealth gap between the rich and poor. Leaders criticized the ‘outdated mindset and the GDP-oriented criteria for evaluating the performance of government officials as obstacles that might keep the five-year plan from being fully realised. The central government would adopt new performance evaluation criteria for local governments and give more weight to the efficiency of economic growth, environment protection and living standards’ (Zhang 2011).

China officially recognizes social development objectives, the central planning agency, the National Development Research Council (NDRC) having a mandate for overall coordination between economic and social development, through the annual, medium and long-term development plans; by regulating project investments; by monitoring social development trends; and by formulating and implementing social development strategies, laws and regulations, amongst others (NDRC 2012). The challenge will be to realize such objectives, change resource allocation decisions and achieve full implementation of state policies, laws and regulations at the local level in the context of persistent systemic and structural features that continue to reinforce practices favouring economic growth (Naughton 2010: 84). This includes, for example, intense pressures for land development, whether legal or illegal, by local governments at various administrative levels (Lin 2009: 6).

NEW SPACES FOR SOCIOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

China has long held a tradition of field research as a basis for shaping social action to promote modernisation (Gransow 2003, Guldin 1994). Zheng described a 'tortuous path' (2006: 19) of sociology comprising activity and then forced isolation, which has been marked by a recurring theme: 'Chinese social reality' has consistently localized foreign theories and methods (Zheng 2006: 19–20).

The term 'harmonious social development', articulating a vision of a more socially aware, less destructive type of growth arose in the Chinese discipline of sociology (Zheng 2006: 34). China's recent policy goal of building an 'all-round well-off and harmonious society' has allowed certain problems to be named, contributing to 'the identification of such problems as social problems' (Xu 2009: 39). As part of the policy, central government has called on specifically social and local forces to provide social services, and thereby assist the state in building the 'harmonious society' – through the control of those social forces under the auspices of the governing Party. These developments have led to a new emphasis on the deployment of social scientists, especially to work on issues surrounding social stratification. 'Chinese sociologists, demographers and statisticians are at the forefront in providing the expert knowledge required for a discursive and epistemological shift away from GDP oriented growth' with a new focus on inequality (ibid.: 46). In terms of governmental technologies, do these measures to 'tame protests and to solve what the leadership deems to be specifically 'social' problems' by turning 'problem identification and solution into an 'arts of government' rather than a process leading to the need for systemic change' (ibid.: 45)? Increasingly, social analysts participate in investment planning and appraisal preceding decisions on major state investment projects (CIECC 2004).

SOCIAL ASSESSMENT IN CHINA

Since 1978, China has reformed in stages the centralized planning system for investment decision making, requiring feasibility studies for significant investment projects from the 1980s (Ping 2009), and developing methods for investment appraisal as practiced internationally, focusing initially upon economic appraisal methods (CIECC 2004). This later expanded to encompass environmental impact assessment under an environmental regulatory system (CIECC 2004).

Social issues reached investment planning through incremental steps from the 1980s onwards. From 1993, participatory social assessments were permitted for internationally funded projects. The 2003 EIA Act expanded earlier laws, requiring people's participation in environmental management. A 2012 Ministry of Environment EIA Technical Guideline, to be regulated through the EIA framework, strengthens requirements for stakeholder engagement 'up front' in project preparation and requires SIA for projects with construction impacts (Xiao et al. 2012). SIA includes a socio-economic baseline and prediction of social impacts through quantitative or qualitative analysis, to be managed through mitigation. The Guidelines focus on a key social risk factor, land acquisition (see below), but also encompass public health, cultural heritage and community infrastructure. This important step will be implemented initially as a pilot.

Systematic studies on project-based social assessment methodology in China started from the 1980s. A detailed research paper on its use in investment projects appeared in 1993 (Wang and Marsden 1993). Later studies were primarily carried out by the China International Engineering Consulting Corporation (CIECC); Investment Research Institute of the State Planning Commission (now the NDRC); and the Research Institute for Standards and Norms of the Ministry of Construction (RISN), resulting in a number of publications. Key Chinese sectoral agencies have prepared in-house documents setting out methods for social assessment that could be selectively applied in project preparation. NDRC has endorsed several recent Guidelines setting out requirements for social assessment and resettlement planning along with economic, financial, and environmental assessment in certain public and private projects (CIECC 2004).

A 2002 NDRC-endorsed *Guideline*, which, for the first time integrated social assessment into feasibility studies, along with economic, financial, environmental, technical and other parameters, presents a wide-ranging and comprehensive mapping of social assessment that looks for opportunities for enhanced impact as well as social risk management. The *Guideline*, adopting a participatory approach, defined the role and scope of social assessment, introduced the major components and presented procedures and techniques for social assessment. The three key elements are a social impact assessment, an analysis of the 'mutual adaptability' of the project and its regional social environment, and a social risk analysis. It defined the social content to include incomes, living standards, likely impacts, stakeholder identification and analysis[20].

Next, the analysis of 'mutual adaptability' between the project and its regional social environment aimed to engage key stakeholders and enhance the project design in light of social variables[21]. Finally, social risk analysis focused on possible sources of social, ethnic or religious conflict, and designed measures to avoid, reduce or mitigate those risks (Ibid.: 8−9).

Whilst the government has taken important steps towards establishing methods and content for social assessment, major challenges remain to its full implementation throughout the investment project cycle, in the context of a transforming investment management system (State Council 2004) and through local government responses to policy shifts from above.

CONCLUSION

Policies and procedures constructing the content and methods for social analysis are resonating in China. Yet challenges remain in China and other developing countries that are still without the key legal and institutional elements of regulatory framework for SIA or other formal mechanisms that allow them to identify and manage the social process, including social risks and opportunities for project investments, in the context of induced development.

Social analysis, building on pioneering work that mobilized support, has achieved a measure of recognition internationally in investment planning and management alongside economic, financial, environmental and other forms of analysis. Increasingly, both public and private sector investors recognize that it is

[20] The social assessment has eight essential elements: a study on how the project will affect local residents' income and their job assignments; a study on likely project impact on affected people's living standards and quality of life; an analysis of the likely project effects on local residents employment situation; an identification and review of stakeholders, determining the degree to which affected groups might suffer losses that require appropriate compensation means and methods; a focus on analyzing the likely positive and negative project effects on vulnerable groups such as women, children and the handicapped; an analysis of the likely project effects on the level of local infrastructure and social services; and, finally, an analysis of the impact on the customs and religious beliefs of the local ethnic minorities (quoted in Gransow and Price 2007: 9).

[21] In a three stage process social assessment involves, firstly, investigating and forecasting the attitudes towards the project of different interest groups, assessing the degree to which these groups can be expected to become involved, with the ultimate aim of selecting a participatory process that can contribute to project success. Secondly, it requires investigating and forecasting the attitudes towards the project of local organisations, assessing the degree to which these groups can be expected to support the project. Thirdly, it requires reviewing prospects for utilizing locally available technology, together with the degree of match between local culture and the project design, to maximize complementary and sustainable approaches (Ibid.: 8–9).

in their own interest to manage investments so as to gain public trust by engaging those social actors who will help to determine the degree of success and sustainability. International and bilateral organisations and, increasingly, governments issue guidelines for forms of social analysis or SIA that may encompass the entire investment project cycle. Private sector entities gradually adopt, voluntarily, codes for managing social risk, and social management systems that engage with stakeholders to address those risks and opportunities through the life of a project. Social analysis has proved itself integral to the application of policies protecting those at risk in projects – the displaced, the indigenous, minorities; and to understanding the socio-cultural dynamics of the multi-dimensionality of poverty.

Yet this analysis demonstrates that constructive transformation requires application as well as statements – or policies and procedures risk remaining a 'policy artefact', a 'text' without 'effect'. The written word does not necessarily remove 'on-paper' tokenism, nor eliminate those slippages in organizational support between the guidelines and their practice, nor overcome neglect nor challenges that may empty out policy statements of their efficacy. Policies and procedures do not necessarily eliminate the ambiguities and disjunctures as projects and programs roll out on the ground, nor capture opportunities, nor protect people at risk of induced change. Realising that full potential depends upon the level of commitment to their articulated policy frameworks by key development organisations and corporations, with provision of the necessary capacities, time and resources. In each country, realising that full potential depends on enactment of legislative and regulatory frameworks that encompass participative social analysis as a strategic device, backed by supportive institutional responsibilities and appropriate resources, with mandates to address the social factors of poverty.

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