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INVESTIGATING THE APPARATUS

Institutional Ties of *Journal of Development Economics* Authors and Editors

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[Abstract, Keywords, JEL Codes](#)

IN SPRING 2003, I RECRUITED THERESE DICOLA, THEN A SANTA Clara University senior, to research the curriculum vitas of the people involved in the six 2002 issues of the *Journal of Development Economics*. An author who published two articles in the 2002 issues would generate two “authorships.” Authorships are not weighted for co-authorship, so an article with two authors would create two authorships. Altogether there were 124 authorships. We also investigated the 26 editorial officers—we collected resumes and CVs online. For each individual we searched for employment, consultancy, grant, publication, and presentation ties (through 2003) to the major development agencies the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, The Inter-American Development Bank, the Asian

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Note on authorship: Although two authors are shown above, this paper is written in the first-person singular. Daniel Klein led the investigation and wrote up the paper. He is the “I” here. Therese DiCola was chiefly responsible for collecting the data.

Development Bank, U.S. AID, the United Nations, and so on. We also searched on the individual's name at each organization website.

Regarding the 124 authorships, we find that 75 percent have ties to the "Big 8" official development institutions, and 84 percent to official development institutions more broadly defined. Of the 26 editorial officers, we find that all have ties to the Big 8, all but one with ties of employment, consultancy, or grant. These numbers understate the actual extent of such ties, because for a few names we were unable to obtain a CV.

The results of this study are not surprising. Before presenting the findings, I offer some remarks that are not meant as interpretation of the facts, but rather *as presentation of the investigation*.

WHY SHOW INSTITUTIONAL TIES OF RESEARCHERS?

There is no scandal in development economists having ties to development institutions. I do not mean to suggest that institutional ties corrupt the otherwise honest efforts of researchers, nor that such ties impose narrow bounds on research or policy conclusions.

For example, in the field of transportation economist, Gabriel Roth has led research and understanding of how property rights and freedom can enhance the provision of highways, streets, parking, taxi services, and urban transit. Roth has had a long and productive career, including nineteen years (1967 to 1986) at the World Bank. The Bank generally supported his investigations, with his research culminating in such market-oriented works as the World Bank book *The Private Provision of Public Services in Developing Countries* (Oxford University Press, 1987).

The corpus of World Bank research shows diversity in method, findings, and policy ideas. For many academic researchers, the World Bank and the IMF are just other stops on the seminar circuit, like any normal university department.

Still, we should be concerned that the apparatus will neglect or elide fundamental criticism of the institutions. The Congress-appointed Meltzer Commission (2000: Exe. Sum.) said the IMF's "system of short-term crisis management is too costly, its responses too slow, its advice often incorrect, and its efforts to influence policy and practice too intrusive." The Commission continued: "High cost and low effectiveness characterize many development bank operations as well. The World Bank's evaluation of its

own performance in Africa found a 73% failure rate. Only one of four programs, on average, achieved satisfactory, sustainable results. In reducing poverty and promoting the creation and development of markets and institutional structures that facilitate development, the record of the World Bank and the regional development banks leaves much room for improvement.” Yet the Commission does not come out in favor of abolishing any of the seven institutions investigated.

Figures like Peter Bauer and Deepak Lal developed broad criticisms of foreign aid etc., and those criticisms have been continued in recent years. Specific institutions are criticized for being slow to act, too political, and taking the wrong actions (Stiglitz 2002; for a wide collection see McQuillan and Montgomery 1999). Critics on the left criticize them also especially for interfering with local customs and sovereignty, promoting markets and privatization, and damaging the environment and the position of women (e.g., Danaher 1994). Classical liberals criticize them also for politicizing and clouding public affairs and strengthening and expanding the national government, and for giving free markets, privatization, etc. a bad name (e.g., Bandow and Vásquez 1994; Boettke 1994; Anderson 2004). Others criticize the “Lords of Poverty” for sheer apparatchism, including bureaucracy, waste, cynicism, and exploitation of largesse (Hancock 1989; Irwin 1990). Outside of “the development set” there are many voices calling for abolition of one or more of the institutions (e.g., Anna Schwartz 1998).

Highlighting, as I do here, the money and status that lie behind research is not meant as an exposé. There is no realm of purely independent discourse, unsullied by interests and “biases.” Research is costly and the bills are always paid by someone; discourse is always organized by someone. Beliefs and culture are profoundly characterized by quasi-irreversibility of investment, status-quo bias, non-rivalrous enjoyment, non-excludability, and network effects, so no one should have any illusions about how we would have a pristine Eden of culture if it weren’t for certain evil institutions.

Still, it is proper to document the ties between research and official institutions, if only to provide a touchstone for discussion. Although the World Bank has employed Gabriel Roth and others like him, we should bear in mind that, whatever they might think privately, they generally do not publicly express their views about the institution’s character. There are probably people at the World Bank and IMF who would favor the ending of taxpayer support and any form of governmental privilege, but they probably do not air such views. Former World Bank insider James B.

Burnham (1994: 75) reports that “a surprising amount of [internal analysis] is straightforward and candid in describing and analyzing why bank projects fail,” and former employees like William Easterly of the World Bank (and of the *JDE* editorial board) sometimes come out with sharp criticism. But all such criticism rarely questions whether the institutions should retain their official status and continue to enjoy governmental privileges. The *fundamental* criticism comes mostly from organizations like the Cato Institute and the Hoover Institution, and from independent authors and publishers, not the academic-government complex illuminated here.

Works in the sociology of science, such as *The Intellectual and Social Organization of the Sciences* by the British sociologist Richard Whitley, suggest that scientific communities and cultures are coordination problems that exhibit network externalities, are prone to lock-in, and, especially, can be determined in character and purpose by elite official agencies. Whitley writes:

Co-ordination thus is not just a technical matter of integrating specialist contributions to common goals but involves the organization of programmes and projects in terms of particular priorities and interests. It is a political activity which sets research agenda, determines the allocation of resources, and affects careers in reputational organizations and employment organizations. (Whitley 1984: 88-89)

Although institutional ties do not impose narrow conclusions, it is more than reasonable to suppose that such ties close off, or at least diminish, methods, ideas, and policies that are inhospitable to the missions, purposes, and dignity of the institutions themselves. As Whitley writes:

Within general and sometimes rather diffuse objectives, then, scientists pursue reputations and decide on the significance of results by assessing their contributions to reputational goals. Implicitly or explicitly it is usually assumed that these goals are consonant with, and contributing to, the general mission of the employment organization and funding agencies. . . . By delegating much control over goals and processes to scientists pursuing reputations, funding agencies and government departments have substantially expanded the public

science system and also gained a considerable degree of influence over it. (pp. 297-98)¹

Individuals highly critical of the institutions, maybe believing they should be depoliticized and degovernmentalized as much as possible, are not likely to advance within a field in which such institutions play an integral role. Scientific institutions and cultures exhibit self-reinforcing mechanisms, including screening and selection, self-sorting, preference falsification, intellectual elision, cynicism, and belief adaptation (Kuran 1995).

Richard Whitley's theories of the organization of science and his warnings about the undue influence of governmental institutions are developed mainly in the context of the hard sciences in Britain, where certain "science policy" institutions are central. A U.S. analog is the National Institute of Health for the medical sciences. In development economics, however, the official institutions are more numerous, so the organization of the field might be polycentric. However, insofar as the various institutions treated here are alike in character and mission, and belong to one integrated social network, they might function as a sort of association and exert the kind of influence that Whitley describes for more centralized systems. We should learn more about the development institutions' degree of diversity in character and approach, and about their degree of social integration.

Journal of Development Economics, started in 1974 and published by Elsevier, has been ranked as a leading field journal in development economics (e.g., Kalaitzidakis et al 2002). As such, it helps to define the field. With such close ties to the large governmental agencies, it is unlikely to treat adversarial ideas and judgments. In particular, it is unlikely to be hospitable to spontaneous order economics, an engine of criticism of those agencies. An *Econ Journal Watch* article by Susan Anderson and Peter Boettke (2004) interprets the character of *Journal of Development Economics*.

¹ For an introduction to Whitley's ideas, see Siler 2003.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Again, an author who published two articles in the 2002 issues would generate two “authorships;” authorships are not weighted for co-authorship, so an article with two authors would create two authorships. The six 2002 issues (Vols. 67-69) contained 124 authorships.² For each individual, we sought information about ties to the official development institutions. We distinguished five types of tie: employment, consultancy, grant,³ publication⁴, and presentation.⁵ We drew primarily from three types of sources: (1) resumes and curriculum vitas available on the Web, (2) acknowledgements found in publications and working papers, and (3) the website search-engine of each institution. When we found, say, information about the individual having a consultancy with the World Bank (past or current), we entered the information as a “C” into the appropriate column of a comprehensive Excel file; we did not attempt to measure or record *extent*. That is, an individual who consulted once and an individual who consulted 10 times would both just have a “C” in the World Bank column (as well as possibly other tie indicators). The Excel file with individual’s name redacted is appended here as an Internet link. We will make available the original (un-redacted) version to anyone who will use it discreetly for research and confirmation purposes.

Because the demarcations between employment, consultancy, and grant are vague, here we present those as a single group. They are the primary forms of tie. On top of those are people *without an employment, consultancy, or grant tie to the relevant institution but with publication or presentation ties*. Here the publication and presentation ties are presented together. The darker tops represent those who have *only* such ties. (In most cases, those with the primary forms of tie also have publication and presentation ties).

It should be noted that our data probably understates the true portion of authorships with ties. For several individuals we could not obtain a substantial CV or resume. It should also be noted that a number of the

² The 124 includes all pieces except the Erratum (in Volume 69, Issue 1).

³ The first three categories do not include the honoraria and expense reimbursement that normally accompany presentation and sometimes accompany publication.

⁴ Publication with, say, the World Bank, takes the form of an article, chapter, or book published by the Bank as a stand alone report, a conference volume, a working paper, or a journal article (in *The World Bank Economic Review*).

⁵ Presentation with, say, the World Bank means that the individual’s work has been presented at a Bank conference, meeting, or internal seminar.

JDE authors were junior colleagues who simply have not yet had much opportunity to develop ties to external institutions of any kind.

Figure 1
Known Ties to Official Institutions among 124 JDE Authorships

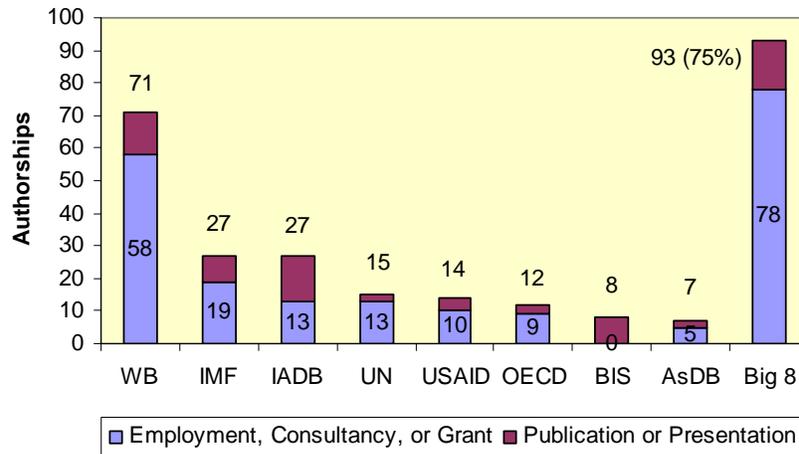


Figure 1 shows the results for what we term the “Big 8”: World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, United Nations, U.S. Agency for International Development, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Bank for International Settlements, and Asian Development Bank. These are simply the official development institutions which showed the most ties. The African Development Bank, for example, does not have on its website an internal site-search engine, and for that reason alone might have not made it into our Big 8. Figure 1 shows that 78 of the 124 authorships (or 63 percent) had employment, consultancy, or grant ties to at least one of the Big 8, and that 93 (or 75 percent) had some form of tie.

Figure 2
Cumulative Ties to Official Institutions among 124 *JDE* Authorships

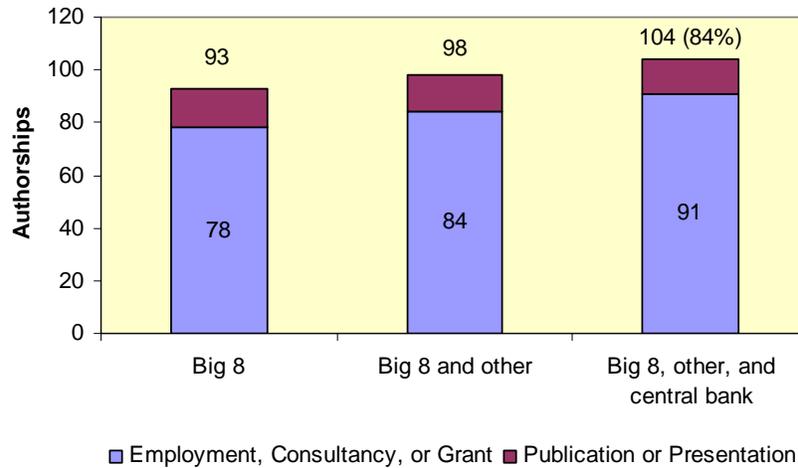
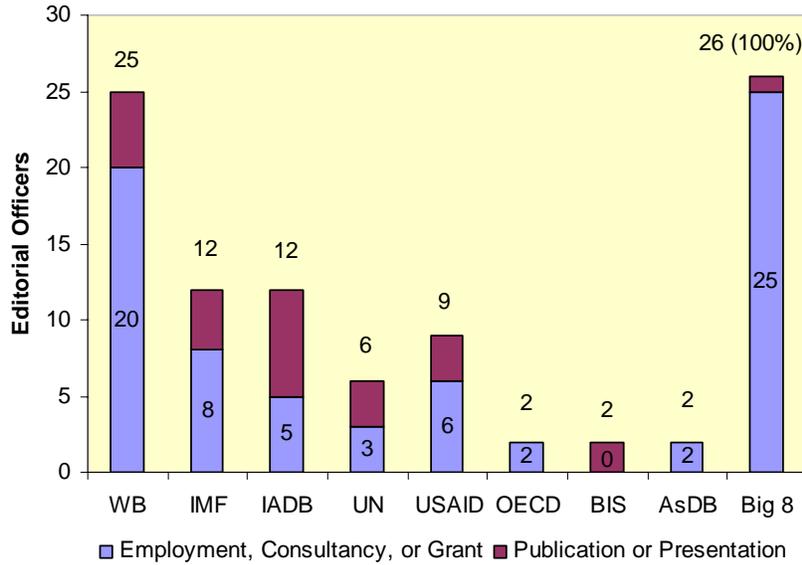


Figure 2 expands the set of official institutions, first by adding an “other” category. “Other” includes the following: WTO/GATT, Canadian International Development Agency, Swedish International Development Agency, German Marshall Fund, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Korean Development Trust, Ethiopian Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, Planning Institute of Jamaica, East-West Center, Centre de Recherche en Economie du Developpement, and International Food Policy Research Institute. The final bar in the figure then adds national central banks; the authors showed ties to the national central banks of the United States, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, England, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, and Spain. Ties for the cumulative set of institutions reach 104, or 84 percent of authorships.

Figure 3
Known Ties to Official Institutions of 26 JDE Editorial Officers



We did the same investigation for the 2002 editorial officers (one Editor, two Co-Editors, one Book Review Editor, and 22 Associate Editors). As shown in Figure 3, 25 of the 26 editorial officers have employment/consultancy/grant ties to at least one of the Big 8, and the 26th has publication/presentation ties. The editors' ties to other institutions and central banks can be gleaned from the Excel sheet, but one should not assume that information found there provides a complete account of actual ties; it surely understates the true extent.

CONCLUSION

Our investigation establishes that the authors and editors of *Journal of Development Economics* have extensive ties to official policy, loan, and grant making institutions dealing with the developing countries. How such ties

affect the character and intellectual content of the field of development economics is another question. It is a question worthy of serious and candid exploration.

APPENDIX 1

[Excel file](#): Institutional ties of 2002 *JDE* authorships and editorial officers, with individual names redacted. (We will make available the original (un-redacted) version to anyone who will use it discreetly for research and confirmation purposes.)

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