

All the King's Horses and all the King's Men:
International anti-corruption discourse, political economy analysis and
assemblage theory

By Howard Staveley

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Abstract

Corruption emerged as a key issue area in international relations and development in the 1990s. However, efforts to control corruption have, to date, been relatively unsuccessful. This has prompted international organisations, like the World Bank, to acknowledge that corruption is a political issue as much as it is an economic one. This shift has led to an increasing use of *political economy analysis* to inform the anti-corruption and governance reform operations of international organisations. This thesis examines political economy analysis as a feature of the expertise housed in the World Bank. It argues that because anti-corruption and governance expertise is essential to the legitimate authority of the organisation, there are risks to that authority if World Bank experts are unable to provide more than highly conventional recommendations for tackling corruption in developing countries. Commentators on development practice have suggested that integrating concepts from complexity science into political economy analysis and adopting an “upside-down” approach to development might be useful to help generate new ideas for controlling corruption. However, this thesis argues that in order to do so, it is necessary to address the philosophical implications of complexity science for mainstream anti-corruption discourse, which is dominated by the positivist assumptions of neo-classical economics. To this end, the thesis argues that Manuel DeLanda’s assemblage theory offers a social ontology in which the relevance of complexity science concepts for social analysis can be developed, and a way of thinking that emphasises how social entities emerge from “the bottom up” without reducing causal explanations to individual human beings and their interests. Social networks, institutional organisations, and cities are examples of social assemblages, real emergent entities with causal power in the world. Mapping social assemblages in political economy analysis, and understanding the relations between social entities and different spatial scales, may reveal new ways of addressing corruption and the intensification of elite domination it enables.

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Introduction

In 2003, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). Its adoption represented the culmination of more than a decade's activity to define, measure, and devise solutions to what has been called 'an insidious plague', an 'evil phenomenon' (United Nations, 2004), 'a cancer' (Wolfesohn, 2000), and a 'most difficult area of development' (World Bank, 2012). Corruption emerged as an issue area in international relations and development in the 1990s with the convergence of geopolitical ruptures and innovations in technical (mainly economic) knowledge. The end of the Cold War brought the liberalisation of the Soviet bloc and with it an unprecedented appropriation of public wealth by private interests. The dwindling of communism in Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia also removed the foreign policy imperative to turn a blind eye to the practices of rapacious elites in some of the states allied with the West. Many of those states remained in seemingly intractable conditions of low economic growth despite decades of development loans and aid.

Social science research in the traditions of public choice theory and the new institutional economics provided a convincing vocabulary to describe how the quality of institutions has a determinative effect on prospects for economic growth and prosperity, and how corruption undermines those prospects. This convergence intensified knowledge production, both within the academy and in international governmental organisations, into the causes and impacts of corruption and governance failure. The new knowledge questioned earlier theories that suggested corruption could be beneficial for economic growth (Mauro, 1995; Rose-Ackerman, 2006). It diagnosed the causes of corruption as lying with institutions riddled with incentives for the creation of economic rents, and it prescribed a range of best practice models for 'good governance'. However, despite the creation of an international normative framework that condemns corruption, and significant investments in governance reform and corruption control, systemic corruption and patrimonialism remain prominent features in many of the poorest countries.

Development has been called a ‘wicked problem’, one that is ‘not amenable to negotiation or short term plans, or ... that can be solved through short-term coercion’ (Copestake and Williams, 2012: 1). Institutionalist approaches to development indicate that efficient, fair institutions that protect property rights and encourage innovation are key to economic growth, but engineering the emergence of such institutions, and seeing them persist effectively, appears impossible. Those countries that have such “inclusive institutions” developed them over the last four centuries through the interaction of various historically contingent processes that involved contestation, crises, and in some cases, revolution (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). In the 1990s and early 2000s, efforts to engineer institutional change to improve governance and address corruption relied on attaching governance-related conditions to development loans and aid. On the whole this conditionality failed to demonstrate lasting institutional change (De Janvry and Dethier, 2012). In many cases, the formal institutional changes implemented in line with loan and aid conditions have been undermined by the persistence of informal rules and existing power relations. Where institutions have changed, this has come from collective action emerging within the political community (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). In response to this experience, international organisations are increasingly acknowledging that economic institutions are inextricable from political institutions, and that in order to address corruption risks in development projects and to promote improvement in economic governance, it is necessary at the very least to understand, if not to some extent participate in, the political dynamics that texture an issue area or sector (Copestake and William, 2012; DFID, 2009; World Bank, 2008).

In order to engage with the politics of institutional change, international organisations active in the field of development have integrated *political economy analysis* into governance reform efforts. Political economy analysis is a form of policy analysis, a practice that ‘aims to situate development interventions within an understanding of the prevailing political and economic processes in society—specifically, the incentives, relationship distribution and constellation of power between different groups and individuals—all of which greatly impact on development outcomes’ (McLoughlin, 2012: 5). The increasing use of political economy analysis signals a “political turn” in international anti-corruption and governance discourse. Where previously this discourse has been characterised by the identification of technical “best practice”

approaches to public sector management, acknowledgement of the political character of governance reform sees practitioners searching for “feasible” and “second best” solutions. It includes an acknowledgement of the limits to what international organisations and aid donors can do to engineer national governance reform. This is also a pragmatic recognition of the relative failure of direct policy interventions to address corruption. It derives from experience rather than a specific social theory, although it draws on theoretical insights to explain why previous policies were not as successful as originally envisaged. This juncture offers an opportunity to interrogate how the problems of corruption and governance dysfunction are being reconstructed, and to explore other possible ways of posing these problems.

This thesis describes the current political turn in international governance and anti-corruption discourse and practice. It argues that the UNCAC can be read as “normative cover” for an informal expansion of the mandate of international organisations to include “political” issues associated with governance reform. This is demonstrated by tracking efforts to “mainstream” anti-corruption, governance and political economy analysis at the World Bank. While this may represent an expansion of mandate consistent with the tendency of bureaucracies to ‘create knowledge necessary to carry out new tasks’ (Barnet and Finnemore, 2004: 26), the political nature of institutional emergence and persistence implies limits to the extent to which international organisations can engage in such tasks. These limits are not necessarily defined by the organisations’ mandates, but by their form as international rational-legal bureaucracies deriving legitimacy from their expertise, objectivity and support for universalist rights discourses. In order to identify these limits and yet still develop effective welfare enhancing policies within them, the way in which anti-corruption and governance dysfunction is conceptualised in political economy analysis is crucial.

The tools developed to assist practitioners to undertake political economy analysis are largely informed by economic approaches to questions of political choice and principal-agent dynamics. Here rational actors respond to the incentives created by the institutional context to further their interests. Systemic corruption and governance dysfunction are situations where enforcement and commitment mechanisms are insufficient to override incentives to act contrary to the public interest. The interactions

between actors and the relationships between formal and informal rules are very complicated, to the extent that some development scholars and practitioners have suggested that the institutional context of development exhibits features that may be amenable to explanation using concepts derived from complexity science (Copestake and Williams, 2012; Mowles, 2010; Ramalingam et al, 2009; Rihani, 2005). Complexity science refers to the behaviour of physical, chemical, biological and ecological systems that, broadly speaking, cannot be adequately explained by reductive methods of scientific enquiry. A number of social scientists and theorists have suggested that social systems also exhibit this kind of complexity, and that complexity science concepts can be used in social explanation (Byrne, 1998; Harrison, 2006; Nowotny, 2005; Susteanu, 2005; Urry, 2005). In a recent contribution to the consideration of the relevance of complexity to development theory and practice, Copestake and Williams have argued that ‘confronting complexity entails acknowledging the need to collaborate in order to build a fuller understanding of the problem. It also entails flexibility of response both to unforeseen events and to improved analysis’ (Copestake and Williams, 2012: 2). The authors suggest that political economy analysis could be improved by integrating complexity concepts.

Although political economy analysis is described as an evolving ‘art’, the tools prescribed by the World Bank and other donors tend to utilise a common palette derived from neo-classical economics. Key to the authority of this language is its “scientificity”, drawing on mathematics, game theory, and computer modelling to describe and predict the outcome of potential policy interventions. As such, the integration of concepts from complexity science into this body of theory would seem to be relatively straightforward. However, and crucially, complexity science challenges both the ontological assumptions that underpin positivist philosophies of (social) science, like neo-classical economics, and the generalisability of concepts across disciplines. In the natural sciences, complexity concepts, such as non-linear causality, emergence, “edge of chaos”, and phase space, have contributed to a shift to realism as the dominant philosophy of science. This is in part due to the effect the insights of complexity science have in undermining the universal application of reductive methods of scientific enquiry. Neo-classical economics, on the other hand, remains a positivist and methodological individualist approach to social explanation. This is not to say that

the empirical insights from neo-classical economics, and particularly its extension in the new institutional economics, are not useful to examine the mechanisms of social organisation relevant to governance, but that in order for the concepts of complexity science to inform political economy analysis as an aspect of development practice, it is necessary to examine the philosophical and meta-theoretical assumptions that underpin it. As the problems of anti-corruption and governance dysfunction are being reconstructed, an engagement with complexity may contribute to a more “accurate” reconstruction, one in which ideas about means to ends relationships more closely align with reality. This thesis argues that rather than attempt to incorporate complexity concepts directly into existing political economy analyses, a greater theoretical effort is necessary. To this end, this thesis argues that “assemblage theory” as developed by Manuel DeLanda (2006) offers a way of integrating complexity concepts into political economy analysis that is sensitive to the philosophical implications of those concepts. The term “assemblage” refers to ‘concrete wholes that are irreducible and decomposable’ such that they have ‘clear ontological status’. For DeLanda, the term assemblage ‘must accommodate the epistemological demands of both synthesis and analysis’ (DeLanda, 2011: 188). Use of assemblage theory can help to clarify the ontological status of social institutions and organisations. It offers new ways of thinking about the social world with implications for how corruption and governance are conceived as issues in international relations.

The first chapter of this thesis will provide an explanation of how assemblage theory develops concepts from complexity science for use in social analysis, before exploring how assemblage theory can account for the autonomy of international organisations, identifying in particular the role that expertise plays in the emergence of the legitimate authority of these social entities. Chapter two moves to a discussion of the substantive issue of corruption, providing a history of anti-corruption discourse, a description of the expertise that has underpinned its development, and the connections between anti-corruption, governance and development. Chapter three follows the ways in which one international organisation in particular, the World Bank, has deployed this expertise to structure its corporate strategies and policies. It argues that the increasing emphasis within the World Bank on the need for political economy analysis to underpin project planning and policy development signals the purposeful integration of the “political”

within the organisation's technical remit. Chapter 4 describes the practice of political economy analysis, and its use in World Bank development policy and planning. Chapter 5 brings together the threads of the thesis to describes how political economy approaches are influencing World Bank policy—in particular its recent efforts to promote social accountability—and provides a critiques of an influential case study concerning government procurement reform in the Philippines in which the “political” was limited to the political process of winning support for reforming legislation. The chapter and thesis concludes by arguing that assemblage thinking can contribute important nuances to political economy analysis, and by extension, to the authoritative expertise necessary to support the legitimacy of international organisations' engagement in anti-corruption activities.

Chapter One

Complexity, realism, and social explanation: the case for assemblage theory

Social complexity

The point that social life is unavoidably messy is obviously mundane, but this very messiness is also recognised as the source of the creative (and destructive) dynamism so important to social change. To try to come to terms with this messiness, scholars from across the social sciences (including international relations) are exploring the usefulness of concepts from *complexity science*. This has been described as something of a ‘complexity turn’ in which ‘the term “complexity” is “present” and doing metaphorical, theoretical and empirical work within many social and intellectual discourses and practices besides “science”’ (Urry, 2005: 2).

Complexity science refers to a number of related concepts developed over the past fifty years, first in the physical science, and then in the life sciences (particularly biology and ecology). It ‘investigates emergent, dynamic and self-organising systems that interact in ways that heavily influence the outcome of later events’ (Urry, 2005: 3). Nicolis Grégoire and Ilya Prigogine, whose work has been instrumental in developing the concepts of complexity science, suggest that it is more helpful to talk about ‘the *vocabulary of complexity*’ (1989: x) rather than a theory of complexity. Similarly, they suggest that ‘it is more natural, or at least less ambiguous, to speak of *complex behaviour* rather than complex systems’ (1989: 8). Ramalingam et al, writing in the context of development practice, also suggest that complexity science is ‘more like a loose network of interconnected and interdependent ideas’ (2009: 59) than a theory, and have summarised the main ideas, grouping them into three categories: complexity and systems, complexity and change, and complexity and agency. The authors’ summary is provided below in box 1.

Box 1: The concepts of complexity science

Complexity and systems: these first three concepts relate to the features of systems which can be described as complex:

1. Systems characterized by interconnected and interdependent elements and dimensions are a key starting point for understanding complexity science
2. Feedback processes crucially shape how change happens within a complex system
3. Emergence describes how the behaviour of systems emerges—often unpredictably—from the interaction of the parts, such that the whole is different to the sum of the parts.

Complexity and change: the next four concepts relate to phenomena through which complexity manifests itself:

4. Within complex systems, relationships between dimensions are frequently nonlinear, i.e., when change happens, it is frequently disproportionate and unpredictable.
5. Sensitivity to initial conditions highlights how small differences in the initial state of a system can lead to massive differences later; butterfly effects and bifurcations are two ways in which complex systems can change drastically over time
6. Phase space helps to build a picture of the dimensions of a system, and how they change over time. This enables understanding of how systems move and evolve over time
7. Chaos and edge of chaos describe the order underlying the seemingly random behaviours exhibited by certain complex systems

Complexity and agency: the final three concepts relate to the notion of adaptive agents, and how their behaviours are manifested in complex systems.

8. Adaptive agents react to the system and to each other, leading to a number of phenomena
9. Self-organisation characterizes a particular form of emergent property that can occur in systems of adaptive agents.
10. Co-evolution describes how, within a system of adaptive agents, co-evolution occurs, such that the overall system and the agents within it evolve together, or co-evolve, over time.

(Source: Ramalingam et al, 2009: 8)

The authors suggest that these concepts ‘can be used in a highly flexible manner—for example, in combination, individually, to augment existing models or frameworks or as a framework in their own right’ (Ramalingam, et al 2009: 63). However, while social life is certainly complex (in the common sense) and would seem to exhibit non-linear and

emergent properties, there is debate about the extent to which complexity science concepts apply in the social realm. Some scholars have suggested using insights from complexity to extend existing theories, such as the identification of “multiple simultaneous equilibria” in international relations (Ayson, 2012), or game-theory based simulations in economics and political science (Axelrod, 2006; Nunberg et al, 2010). Others have argued that scientific complexity implies a set of ontological commitments that are not necessarily shared by mainstream social science theories and that this makes the integration of complexity concepts problematic (Earnest and Rosenau, 2006). This is because mainstream theories tend to assign ontological priority to individual human beings (a strategy known as “methodological individualism”), but social systems include collectives, organisations and networks, all of which have properties that cannot be reduced to the people on which they depend for their existence. While some social theories, for instance neo-realism in international relations, conceive of entities like ‘the state’ as rational self-interested actors, the ontological argument for assuming such “actorness” is difficult to sustain because it must assume that these entities are ontological prior to, in this example, the international system in which they interact (Joseph, 2010). A complexity analysis of the social realm must take account of how social entities emerge in time, on the understanding that the social (or the international) cannot be explained by the interaction of self-interested units outside of history.

Complexity science has had a significant impact on the philosophy of science, particularly in questioning the dominance of the reductive method of much scientific investigation. Scientific reductionism refers to the idea that the properties of entities at the macro level can be explained by the properties of the entities at the micro level on which they depend. One of the key insights from complexity science is that entities at the macro level can have novel properties that cannot be completely explained by the properties of their component parts, and that these novel properties can in turn cause changes in the behaviour of the component parts. These novel properties are referred to as “emergent”. Emergence is described as ‘the phenomenon or process by which complex structures or patterns arise on the basis of simple interactions’ (Bousquet and Curtis, 2011: 47). It challenges traditional approaches that assign ontological priority to the smallest components of an entity because novel properties imply ontological difference. When transposed to the social, with its interpersonal networks, institutional

organisations, cities, and markets all exhibiting novel properties, the ontological priority assigned to individual persons in mainstream neo-classical economics, as well as liberal and realist international relations theory becomes problematic. Reductionism is also evident in social constructivist and Marxist theories: reduction to language and structures of signification in the former, and macro-economic structure in the latter (a kind of “macro-reductionism”).

The challenge to the ontological priority of the individual is also a challenge to the philosophical positivism that underpins much social science theory. “Positivism” refers to a philosophy of science and social science that privileges sensory data, and analysis of that data, as the basis of knowledge. However, as Wight and Joseph assert, ‘in the philosophy of science, positivism has been rejected as an adequate model of science since the 1950s’ (Wight and Joseph, 2010: 1). The current dominant philosophical position in the natural sciences, they argue, is realism. Philosophers that adopt a realist position in relation to scientific practice generally accept three principles: ‘ontological realism (that there is a reality independent of the mind(s) that would wish to come to know it)’; ‘epistemological relativism (that all beliefs are socially produced)’; and ‘judgemental rationalism (that despite epistemological relativism, it is still possible in principle, to choose between competing theories)’ (Wight and Joseph, 2010: 9).

The insights of complexity science have contributed to the predominance of realism in the philosophy of science. While positivism still more or less dominates mainstream social science, and certainly much of the social science undertaken by international organisations, there is considerable activity and debate on what a realist social science looks like. There are two broad groups working in this area: the “critical realists”, drawing on the work of the English philosopher Roy Bhaskar, and a more heterogeneous grouping influenced by the materialism of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze. While scholars in the critical realist tradition and those influenced by Deleuze share much in common in terms of an antipathy to reductionism and a focus on specifying the reality of social entities at different “levels”, one of the key elements that differentiates them is their positions in relation to “essences”. For instance, Bhaskar argues that:

in general to classify a group of things together in science, to call them by the same name, presupposes that they possess a real essence or nature in common, though it does not presuppose that the real essence or nature is known ... A chemist will classify diamonds, graphite and black carbon together because he believes that they possess a real essence in common, which may be identified as the atomic (or electronic) structure of carbon' (Bhaskar, 1997: 210; cited in Delanda, 2006: 128).

Similarly, the sociologist David Byrne, in his exploration of the value of complexity theory for the social sciences, sees the complexity concept of a "strange attractor" as approximating the Platonic "ideal form", linking it to the ancient heritage of a philosophy of essences (Byrne, 1998: 29). This does not pose a particular problem for Byrne, who in the process of trying to put 'the kibosh on postmodernism and poststructuralism' endorses Bhaskar's critical (or scientific) realism as 'a philosophical ontology that fits pretty well exactly with the scientific ontology underpinning the complexity programme' (Byrne, 1998: 35). However, the foundationalism (that is, an ultimate reliance on essences as the foundational referents of knowledge) that Byrne identifies in Bhaskar can be as problematic to philosophical realism as it is problematised in the manoeuvres of poststructuralism because there is no way to account for how those essences came "to be".

Getting rid of the need for essences was one of the main preoccupations for Gilles Deleuze in developing what Manuel Delanda has called his "virtual philosophy" (2002). This is achieved, in part, by arguing that all entities have a history, that for example, 'there is no need to be ontologically committed to the existence of "hydrogen in general" but only to the objective reality of large populations of hydrogen atoms' (DeLanda, 2006: 28). In order to avoid reification of the categories of knowledge DeLanda argues that 'we must instead focus on the historical processes that produce those products, with the term "historical" referring to cosmological and evolutionary history in addition to human history' (2006: 28). Deleuze also used concepts from complexity science, in particular "phase space", and "strange attractor", to articulate his non-essentialist materialist philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; DeLanda, 2002). DeLanda has in turn used Deleuze's philosophy to develop a social theory informed by complexity science that he calls *assemblage theory*. This move from empirical observation (the insights of complexity in the natural sciences) to ontology and philosophy, and on to

social theory is important if the concepts of complexity science are to be used for more than their metaphorical power in social explanation. As a relatively recent contribution (2006), assemblage theory has had limited application, and mainly in human geography, architecture, and urban studies, where key features, like “territorialization” and “deterritorialization” have particular resonance (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011; Palmås, 2007). Yet drawing from Weber, Giddens and others, De Landa’s work has relevance for the study of international relations, and particularly, this thesis will argue, for the organisations participating in global governance and international development.

Assemblage theory

A philosophical realist and materialist social theory would argue that while social entities are not “mind-independent” (they would cease to exist if human minds did), they are autonomous from our conceptions of them. This is important because our conceptions (theories, models and classifications) may be wrong (De Landa, 2006: 1). One of these conceptions, a very common one, is that there is such a thing as “society as a whole”, and that society is like a human body, with organs and properties that function together in a totality. This “organismic metaphor”, celebrated in more sophisticated forms by Aristotle, Hobbes, and Hegel among others, shares its rhetorical force with a general theory of totalities in which parts are related to wholes by *relations of interiority*. Relations of interiority exist where the ‘component parts are constituted by the very relations they have to other parts of the whole’ (DeLanda, 2006: 9). This is problematic in terms of accounting for the emergence of novel properties, because ‘allowing the possibility of complex interactions between component parts is crucial to define mechanisms of emergence, but this possibility disappears if the parts are fused together into a seamless web’ (DeLanda, 2006: 10). Accounting for parts-to-whole relationships without relying on relations of interiority is a primary objective of DeLanda’s assemblage theory in order to guard against the tendency to build up the social world as a totality. ‘Assemblage connotes emergence rather than resultant formation’ (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011: 125), but crucially it is an emergence resulting of *relations of exteriority*. This involves distinguishing

the properties defining a given entity form its *capacities to interact* with other entities. While its properties are given and may be denumerable as a closed list, its capacities are not given—they may go unexercised if no entity suitable for interaction is around—and form a potentially open list, since there is no way to tell in advance in what way a given entity may affect or be affected by innumerable other entities (DeLanda, 2006: 10).

Assemblages then, are ‘wholes characterized by relations of exteriority’ such that ‘a component part of an assemblage may be detached from it and plugged into a different assemblage in which its interactions are different’ (DeLanda, 2006: 10). The whole may not survive the excision of the part, but the part can. In a totality, or seamless whole, the linkages between component parts are logically necessary, but ‘in an assemblage these relations may be only contingently obligatory’ (DeLanda, 2006: 11). DeLanda repeats the example from Deleuze and Guattari of two species (a wasp and orchid) in a close and critical symbiosis, but argues it could also apply to the organs of an animal (or human) in so far as particular organs have an evolutionary history (albeit a long one) that render the relations to other organs and the whole contingently obligatory. As such, an individual animal (or human) is an assemblage, and so is a two species symbiosis. The former has clearly defined physiological boundaries and ‘tight integration between its component organs’ (DeLanda, 2006: 12), while the latter is made up of two individual assemblages (the wasp species and the orchid species), interacting with capacities expressed by properties of the physical and climatic environment. This also indicates that assemblages can be wholes composed of organic and inorganic entities, their identities *conditioned* (in historical processes) by the relations between their component parts and their environment, but not *constituted* by them. The heterogeneity of assemblages is important because it clarifies that social assemblages are more than collections of people: they are composed of human, material, informational, and other biological and physical entities and intensities.

As well as relations of exteriority, assemblages have two key dimensions. In the first, the components of an assemblage may play a material or expressive role, or a mixture of both ‘by exercising different sets of capacities’ (DeLanda, 2006: 12). The second dimension concerns the ‘variable processes in which these [material and expressive] components become involved and that either stabilize the identity of an assemblage, by

increasing the degree of its internal homogeneity or the degree of sharpness of its boundaries [*territorialization*], or destabilize it [*detrterritorialization*]' (DeLanda, 2006: 12). Crucially both territorialization and detrterritorialization can be at work in the same assemblage at the same time, such that 'one and the same assemblage can have components working to stabilize its identity as well as components forcing it to change or even transforming it into a different assemblage' (DeLanda, 2006: 12). Social assemblages comprise, at the very least 'a set of human bodies properly oriented (physically or psychologically) towards each other', with one of the most simple being a conversation between two people. These minimum material components are joined by expressive components such as language and symbols, but also behaviours and other non-linguistic social expression.

Territorialization plays an essential synthetic role 'since it is in part through the more or less permanent articulations produced by this process that a whole emerges from its parts and maintains its identity once it emerges' (DeLanda, 2006: 14). Deterritorialization, meanwhile, is any process that 'either destabilises spatial boundaries or increases internal heterogeneity' (DeLanda, 2006: 13). In assemblages this dynamic is joined by another key synthetic process played by what DeLanda calls 'specialised expressive entities', the most obvious being genes and words: '[w]hile territorialization provides a first articulation of the components, the coding performed by genes or words supplies a second articulation, consolidating the effects of the first and further stabilizing the identity of assemblages' (2006: 15). While genes and words are 'special expressive entities', for DeLanda they are also assemblages comprising physical components and semantic combinations. He calls them "special assemblages" because their emergence represented 'critical thresholds in the history of the planet when physical expressivity has become functional' thereby enabling a proliferation of new assemblages (2006: 14). However, these special assemblages should be seen as 'simply one more component entering into relations of exteriority with a variety of other material and expressive components ... operating side by side with non-genetic and non-linguistic processes of territorialization and detrterritorialization' (DeLanda, 2006: 16).

In describing the processes of assemblage formation it is important to note that the isomorphism in territorialization and coding across assemblages does not mean social

assemblages at different spatial scales are comparable (as implied by the organismic metaphor): 'many social assemblages are not highly coded or highly territorialized' (DeLanda, 2006: 16). However, DeLanda asserts that the processes of assembly are 'processes that must be conceptualised as recurrent', and that as such, assemblages always exist in *populations*, 'however small ... generated by the repeated occurrence of the same processes' (2006: 16). In terms of the social, 'interactions between members of a collectivity may lead to the formation of more or less permanent articulations between them yielding a macro-assemblage with properties and capacities of its own' (DeLanda, 2006: 17). It is the emergence of macro-assemblages from collectivities, the members of which may themselves be assemblages, that provides the link between the micro and macro in assemblage theory. This allows 'the replacement of vaguely defined general entities (like "the market" or "the state") with concrete assemblages' (DeLanda, 2006: 17). Micro and macro become, not absolute positions, but terms for related assemblages at different spatial scales.

Social mechanisms in assemblage theory

One of the key insights of complexity science is the *non-linearity* of cause and effect in many processes. Linear causality refers to constant conjunctions of cause and effect, in which the effect is implied by the cause. It is the basis of logical deduction, in which such and such a cause, under such and such conditions will produce a specific effect. Non-linear causality, on the other hand, is characterised by 'systems ... which do not display proportionality between input and output, and in which small influences can result in large effects' (Bousquet and Curtis, 2011: 46), such that the precise effects of a cause cannot be predicted, but the probability of a range of effects may, with enough information, be stated. Non-linear processes also features critical thresholds ("tipping points") at which small causes produce radical changes. DeLanda argues that 'if causality is to provide the basis for objective syntheses causal relations must be characterised as *productive*, that is, as a relation in which one event (the cause) produces another event (the effect) not just implies it' (2006: 20). As such, the 'most that one can say about external causes in a population is that they *increase the probability* of the occurrence of a given effect' (2006: 21). In addition to causal interactions, social assemblages also contain 'mechanisms which ... involve *reasons* and *motives*' (DeLanda, 2006: 19). For

DeLanda, while 'reason may be exemplified by traditional values and personal emotions, motives are a special kind of reason involving explicit choices and goals' (2006: 23). Traditional reasons would not require choice in terms of setting a goal for action: the value of the goal is given by the tradition, and not through the intentional choice of the actor. In a similar way desire constitutes a reason, fixing the object of desire without necessarily involving deliberate choice. Motives are defined by matching means to ends, requiring both the identification of a goal from a number of potential goals, and the identification of the means for achieving that goal. The motive mechanism most closely aligns with rational individualist social theories, and as a mechanism can produce causal effects either from deliberate action (such as the action taken by drafters of a constitution), or collective unintended consequences of intentional action, that is, as a 'statistical result' (for example, prices in a market) (DeLanda, 2006: 24). Similarly, while beliefs (traditional reasons) and desires can be socialized by, for example, family or school (in processes that may include intentional motivated action, for example, in curriculum design), 'socialization must ... be conceived in probabilistic terms' (DeLanda, 2006: 25). The emphasis on mechanisms of reasons *and* motives distances assemblage theory from rationalist social theories that suggest utility maximization as the predominant "rule" in social or economic activity, without rejecting rational calculation as an explanation for causal action.

Essences and ontology in assemblage theory

As noted above, one of the key concerns in the materialism of both DeLanda and Deleuze is getting rid of the need for essences in realist philosophy. This is achieved primarily by historicizing the identity of any given assemblage at any scale. The identity of an assemblage is always the product of a process (territorialization, and in some cases, coding) and it is always precarious, since other processes (deterritorialization and decoding) can destabilize it' (DeLanda, 2006: 28). This means in effect that 'the ontology of assemblages is flat since it contains nothing but differently scaled individual singularities (or haecceities)' (DeLanda, 2006: 28). This is not to say that we are unable to categorise assemblages for the purpose of analysis, but it does guard against reifying those categories. In place of essential categories, assemblage theory draws on the complexity science concept of "phase space"—the set of possible positions for a physical

or chemical system. Phase spaces are topological, in so far as they are subject to continuous deformations along many possible dimensions, and ‘their structure is given by topological invariants called “attractors”, as well as by the dimensions of the space, dimensions that represent “degrees of freedom”, or relevant ways of changing in concrete physical or chemical dynamical systems’ (DeLanda, 2006: 29). Attractors define the long-term tendencies of systems, with a simple example being the point at which a pendulum rests. In biology and social science, phase spaces are much more complex than in physics and chemistry and tools to investigate their structure are not available. For this reason, DeLanda refers to them as possibility spaces, and ‘ventures the hypothesis that they will also be defined as phase spaces with a much more complex distribution of topological invariants (attractors)’ (2006: 29). DeLanda, and Deleuze before him, refers to these topological invariants as *universal singularities* because they are singular or special topological features that are shared by many different systems. Universal singularities are “discovered” by systems through evolutionary processes and provide the “mechanism-independent” causes formerly provided in philosophy by “essences”. In taxonomic terms, the distributions of these universal singularities replace Aristotle’s genera, while individual singularities—approximating or “circling” the universal singularity—replace his species. The genera we are familiar with are more simply described as ‘body plans’: ‘a set of universal singularities ... that structure the space of possibilities associated with the assemblage’ (2006: 30). As noted above, the link from genera to species is not a process of logical differentiation, but one of *historical differentiation*, ‘a process involving the divergent evolution of all the different vertebrate species that realize the abstract body-plan’ (2006: 29). ‘Thus’ says DeLanda, ‘while persons, communities, organizations, cities and nation-states are all individual singularities, each of these entities would also be associated with a space of possibilities characterised by its dimensions, representing its degrees of freedom, and by a set of universal singularities’ (2006: 30). He provides an example using Max Weber’s typology of hierarchical authority: traditional, rational-legal, or charismatic. Each of these extreme types would constitute a universal singularity, with the three universal singularities, along with the ‘degrees of freedom’ that define the possibility space, together constituting the ‘diagram’ or ‘body plan’ of hierarchical authority structure. Actual organisations ‘will tend to display a heterogeneous composition of authority structures approximating [these] extreme forms’ (2006: 69).

This brief description of assemblage theory is important to establish the ontological status of social entities. It provides for the crucial link between the micro and macro in social explanation, not as absolute positions, but as relationships at different spatial scales. DeLanda argues that there is little explanatory purchase offered by a micro to macro relationship that relies on the individual person and “society”, or the individual firm and “the market”. Assemblage theory requires specification of concrete assemblages, like the organisational assemblages involved in the government of a particular territory, its material and expressive components, and the processes of territorialisation and coding that provide it with a more or less durable identity. This assists in identifying the novel properties of assemblages, and tracking how the capacities related to those properties are exercised in social relations.

In developing assemblage theory, Manuel DeLanda refers to institutional organisations as assemblages of persons and material and expressive components, using contemporary and historical examples from Europe and the United States. He acknowledges the Western focus of his examples, but argues that this reflects his belief that ‘some of the properties of social assemblages, such as interpersonal networks or institutional organizations, remain approximately invariant across different culture’ (2006: 6). As well as this Western focus, Robert Deuchars has also pointed out that ‘DeLanda’s use of assemblage theory and social complexity [is] not well developed beyond the domestic realm’ (2010: 178). This thesis will sketch an extension of assemblage theory to international organisations, and to their interactions with assemblages in non-Western countries to promote economic development. DeLanda cautions that in order to avoid ‘assemblage’ becoming a general reified category, it is critical to always examine concrete examples. As such, this thesis will focus on the World Bank, first as an assemblage, and then as an actor exercising capacities, specifically capacities related to the constitution of social problems and goals, with the particular problem area being the impact of corruption and governance dysfunction on economic development.

International organisations as assemblages

It is important to understand the organisational form of international organisations, their emergent properties, and the capacities that those properties enable. Mainstream approaches to international relations theory—Realism, Liberalism, and Marxism—have traditionally conceptualized international organisations as epiphenomenal, as reducible to ‘arenas through which others, mostly states, acted’ (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: viii) toward ends associated with, respectively and summarily, projecting and maintaining power, solving collective action problems, and extending the reach of capitalist social relations. However, Barnett and Finnemore have shown the ways in which international organizations have autonomy as actors in world politics. This autonomy, they argue, is based on the legitimacy and authority derived from their legal-rational bureaucratic form.

The legitimate authority that Barnett and Finnemore identify in international organisations can be seen as an emergent property, ‘not a commodity but an attribute generated from social relations’ (2005: 162). This attribute, or property in DeLanda’s terms, enables international organisations to exercise power; that is, the ability to produce, ‘in and through social relations, ... effects that shape the capacity of actors to determine their own circumstances and fate’ (Barnett and Duvall, 2005: 8). Power here is a capacity exercised in the interaction between the organization and other social entities. Barnett and Finnemore suggest that international organizations, like other organizations in the rational-legal bureaucratic form, exercise both regulative and constitutive power. The regulatory effects of power come from ‘the ability of an actor to manipulate incentives to shape the behaviour of another actor’, while the constitutive effects of power derive from ‘the ability to create, define, and map social reality’ (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 30). Of the two, regulatory power is the more conceptually straightforward: it involves the promulgation of rules and the enforcement of those rules. But the development of rules, on the other hand, will often arise from the operation of constitutive power deployed to classify the world, construct problems, fix meanings, and diffuse norms (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 31-34).

While legitimate authority is the property that provides for the exercise of power as a capacity, the extent to which it is an emergent property of the assemblage depends on its autonomy from the properties of its component parts. This can be investigated by examining whether the changing of a component part (e.g. an individual staff member) changes the property, as well as its ability to react back on its component parts, providing them with constraints and resources. An international organization that slavishly follows the dictates of the United States Department of Treasury, for example, is unlikely to have emergent authority. Any authority it has derives from the United States Treasury, and it is unlikely to have much effect on the policies the Department pursues. David Leon calls this ‘institutional endogeneity ... a situation in which the more instrumental institutions are in performing functions for states under anarchy, the less autonomous and causally consequential they become’ (2011: 226-227). Most international organizations, on the other hand, are separate entities from those they rely on for resources, and derive autonomy in three ways. The first of these is *delegated authority*, and arises when states put an international organization ‘in charge of certain tasks’ (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 22). The “state” here is used as a short hand, but if it were necessary to be specific, the concrete mechanism of delegation, and the governmental assemblages at the national level responsible for developing and monitoring the delegation would also need to be identified. For instance, the United States Department of Treasury may be responsible for developing United States policy in relation to its voice on the Executive Board of the World Bank, but in doing so it needs to interact with a range of other entities both governmental and non-governmental (World Bank, 2011). Delegated authority is ‘always authority on loan’ and to be able to use it international organizations ‘must maintain the perception that they are faithful servants to their mandates and masters’ (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 22). This requires the mobilization of expressive components of the organizational assemblage, like programme evaluations that show how state funds are being used. Evidence that the authority is emergent would be the ability of an international organization to shift the limits of its mandate (even if informally) and to develop new tasks for delegation. In this respect, delegated authority can be considered as a resource dependency for international organizations, one tied to other resource dependencies like funding and access to information (for example, national statistics).

The second source of authority for international organizations is *moral authority*. Moral authority relies on expressive components of an assemblage and in the case of international organizations is 'dependent on a contrary discourse of states protecting their own national and particularist interests' while international organizations 'emphasize their neutrality, impartiality, and objectivity' in ways that 'are intended to contrast their universal concern with the self serving claims of states' (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 23). The moral authority of international organizations also derives from and is expressed in the exercise of capacities related to their bureaucratic form, which emphasizes detachment and political neutrality.

The third source of authority for international organizations is *expert authority*. Expert authority relies on both the material and expressive components of an assemblage. In the material sense, expertise allows for the matching of means to ends, while the objectivity and detachment associated with expert knowledge, and the "epistemic communities" that may form around a field of enquiry provide expressive components. Barnett and Finnemore note that the 'deployment of specialized knowledge is central to the very rational-legal authority that constitutes bureaucracy in the first place because what makes such authority rational is, at least, in part, the use of socially recognized relevant knowledge to carry out tasks' (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 24). Expert authority also intersects with both moral authority and delegated authority because, on the one hand the use of socially recognized knowledge engenders trust and on the other, expertise enables tasks to be carried out. Expertise also has a depoliticizing effect with 'quantification vastly enhanc[ing] the power of ... claims of objectivity and impartiality' (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 24). As Barnett and Finnemore suggest, 'to the extent that they can quantify the social world and develop mathematical models of important relations in it, experts can achieve strong intersubjective agreement on the nature of the world, the nature of its problems, and appropriate policy responses' (2004: 69). Integral to this quantification is a distancing from the object of study, an operation that is essential to the power of expertise and knowledge. The very disinterestedness with which experts pursue their objects of study is integral to expert authority. In Barnett and Finnemore's words, 'one of the paradoxical implications of quantification is that bureaucrats become powerful only by making themselves appear powerless' (2004: 69).

Expertise, then, is a key source of authority for international organizations that sits alongside the rational-legal authority conferred upon them at their creation (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999: 707). The autonomy this provides means that international organizations develop in ways and take on tasks that their creators could not have anticipated. Barnett and Finnemore argue that the ‘characteristics of bureaucracy as a generic cultural form shape international organisation behaviour’ (1999: 700) and that this is more important to understanding the behaviour of international organizations than the intentions of the states that created or fund them. Weber saw the cultural form of bureaucracy as a great human achievement, but one with the very real tendency to domination born of an unprecedented ability to order reality. Yet because any such ordering must be an artificial compartmentalization of a ‘very messy reality’ (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 64), bureaucracies are prone to making mistakes. Barnett and Finnemore ask why it is that international organisations that ‘often produce undesirable and even self-defeating outcomes repeatedly’ can persist ‘without punishment, much less dismantlement’ (1999: 701). According to neo-realist and neo-liberal theories of international relations, an international organisation that repeatedly makes mistakes should become less and less useful to the states that support it, leading to its dismantlement. The fact that this does not happen, or at least happens very rarely (and not to the major international financial institutions established following the Second World War), supports arguments for the moral and expert sources of international organization authority as emergent, as compared to delegated authority, which could, in the absence of the emergent forms, be more easily withdrawn. Barnett and Finnemore point to ethnographic studies of organisations which suggest that ‘organisational goals are strongly shaped by the norms of the profession that dominate the bureaucracy and in which interests themselves vary, often in flux, debated, worked through interactions between the staff of the bureaucracy and the world in which they are embedded’ (1999: 706). This indicates that the evolution of knowledge in a field of expertise, something that is not confined to the bureaucracy, can in part account for the persistence of organisations implicated in crises. Discourses are assemblages (DeLanda, 2006: 75) that can enter into relations of exteriority to function as components of international organizations. When the mistake is with the discourse, and “body of knowledge” itself, it is a mistake shared with other assemblages—universities, national governmental, professional associations—in which the discourse assemblage also functions as a

component. In the vocabulary of assemblage theory this is a process of deterritorialisation, one that has the potential to alter organizational identity. The deterritorialisation process functions across both material and expressive components, in realigning resources on the one hand, for example, and signaling learning and engagement on the other. The persistence of the problem, or the object of study and action, despite previous unsuccessful forays, also justifies maintaining a capacity to develop new responses. As the next chapter will show, the history of anti-corruption discourse and policy can be seen as an example of how, though relatively unsuccessful to date, international organisations and donors continue to look for new ways of achieving 'good governance' in developing countries.

Chapter Two

Anti-corruption and good governance discourse

This chapter plots a brief history of anti-corruption discourse and describes the social science knowledge that underpins its most recent incarnation. It then charts the development of a set of international declarations, agreements and conventions that approximate an international anti-corruption “regime” and shows how this regime has become central to discourses of economic and social development.

A history of corruption

In her sketch of the history of international anti-corruption discourse, Padidah Ala'i identifies three broad phases in rhetoric and policy. The first is characterised by 'geographical morality' and bound up with colonial administration, the second revisionism and cultural relativism associated with processes of decolonisation, and the third by an international regime heavily reliant on economic and social science methodologies.

Ala'i identifies a beginning in 1787 with the impeachment in the House of Lords of Warren Hastings, the former Governor-General of Bengal. Edmund Burke, himself intensely involved in the reform of British administration, accused Hastings of creating a corrupt system of government, 'whose sole purpose was to exercise “arbitrary power” to plunder India without restraint or respect for the rule of law' (2000: 883). In response, Hastings contended that the actions of one operating in India do not have the same 'moral qualities' which similar actions would have in Europe (Ala'i, 2000: 887), and that although arbitrary power was used, his extraordinary economic successes and service to the East India Company and the Crown more than made up for it (Ala'i, 2000: 888). Burke did not dispute Hastings's argument that conditions in India were different, but asserted that a universal morality should apply to the actions of British officers

regardless of where they were. Burke condemned Hastings's defence as appealing to a 'rule of geographical morality'.

Burke's appeal to a universal morality won out, and Hastings was impeached. But he was later acquitted because 'the House of Lords held that Burke had not been able to prove "a corrupt, habitual, evil intention" as was required for the crime of bribery' (Ala'i, 2000: 889). This case provides a useful introduction to a history of anti-corruption discourse because both the prosecution and defence relied on moral arguments symptomatic of, on the one hand, the ideology of imperialism, and on the other, its practice. Burke's argument 'subscribed to two fundamental principles' that there is 'only one morality applicable to all men', and that 'merit cannot extinguish crime' (Ala'i, 2000: 891), but in acquitting Hastings, the House of Lords tacitly condoned his argument of geographical morality based on the justifications inherent in success. Ala'i suggests this represented 'the acceptance of the view that Asian countries constitutionally required despotic rulers and subscribed to lower standards of morality, particularly with regard to the duties owed by a sovereign to his people' (2000: 891). But Hastings impeachment was not without its lessons. His successor in Bengal, Cornwallis, cleaned up the Indian civil service by dismissing from it all Indians, using the rule of geographical morality to justify not British bribery and corruption in India, but British dominion.

Whatever the noble intentions of Burke and his contemporary defenders of moral universality, this history suggests that the 'moralist approach' to anti-corruption is deeply problematic, and can lend itself to 'an apriori condemnation of all non-Western societies and cultures as morally inferior' (Ala'i, 2000: 895). Hastings defended himself in the categories advanced by Burke, arguing that it was necessary for Britain to intervene in India on Indian terms, which were, regrettably, morally questionable. Cornwallis and his successors solved Hastings's quandary by imposing British power in Asia on British terms, backed by a moral universality. This universality was later consolidated by the deliberate British policy to create 'a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern' (Macaulay's 'Minute on Indian Education' (1835), cited in Spivak, 1988: 77).

If an appeal to moral universality was a feature of the long colonial period (nevermind its practice), defended ever more fiercely as the twentieth century slouched forward, the period of decolonisation was marked by a foregrounding of difference in anti-corruption discourse. In the 1960s the prevailing view was that ‘the definitions of corruption and bribery varied with societal values and inherited cultural and religious traditions’ (Ala’i, 2000: 897). This was coupled with the thesis that corruption is a ‘necessary and inevitable part of the modernization process’ (Ala’i, 2000: 897), offering ‘the integration of various groups who otherwise would not be able to participate in the political process’ (Ala’i, 2000: 897); introducing ‘efficiency into the system where there is none’ (Ala’i, 2000: 890) by securing ‘exemptions from costly rules that hamper the development of the private market’ (Rose-Ackerman, 2006: xiv); and, in the absence of effective political institutions, presenting ‘an acceptable alternative to violence in times of change when it facilitates elite integration and humanizes government for non-elites’ (Ala’i, 2000: 901).¹ While this revisionist discourse was intended to counteract the smug moral certainties underpinning imperial domination, according to Ala’i it ‘ironically perpetuated the rule of geographical morality, while denying the relevance of morality’ (Ala’i, 2000: 902) by providing the ‘intellectual and moral justification for multinational corporations ... to apply a different, lower standard of conduct to their actions in the South than they would apply to their actions in the North’ (Ala’i, 2000: 902). It strengthened the second arm of Hastings’s defence, that success—success in business, in modernisation, in avoiding violence—justifies a “lower” standard of conduct.

The third broad phase of anti-corruption discourse, the one that remains in the ascendant today, enters in the 1980s and 90s with the production of evidence to show that the success defence for legitimising bribery and corruption is unfounded. There is now a broad consensus on the harm corruption does to economic development such that, according to Hansen, ‘like trafficking, terrorism, money laundering and several other issues corruption has come to be viewed as something which is to be prevented or eliminated through concerted regulatory efforts at the international level’ (Hansen, 2011: 252). This current phase features a rejection of ‘geographical morality’, replaced by a ‘reliance on economic arguments’, and ‘heavy reliance on social science methodology and empirical data to prove detrimental economic consequences of

¹ See also Khan, 2006; Huntington, 1968; Leff, 1964.

corruption in the South' (Ala'i, 2000: 904). In the economic and social science work on corruption a new set of universal technical "best practice" truths replaced a set of old and discredited moral universals.

Anti-corruption expertise

This section explores the knowledge and expertise that has underpinned the shift to a technical discourse on the deleterious impacts of corruption on economic development. In its relationship to development, corruption has been conceptualised as an economic issue, amenable to explanation by economic theory. Economists, as Rose-Ackerman point out, 'do not like to engage in "good" and "bad" type judgements', but the very word "corruption" carries force as a 'moral category that signifies putrefaction and rot'. In the 1990s economists sought to separate the moral dimensions of corruption from the economic dimensions by focusing on 'monetary payments to agents (both public and private) to induce them to ignore the interests of their principals and to favour the interests of the briber instead' (Rose-Ackerman, 2006: xiv). The principal-agent dynamic has remained at the heart of the economics of corruption (Rose-Ackerman, 2006: xvii). The principal-agent relationship is inherently problematic because '[u]nless the principal is perfectly informed at zero cost about the actions of the agent ... the agent is given scope for opportunistic behaviour which benefits himself or herself and usually also reduces the welfare of the principal' (Toye, 1995: 55). When transposed to politics, the inherent risks in the principal-agent relationships are coupled with lack of credible commitment in situations where there are no mechanisms for principals (citizens) to effectively hold agents (leaders) to account. Corruption as a development problem involves information asymmetries between publics and their elected or unelected leaders, and between those leaders and their agents in bureaucracies. This dynamic also informs definitions of corruption. For instance, Transparency International, the non-governmental organisation that has perhaps contributed the most to elevating corruption to an issue area in international relations, defines corruption as 'the abuse of entrusted power for private gain' (Transparency International, 2012).

Corruption is generally categorised as either low-level or systemic. Low-level corruption is associated with officials bestowing benefits where supervisors 'cannot perfectly monitor official behaviour' (Rose-Ackerman, 2006: xviii). It includes speed payments in

situations where the regulatory system imposes delays and other costs. This kind of corruption 'can lead to inefficient and unfair distribution of scarce benefits, undermine the purpose of public programs, encourage officials to create red tape, increase the cost of doing business and limit entry, and lower state legitimacy' (Rose-Ackerman, 2006: xix). High-level or systemic corruption can involve situations where 'a branch of the public sector may be organized as a rent-extraction machine'; 'a nominal democracy may have a corrupt electoral system, with money determining the outcome'; and situations where 'governments engage in large projects and transfer assets in ways that have a significant effect on the wealth of domestic and foreign business organisations' (Rose-Ackerman, 2006: xix). Economists have therefore sought to investigate ways of structuring incentives so that principal-agent relationships operate effectively.

Systemic corruption suggests the failure of institutional mechanisms to structure and enforce efficient principal-agent relations. The key step in constructing corruption as a development problem is to show that this slippage in the principal-agent relationship negatively impacts economic growth. While there remains debate about the effects of different forms of corruption on growth (Khan, 2006), the international consensus has converged on findings like those of Paulo Mauro that 'bad institutions affect the growth rate ... by lowering the investment rate' (1995: 695) and that therefore 'that corruption lowers the private marginal product of capital (for example by acting as a tax on the proceeds of investment)' (1995: 700). The mission for international development organizations and donors then becomes to encourage the development of "good institutions" that can provide confidence to investors, and that can channel the revenue gained from investment into "pro-poor" economic development.

The key theoretical approaches that have informed the economics of corruption, and the development of anti-corruption and good governance policy from the 1980s to today are *public choice theory* and the *new institutional economics*.

Public choice theory

Public choice theory applies neo-classical economic rational decision making principles to political decision making, to explain how economically inefficient policies are

introduced through the individual utility maximizing behaviour of public officials. Public choice theory is important for understanding the emphasis in the anti-corruption discourse of the 1980s and 1990s on *government failure*, as it shows how the incentives faced by individual politicians lead to the creation of policies that can harm prospects for economic growth. This had a profound influence on the neo-liberal reforms of the 1980s, by providing a rationale for minimizing government intervention in the economy on the basis that government involvement will likely lead to a less economically efficient and welfare enhancing outcome compared to “the market”. In many countries at the beginning of the 1980s, governments were heavily involved in markets, producing industrial products, closely regulating financial services, and setting prices. These activities created an array of incentives for individual officials to act contrary to public welfare. It seemed to follow that limiting government’s role in the economy would restructure and reduce these incentive, allowing the market to find an equilibrium based on real supply and demand. The broadly positive experiences (in terms of GDP growth) of neo-liberal reform in developed countries became the object lesson in how to address economic growth problems in developing countries. However, by the close of the 1990s any hopes of a broad brush solution to economic development were dashed. Neo-liberal reforms, while certainly creating winners, also had a profoundly destabilising effect, in many cases increasing opportunities for corruption. The key difference it seemed, was not in the extent of reform—for some developing countries implemented neo-liberal reforms with a greater tenacity than many developed countries—but in the insitutional context of reform. Developed countries boasted regulative institutions for defining, enforcing and arbitrating contracts, and could ensure that as direct government involvement (ownership, control, investment, direction) was withdrawn, governmental processes (regulative, informational, judicial) remained in play. Where these processes and insitutions were weak or non-existent, the withdrawal of government was not an opening to an efficient market, but to a free-for-all in which the strongest prevailed. This realisation led to a refocusing on the role of institutions in economic change and development, and the rise of the new institutional economics as the key theoretical approach in anti-corruption discourse and policy development.

The new institutional economics

Institutionalism in economics has a long history dating back to the nineteenth century. The “old institutionalism” focused on the role of technological change in economic organization, particularly the organization of firms. In contrast, the “new institutional economics” attempts to ‘incorporate the concepts of public/rational choice into economic decision-making’ hoping to ‘suggest something about the relationship between the individual and the collective’ (Harriss et al, 1995: 2). It is, in summary, ‘a development of neo-classical economics to include the role of transaction costs in exchange and so to take account of institutions as critical constraints on economic performance’ (Harriss et al, 1995: 3). The strap line “institutions matter” emerged with the work of Douglass North, Mancur Olsen, and Richard Posner among others, which modified the neoclassical economic paradigm to show how incentives and individual behaviour are structured and conditioned by institutions. It ‘opened for analysis the “black box” of the firm and other institutions’ (Hodgson, 2002: xiv). For North, an economic historian and winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics, ‘institutional change shapes the way societies evolve through time and hence is the key to understanding historical change’ (1990: 3). Here, institutions are the ‘rules of the game in a society’, the ‘humanly derived constraints that shape human interaction’ (North, 1990: 3). The economic usage of the term includes ‘cultures, ideologies, property relations, particular organizations forms’ (Toye, 1995: 64), with formal institutional structures including ‘conventional property rights but also any other enforceable constraints such as taxes and subsidies’ (Khan, 1995: 72). They ‘affect the performance of the economy by their effect on the costs of exchange and production’. For North, ‘integrating individual choices with the constraints institutions impose on choice sets is a major step toward unifying social science research’ (1990: 5). The relationship between institutions and economic development is summed up in the following:

Institutions, together with the standard constraints of economic theory, determine the opportunities in society. Organizations are created to take advantage of those opportunities, and, as the organizations evolve, they alter the institutions. The resultant path of institutional change is shaped by (1) the lock-in that comes from the symbiotic relationship between institutions and organizations that have evolved as a consequence of the incentive structure provided by those institutions and (2) the

feedback process by which human beings perceive and react to changes in the opportunity set (North, 1990: 7).

Key to the new institutionalism is a critique of rational behavioural theories of economics. These critiques centre on the lack of information actors have about the world. Writing in the late 1980s, North could still suggest that neoclassical behavioural assumptions work well for finance, where a lot of information and other prerequisites exist, but not for most other systems of exchange (North, 1990: 20-21). Given the radical information poverty that actors experience, 'institutions exist to reduce the uncertainties involved in human interactions' (North, 1990: 25). The other central feature of the new institutional economics is its modification of the "rationality postulate" in neo-classical economics. Rather than values being constant and 'that individual economic agents select the most efficient means of maximizing rationally chosen ends', North and others argue that 'individuals make choices on the basis of their mental models' (Harriss et al, 1995: 3). Mental models differ widely and are in part culturally derived. Mental models in a sense reinforce the formal articulation of institutions at the individual level, and are used to explain behaviour that is individually rational in a collective context. This is how institutions enable individuals to overcome social dilemmas by changing the incentives for individually rational action.

The recognition of the importance of institutions in reducing transaction costs provided a middle way between those who saw lack of economic growth as a problem of government failure, and those who saw it as a problem of market failure. According to Toye, the new institutional economics suggested that neither of these was 'invariably correct'. Instead, the task in developing policy would be to 'estimate the respective net changes in transaction costs in comparison with the anticipated allocative improvement, to find out whether policy should be favouring additional government intervention or further privatisation' (Toye, 1995: 58). The new institutional economics both 'undermines an ideal view of governments as benevolent and omniscient' (Toye, 1995: 58) and renders markets just 'one type of social device, whose performance is to be judged against that of others' (Toye, 1995: 54). The choice between social devices then becomes highly context dependent. In this way the new institutional economics

'brought about a shift in terms of the discourse about development', but one that 'has to be encompassed within a more thoroughly *political* economy' (Harris, 1995: 12-13).

Anti-corruption and development

While corruption—the abuse of entrusted power—is a social phenomenon identifiable in all societies, it is predominantly in emerging economies and developing countries where corruption is described as a *systemic* problem. Drawing on the influence of public choice theory and the new institutional economics, corruption has become constructed as a problem for economic development and a legitimate task area for those actors working in development assistance. But this was not always the case. Prior to the 1980s, for instance, bribes paid by multinational companies in overseas jurisdictions were tax deductible in many Western countries. However, even by the late 1970s, the diversion of public funds into private accounts, the dulling of competition effects as a result of preferential business agreements secured through bribes, and the embedding of rent-seeking behaviour in public management led many to question the revisionist wisdom about the efficiency, integrative, and pacifying effects of corruption (Mauro, 1995; Krueger, 1974). The growing recognition of the problems associated with corruption led to the beginnings of what might be described as an international anti-corruption regime.² Regimes can be seen as assemblages in their own right, and to a greater or lesser extent, like discourses, can form component parts of other assemblages. In this sense, the adoption of 'principles, norms, rules and decision making behaviour' (Krasner, 1982: 1) as "operating procedures" of national-level governmental organisations (through laws ratifying the UNCAC, for example) is an example of a regime entering into "relations of exteriority" with governmental assemblages, performing materially (for example in prompting changes in the allocation of resources within a bureaucracy) but perhaps most importantly, expressively. The anti-corruption regime can itself be seen as forming part of a larger concatenated international regime addressing transnational crime, with the very concept of crime expressed in normative terms that facilitate enforcement and "technical" intervention.

² Following Krasner's definition of international regimes as 'principles, norms, rules, and decision making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue area' (Krasner, 1982: 1).

A 1975 United Nations (UN) resolution on bribery in international financial transactions was followed in 1977 by the passing in the United States of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and subsequently the active promotion by the United States of laws forbidding bribery in international commercial transactions. The 1980s saw attempts to develop a UN anti-corruption convention, but this was hampered by the Group of 77 developing countries' insistence that it be preceded by a code of conduct on multinational corporate behaviour (Ala'i, 2000). This was not possible, and so the convention remained in draft. Anti-corruption discourse received a shot in the arm in the 1990s as the world watched the economies of the former Soviet countries shrink, some, like Russia, by half, as they became dominated by corruption, graft, and the rise of the oligarchs. The demise of soviet communism also made it less defensible for Western governments to ignore corrupt governing practices by ostensible allies. At the same time, and as outlined above, the views of economists within the academy and in international organisations began converging on the importance of institutions and the conclusion that corruption was inimical to economic growth. From 1996 a UN resolution on corruption was an annual feature, signalling 'a normative embrace of the virtues of capitalism, buffered by commitments to democratic governance' (Bukosvansky, 2006: 187). Attention returned to the overseas activities of Western corporations, with the (non-binding) UN Declaration Against Corruption and Bribery in International Commercial Transactions, and governments in the form of an International Code of Conduct for Public Officials. This signalled international agreement to the principle of legal equivalence of laws forbidding bribery of domestic public officials, with officials in other jurisdictions.

A year later, developed countries agreed to the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. This agreement went further than the UN declaration by requiring OECD members to criminalize the bribery of foreign public officials, and, according to Bukovansky, 'clearly echoes the turn toward a comprehensive concern with governance and the ethics of governance as a legitimate objective of international institutions' (2006: 192). All 34 OECD members, and five non-members—Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Russia, and South Africa—have now adopted the Convention (OECD, 2012). The OECD Convention focuses on 'improper advantage' but as the Commentaries on the Convention clarify, it does not require the criminalization of

small 'facilitation payments' made to public officials to 'perform their functions'. While 'generally illegal in the foreign country concerned' the criminalisation of such activities by other countries 'does not seem a practical or effective complementary action'. Countries are instead encouraged to 'address this corrosive phenomenon by such means as support for programmes of good governance' (OECD, 2011: 15).

While these efforts at building normative consensus at the international level were underway, the diagnosis of "institutional failure" as a key determinant in low growth and persistence of crises in low-income countries led international development organisations to focus on the external policy instruments that could be used to change the political equilibrium 'through enforcing greater transparency and accountability on political elites' (Adam and Dercon, 2009: 176-177). In the 1990s, anti-corruption policy focused on reducing the incentives for corruption, and providing mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement of formal laws prohibiting corrupt practices. Changing incentives to reduce corruption involved a reduction in the extent of government regulation, increasing salaries for public officials (made easier by reductions in their total number), creating legal deterrents, greater administrative transparency and 'more effective judicial processes for dealing with those charged with corruption' (Khan, 2006: 222). Development aid and loans became conditional on implementation of these kinds of governance reforms. In this "structural adjustment era", the kinds of macroeconomic policies prescribed by international organizations included the privatization of state-owned industries, intended to, among other things, reduce the opportunities for rent creation and foster efficiencies borne of competition, and financial openness, where increased financial mobility would encourage policy stability and good governance as governments sought to retain investment.

In concert with the introduction of these reforms, the World Bank, Transparency International (established in 1993 by former World Bank staff), and others, developed comparative governance indicators to measure levels of corruption and perceptions of governance and institutional quality across countries. While the use of such governance indicators is fraught (Langbein and Knack, 2008), they provide broad metrics to indicate whether policy and governance changes have an effect on rates of corruption and corruption control. On the basis of these indicators, the liberalisation reforms

prescribed right through the 1990s to address government failure have, on the whole, been shown to be ineffective in addressing corruption (Khan, 2006: 222). The persistence and in some cases the intensification of corruption through liberalisation, has made it clear that deregulation *per se* does not lead to the kinds of economic or social outcomes envisaged by the set of market-favouring policies described by John Williamson as the “Washington Consensus” (Williamson, 1990). With this realisation, there was a ‘radical shift in the rhetoric of globalisation’ away from ‘the language of the market’ to that of quality of government, focusing on ‘governance, accountability, transparency, and democracy’ (Chandhoke, 2002: 44) with corruption, the ‘mythological hydra’ (Marquette, 2004: 426), barring access to modernity.

With the OECD Convention and UN Declaration focused on the activities of bribe givers, the attention of the international anti-corruption efforts swung round to focus on bribe-taking government officials (Bukovansky, 2006: 187). The 2002 Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development brought together international organisations, donors and developing countries to chart a new approach to development. Louis Pauly has described how Monterrey represents a reinvigoration of the role of the UN Economic and Social Council in economic development as it lent its legitimacy to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), organisations refocusing after a decade of controversial market-based policies closed with the Asian financial crisis (2005). Those at Monterrey agreed that the fight against corruption was a priority, but within the context of the Monterrey consensus, this would need to be carried out in a development framework more sensitive to “ownership” by developing countries. Those at Monterrey also committed themselves to ‘negotiating and finalizing as soon as possible a United Nations convention against corruption in all its aspects’ (United Nations, 2002: 15).

Both the supply and demand side of corruption is addressed in the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), which entered into force on 14 December 2005 and currently has 140 signatories and 160 parties. The Convention ‘represents a significant consolidation of the anti-corruption consensus in the international community’ (Bukovansky, 2006: 187) and includes provisions for extradition, confiscation of assets, the ‘explicit extension of anti-corruption to the private sector’ (Bukovansky, 2006: 187), and prohibits the tax-deductability of bribes. ‘It draws together all the threads of the

governance and development discourse into a coherent bundle' (Bukovansky, 2006: 188). The negotiation, agreement and ratification processes for the Convention have increased the visibility and priority of addressing corruption for both donor States and developing countries (ITAD, 2011), and has been hailed by some as signalling a near global acquiescence to a norm of political universalism (Mungiu-Pippidi et al, 2011). The next chapter examines how one of the main participants in the development of the UNCAC and anti-corruption discourse in general, the World Bank, is using this new normative framework to create new tasks for itself and other donors to encourage "good governance" in developing countries.

Chapter Three

Knowledge, expertise and politics: The role of the World Bank in anti-corruption discourse and policy

Until our borrowing members achieve a greater level of comfort with dialogue on governance matters and our own experience with it matures further, it is advisable that delicate policy issues are discussed only by senior managers (Directors and above). Technical issues, of course, can continue to be handled at staff level.

Barber B. Conable, World Bank President (World Bank, 1991: 2)

The World Bank has been a leading actor in developing an international discourse on corruption and good governance. As discussed in the previous section, this has resulted in the formation of a set of resolutions and agreements approximating an international regime. This section traces the evolution of expertise and policy within the World Bank that both contributed to the formation of this regime, and found new resources in its consolidation. Following DeLanda's warning against abstracting the concept of assemblage, the World Bank is treated as a concrete assemblage, with its work on anti-corruption and governance having both (de)territorializing and (de)coding effects on the organisation.

As a concrete assemblage, the World Bank is a hierarchical authority structure in the rational-legal form. This kind of assemblage is one 'in which the relations of exteriority between components are exemplified by a contractual relation through which some persons transfer rights of control over a subset of their actions to other persons' (DeLanda, 2006: 70). While many organisations 'tend to be mixtures of different authority forms' (DeLanda, 2006: 69), international organisations in many ways approximate the extreme of the rational-legal form. The recruitment of almost all staff is based on expertise and merit. Even relatively junior staff display advanced degrees from top universities, many of them in the United States. Although the topmost levels of management are subject to "representative" pressures (for instance, the World Bank

President is always an American), recent incumbents cannot be said to exhibit particularly extraordinary charismatic qualities. The separation of incumbent from office is achieved in the World Bank, as in other international organisations, perhaps more fully than it is in many national-level government organisations because these organisations lack the same kinds of legitimacy resources that accrue to national-level governments and their bureaucracies through democratic procedures. As DeLanda suggests, 'with a full separation of office from incumbent the organization itself may be considered a goal-oriented corporate actor' (2006: 70). However, while the "actorness" of the organisation is shored up to the extent 'its resources (physical, technological, legal, financial) are linked to formal positions or offices, not to their incumbents', the World Bank must enter into relations of dependence with other organisations in order to secure those resources (DeLanda, 2006: 76). The World Bank has obvious resource dependencies on national governmental organisations, and this is reflected in the make up of its Executive Board, comprising representatives of the 25 principal funders of the Bank. This point about resource dependency is important as it clarifies the relationships between "states" (used here in the shorthand) and international organisations as relations of exteriority. States, or more correctly, national governmental organisations, are not (usually) component parts of an international organisation, although they may exert authority over an international organisation linked with resource dependence (delegated authority, financial, informational and legal resources). While autonomous from states, international organisations like the World Bank also enter into assemblages with national-level organisations and other actors in specific issue areas.

As with all social assemblages, the critical material component of the World Bank is its staff, its 'human bodies' (DeLanda, 2006: 72). For the purposes of this thesis, it is not necessary to list the many material and expressive components of the Bank, or to explore in detail its organisational structure, but it is helpful to follow DeLanda in distinguishing those components that play an expressive role—expressing the legitimacy of the authority—from those playing a material role, that is, involved in the 'enforcement of obedience' (DeLanda, 2006: 68). The Bank has traditionally enforced obedience internally through review and evaluation mechanisms (as well as human resources practices), and externally through conditionality on loans, and criteria for access to development funding. Its engagement with corruption and governance, as well

as the perceived failures of the 1990s, has intensified policing of its internal and external facing processes to manage corruption risks. This functions to ensure the behaviour of Bank staff does not impact its legitimacy in addressing corruption in development, which derives to a great extent from its own integrity as well as the expertise it houses.

Economic and social science knowledge is key to the Bank's legitimate authority in poverty reduction and economic development policy. Yet like all rational-legal bureaucratic legitimacy, it hinges on the ability to 'regularly produce the desired outcome that expresses [its] legitimacy' (DeLanda, 2006: 71). Corruption and governance dysfunction in poor countries is so problematic because it undermines the ability of the Bank to regularly produce "pro-poor" economic development outcomes. As anti-corruption becomes an 'overarching corporate strategy' (De Janvry and Dethier, 2012: 19) for the Bank there is the risk that a failure to address corruption will undermine the legitimacy of the Bank, and reduce its ability to draw its resources. As DeLanda points out '[t]he more complex the outputs and production processes, the more uncertain the evaluation, and the less clear the technical expression of legitimacy'. In these situations 'when documenting and justifying their efficiency to other organisations', organisations will 'stick to ceremonial "rituals of rationality" to buffer themselves from criticism' (DeLanda, 2006: 71). In this sense, expertise and knowledge production about corruption and governance reform are expressive components. This is evident, for example, in the World Bank's "open development" initiative, which in part positions the Bank as an "open source" knowledge resource provider for other organisations engaging in development-related projects at different spatial scales (World Bank, 2013). This openness models the organisational behaviour that the Bank is trying to inculcate in developing countries and indicates belief in a "network" model of social innovation, borrowing from the moral authority of the open source movement in software development. At the same time it draws a distinction between itself and national governments consistent with the 'contrary discourse' of international organisation 'neutrality, impartiality and objectivity' noted by Barnett and Finnemore (2004: 23). In this sense "openness" is a rhetorical construct that is contrasted to the "closed" circulation of information necessary to facilitate corrupt practices. So while engagement with corruption holds risks for the Bank in terms of the link between resource dependency and the measurement of achievements, it has facilitated the

creation of new tasks, new areas for potential success, and reset the limits of its mandate. The next section will trace the development of governance and anti-corruption as central concerns for the Bank, and key areas to exert its expertise.

The World Bank and governance

Marquette has pointed out that prior to the 1990s the World Bank had avoided explicitly acknowledging consideration of corruption risks in its lending decisions. Taking into account issues like corruption, human rights and a “country’s political structure” were considered to be inconsistent with the Bank’s Articles of Agreement (1944) which proscribe political activities. For instance, Article 10 section 10 of the Articles of Agreement state:

The Bank and its officers shall not interfere in the political affairs of any member; nor shall they be influenced in their decisions by the political character of the member or members concerned. Only economic considerations shall be relevant to their decisions, and these considerations shall be weighed impartially (World Bank, 1944; cited in Marquette, 2004: 413).

“Governance” was first formally introduced on the World Bank’s agenda in 1991, with the consideration by the Executive Board of a discussion paper, *Managing Development: the Governance Dimension*. In his foreword to the paper, the then World Bank President Barber B. Conable noted that ‘governance is an emotive word, and more importantly, a potentially contentious issue internationally and within many of our member countries’ (World Bank, 1991: foreword). The discussion paper identified the main elements for the Bank’s approach to governance, comprising the need to ‘continue to exploit opportunities for improving development management’ by, for example, ‘assisting borrowers [to] break up monopolies, removal of controls and other avenues for corruption’; focusing efforts on those countries committed to improving public sector management; and ‘assist the design of highly differentiated responses, taking account of the country’s institutional needs, its political economy, its society, and history’ (World Bank, 1991: iv). The paper included an acknowledgement of the need to ‘foster an “implementation culture” within the Bank and to sensitize staff to the need to handle issues in this area with humility, sensitivity and caution’ (World Bank, 1991: v). While

the Bank had a history of participating in projects with borrower countries on public sector reform, this paper represented the successful construction of governance as a specific activity area for the Bank (and for international development assistance more broadly), for although there was 'some apprehension among [Bank] borrowing members that ... staff might exceed the Bank's mandate' and 'divergent views expressed by the Executive Directors on the subject' the approach outlined in the discussion paper received 'widespread support' (World Bank, 1991: forward).

Although the 1991 discussion paper included a section of 'reflections on corruption' as one of the key dimensions of governance, in a 2000 speech, then World Bank president James Wolfensohn described how corruption was effectively off limits for the Bank when he was appointed in 1995. He went on to say:

So, I came out in my Annual Meeting speech, I said corruption is a cancer and it is not political but it is social and it is economic and, therefore, I am allowed to talk about it. And if you politicians think that it is political, that is your problem. I think it is social and economic. Therefore, I can talk about it. (Wolfensohn, 2000; cited in Marquette, 2004: 421)

The contemporary anti-corruption activities associated with the UN Declaration and OECD Convention, and the nascent anti-corruption norms that these represent, also provided a degree of cover for a more direct engagement by the World Bank on corruption. It would no longer be a political phenomenon, but, with close to universal condemnation, an economic one.

In 1997, the World Bank announced that it would implement a 'systematic frame-work for addressing corruption'. Corruption was explicitly framed as 'a development issue', and something central to 'the assistance it provides to countries and in its operational work more generally' (World Bank, 1997: 2). Driven by Wolfensohn, the 1997 framework set out a range of actions in four broad areas: prevention of corruption in World Bank projects and programmes, assisting countries that ask for help in combating corruption, mainstreaming concern with corruption in planning, programme, and lending decisions, and contributing to international efforts to fight corruption (World Bank, 1997; World Bank, 2000). By 2000 the Bank had requests from 'more than two

dozen countries ... to deal specifically with corruption', and was working with 'more than 95 countries ... [on] broadly defined public sector and institutional reform' (World Bank, 2000: 2). To minimize fraud and corruption in its projects, the World Bank established an Oversight Committee on Fraud and Corruption in 1998, and established a 24 hour 'hotline' that led to '44 companies and 10 individuals being debarred from Bank contracts' (World Bank, 2000: 3). Lending for governance and public sector reform in this period 'grew as a share of total Bank lending, to more than 25 percent of total Bank lending in volume terms', starting in 1999, and reaching 35 percent by 2002 (de Janvry and Dethier, 2012). The increased emphasis placed on governance reform should have led to progress, but by 2005-2006 donors were increasingly acknowledging that 'governance reforms required the right political incentives, credible champions, and appropriate demand-side pressures' (de Janvry and Dethier, 2012). The World Bank's response was to develop a new strategy with anti-corruption at its centre, but this time with the political dimensions foregrounded for analysis. The 2007 Governance and Anticorruption Strategy (GAC) represented a 'highly negotiated ... [c]orporate strategy that sought to change the way the Bank did business' (de Janvry and Dethier, 2012: 25).

The politics of corruption and governance

The World Bank defines governance as comprising 'the form or nature of the political regime; the processes by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources; and the capacity of governments to design, formulate, and implement policy and deliver goods and services' (World Bank, 2012: 9). The latter two dimensions fall within the Bank's mandate, and have been subject to progressive articulation through Bank policy since the early 1990s. But as suggested by Marquette, it is not so easy to separate these dimensions and view them in a 'purely economic manner, which excludes considerations of, for example, power structure, class and ethnic divisions, and historical trajectories, so essential to a political approach' (2004: 422-423). Marquette's concern is that through its work on corruption, the Bank is using its technocratic, specifically economic, identity to assume a political role beyond its Articles of Agreement. Yet at the same time, the issue of corruption is so thoroughly political and replete with the play of power, that it is impossible not to encroach on the political in trying to understand and address it. In fact, in its recent update to the 2007

GAC strategy, the Bank has recognized the insufficiency of relying on ‘economic governance alone’, noting the need for ‘a step change in its grasp of the opportunities and constraints in governance, within the parameters of its mandate’ (2012: 9). In talking about governance and corruption in his April 2011 address to the Peterson Institute, then Bank President Robert Zoellick echoed his predecessor, stating:

These are not dry technical issues. These are not luxuries reserved only for developed countries. They reflect on the quality of governance. They improve public policy. They signal integrity. They communicate respect for the public. They treat public office as a trust. They may sound political, but they are certainly economic (Zoellick, 2011).

The Bank then is continually probing the parameters of its mandate; searching out languages and framing that provide space to pursue “political” issues, but at the same time transmuting them into the language of economics. While the efforts of the World Bank and others to stem corruption in developing countries has been relatively ineffective to date, one area of success is its contribution to international efforts to create an international normative consensus against corruption. As suggested above, this consensus is expressed in the UNCAC. Since the UNCAC was introduced, a key anti-corruption strategy for donors has been to encourage governments to accede to and ratify the Convention. In ratifying the Convention countries commit to governance norms that include participation in government decision making by citizens and civil society groups. This is emphasized, for example, in Article 13(1), which holds that:

Each State Party shall take appropriate measures, within its means and in accordance with fundamental principles of its domestic law, to promote the active participation of individuals and groups outside the public sector ... in the fight against corruption and to raise public awareness regarding the existence, causes and gravity of the threat posed by corruption (UN, 2004: 15)

Such formal normative commitments provide greater scope for donors, including the World Bank, to engage with non-governmental groups in governance reform and anti-corruption activities. Some of these activities would previously have been considered as “political”, but increasingly the “political” is being recast in a technical light: as “political economy”. However, as Khan points out, ‘[r]esponding to institutional failures requires

not just an understanding of the balance of power but also requires us to take political positions' (1995: 71). The World Bank can only take political positions where it can appeal to an international normative consensus for support. In this respect, Bukovansky argues that 'a survey of this consensus [in relation to corruption] reveals omissions and oversights which cause analysts to evade and obscure, rather than directly engage, core problems of politics and ethics'. What is obscured, according to Bukovansky is the political orientation of anti-corruption discourse toward 'an extension of multilateral efforts to expand and solidify the institutional foundations for a global market economy' (2006: 182). Anti-corruption discourse 'diverges from existing trade and monetary regimes ... in its relatively explicit evocation of the *moral underpinnings* of a successful market economy' (2006: 182). This creates an ethical problem in that the 'liberal-rationalist approach to corruption has to do with the external imposition of contingent standards on societies that are not fully participating in defining those standards' (Bukovansky, 2006: 184). Intrinsic to the ethical problem related to the legitimacy of international good governance standards, is the practical problem that this lack of legitimacy creates. Standards with less legitimacy are less likely to be enforced. This missing component is important because understanding the conditions of possibility for the emergence of institutional organizations that exhibit values of efficient and effective governance can help reveal why they do not emerge under different conditions. The most recent developments in anti-corruption discourse and policy turn on this realization: that while countries may formally adopt norms of ethical universalism through ratifying the UNCAC, this will only affect institutions—both formal and informal—to the extent that such norms are localized through highly contextualized political processes, including collective struggle. As detailed in the next chapter, it is for this reason that the World Bank has, along with other organizations donor organizations, promoted the greater use of *political economy analysis* to understand the dynamics that impact prospects for anti-corruption and governance reform, and to point to "social accountability" initiatives as the way to engender collective reform action (World Bank, 2012).

Chapter Four

Political economy analysis and governance reform

An important indication of the explicit “turn” to politics in anti-corruption discourse is the integration of political economy analysis into World Bank policy and programme development. This chapter introduces the practice of political economy analysis, and provides an account of the World Bank’s own evaluation of its use of political economy analysis.

Political economy analysis is a form of policy analysis (as opposed to an academic practice) intended to ‘situate development interventions within an understanding of the prevailing political and economic processes in society’ (McLoughlin, 2012: 5). It is ‘a way of thinking and a tool for practitioners’ (Copestake and Williams, 2012: 1) who are ‘concerned with the interaction of political and economic processes in a society: the distribution of power and wealth between different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, sustain and transform these relationships over time’ (DFID, 2009: 4).

The World Bank and other international development organisations are not alone in integrating political economy dimensions into project planning and decision-making. The private sector is increasingly using sophisticated political risk assessments to inform investment decisions, and the OECD has also developed guidance to support its member countries to build ‘successful advocacy and coalitions for reform’ (Fritz et al, 2009). The increasing interest in political economy analysis as a planning and decision-making tool in development is in part attributable to the normative shifts in development practice in the “post-Monterrey era”. Although the World Bank emphasised the importance to its work of “political” analyses before Monterrey—particularly as a key input into Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)³ (Desai, 2011: 7)—the 2007 Governance and Anti-Corruption (GAC) Strategy includes an explicit

³ PRSPs are the World Bank’s main strategy documents for developing and articulating reform options with borrower countries.

direction to include political economy analysis in Bank project planning to enable better understanding of corruption risks, and the opportunities for governance reform. Subsequently, the Bank has published several papers on political economy analysis,⁴ and developed tools for integrating it into its programmes and decision-making mechanisms. The frameworks for political economy analysis, developed predominantly during the early to mid-2000s (Desai, 2011: 10), sit within the sub-discipline of development economics, and draw heavily on insights from the new institutional economics. They are concerned with ‘political incentives, distribution of political power, credibility, institutional fragility, as well as recognition of significant regional and sub-regional variations in the political-economic landscape’ (Desai, 2011: 10). Thus although the political element—of contestation, interests, and power—figure prominently, emphasis remains on the economic results of political decisions.

In assemblage theory terms, focusing on political economy analysis is a way of tracking the ‘new’ concern with politics in anti-corruption and governance policy as it joins with other expressive components to code organisational identity within the World Bank and enables it to perform new tasks. The development of the 2007 GAC Strategy provided the impetus for a more systematic approach to mainstreaming political economy analysis in the World Bank’s governance and anti-corruption work. The new framework draws on the large body of existing work within the Bank, and from a “community of practice” comprised of Bank and affiliated experts and contractors in universities and aid agencies in donor countries (Desai, 2011).

Conducting political economy analysis

The “political” has entered into governance reform analysis over the years in a number of different frameworks. Early approaches focused on “constraints” to economic

⁴ The key World Bank guides to political economy analysis are *The Political Economy of Policy Reform* (World Bank, 2008), published by the Social Development Department, the *2009 Problem-Driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis* (Fritz et al., 2009), published by the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network, and the recent *Understanding Policy Change: Political Economy Concepts in Practice* (November 2012) published by the World Bank Institute. The different sections within the Bank responsible for these documents indicate, to some extent, their orientation. The first is focused on ways of identifying potential opportunities for reform within priority sectors (e.g. agriculture and water), the second presupposes a defined problem to which the tools of political economy analysis can be applied across three interlinked levels: country, sector and project; and the third as a handbook for development practitioners, students, teachers, journalists, and civil society actors.

development and reform, and included political factors in the analysis, while institutionalist analysis focused on the political and economic institutions in a society and the incentives associated with their persistence (Duncan, 2011). The “new” political economy analysis tools developed by the World Bank attempt to integrate earlier approaches, and focus on identifying stakeholders, specifying the stakes (gains, losses, incentives and payoffs) involved, the institutional context, the constraints to policy reform, and the structural factors that condition incentives (e.g. natural resource endowments), taking account of “historical legacies”. These components are described below to provide an indication of the content and inputs to the World Bank’s political economy analysis work. The summary of the approach to political economy analysis outlined below is taken, for the most part, from the World Bank’s most recent publication in this area, Corduneanu-Huci et al’s *Understanding Policy Change: Political Economy Concepts in Practice* (2012).

Identifying and mapping stakeholders

Stakeholders are identified as those individuals or organisations that are likely to be impacted by policy reform. Stakeholder analysis comprises two parts: ‘an inventory or mapping of the key stakeholders, their political influence and the links between them’, and what and how much the key individuals or organisations are likely to win or lose from the reform (Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012: 283). This latter aspect can be difficult to quantify, and can exhibit subjective as well as objective aspects, in so far as stakeholder preferences may not necessarily correspond with their material interests. As Amartya Sen has suggested ‘commitment drives an all important wedge between personal choice (*preference*) and personal welfare (*interest*)’ (1977: 329; cited in Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012: 284). Therefore it is important that stakeholder analysis include both evidence about the preferences of different stakeholders (derived from, for example, interviews, field work, and surveys), and ‘objective values or expected preferences that can be derived from theory based on the logical possibilities and precedents of preference articulation and interest aggregation’ (Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012: 284). Corduneanu-Huci et al suggest that stakeholder analysis should proceed through four steps:

policy preferences of stakeholders (their personal choices); *interest specification* (actors' awareness of how their preferences translate into personal welfare); *interest articulation* (what actors actually want, express and pursue regardless of their capacity to obtain it); *interest aggregation* (collective action capacities for policy change) (Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012: 285).

Stakeholders are then usually categorised as demand-side or supply-side stakeholders, reform champions ('powerful actors with high stakes in the policy process who facilitate collective action and advocate change') or reform opponents (those who have interests in maintaining the status quo) (Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012: 285). Such categorisation is useful, but should 'not lose sight of ambiguity and dynamics' (Fritz et al, 2009: 47). Stakeholders are generally identified in aggregate, but analysis aimed at identifying opportunities for reform will also identify specific actors that may be representative of stakeholder groups. In identifying actors, it is necessary to describe any differences in preferences and interests they may exhibit relative to the aggregate stakeholder grouping they "represent".

In determining the preferences and interests of stakeholders, it is necessary to identify the stakes that are in play. Corduneanu-Huci et al provide a typology of gains and losses from policy reform. This typology comprises monetary stakes or payoffs (for example, a new taxpayer registration policy would be likely to impact those who engage in tax evasion) reputational costs or gains (in which, for example, a 'reform champion' wins acclaim for their efforts and can advance their political or bureaucratic career), and audience costs and gains (commitments lock in expectations for reform, which if not realised can lead to loss of credibility and approval) (2012: 286). Audience costs and gains depend to a great extent on accountability relations embedded in political systems. Where accountability is weak, both costs and gains can be minimal. In describing the stakes for those impacted by potential reforms, it is also important to account for the time horizon of costs and benefits (the relative value accorded to short and long term gains), stakeholders' risk profile, and reform stages (sequencing). This latter aspect is particularly important in anti-corruption reform, as the gap between the policy process stage of reform and subsequent implementation stages (particularly in terms of

monitoring and enforcement) is wide and full of opportunities for the policy to breakdown.

Corduneanu-Huci et al suggest that stakeholder analysis can be structured around three key questions: who are the relevant stakeholders (individuals and organisations)? What resources does each stakeholder have (institutional resources, access to influencers, financial resources)? What is the intensity of stakeholder preferences (how significantly would a reform impact preferences and interests)?

Institutional context

Consistent with the new institutional economics, institutions here refer to the formal and informal “rules of the game” that operate in a policy making process. These rules, which constitute the institutional context for policy reform, ‘determine[...] the power of different stakeholders to promote their agendas’ (Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012: 287). A political economy analysis should describe the institutions relevant to the policy process, and ask questions about slippage between formal and informal rules, who is granted special privileges by which institutions, and how ‘the incentives generated by the rules of the game affect the collective action potential, resources and reform stakes for stakeholders’ (Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012: 287). For Fritz et al, ‘thorough institutional analysis strengthens the operational usefulness of GPE [governance and political economy analysis] by identifying what reforms are feasible from political economy as well as an explicitly institutional perspective’ (2009: 8). Key to this can be developing an understanding of the relationships between formal and informal institutions. Fritz et al offers a typology of these relationships, suggesting they fall into complementary (in which informal institutions support formal institutions), accommodating (some acceptance of formal institutions, accompanied with some circumvention), substituting (in which informal institutions ‘fill a void that is left by missing or incomplete formal institutions’), and competing or subverting (where informal institutions ‘diverge from, contradict, or contravene formal institutions’) forms (2009: 45).

Constraints

The key constraints on reform are identified as principal-agent problems, information asymmetries, and lack of credible commitment. Constraints are significant where they impact the potential for collective action. Identifying domains for collective action (e.g. political parties, unions and social movements), and the nature of collective action problems will reveal something of the constraints to collective action in particular situations. This requires attention to the efficiency of information exchange between stakeholders, the prospects of establishing reliable principal-agent relations (e.g. between reform champions and implementers), the monitoring and evaluation arrangements that could be brought to bear on the reform, and the mechanisms that could be used to enhance the likelihood of credible commitment. Understanding constraints as they arise from the institutional context and the disposition of stakeholders is important to assessing the feasibility of reform (Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012).

Structural variables

Fritz et al. and others (e.g. DFID, 2009) argue for the specific inclusion of structural variables in political economy analysis. The natural resource base, level of development, climate, geography, and population dynamics can have a deep influence on the incentives and constraints available to stakeholders, and the historical roots of institutions. As Fritz et al notes, 'the nature of resource endowments can significantly shape the development and institutional trajectory of countries' (Fritz et al, 2009: 42).

Methods

Social science research instruments are key inputs to political economy analysis. Surveys, case studies, interviews, media analysis, and qualitative analyses are required to provide a wide base of data for both the descriptive (*the what?*) and inferential (*the why?*) aspects of the political economy analysis. Accounting for systematic bias in sources requires the "triangulation" of evidence, which can take place, for example, within data collection instruments (e.g. careful attention in formulating and asking

survey questions) and by using a number of sources covering the same event (e.g. media reports, interview responses, transcripts of parliamentary debates) (Fritz et al, 2009; Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012).

Timing

Political economy analysis can also provide insight into the timing of reforms, by indicating the kinds of conditions conducive to reform. This can include the identification of the kinds of critical junctures⁵ that could facilitate reform, along with less dramatic timing structures, like election cycles, shifts in public opinion, changes to the economic context (commodity prices), the development of new international 'best practice' standards and recommendations, and international relations (e.g. geopolitical considerations in aid funding). Consideration of the pacing of reform is also a key to the effective timing of policy reform. As noted above, different stakeholder dynamics may be in play at different stages of the reform process. Reform champions may secure a reputational windfall for seeing a new bill through the legislature, but effectively abandon responsibility for it during the crucial implementation stage. Pacing takes into account the spread of incentives at different stages of the reform process, so that the different collective action problems that arise can (at least) be anticipated and included in assessments of reform feasibility. It can drive the use of wider consultative mechanisms, for example, or long-term relationship building with media to encourage ongoing interest in and visibility of the reform process. In this respect, 'the right sequencing of reform steps can build-in short-term political gains that broaden acceptance and pave the way for subsequent stages' (Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012: 310).

Organisational "buy-in"

The major guides on political economy analysis point out that just as political and economic processes are interdependent and subject to constant changes, so 'political economy analysis should be viewed as a dynamic process rather than a static output' (DFID, 2009: 20). Analyses should therefore be subject to revision and integrated

⁵ According to Corduneanu-Huci et al, 'unprecedented episodes of catalytic events that lead to the realignment of incentives and lift preexistent constraints on action' (Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012: 304).

directly into the work of operational teams. As with any operational input, there are organisational and micro-political considerations to the development and implementation of political economy analyses. In order to win support for such work, practitioners must clearly identify the purpose of the analysis, ensure the timing is right to feed into strategy or project development, identify the audience(s) of the analysis taking account of tensions that could emerge (including trade-offs between transparency and rigour of analysis), specify data collection methodologies including who the analyst proposes to work with to ensure the most useful inputs, and how the analysis will be disseminated within and beyond the organisation (DFID, 2009). These considerations all impact on the scope and depth of the analysis, and so require careful attention prior to putting proposals forward to organisational sponsors.

Assessing political economy analysis

Desai carried out a review of 200 World Bank projects approved between 2004 and 2010 to assess the extent to which political economy analyses had been “mainstreamed” in World Bank operations. The review covered a range of analyses that included political elements, as well as specific political economy analyses, and found that ‘the use of formal and informal political-institutional analysis in projects is high, and has not changed significantly between pre-GAC and post-GAC periods’ (Desai, 2011: 41). The majority of the projects reviewed included both formal and informal rules, but the ‘most common analytical tool is of formal institutions, with 80-90 percent of projects incorporating this tool’. However, the review found that specific political economy analyses were used in only a small number of projects, although given the small numbers the increase between the pre-GAC and post-GAC was relatively significant (Desai, 2011: 42).

The key conclusions from the review were that ‘political analysis was and is thinly and inconsistently applied’, ‘the rigor and quality of political analysis was ... uneven, partly as a result of a lack of a common definition of what constituted “political economy”’, and ‘more sophistication is needed in the design of instruments and tools used in World Bank-supported programs, taking into account both the political constraints in countries, sectors and projects, as well as the possible unintended consequences’ (Desai,

2011: 48). This reflects a concern that ‘the gap between political-economic diagnosis and operational solutions will continue to widen’, and ‘it will require highly innovative solutions to operational problems given these political constraints—solutions which, thus far, have not been widely forthcoming’ (Desai, 2011: 48). In terms of “mainstreaming” political economy analysis, the review suggests that ‘the development of a separate analytical product line ... purely devoted to political-economy analysis is unlikely to lead to significant “mainstreaming” of political analysis in Bank operations’ (Desai, 2011: 48). However, incremental funding of political economy analysis inputs into country and sector work has increased since 2000 and ‘high quality “embedded” forms of political analysis often carried a great deal of weight, impact, and value-added in Bank operations’ (Desai, 2011: 48). The Political Economy Community of Practice developed within the Bank comprises a ‘roster of in-house experts and ... a similar roster of consultants with the requisite skills and knowledge of the politics of countries and sectors’ (Desai, 2011: 48). However, a survey of Bank staff indicated that ‘most respondents did not believe that political-economic guidance and support had been provided in a user-friendly way’ (Desai, 2011: 49).

The review also noted that ‘although political economic analyses ... expanded the Bank’s knowledge of political and institutional constraints to project outcomes, most analyses proposed solutions closely related to those elaborated in the 2000 governance strategy, or the *PRSP Sourcebook*, focusing on inclusive policy making, the need for checks and balances on executive authority, and transparent decision making’ (Desai, 2011: 49). The ‘highly conventional’ nature of recommendations arising from political economic analyses, also did not take account of the World Bank’s ‘own role or that of other donors in shaping incentives in sectors and countries’ (Desai, 2011: 49). This evaluation suggests that there is scope for improving the way the World Bank approaches political economy analysis in its reform agendas. The next chapter proposes that the insights from complexity science and assemblage theory could have a role in improving political economy analysis as a “thinking tool”.

Chapter Five

Improving political economy analysis: a role for assemblage theory?

Political economy analysis is used to identify potential reform action, and to help understand how reforms might be progressed. This chapter begins with a critique of an influential case study of an anti-corruption and governance reform process to show that although political economy analysis offers the prospect of a broad understanding of the political, economic and social dynamics in a reform situation, it remains preoccupied with formal institutional fixes that obscure the role of informality in social relations, and may limit the scope for political contestation. The relationship between the formal and informal is then used as a gateway to explore how assemblage theory offers ways to improve political economy analysis, not by way of a wholesale renovation, but by suggesting how “assemblage thinking” might reveal ways of addressing corruption in specific contexts.

Collective action and social accountability: Procurement reform in the Philippines

Perhaps the central theme of the political turn in anti-corruption and governance discourse is the importance of collective action to the instigation of governance reform (Corduneanu-Huci et al, 2012). However, the kind of collective action imagined in World Bank political economy analysis is the very deliberate construction of reform coalitions. While this is by no means an easy process, it is different to the kinds of collective action observable in social movements. An influential example of the formation of this kind of deliberate or engineered collective action is the development of a coalition to advance procurement reform in the Philippines. Government procurement is an area of significant corruption risks, because it involves large sums and long-term contracts, and affects social services and infrastructure critical for development. The greater the discretion of officials, both elected and unelected, in procurement decision making, the greater the opportunity for corruption. While competitive tendering is the classic model for procurement, formal and informal processes that exclude potential providers can undermine competition. Lack of evaluation and monitoring of delivery of procured

goods and services also increases effective discretion and incentives for personal gain. The Philippines Procurement Reform Act (PRA) story has been influential in recent development practice because it outlines the kinds of sensitive political dynamics inherent in governance reform, and suggests roles that international organisations and donors can play in these dynamics. In particular, it has influenced the promotion and funding by the World Bank of *social accountability* initiatives (World Bank, 2011a). Social accountability, according to the World Bank, involves citizens and civil society groups ‘monitoring and assessing government performance—particularly in providing feedback on, and voicing demand for, improved service delivery—and thus contributing to greater development effectiveness’ (2012: iii). Promoting social accountability involves the development of civil society capability to monitor and voice concerns about governance. From a governance reform perspective, it involves, on the one hand, promulgation of formal rules and procedures, and on the other, the participation of citizens’ groups to monitor the adherence of officials to those rules. A summary of the PRA story is included as a case study in an appendix to Corduneanu-Huci et al’s *Understanding Policy Change: Political Economy Concepts in Practice*, the only case study included in this way. Given the influence of the Philippines PRA case study in informing both the practice of political economy analysis, and the promotion of social accountability in policy and rhetoric, it is examined below from critical and assemblage theory perspectives.

The PRA case study was originally prepared following the successful passing of the Procurement Reform Act and was intended to provide ‘practical lessons on strategy, which by its very nature is about dealing with political barriers or problems as they crop up during the implementation process’ of a policy reform (Campos and Syquia, 2006: 3). Developing and securing political agreement to legislation is not an easy project to undertake. As Campos and Syquia point out:

...for a procurement code to be passed, four potential impediments had to be overcome. First, the Executive branch had to be unified in the effort. Second, civil society groups had to be mobilized to lead the advocacy needed to get the legislature to act. Third, the reformers within the Executive branch and civil society groups had to work together in unison. Fourth, influential legislators

had to be recruited to champion the bill in their respective chambers (2006: 5).

Collective action in this context succeeded through two main stages: first, ownership of and “buy-in” to the reform process by key government organisations, and second, promoting and coordinating civil society pressure for reform. The World Bank and US Agency for International Development (USAID) played enabling roles in the process, but it was initiated and to a great extent led by Filipino civil servants, notably, in 1998, by the head of Philippines Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Benjamin Diokno, ‘a US-trained economist with a background in public administration’ (Campos and Syquia, 2006: 8). Diokno sought assistance from USAID to develop an analysis of the problems with public procurement in the Philippines and a draft procurement bill that could consolidate the many existing instruments that structured procurement processes. Although the analysis was done to a tight timeline, and the work produced was of high analytically quality, the DBM Undersecretary with responsibility for it quietly shelved the analysis and ‘became reticent about moving things beyond internal discussions with the consultants’. This was because the consultants had ‘alienated practically every government official they had interviewed and/or to whom they presented earlier drafts of the study’ (Campos and Syquia, 2006: 8). The way the consultants worked clashed dramatically with the ‘painstaking ownership building’ necessary for ‘buy-in’ within Philippines civil service agencies (Campos and Syquia, 2006: 8).

Within the context of a wider budget reform program, a technical assistance team comprising staff from USAID and the World Bank sought to understand why the procurement reform work had been shelved. They organised a two day workshop on the analysis and draft bill developed by the USAID consultants, which was pitched as a session in which officials could “shoot down” the consultants’ study section by section, line by line, and then develop their own version of the procurement law’ (Campos and Synquia, 2006: 9). This was a very successful process, which led to the kind cross-agency ownership necessary to engender executive branch support for the reform process, and led to the formation of a cross-departmental technical work group. The working group remained in place for the duration of the legislative process, and was crucial for securing

the ongoing support from government agencies for the procurement reform, even as it hit snags along the way. Support across government departments was also important for providing confidence to senior officials and politicians that the bill was technically sound, and could achieve what was intended. In this context, the bill, with the collective support of officials across the executive branch of government, was attractive to the President (Joseph Estrada, at that time embroiled in a corruption scandal) who provided for its expeditious introduction to the legislature for consideration.

This first phase faltered when the progress of the Bill through the legislature was overtaken by the political upheaval associated with Estrada's impeachment in 2001. When the new president, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo took office she did so on a strong anti-corruption platform as politicians across the spectrum sought to differentiate themselves from the scandals of the previous administration. This held out good prospects for the procurement reform, but only if public pressure for anti-corruption policies continued. The second phase therefore involved the formation of a civil society coalition to call for and support the reform process. The case study provides details on the steps taken by the technical advisors and key officials to win support from individual politicians, and illustrates the importance of personal integrity and reputation in the relationships between key players. Understanding this landscape is essential for the close management necessary to win and keep support for a reform process in a highly charged political environment. Through this time, while the technical assistance team and the officials working group had become together a 'tightly knit, well oiled machine', they 'deliberated on the need for an NGO to monitor the implementation of the new law if it was passed' (Campos and Syquia, 2006: 16). The result was the formation in 2001 of a new non-government organisation, Procurement Watch Inc. (PWI), with members of the technical assistance team on its board alongside academics with an interest in corruption control and governance reform. PWI had a crucial role in the second phase of the reform process by coordinating the involvement of a wider grouping of civil society organisations. PWI was established to 'recreate a semblance of the impeachment ambience that could focus the public's attention on corruption, at least to an extent sufficient to convince enough legislators to support the needed legislation' (Campos and Syquia, 2006: 16). What is most interesting about this process is the central involvement of technical assistance staff from the World Bank in PWI and the civil society and media

aspects of the reform process. PWI sought and secured funding from donors (including the World Bank) for advertising and promotion, engaging a marketing firm to develop a campaign strategy with AM radio programming as a key tactic. Politicians from across the political spectrum were invited onto AM talk shows to answer questions about the PRA and its implications. Securing support from a range of political parties allowed the PRA to become a non-partisan issue, with politicians lining up to demonstrate their support for its anti-corruption message. The PRA was passed by Congress in 2003 with a large majority.

While the PRA case study provides useful insight into potential strategies for engaging in and with the politics of formal institutional reforms, it does not extend to the implementation of those reforms. In a recent paper, Rodan and Hughes have described how the PRA implementation has been much less successful in terms of achieving efficient and transparent government procurement than would be implied in the success story outlined in the case study and its use by the World Bank and other agencies to inform subsequent governance strategies (2012). Once the PRA was passed, the pro-poor rhetoric deployed during the policy reform process shifted ‘to the technical concern of monitoring compliance with detailed and complex regulations and processes’ (Rodan and Hughes, 2012: 372). The civil society-state partnership model instilled in the PRA required the involvement of civil society groups on the Bids and Awards Committees (BACs) that make public procurement decisions. This was an important element of the reform process, and was seen as a “win” for civil society groups. However, in the implementation process it became clear that the extent of procurement activity requires considerable time and resource from civil society groups to participate in BACs and monitor the implementation of the PRA. Rodan and Hughes write that although ‘the roles of BAC observers and recourse to PTG [the Procurement Transparency Group] have produced some significant instances of arresting corruption ... the challenges of ensuring adequate numbers of observers sufficiently equipped technically to serve on the BACs, let alone lodge reports on concerns about the procurement process, are considerable’. This means that the ‘practical demands’ of participating in public procurement processes ‘consume a disproportionate civil society effort in technical rather than political exercises’ (Rodan and Hughes, 2012: 374).

The World Bank's experience with the PRA process in the Philippines, and particularly its mobilisation of civil society groups, has informed the development of its Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA). The GPSA is a multi-donor fund of which \$5 million is provided by the World Bank for supporting civil society organisations engaged in monitoring government service delivery and governance, that is, organisations that are 'working with their governments to achieve greater transparency and accountability, and stronger development results' (World Bank, 2012: 1). Independent budget analysis (tracking spending relative to budget undertakings), and "citizens report cards" on health, education, housing and telecommunications are examples of the kinds of approaches that civil society organisations can take to working with governments. The use of mobile communication technology and the Internet are also hailed as offering unprecedented scope for connecting organisations and citizens in collective action efforts to hold politicians and governments accountability for their promises. The two-pronged approach represented by the Philippines PRA example forms the model for social accountability policies: the promulgation of formal rules, followed by the monitoring of those rules by citizens.

The kind of civil society envisaged in efforts to promote social accountability is central to Michel Foucault's idea of *governmentality*, which 'brings together the practice of governing and the necessary rationality of government that makes governing possible' (Joseph, 2010: 223). This rationality is focused on the management population for, in Le Perrière's words, 'the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead to a convenient end' (Foucault, 2001: 210). The rationality necessary for this governmentality might also be described as a set of 'initial conditions' including a common 'conceptual map' of the political community which members of that community can use to 'shape their dealings with one another' (Khilnani, 2001: 27). It also presupposes 'a particular type of self: one that is mutable, able to conceive of interests as transient, and able to change and to choose political loyalties and public affiliations' (Khilnani, 2001: 28), and 'an institutional dispersal of social power' (Khilnani, 2001: 30). Yet for many postcolonial and developing countries these "initial conditions" are patchy at best. The World Bank's social accountability initiatives can be seen an attempt to inculcate this governmental rationality in a particular form of "partnering" civil society. In this respect, the World Bank's social accountability initiative is designed as a '*less confrontational* approach to

making demands' in processes of social change characterised 'not by shouting, but by counting' (Rodan and Hughes, 2012: 368).

Larners and Le Heron suggest, 'political discourses only become governmental to the extent that they become technical' (Larners and Le Heron, 2004: 213). So while the political is being rehabilitated into anti-corruption discourse through political economy analysis and wider recognition of the political roots of economic institutions, this new concern with politics can also be read as a process of transmuting the political into the governmental. As in the PRA example, politics becomes a way of achieving governmentality. And thus government comes to resemble 'a "managerial activity", arranging things wisely in order to maximize outputs in specific fields of application' (Zanotti, 2005: 463). With this governmentality frame, Foucault was able to describe the state as 'nothing more than the mobile effect of a regime of multiple governmentalities' (Foucault, 2004: 79). This "belittling" of the monolithic state is also a characteristic move in assemblage theory focusing as it does on undoing totalising conceptions like the "state" and "society". This manoeuvre can also be applied to "civil society", in so far as it questions whether "civil society" is an ontological category, or a short hand for a population of assemblages (such as social networks) that enter into relations of exteriority with other social entities, such as hierarchical authority structures. If the latter, then the question is what specific assemblages are formed through these relations? What are their properties? What effects are caused by the exercise of their capacities? Some of these assemblages will exhibit properties of governmentality, but not all of them will, and so the patchiness re-enters conceptual models. This is important in terms of both rhetoric and policy because in many countries the existence of authoritarian governments throws civil society organisations into oppositional stances. So while 'partnership is the DNA of the GPSA' (World Bank, 2012: 1), a vision of partnership is problematic because, as Khilnani argues, in many countries "'civil society" has come almost exclusively to mean all those forces and agencies which oppose the state and its efforts at regulation' (2001: 30). With a model informed by assemblage theory the context can re-emerge with force. The specific assemblages, their properties and relations of exteriority between them that condition their capacities must be mapped. Only then can an assessment be made as to whether a "partnership" is feasible or even desirable. So while the social accountability model, as exemplified in the

Philippines PRA case study, may be relevant in particular situations, the oppositional nature of state-civil society relations in many contexts will make social accountability as a project at least problematic in political terms, and at worst it could drain resources and legitimacy from both civil society organisations and those international organisations that support them.

Thinking with assemblage theory

Evaluations of political economy analyses have largely relied on ‘the direct experience of practitioners’, and have reaffirmed ‘the potential of PEA [political economy analysis] to inject greater realism into practice through more open discussion of power, political culture, ethnic divisions, corruption, capacity and incentives, sources of opposition and indifference, and so on’ (Copestake and Williams, 2012: 2). However, there has ‘been little analysis of the politics of the production of PEA [political economy analyses]’ (Copestake and Williams, 2012: 5). To this end, Copestake and Williams suggest that more effective political economy analysis can be improved by being ‘more *specific* about the scope of analysis, who it is being done for and why; ... more *reflexive* by combining a political economy analysis with more explicit self-assessment; ... more *agile* by adapting analysis and its use to feedback and new events’ (Copestake and Williams, 2012: 3). This comes down to greater elaboration of the position of the analysts and commissioning organisation with respect to incentives, constraints and institutional factors, and their ability to influence change. The authors suggest that one way of doing this would be to apply some of the insights from complexity science to political economy analysis, particularly feedback, non-linear causality, and co-evolution. However, as argued above, before concepts from complexity science can be used in social explanation, it is necessary to ensure that this borrowing is sensitive to the philosophical and theoretical implications of those concepts.

One of the key insights from complexity science is the time irreversibility of many non-classical physical systems and thus their dependence on historical processes. Political economy analysis can be powerful because it is sensitive to the historical roots of current political and economic institutional arrangements, and because in bringing political processes within the scope of analysis it can track across the whole social

terrain, instead of being focused on issues that are narrowly “economic”. However, although ‘[m]ost political economy frameworks used by donors highlight these issues [related to history and context] ... the implications for development policy are often not pursued’ (Institute of Development Studies, 2010: 72). While the rational-legal organisational form, and the expertise it fosters, imposes limits on the tasks that are seen as legitimate to international development organisations (associated, for example, with emphases on objective detachment and neutrality), it can also condition the attitude and imaginary that practitioners bring to the construction of development problems and tasks. The Institute of Development Studies suggests that policy makers need to ‘resist the temptation to revert to the default position of viewing the world through an OECD lens’ (2010: 78). This requires an acknowledgement that ‘the current global environment is quite different from the one in which Western state building took place, creating a new and historically unprecedented set of challenges, which have until recently been neglected by donors’ (Institute of Development Studies, 2010: 72).

It is simply not possible to engineer the emergence of OECD-style institutional organisations in many countries. Institutions emerge from the immediate political economy environment. As the children’s rhyme would have it, “all the king’s horses and all the king’s men”, despite their best efforts, cannot artificially create an emergent entity against the arrow of time. The “political turn” in anti-corruption discourse is a reaction to this, and while political economy analysis can make practitioners sensitive to the specific context of their work, the positivist framework in which this analysis takes place does not provide for the kind of interactive model that the Institute of Development Studies and others suggest. Positivist social theories, like neo-classical economics, are implicated in fixing the positions of observer and observed. The kind of “upside-down” approaches being promoted by the Institute of Development Studies, Copestake and Williams, and others are thus undermined by the effect that positivist social science has on reinforcing the status of the observer—the emphasis on the “diagnostic” role assigned to political economy analysis, for instance, expresses an expert detachment and the prospect of treatment. This does not mean that in practice organisations like the World Bank do not learn from their development partners, and do not themselves change in their interactions to be able to better position themselves to participate in the production of social knowledge and policy—the discourse on “open

development” and the fierce surveillance of internal governance processes are examples—but it effaces donors’ participation as components of assemblages in the context of development. The production and circulation of knowledge on corruption and governance, therefore, is subject to a disjunction between the scientific aura of that knowledge, on the one hand, and, on the other, the lack of coherence in that knowledge when viewed from the perspective of a realist philosophy of science.

This can lead to problems, including problems in relation to ideology that are also picked up at the empirical level in the new institutional economics, for example, in the preference for either state or market as solutions to low economic growth. De Janvry and Dethier, for instance suggest that one of the difficulties with “mainstreaming” political economy analysis may also be a symptom of a split among Bank leadership and membership about the role of the state in development between those who see the state’s role as limited to addressing market failure, and those that also see it as a ‘proactive coordinating instrument’ (De Janvry and Dethier, 2012: 29). They suggest that ‘Bank leadership has almost always looked at the role of state as a divisive issue to be carefully handled, in part by neglecting it’ (De Janvry and Dethier, 2012: 29). The authors argue that this has led to an ‘underinvestment (relative to effective demand and project needs) in World Bank staff skills on governance matters’ (De Janvry and Dethier, 2012: 30).

One of the main purposes for DeLanda in pursuing assemblage theory is to guard against the reification of totalities and essences in social explanation. “Society”, “the state”, and “culture” are the kinds of unreal entities assumed by many social theories. Often these words are used as short hand for complex organisational arrangements, but there are few satisfying explanations in positivist theory that link the micro activities of obvious persons and organisations with the totality represented by terms like “society”. Social assemblages on the other hand overlap: they share many of the same components (for example, the same persons), they can merge, be symbiotic, or parasitic. Assemblages can form within an existing assemblage, changing it radically, or splitting from it impacting its resource dependencies. They are all interacting entities in a flat ontology, more or less territorialised and coded. A hierarchical organisation may imply superiority, but that is relative to an exercise of its properties in relations of exteriority (e.g. the

legitimate use of violence or practices “governmentality”) and not to ontological superiority. This creates the space for contestation, a space that is denied in totalities where change requires a transformation of the identity of the totality itself. As DeLanda states:

One difference between the neoinstitutionalist approach and the one I am trying to sketch here is this: beyond the level of the individual organisation, the neoinstitutionalist does not seem to envision yet another emergent larger scale entity but simply refers to “society” or “the polity” as a whole. This, however runs the risk of introducing too much homogeneity into our models and of suggesting that human societies form a “totality”, that is, an entity on a higher ontological plane than individual institutions and individual human beings. By contrast, speaking of concrete cities (instead of “society” in the abstract) enables us to include in our models historically emergent wholes that do not form totalities but simply larger scale individual entities (DeLanda, 1997: 37; cited in Deuchars, 2010: 175-6).

Many of the problems encountered in work to improve economic governance involve a central problematic in terms of relationships between parts and wholes. For example, corruption in public procurement may involve problems with a lack organisation and coordination of information across different civil service organisations. However, the causes for the persistence of that lack of organisation and coordination may lie at different levels of organisations. This means that intervening at one level to establish a formal law or set of procedures may not have an impact on persistent informal processes that adapt to the alterations in the formal environment.

The Institute of Development Studies argues that ‘[d]evelopment practitioners, and especially Western donors, have mental models of development and of their own role in the process that get in the way of accepting and applying research findings’ (Institute of Development Studies, 2010: 69). These mental models inscribe a tendency to focus on formal institutions and organisations, to reject best practice as impossible but yearn for it out of familiarity and pride, and to forget that, despite their expertise, international organisations can never be auteurs of development. The main contributions that assemblage theory can make are to counter these tendencies in thought, and to use the opportunity provided by the ‘new’ concern with the political in anti-corruption

discourse represented and encapsulated by political economy analysis to provide openings for new ways of thinking about the context of governance reforms and anti-corruption projects. Assemblage theory can contribute in four principal ways by: (1) clarifying the ontological status of 'institutions', (2) emphasising to practitioners the reality of informality, (3) providing an historically sensitive vocabulary to loosen the bonds of "best practice", and (4) providing reasons for reflexivity. These four contributions are discussed below.

(1) Clarifying the ontological status of institutions

One of the key features of the new institutional economics is its separation of 'the underlying rules from the strategy of the players' (North, 1990: 5). While this is principally an analytical move, it has ontological implications in the reification of methodological individualism it produces. North suggests that institutions influence the mental models that individuals apply to choice situations conditioned by the rules at play, and that this is the pathway through which the methodological individualism of neoclassical economics is reconciled with the constraints on choice sets and interest identification represented by social institutions (North, 1990). However, assemblage theory would suggest that individual persons are components in larger scale assemblages in which rules play territorialising and coding functions. The predominant strategies of players, then, would figure as processes of (de)territorialisation in the larger scale assemblage. The rules and the strategies of the players are reintegrated in an assemblage, which becomes a legitimate object of analysis. This would allow consideration of, for example, a public procurement system as, not complexes of rules balancing incentives for self-interested actors, but assemblages, in which rules enter into relations of exteriority with a range of heterogeneous components. Singular interventions, like the promulgation of a new law, could not ever be the end point of reform. Such interventions should be seen in relation to ongoing de- and re-territorialising processes.

Institutional change, then, proceeds by processes of de- and re-territorialisation, which may be associated with changes in formal rules (such as a new law that opens up a monopoly to competition) or more informal process, like the effects of technological

change on the economic opportunities of social actors (for example, mobile phone banking). Identifying and mapping assemblages, and tracking (de)territorialising processes is a legitimate expert task for international organisations.

(2) Emphasising the reality of informality

While the political economy analysis guides urge analysts to map informal institutions, the tendency to focus on formal institutions betrays a positivist (but also perhaps a practical) bias toward written codes and immediately apprehensible rules and social entities. In his exploration of informal urbanism, Kim Dovey, suggests that ‘the informal and formal sectors are not separate, both are always present with reciprocal relations in all economies’ (Dovey, 2012: 350). He goes on to say:

These forms of urban informality are fundamentally integrated with an informal economy and informal politics. Informal controls are imposed over informal practices: informal fines, fees and bribes are paid, votes are bought, blind eyes are turned. Informal houses, shops and factories are built and inhabited by informal residents and staff. Informal land tenure and home ownership systems evolve, informal rents are paid, informal electricity and water is tapped. Informal governance operates within the framework of formal governance (Dovey, 2012: 352).

As such, informal and formal organisations are assembled together in shared spaces: ‘while an informal settlement can be identified and territorialised as a discrete assemblage (as a noun), it is assembled (as a verb) through its multi-scale connections with the political economy of the city, nation and globe’ (Dovey, 2012: 358). Therefore, the formal and informal should be seen as a ‘two-fold concept rather than two concepts in opposition’ (Dovey, 2012: 363). While political economy analysis certainly makes room for informal institutions, the emphasis in recommendations tends to be placed on strengthening formal institutions. However, as the Institute of Development Studies point out ‘there is mounting evidence that many reforms to improve governance by strengthening formal, rules-based institutions have had limited impacts’ (2010: 69). Reforms that focus on formal institutional changes may, in a context populated by assemblages of formal and informal social organisations, only lead to the adaptations of

those assemblages to changed conditions, pursuing the same ends rather than the improved outcomes sought by reformers.

The “formal” here refers to institutional organisations and rules that are based on written laws, procedures and constitutions, administered by governmental organisations recognised at the international level in discourses of sovereignty. However, some of the micro-components of a governmental macro-assemblage will be components of other “informal” assemblages, such as political patronage networks. The sharing of components by different assemblages is important: the same individual persons can be members of different networks exercising different capacities in each. In this sense, systemic corruption appears where the resources that form part of an assemblage are appropriated into another. The sharing of components by two or more assemblages has (de)territorialising effects on those assemblages. The relationship between these overlaid assemblages is familiar from the typology of formal-informal institutional relations outlined in the guides to political economy analysis. In line with this institutional analysis, the overlaid assemblages can be complementary, accommodating, substituting, or competing or subverting (Fritz et al, 2009). However, the additional force to thought that assemblage theory provides is the imperative to specify the concrete components of the overlaid assemblages. While empirically difficult, this guards against conceiving of institutional conflict as a result of tensions between, for example, “traditional values” and administrative “best practice”. To map social assemblages is to ask how they provide resources and constraints to their component parts within the specific environmental context.

The focus on corruption here might suggest that informality is a problem. However, informality *per se* should certainly not be equated with criminality, inefficiency or corruption. The efficiency of many organisations derives from the informality of interpersonal networks in which the ‘little ideas of little men, the little inventions and interferences between imitative currents’ (Deleuze 1994: 314) enable the production of socially useful products. Increasingly, businesses are creating workspaces designed to encourage informal interactions. In addition, informal processes and networks also place constraints on the kinds of behaviours implicated in corruption by acting as reputation storage devices (DeLanda, 2006:56). However, whether reputation storage is

an emergent property of a social network is an empirical question, one that should be investigated in trying to identify novel ways of controlling corruption. Political economy analysis should therefore ask whether formal rules and procedures support the kind of creative informality key to collective action, or might disrupt it leading to a more pernicious informality-formality relation.

(3) Loosening the bonds of 'best practice'

DeLanda suggests that the main implication assemblage theory has for policy and practice is experimentation and the search for new organisational forms. DeLanda's imperative to experimentation is not to be read as a licence to impose experimental conditions on development loans, or effect radical or absolute deterritorialisations of assemblages, but a 'call for a more experimental attitude toward reality and the potential for self-organisation inherent in even the humblest forms of matter-energy' (DeLanda, 1997: 273). Deleuze and Guattari sum up this attitude when they suggest:

This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum [in DeLanda's term, a particularly durable assemblage], experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 178).

This kind of experimentation is underpinned in assemblage theory by the relationship between the virtual and actual. The universal singularities briefly described in chapter one are historically contingent, and as such the "diagram" of authority structure drawn from Weber reflects the historical development of authority structures, predominantly in the West. However singularities, actual assemblages, evolve in co-adaptation with their environments—in complexity terms, in relation to "fitness landscapes"⁶—so there can be no pre-determined "best practice" model that can be transplanted to a different context. An authority structure can only change along the dimensions structuring the possibility space, and does so through processes of (de)territorialisation and (de)coding.

⁶ 'Fitness landscape' refers to the dynamic adaptive interactions between entities in a specific environment. It should not be confused with competitive social Darwinian "survival of the fittest".

It is not possible to predict how this change will occur as the singularity moves into the adjacent possible, but as social assemblages affect their component parts and adapt to their environments (including other entities) they change the interactions of those parts, which can in turn lead to changes in the whole, particularly at critical points, pushing the assemblage into a “phase change” situation—radical change from one tendency to another, or one set of universal singularities to another. The diagram as virtual is mechanism independent, it requires mechanisms to be actualised, but the mechanisms are not pre-given, that is, the movement from one attractor—one universal singularity—to another in the possibility space can take any number of novel tracks depending on the exercise of the capacities of the entities that make up the assemblage (in interaction with each other and the environment). This is a critique of the “path dependence” central to neo-institutionalism. While, the “lock in” aspect of path dependence—the acknowledgement that organisations only change relative to their properties from one moment to the next—is consistent with the insights from complexity science and assemblage theory, path dependence itself is often used to suggest pre-formed (or even “essential”) alternative paths, and the difficulty inherent in switching from one to the other. The concept of possibility space, on the other hand, suggests a much more open trajectory of change, one that unfolds in interactions with a landscape of other social entities and environmental factors. This evolutionary approach suggests there is a process of blind “discovery” of organisational forms. The rational-legal form of authority structure, for instance, is relatively young compared to the charismatic and traditional forms, yet ‘the last 200 years have witnessed the propagation of the rational-legal form throughout the organisational populations inhabiting most territorial states, if not in extreme form then in mixtures of this form’ (DeLanda, 2006: 70). As such, to replace “path dependence” with trajectories (or, in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, “lines of flight”) through possibility space is to acknowledge the potential for new diagrammatic forms, and to dislodge attachments to some ideal “best practice” models imported from other contexts, other “paths”. This is not to suggest that the movement from one attractor (universal singularity) to another is easy or quick. Understanding how change happens in social assemblages requires careful and sustained attention to their material and expressive components, and the processes that stabilize their identity: territorialisation and coding. As noted above, identifying these components and processes is an empirical task, and one in which

international organisations, like the World Bank with its considerable expert resources, can play an important role.

(4) Reasons for reflexivity

As this thesis has emphasised, assemblages are created by processes of territorialisation characterised by the sharpening of boundaries and the homogenization of components, stabilised by processes of coding. Social assemblages can integrate new components as part of territorialising processes, but new components can also enter into assemblages through processes of deterritorialisation. The heterogeneity of assemblages means that all sorts of entities assemble in relations of exteriority, this includes cultural products like books and films, newspapers and radio shows, as well as scientific theories, discourses and social scientific analysis. Here texts do not represent reality, but enter into productive relations with other entities and social products. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, this is ‘the book as assemblage with the outside, as against the book as image of the world’ (2004: 25). In this light, a political economy analysis should not be taken as a representation of the reality of development, but as an assemblage with it. The research it motivates, the data it describes, enter into relations of exteriority with other entities.

In mapping and investigating assemblages it cannot therefore be the intention to create an objective image of the world (what Deleuze and Guattari call ‘a tracing’ (2004: 26)), but to create analyses “to scale” that enter into relations with other entities. This is seen in the influence that the very exercise of analysis, and the inputs necessary to it can have on the activities of real social actors (Nunberg et al, 2010). It is also clear in the way analyses circulate within organisations. Of course a political economy analysis’s claim to represent reality is important—its role in processes of (de)coding or (de)territorialising will depend on the extent to which readers (a World Bank Executive Board member, a civil society organisation) believe it corresponds with the world—but its claim to represent the world can only ever be an expressive function and not a truth claim. As such there remains a “drive to accuracy” in mapping, but also a non-constructivist and non-relativist account for why reflexivity is essential for the analysis. This is because where political economy analysis takes place international organisations will always be

part of the fitness landscape, if not part of assemblages populating that landscape. As such assemblage theory can help to place the analyst on the map, pointing with an insistent little arrow: “you are here”.

Conclusion

This thesis has argued that knowledge and expertise is crucial to the emergent legitimacy of international organisations, but in the case of anti-corruption expertise, although economic knowledge has helped produce an international regime and consensus against corruption, reforms in developing countries informed by this knowledge have been much less successful than hoped. As anti-corruption becomes a “corporate strategy” for the World Bank, and the UN adopts the rule of law as a presiding theme and area of action (United Nations, 2012), there is the potential that the lack of success associated with existing approaches to anti-corruption could undermine the legitimacy of these organisations. Acknowledging the lack of progress in combating corruption, and the insights from the new institutional economics that power and politics underpins economic institutions, the World Bank and donors are increasingly looking for ways to influence political processes to deliver positive population outcomes (“pro-poor growth”). Political economy analysis has been identified as a key tool to help development agencies understand how politics influences economic processes in specific country, sector and project contexts. However, although there is potential for high quality analysis to assist project planning and implementation, there is a sense of frustration that the recommendations emerging from political economy analysis have been, for the most part, ‘highly conventional’ (Desai, 2011: 49).

Commentators on development practice have suggested that integrating concepts from complexity science (Copestake and Williams, 2012; Ramalingam et al, 2009), and adopting an “upside-down” approach to development (Institute of Development Studies, 2010) offer potentially fruitful avenues for exploration. However, this thesis has argued in order to do so, it is necessary to address the philosophical implications of both complexity and an “upside down” approach for mainstream anti-corruption discourse, which is dominated by the positivist assumptions of neo-classical economics. Manuel DeLanda’s assemblage theory offers a social ontology in which the relevance of complexity concepts for social analysis can be developed, and a way of thinking that emphasises how social entities emerge from “the bottom up” without reducing causal

explanations to individual human beings and their interests. To date assemblage theory has been used predominantly in the critical mode. This thesis has made some initial suggestions about how it might be employed in the problem-solving mode traditionally dominated by positivist social sciences like neoclassical economics and international relations neoliberalism. It argues that political economy analysis could be improved by assemblage thinking, that is, by identifying how social entities in particular social contexts enter into relations of exteriority in networks and hierarchical authority structures that have emergent properties irreducible to the components on which they depend for their existence. This also emphasises that international organisations, like the World Bank, are in the business of creating new assemblages. Through their constitutive power they:

...define new interests and new tasks (such as protecting human rights, promoting development , peacekeeping), as well as to constitute and legitimate new actors to carry out those tasks (human rights monitors, technical assistance missions, peacekeepers). In this way, they create new interlocutors and new constituencies, both for themselves and for other actors, notably states' (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 164).

But international organisations do so in complex social situations, where many different social entities are interacting and adapting, and where the outcomes of such constitutive power cannot be predicted. The social accountability initiatives of the World Bank, for example, seek to constitute civil society actors as monitors of government service delivery, integrating them into assemblages with governmental organisations in relations of exteriority that may limit their ability to contest rights to democratic accountability.

Assemblage thinking can help international organisation staff to come up with 'new ideas and new solutions in policy debates' (Barnett and Finnemore, 2004: 162) to, in the words of the new World Bank president Jim Yong Kim, "bend the arc of history" (2013), but it comes with its own set of obstacles, including that assemblages, like complex systems, 'are far harder to model and analyse' and 'this carries cost implications in terms of time, money and skills that are far from trivial' (Ramalingam, 2008: 11-12). Not

only is there much work to be done to develop research methods for identifying social assemblages, the (de)territorialising and (de)coding processes that operate to (de)stabilise their identity, and their causal powers and effects, but the reflexivity that assemblage theory requires makes it difficult for international organisations to efface their active power in political situations. While this provides a more “accurate” reading of the social context, it can have deterritorialising effects on international organisations as rational-legal bureaucracies, and may require them to seek new ways of expressing legitimacy. This is a line of flight, a blind search for new forms in a world where international organisations themselves are a relatively new population of entities. International organisations like the World Bank form part of new global assemblages that provide resources and constraints to other actors, and act themselves as causal agents in world politics. Assemblage theory also implies a long game: the influence of Fernand Braudel⁷ on DeLanda’s work should be a caution to those who see in assemblage theory a series of “quick wins” for development.

Importantly, however, thinking with assemblage theory does not imply a wholesale renovation of anti-corruption knowledge and expertise. Rather it can provide a theoretical basis for the experience-derived turn to context and politics in anti-corruption practice and can integrate empirical insights from the new institutional economics while discarding its positivist foundations. The lure of predictive power that positivist social theory extends is illusory, but it does indicate that to social actors, valuable knowledge is knowledge that enables action. This is particularly important for international organisations whose job it is to “do something”: to define and seek ways to address problems. There are concerns within the World Bank that the political turn in anti-corruption and governance discourse can create perverse incentive for borrower countries and donors to avoid pushing for potentially more effective reforms if they claim they are not politically “feasible” (Fritz et al, 2009). As such, political economy analysis risks becoming redundant if it fails to produce the kinds of recommendations for action that are required for the World Bank to express the legitimacy of its authority. Examining the philosophical assumptions underpinning expert knowledge can open a creative space for considering “how” approaches to anti-corruption and governance

⁷ Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) was an influential member of (French) Annales School of historiography. His work is associated with “geological” interpretations of history, emphasising large scale and long run socioeconomic processes.

reforms should be approached before setting out to sense new intimations of “*what*” to do about it. As Barnett and Finnemore note, the ‘[a]pplication of rules, norms, and scripts to new situations always requires some creativity and invention’. They suggest that this ‘creative agency is more likely to occur at moments of rapid global change as IO [international organisation] staff draw from existing bureaucratic culture to extend and project their authority’ (2004: 162). Whether the global financial crisis of 2008 and 2009, or the rapid political changes in the Middle East provide a moment for creative agency is an open question, but the persistence of corruption, and the intensification of elite domination in many societies it enables, makes the dire need of such creativity all too real.

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