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Lost in translation: development politics in between the spaces of 'the cultural'

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This paper suggests a theoretical framework of different spaces of 'the cultural' in order to assess recent changes towards more culturally minded policies in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). I trace the ideational transition of 'the cultural' in development from the modernist, economistic discourse of culture to the postmodern rise of 'the cultural' in its own right and show how these two concepts are intertwined with two spaces of 'the cultural': on the one hand the discursively constructed Other Space of the economistic discourse, on the other hand the Self Space of the cultural langue. I argue that we are currently entering a third phase in this transition which sees the attempt of a re-negotiation of 'the cultural' in a critical engagement between Self Space and Other Space which produces what Homi Bhabha calls an 'interstitial Third Space'. The necessary translation between Self Space and Other Space engenders a Third Space of cultural hybridity marked by the indeterminacy of perpetually negotiated in-betweenness – a space of 'the cultural' which is lost in translation.

"What do you do?"
"I'm not sure yet, actually."

1 Culture in development: distinct spaces of 'the cultural'

With the mounting diffusion of postmodern thought human geography took what is now commonly addressed as a 'cultural turn' in the mid-1990s. The contribution of this turn to the 'progress' of the discipline has been evaluated ambiguously (e. g. Hamnett 2001; Martin 2001; Mitchell 2000): While some saw the looming danger of a conversion of human geography into a pseudo-philosophical, a-political playground for lofty theorists, others welcomed the new emphasis on relativism and individuality, and interpreted the postmodern impetus as a reassertion of 'the local', owing to the postmodern focus on the contextuality of culture and cultural knowledge. But the cultural turn did not merely herald the dawn of a new age of idiographic research. In the field of human development, it signified a growing concern with culture in its own right as the source and legitimation of development and, concomitantly, a concern with empowerment to guarantee cultural liberty and defend it against marginalisation and oppression emanating from global hegemonic discourses (e. g. Curry 2003; Peet 2002; Rew 2003; Rocheleau et al. 2003).

The cultural turn in the academe was accompanied by a partly nascent, partly renascent attention to culture in development politics at around the same time. In 1995 the World Commission on Culture and Development, chaired by the Secretary General of the United Nations from 1982 to 1991, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, presented the 300-page volume Our Cultural Diversity as the product of three years' work in which it highlighted 'culture as the "last frontier" in development' (UNESCO 1995). It was accompanied by the foundation of a book series on culture and development with contributors mainly from developing countries (see, for example, Saraswati 1996 and 1997). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has picked up on this surge of culture and, among others, in 2004 published a Human Develop-

ment Report on cultural liberty. Most recently, however, it has also been the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the so-called Bretton Woods Twins, who have moved to join the cultural standard bearers by writing 'culture' on their still heavily economistic banners. It looks as though we are bearing witness to a newly emerging definition of 'the cultural' in development, propagated on the part of organisations which are firmly rooted in mainstream development discourse.

Culture has become *en vogue* in both the academic and the political world of development, no doubt. This article looks at the different concepts of the spatiality of 'the cultural' that meet in the field of development. It builds on the notion of communicatively produced spaces and distinguishes three spaces of 'the cultural': On the one hand there is what I call the postmodern *Self Space* of the cultural langue, on the other hand the transnational development organisations such as the Bretton Woods Twins have, over the past few decades, constructed an *Other Space* of the economistic discourse of 'the cultural'. If the Bretton Woods Twins now aim to 'give equal weight' (World Bank 1999) to culture and economy in their policies, they start to negotiate, I argue, a new space of 'the cultural' which lies somewhere in between the two other spaces. As this re-negotiation takes place a translation between Self Space and Other Space has to occur; a translation which opens up an interstitial *Third Space*.

In this paper I would like to set forth a theoretical way of conceptualising these three spaces of 'the cultural'. In doing so, I juxtapose 'the economic' in the modernist discourse of 'the cultural' as prevalent in mainstream development to the postmodern rise of 'the cultural' in its own right. Drawing on recent and historical sources I construct two distinct languages of thinking and talking about the role of culture in development; two languages which at the same time engender two distinct spaces of 'the cultural': Self and Other Space. While Gramscian concepts of subalternity and hegemony have been used before to theoretically frame discourses and power relations in development and international relations (Cox 1983; Peet 2002), I argue that with the recent attempts of a re-negotiation of 'the cultural' between the postmodern langue and the economistic discourse we are witnessing a distinctly new process which I call 'translation'. Conceptualising this process not only as a translation between two languages, but at the same time between two spaces I strive to expand the theoretical framework in which to think this spatial translation and the new interstitial Third Space it engenders. For this purpose I employ two concepts from linguistics as conceptual underpinnings: First, the Sapir-Whorf-Hypothesis which adopts a view of linguistic determinism and surmises that different languages uniquely and incommensurably structure perception and expression of their speakers and second, William Quine's linguo-philosophical notion of the 'indeterminacy of translation'.

2 Theoretical prelude: langue, discourse and Third Space

For the purpose of this article I propose a linguistic conceptualisation of space transcending traditional notions of Euclidean space and more recent ones of social space going back to Lefebvre (1974/1991) (e. g. Allen/Massey 1984; Elden 2001; Massey 1999). Consequently, the spaces of 'the cultural' are viewed as textual spaces which do not exist as an ontological category *a priori* but are continually communicatively produced and reproduced and serve as a medium of communication (Miggelbrink 2002). In advancing this linguistic conceptualisation of the location of culture, however, I explicitly do recognise the validity of Schlottmann's (2003) propositions: This conceptualisation does not claim holistic supremacy or supplant previous ones but is rather perceived as a proposition that presents certain facets of the spaces of 'the cultural' more adequately than others.

When necessary to avoid ambiguity I use the terms 'the economic' or 'the cultural' to refer to the ideas of economy and culture, taking up

Castree's recent intervention (2004) which advocates a separation of the ontological concepts of the two terms from their meaning constructed in their respective languages. I draw on Foucault (1969/1972) to distinguish between modernist discourse in development, which is fundamentally characterised by 'the economic', and the postmodern langue in development, which refers to 'the cultural'. While the sole function of discourse is to serve as a transparent representation of the ideas and things which are located outside it and hence is outward in its orientation, the direction of meaning in language (*langue*) for Foucault is entirely inward. Langue unfolds in the context of the cultural environment and hypothesises a direct correspondence between signifier and signified. It is conceived as mimetic of the world, whereas discourse constitutes a delocalised representation of the world with an arbitrary nexus between signifier and signified.

In this vein, I adopt Homi Bhabha's notion of Third Space who, in his 1994 monograph *The Location of Culture*, conceptualises culture as neither unitary in itself nor as dualistic in a self/other dichotomy and rejects any material notion of culture. Instead, he erects a wholly linguistic framework to think the production and reflection of culture in a process of liminal negotiation placing culture in 'in-between' spaces of *différance* (for the concept of in-betweenness in German geography cf. also Lossau 2000). 'Space is thus not conceived as a structure underlying the postmodern world but as a symptom of its dynamic, mutating pathologies' (Rose 1995, p. 369). Bhabha interprets particular constitutions of space as constitutive of particular knowledges of the Self and the Other. Self Space as produced by the cultural langue, i. e. culture's own space in which it resides and the discursively constructed Other Space of 'the cultural' which consists of representations of 'the cultural' from the Self Space can engage in perpetual negotiation from which an interstitial Third Space arises. This birth of Third Space from negotiation and re-negotiation between Self and Other involves an act of translation between cultural langue and economistic discourse. This translation unrolls Third Space based on the 'enunciative split' (Bhabha 1994, pp. 36–39):

> 'The linguistic difference that informs any cultural performance is dramatized in the common semiotic account of the disjuncture between the subject of a proposition (*énoncé*) and the subject of enunciation, which is not represented in the statement but which is the acknowledgement of its discursive embeddedness and address, its cultural positionality, its reference to a present time and a specific space. ... The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space ... [a]nd by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves.'

In the tradition of postcolonial theory, Homi Bhabha's spaces of 'the cultural' are a profoundly political project in which he subjects the practice of the politics of culture to new languages of theoretical critique and renders space a central problematic of cultural politics (Peet 1997; Rose 1995). He creates appositional cultural politics in the hegemonic relationship of Self Space and Other Space but then offers the possibility of cultural hybridity which opens up to entertain cultural difference in a Third Space without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.

In this paper I mimic Bhabha's layout of the spaces of 'the cultural': I refer to discourse and langue and juxtapose notions of 'the cultural' from the field of development and how they evolved and changed over time. In the two ensuing sections I trace the role of culture in development in the modernist discourse of 'the cultural' in development which frames the world in one economistic picture and subsequently make a foray into the notion of 'the cultural' as it unfolds in the wake of postmodern thinking. I then proceed to introduce the new role culture is set to assume in development politics according to recent policy statements of the World Bank and the IMF. Section 5 finally weaves these threads together and constructs the theoretical scaffolding to understand how development policy tries to translate between two distinct spaces of 'the cultural' – a translation which gives birth to a new interstitial Third Space.

3 Other Space: modernist development discourse

"Isn't it weird there are no street names in Tokyo ... you'd think a city like this would have street names ... you need a map to get anywhere."

The relationship between 'the cultural' and development has undergone significant changes in the past century up to now. Back at the beginning of the 20th century what is now called 'the South' was referred to as the uncivilised world and the reason for its backwardness – or underdevelopment – was believed to be its culture or rather the lack thereof (Schech/Haggis 2000). It was only in 1949 that the term 'development' in the sense of 'escaping under-development in poor countries' became firmly established when the then President of the United States Harry Truman in his inaugural address paved the way for what later became known and criticised as a development discourse constructing an entirely Western representation of development which apotheosises the role of 'the economic'. It is at this point of the 'invention of under-development' or the beginning of the 'development project' (Esteva 1992, p. 6; McMichael 1996, p. 35) where my enquiry into the function of culture in modernist development starts.

While Valdés (2002, p. 33) dates the discovery of culture as an integral part of development back to 1982, articulations of the principal role culture should assume in the development process can already be found in a 1951 publication compiled by UNESCO. Even though the view of culture presented at that time still somewhat emphasises the material component and implies progressive stages of cultural development, it also incorporates the non-material aspects of a wider definition of culture. Above all, at this early stage it recognises a principle that would be largely ignored by mainstream development in the following decades:

> 'The right to culture is therefore an individual one. It is the human right of every people to reveal its soul, to express itself freely. And it is a permanent right. ... Finally, we may say that the right to culture is ... the ultimate right of all peoples. ... It is the most important factor in the development of their internal freedom' (Arciniegas 1951, p. 33 f.).

Yet in the same year UNESCO's parent organisation embarked on the following policy:

> 'There is a sense in which rapid economic progress is impossible without painful adjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of caste, creed and race have to burst (...)' (United Nations, Department of Social and Economic Affairs 1951 quoted in Escobar 1995a, p. 3).

When the United Nations in the above statement are talking of 'bonds of caste, creed and race' they are implicitly referring to culture. Cultural conformation to the West was the consequence the rallying cry of 'economic modernisation at any cost' implicitly entailed; and economists of that time were not reluctant to spell this out explicitly. Jagdish Bhagwati in 1966 contended that

> 'many of the currently underdeveloped countries are starting out with a deadweight of ... sociological handicaps .... Cultural traditions are frequently incompatible with the pursuit of material improvement' (1966, p. 39 f.).

Yet more telling is the conclusion that contemporaries drew from this analysis stating that 'cultural values may well crumble away and be so rearranged as ... to reinforce economic change' (Pepelasis/Mears/Adelman 1961, p. 162). Economists at that time advocated a 'big push' to achieve cultural change and were called upon to 'fight tooth and nail any line of argument that might result in a reversion to gradualism as a basis for development policy' (Higgins 1968, p. 266).

The idea of cultural change, even cultural engineering, thus is inextricably tied up with what Gillian Hart (2001, p. 650) calls 'big D' Development, the project of post-war modernisation, as opposed to 'small d' development as an incremental process. Big D Development equates development with economic growth, exploits it for pursuing global political interests (Chomsky 1969) and, ignoring its own socio-cultural mooring (Schech 2003), knits Development as a specifically Western, economistic

discourse. Considering the pervasiveness of 'the economic' in Western development thinking the discipline of economics itself can be likened to a culture of its own, a foreign culture that was imposed on developing countries (Taylor 1985). Therefore it would be wrong to claim that early mainstream development did not mind about culture altogether. However, it adopted a crudely instrumentalist and Western-centric stance devising its own notion of 'the cultural' to fit into the economistic discourse (Mehmet 1995).

Since its very inception in the immediate post-war years development has been primarily concerned with economic modernisation following a Western model. The modernist, economistic discourse of development that emerged constructs its own Other Space of 'the cultural', which maps culture as an instrument onto the economistic canvas. Voices of culture that do not conform to this framework are not and cannot be heard. The host culture, however, was perceived as a hindrance to development as economic growth and constructed as inferior to be detained in a distinct Other Space. It was with the appearance of postmodern epistemology that this discourse was gradually unravelled, culture was given a voice and a thorough re-orientation of the relationship between 'the cultural' and development was made conceivable in which a new space of 'the cultural' could unfold.

4 Self Space: postmodern langue

"Can you keep a secret? I'm trying to organise a prison break. We have to first get out of this bar, then the hotel, then the city, and then the country. Are you in or you out?"
"I'm in."

While modernism regards culture as an instrument of preferably economic development, postmodernism entirely deconstructs this conventional notion of 'the cultural' and development, indeed turns it upside down.

Postmodern theory departs from the unity of the modernist discourse to arrive at a stage where, just to name some pivotal characteristics, meta-narratives are replaced by *petits récits* – micro-narratives (Lyotard 1984); heterogeneity, the presence and coexistence of different features are stressed (Jameson 1991); a stage where the focus is on the local, the people, the grassroots (Esteva/Prakash 1998) and thus a stage that sees the resurgence of 'the cultural' in its own right and not as a mere *addendum* to economic development. In this vein, the cultural langue that emerges produces an oppositional Self Space to the homogenising discursive Other Space.

The cultural langue and its adaptation for development have also been dubbed 'post-development' denoting specifically the opposition to mainstream Development (e. g. Escobar 1995a/b; Sachs 1992). Postdevelopment selectively embraced the postmodern epistemology and forged it into something immediately relevant for the field of development (Müller 2006 forthcoming). It started off as a radical reaction to the development dilemmas modernity presented: The hegemonic economistic discourse of the North is seen to prompt a Westernisation and homogenisation annihilating cultural difference and pushing cultures into a position of marginalised subalternity (Escobar 1995a/b).

Post-development unveils the idea of 'big D' Development and lays bare the teleological meta-narrative installed behind it that upholds the Western project of Development as a means of escaping under-Development (Esteva 1992). At the same time the totalising development discourse constructs and deploys from a hegemonically superior position a linguistic notion of development which legitimises extant development practice and cements the status quo of power relations. In this vein, Development has become an institutionalised discourse reproducing ever-new images to fortify the Other Space of 'the cultural', both reifying and reinforcing the development metaphor by constructing a whole science that deals with Development.

Postdevelopment spurns Development not only on the grounds of the results which it failed to deliver but also on its intentions. It does not look for alternative development 'as a deodorant' to cover the stench of development, though (Esteva 1985, p. 78). Thus, and in this it is unique

among all the calls for different development, it constitutes a searing rejection of the dominant regime of development. But not in order to supplant it with yet another paradigm but to deconstruct the whole notion of development altogether (Latouche 1993; Rist 1997; Sachs 1992).

In its concern for power relations post-development considers the exclusion of the people, which comes with the hegemony of the modernist discourse, as one of the major flaws (Escobar 1995a). Consequently, it calls for a return of culture as a means of liberation from the oppressive Other culture (Manzo 1995) that is propagated by the hegemonic modernist discourse:

> 'If I knew for a certainty that a man was coming to my house with the conscious design of doing me good, I should run for my life...for fear that I should get some of his good done to me' (Thoreau 1977, p. 328).

The prime achievement of postmodernism for the culture-development-nexus is to have turned the mirror on the culture of the beholder and thus to have adopted an approach of cultural relativism. The most extreme versions have opted for a stance that could be described as cultural radicalism where culture is instituted as virtually untouchable and beyond all interference whatsoever on the part of development (e. g. Esteva/Prakash 1998). In fact, this distinctly postmodern view was already advanced more than fifty years ago in the field of development economics, a field that nowadays still remains largely unimpressed by development critique: Boeke in 1954 concluded that the biggest favour the Western world could do the developing countries is to leave them alone (Boeke 1954).

5 Third Space: the new politics of culture

"Why do you have to be with your opposite, why can't similar people be together?"
"Because that would be too easy ..."

Mainstream development and 'the cultural'

In this section I am pulling together the threads of the previous sections to construct the theoretical scaffolding in which to frame the Bretton Woods Twins' recent policy changes. The application of Foucauldian discourse theory and Gramscian concepts of subalternity and hegemony to international organisations and their discursive spaces has been done before and there is no great enlightenment in rehashing them here at a length that goes beyond what is necessary to understand my ensuing argument which unfolds mainly at the policy level.

The relationship of mainstream development and 'the cultural' has passed through two different stages. The first one could be described in Gramscian terms as the stage of subalternity and corresponds to the economistic concept of development as outlined in section 3 of this paper. To sum up that section and couch it in more theoretical terms, 'the cultural' has played a subaltern role in modernist development by remaining excluded from the established discursive Other Space of development representation. I am with Spivak (1988, 1996) who furthered Gramsci's concept of subalternity positing that it does not only mean marginalisation but that 'within the definition of subalternity as such there is a certain not-being-able-to-speech act that is implicit' (Spivak 1996, p. 290). Spivak holds that the subaltern is not able to speak since its very condition is devoid of an authentic speaker-listener exchange. In this subaltern condition the voice of culture, or rather the myriad voices of culture, were not listened to or echoed by modernist development, mutual engagement or attempts at a dialogue have never been established.

In this sense subalternity is different from the second stage in which culture's existence in its own right in the Self Space of 'the cultural' is acknowledged and framed by the postmodern langue. 'The cultural' moves to transcend the stage of muteness, acquires a voice and enters the system in the Self Space as a counter-hegemonic movement to the hegemonic Other Space of mainstream development, as pointed out in section 4. It is no longer shunned and invisible but engages in negotiations with the hegemonic (Strinati 1995). However, this dialectic engagement is single-handedly led by the globally hegemonic economistic discourse in development, woven and buttressed foremost by the World Bank and the IMF. These two international organisations act as the pace setters for producing the globally hegemonic Other Space and fend off every counter-hegemonic attempt which would question or withstand the hegemonic steamroller. Through their policy measures and the instituted primacy of the market the Bretton Woods Twins were able to impose their hegemonic models of development on countries in a negotiated consensus which relegates culture to a passive recipient to be superformed by the inevitably dominant economistic discourse. This constitutes a *topos* which Cox, taking up Gramsci's ideas, calls 'trasformismo' (1983, p. 173) – an automatic hegemonic mechanism to absorb and assimilate dangerous ideas and thus to keep oppressing counter-hegemonic tendencies (Cox 1983; Escobar 1995a; Peet 2002, 2003).

What we are currently witnessing is the transition to a third stage which moves beyond mere dialogue in that it is characterised by even communication and the attempt at a translation between elements of the postmodern langue and mainstream development. In academic work, the re-formulation of the relationship between 'the cultural' and development has taken on different forms, which are summarised by Gasper (1996). Post-development's opposition to the economistic modernist discourse and the postmodern emphasis on 'the cultural' have had a discernible bearing on recent publications that proclaim the 'culturing of development studies' or 'economic development as part of a people's culture', in short – publications that claim for culture *a* but not *the* major part in development (Gasper 1996; Schech/Haggis 2000; Schech 2003; UNESCO 1995).

Approaches of this kind turn to indigenous practices and knowledge as co-foundations for alternative development (Agrawal 1995; Verhelst 1990), favour community-based approaches to development (Goldman 2003), emphasise and defend empowerment and participation (Chambers 1994; Parfitt 2004), attend to livelihood and vulnerability issues (Korf 2004; Tröger 2003) or link sustainability and indigenous knowledge (Croll/Parkin 1992; Fairhead/Leach 1998), all of which are approaches that account for the increased importance of culture without scrapping the idea of development as a teleological process altogether. They do not interpret postmodern thinking in the radical, all-annihilating way but rather try to make its criticism work for local practice and policy (cf. Müller 2006 forthcoming).

New development politics of 'the cultural'

In development politics, recent policy changes in the World Bank and the IMF indicate a move towards increased cultural sensitivity; or at least so the policy statements go. While UNDP and UNESCO have been addressing culture in development in various forms since at least the 1980s and now put additional emphasis on this issue, the recent interest in culture on the part of the Bretton Woods Twins is far more notable. Development policy as represented by the Bretton Woods Twins had a hard time in the 1990s. Although at the start of the 1990s 'neoliberal orthodoxy appeared as an impregnable fortress cemented in place by the Washington Consensus' (Hart 2001, p. 651), sustained attacks from the camps of development theory (e. g. Sachs 1992) and later also practice (Ishikawa 1994; Milanovic 2003; Stiglitz 2002) have made the walls of the Washington Consensus crumble. Moreover, the dubious record of the Structural Adjustment Programs (Weisbrot et al. 2001) and a number of economic crises in the 1990s, notably the Mexican crisis in 1994/95 and the Asian crisis in 1997/98, seem to have had an impact on mainstream development policy.

Ideas of a new paradigm of development policy began to gel and in 1998 the then Chief Economist of the World Bank, Joseph Stiglitz, announced a new Post-Washington Consensus (Oosterlynck 2004; Stiglitz 1998). The World Bank Annual Report 1999 puts it this way:

> 'That vision, now known as the Comprehensive Development Framework, builds on these ideas: It suggests a holistic approach to development that recognizes the importance of macroeconomic fundamentals but

> gives equal weight to the institutional, structural, and social underpinnings of a robust market economy. It emphasizes strong partnerships among governments, donors, civil society, the private sector, and other development actors. Perhaps most important, the country is in the driver's seat, both "owning" and directing the developing agenda ...' (World Bank 1999).

One of the major pillars of this new policy is to incorporate social and cultural factors and to respect that they translate into specific institutions in different countries (Hayami 2003; Toye 2003). The new guidelines of the IMF explicitly mention the 'complementarity of macroeconomic, structural, and social policies' that will be given greater recognition (IMF 2000). Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) were introduced by the World Bank in 1999 as a framework for debt relief and access to funding from multilateral and bilateral donors. Most recently, in August 2004 the World Bank carried out a major remake of its Adjustment Lending renaming it Development Policy Lending after a three-year discussion process. Under the new policy World Bank lending is set to have a longer-term focus and to transfer ownership of development policies to the respective countries. This novel move addresses one of the core themes of postmodern thinking stating that 'there is no one blueprint for reform that will work in all countries' (World Bank 2004), or: 'first that as a rule one policy for the whole country is not possible, and second that what is beneficial for one section of society may be harmful for the other.' This, once again, is Boeke in 1954 (p. 293).

This marks the departure from earlier policies that exhibited a paternalistic, uniform top-down character and were characterised by stringent conditionality. Under the new approach states develop their own national poverty reduction strategies, which are to be nationally owned through a process of broad-based participation from, amongst others, civil society organisations. Bottom-up movements in designing poverty reduction programmes are positively encouraged in a process of empowerment of the local people. The World Development Report 2000/2001 aimed to adopt a broader approach to poverty and to give a voice to the poor whose participation in the negotiation of a common space of 'the cultural' did not seem to be a matter of particular endeavour before (Narayan et al. 2000; World Bank 2000). In other words, the universal re-appearance of the broader idea of partnership in development as a relationship of reciprocity and dialogue is instituted on the agenda of development policy once again – this time more vigorously than ever before. While the Bretton Woods Twins' new cultural clothes have already drawn considerable criticism (e. g. Mercer 2003; Sanchez/Cash 2003) and would certainly merit a separate paper, the following broad strokes to sketch the social capital debate at the World Bank shall suffice to draw up the setting.

The social capital debate at the World Bank

Social capital can be conceptualised as those social relationships that facilitate collective action in the public interest and thus contribute to institutional and economic development (Evans 1997; Putnam 1993). It builds on intrinsic cultural norms like trust and reciprocity for development. Social capital accumulation is an intrinsically local-level process and one of the few sources of capital available to the poor and those with fewer power resources (Fox/Gershman 2000).

Bebbington et al. (2004) frame the evolution of the World Bank's policy engagement with social capital as a struggle of competing discourses on the 'battlefield of knowledge' (Long/Long 1992). Dissolving the black box model of the World Bank as one unified actor they shed light on institutional self-doubt within the World Bank and the negotiation of the social capital concept between the extremes of economistic discourse and cultural langue. They show how in 1996 the 'cultural group' in the World Bank and their ideas were tamed by economists who tried to link up social capital with economic development. This quantification of social capital on the other hand attracted the ire of critical observers who regarded it as an inappropriate application and decontextualisation of the concept.

However, to secure the influence of the analytical concept of social capital in the World Bank a marriage to the empowerment and poverty agenda was proposed which resulted in the prominent mention of social capital in the World Development Report 2000/2001 and an operational coupling of participation, empowerment and social capital. The link from theory and conceptual resolutions to practice, however, proves to be highly vulnerable. Fox/Gershman (2000) find that seven in ten analysed social capital projects stipulated by the World Bank failed due to an essential mismatch of theory and practical implementation. Nevertheless, just to mention one example, increasingly NGOs have been integrated as project partners in local communities in order to fulfil a cultural advocacy role on the part of the community.

Bebbington et al. (2004) conclude that the frontier of the speakable in the social capital debate in the World Bank has been pushed further over time, that the 'world of acceptable statements and utterances' has changed (Ferguson 1990, p. 18). Through the negotiation of the highly contested concept of social capital it is also the space of 'the cultural' which is renegotiated between economistic discourse and cultural langue and assumes a new form. The crux lies in framing the renewed interest mainstream development exhibits in culture and in cultural policy theoretically.

Negotiating a Third Space

The novel emphasis on participation, civil society, empowerment, bottom-up processes and partnership suggests that a re-negotiation of the concept of 'the cultural' is currently taking place in which the two formerly distinct spheres of Self and Other Space seem to be moving closer towards each other in an act of critical engagement. Speaking with Bhabha, a hybrid cultural space is in the process of emersion; a space that is neither Self nor Other Space. How do the new cultural clothes of IMF and World Bank fit into this framework?

Undoubtedly, on the part of IMF and World Bank there seems to be a willingness, if judged by their policy statements, to engage critically with the Self Space of the cultural langue. In the course of this critical engagement culture is liminally negotiated into the interstices of Third Space and is metamorphosed into a hybrid culture: It is pulled out from its Self Space and engages in interaction with Other Space creating interstices of *difference* where culture is neither the One nor the Other. This hybrid culture opens up the possibility of a new politics of cultural difference as opposed to cultural diversity. 'Cultural difference is not about mapping diversity across the territory of Western space, but rather about moments of opacity when the regulatory surveillance of that space fails' (Rose 1995, p. 369; cf. also Mitchell 1997; Young 1995). The politics of culture based on the Third Space of 'the cultural' eludes the trap of polarity and ascribes to culture an active role in negotiating this Third Space. It therefore transcends the politics of cultural diversity in which culture assumes the function of a passive object of pre-given knowledge (Bhabha 1994).

The recent will to change policies in development creates the potential for a Third Space which sees the liberation of culture from its previous subservient role. It embodies a dynamic space of transformational encounters and mutual critical engagement imbued with the contradictions, ambivalences and ambiguities of both sides (Routledge 1996). Its nature of indeterminacy leaves it in constant flux of negotiation through which two distinct spaces are brought together. This confluence makes necessary an act of constant translation between the spaces of 'the cultural' for the thinking of which linguistic concepts can be useful.

The philosopher-linguist Quine puts the concept of translation succinctly: '[O]ne sentence is a translation of another if it expresses the same idea, the same thought, the same meaning, the same proposition' (1974, p. 36). In the 1950s the Sapir-Whorf-Hypothesis became popular which, in its moderate form, avers that different languages structure and shape the thoughts and behaviour of individuals in different ways and allow them to articulate different concepts. Hence, when translating from one language into another there are certain thoughts that can be expressed in the first language but cannot be transferred to the second one without a loss of

meaning, without essentially flawing the idea. Quine argues that it is a bundle of analytical hypotheses which constitutes the parameter of translation and that only within the terms of a theory or a conceptual scheme those analytical hypotheses *may* be identical and thus lead to an adequate translation (1960). For all other cases, however, Quine introduced the term 'indeterminacy of translation' (Harman 1969). It is this very indeterminacy, which is the linguistic counterpart of Third Space, through which Third Space is called into being; it causes the interstices between different sets of analytical hypotheses to appear, disappear and reappear in perpetual oscillation between the Here and the There – lost in translation.

6 Lost in translation

In this paper I have explored the theoretical underpinnings for the recent adoption of more culturally minded policies by the World Bank and the IMF. I have sketched in broad lines the role of culture in development and how modernist development discourse relegates culture to an instrument in the toolbox of economics. In contrast, the postmodern langue of talking about culture in development perceives culture as the embodiment of the local element, as the thick fabric from which development is woven. In the same vein, there exist two distinct spaces of 'the cultural': the Self Space of the cultural langue and the Other Space of the economistic discourse.

The core argument that I have developed in this paper reads as follows: With the implementation of their new policies the IMF and the World Bank have set out to initiate a critical engagement between Self and Other Space; a critical engagement which necessarily asks for a translation between the two spaces. With this attempted translation the role of culture in development enters a distinctly new phase which sees the rise of what Homi Bhabha termed Third Space, a liminally negotiated, interstitial space into which Self and Other Space are translated. The indeterminacy that accompanies the translation reflects the dynamic nature of constant flux engendering a new Third Space hybrid culture – lost in translation.

As much as these spaces of 'the cultural' are able to form an adequate scaffolding to grasp the spatialities of 'the cultural' in the politics of culture in development – they remain highly abstract concepts which are devoid of immediate normative implications. Rather, they map out a framework within which to think the negotiation of spaces and through which to analyse the process of their communicative construction. Third Space draws up a space for cultural difference which rules out any hegemonic relationship but accords culture an active, authoritative part in a cultural politics of a perpetual process of displacement and disjuncture.

In the case of development politics, several authors (e. g. Fox 1997; Fox/Gershman 2000) have recorded the obstacles the World Bank was faced with when it tried to intervene as a global organisation at the local level of social capital formation. The linguistic, delocalised Other Space of 'the cultural' was confronted with local social relationships that constructed a Self Space that subverted the discursive Other Space, turned it upside down and thus made necessary a renegotiation of the concept of 'the cultural'. In the same vein, the Other Space was challenged at the organisational level by an anti-economistic opposition within the World Bank which also engaged it in a redefinition. In this vortex of competing meanings Third Space emerges as a continually contested space which is produced in the loop of disruption and rapprochement. This is where the interconnections with conceptualisations of space other than textual ones loom high: Although the spaces of 'the cultural' as presented here are a purely linguistic concept, they are not beyond formative interference from social processes.

"I'm stuck. Does it get easier?"
*"No. Yes. It gets easier."**

* Quotes from Sofia Coppola's motion picture 'Lost in Translation' (2003).

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