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Creating Authority over Remittances: Development Experts and the Framing of Remittances as a Development Tool

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Expertise is commonly understood as the possession of experience and deep knowledge about a subject. By definition the expert is an “authority” in the matter, and thus is given the last word when it comes to her subject. But how do we designate and recognize an expert in the first place? What are the certifying practices and institutions? How does expertise become authorized? How does expertise provide certain moral and cognitive authority over others?

Authority can arise from: 1) structural positions, e.g., a position of control and supervision such as that of a parent, manager, factory floor supervisor, or elected official; 2) belonging to a dominant group or category (Tilly 1998); 3) intrinsic or perceived qualities or behaviors such as distinction, prestige, charisma, nobility, ability, or merit; 4) claims on pastoral knowledge on how to save, lead, aid, cure, care, and protect a subject (Sennett 1980; Eyal 2003); and 5) how certain expertise and technical knowledge is adjudicated as legitimate and useful for the public good by the state; e.g., the historical rise and legitimation of disciplines such as demography, economics, accounting, sociology, criminology, social work, or statistics (Latour 2007: 6; Foucault 1991). This chapter will focus on this last type of authority. To understand why a certain expert discourse that touches on issues of policy, government and administration becomes prominent, we have to look for answers outside of the empirical questions and scientific processes and look into the political and social context. Since “the speed of political decision-making is faster than the speed of scientific consensus formation” (Collins and Evans 2002), the side of the debate that initially gains the support of funders and ideological entrepreneurs outside of academia increases its overall influence both inside and outside core circles of scientific expertise (MacKenzie et al. 2007).

This chapter will show: a) how experts are empowered by being aligned with powerful interests, actors, and institutions and how their discourses and expertise get authorized; and b) how powerful interests make use of certain convenient truth-claims to further their own agendas. This argument may seem tautological because it refers to a self-reinforcing circular mechanism whereby power sites authorize certain knowledge, and whereby this knowledge legitimizes their authority. Expertise creates authority because certified and authorized knowledge can provide moral authority, “reasons of state” (Scott 1998), rationales to the powerful to implement policies that they had conceived previously but for which they may need a new expert discourse to act on society when the conditions are right (Portes 1997).

This chapter analyzes the framing of a bottom-up phenomenon as a domain for top-down control by developmental experts. It is yet another example of *metis*, local knowledge (Scott 1998) supplanted by bureaucratic reasoning and management (Foucault 1991). It documents the change in the framing of remittance recipients from populations in need to individuals who must take personal responsibility for their survival (Somers and Bloc 2005). This reframing is part of a coordinated campaign by experts interested in claiming jurisdiction over remittances to justify their intervention, on technical and moral grounds, as a means to drive development by quantifying remittances, reframing their meaning, and creating new financial products around them.

This chapter uses the concept of "discourse" following Michel Foucault, who was not interested in a set of "true" or "correct" theories *per se* but in how ideas were reproduced and dispersed (Foucault 1972: 21-55, 79-105, cited in Bockman and Eyal 2002: 313). As Bockman and Eyal (2002) elaborate, certain discourses are perpetuated because they become part of the way we think about certain things. It analyzes the new discourse around remittances and economic development and the mechanisms and networks that spread it. The events described exemplify ongoing processes of conceptual reframing by organizations and self-proclaimed experts who are mobilizing resources to gain authority over social practices by altering future policy discussions on the matter. While discussing remittances, this analysis is applicable to other areas where authoritative expertise is produced.

Foreign aid, now also called official development assistance or poverty reduction loans, are the resources that rich countries and development banks give to developing countries with the explicit goal of producing economic development. William Easterly, a development economist who worked for sixteen years at the World Bank, recounts:

> There is now a regular cycle in the literature on foreign aid and growth. Someone will survey the evidence and find that foreign aid does not produce growth. There will be some to-and-fro in the literature, in the course of which a few studies will find a positive effect of aid on growth. Foreign aid agencies will then seize upon the positive effect, usually focusing on only one study, and will publicize it widely. Researchers will examine the one positive result more carefully and find it is spurious. Then there will be more to-and-fro in the literature, and a new twist will be discovered under which aid has a positive effect…Aid agencies will seize on this result again, and the cycle will begin all over again… The point is, that the policy community chose to believe the finding that was most favorable to the aid policies it wanted to implement (Easterly 2006: 44-46).

Below I will show how a similar cycle to growth and foreign aid exists around economic growth and remittances. Remittances are the resources that people working abroad send to their families in their places of origin. According to an official tally by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) remittances amounted to more than $337 billion dollars[1] in 2007, with over $251 billion going to developing countries (Ratha et al. 2008).

Mexican emigrants sent more than $23 billion in 2006 (MIF 2007; Ratha et al. 2008). Chinese and Indian diasporas sent similar amounts (Koser 2007). These figures are underestimations since many remittances go through informal channels or are carried in person and thus go unreported. In many developing countries, official figures for aggregate remittances tend to surpass foreign direct investment (FDI), foreign aid, and income from tourism. In recent years it is common for articles on remittances to first report their size, to then provide predictions about the economic development and "poverty reduction" that is to result from them if the right interventions occur. Remittances flows are indeed increasing, but only recently have developmental economists gained hegemony describing them in ways that serve their own agendas and expertise.

The debate over whether migration and the resulting remittances can foster economic development is an old and contentious one that has passed through many dialectical phases. For example, Frank Laczko, Head of Research and Publications of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) states that:

> In recent years… there has been a shift in thinking about the relationship between migration and development. Traditionally, migration was seen as a problem with negative implications for development. Today, there is a *growing recognition* that migration and migrants can enhance a country's development. One of the factors which contributed to this change in thinking is the *growing recognition* of the importance of remittances (Ghosh 2006, emphasis my own).

Notice the circular argument about the "growing recognition" of the importance of remittances for development. We hear a similar story from the testimony that Susan Martin gave to the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

> Until relatively recently, researchers and policy makers tended to dismiss the importance of remittances or emphasize only their negative aspects. They often argued that money sent back by foreign workers were largely spent on consumer items, pointing out they seldom were invested in productive activities that would grow the economies of the developing countries. They also feared that those receiving remittances would become dependent upon them, reducing incentives to invest in their own income-generating activities. Moreover, what was considered to be excessive consumerism, they argued, would lead to inequities, with remittance-dependent households exceeding the standard of living available to those without family members working abroad…Over time, the critics pointed out, remittances would diminish as the foreign workers settled in their new communities and lost contact with their home communities. Sometimes, wives and children would be left behind… Many of these problems still exist, but recent work on remittances shows a far more complex and promising picture. Perhaps because the scale of remittances has grown so substantially in recent years—it quadrupled in the Western Hemisphere during the past decade—experts now recognize that remittances have far

> greater positive impact on communities in developing countries than previously acknowledged (Martin 2002).

Here Martin accepts that perhaps the "growing recognition" of the development impacts of remittances is due merely to their quantity.[2] There is a real increase in remittances; nonetheless, my fieldwork experiences in remittance-receiving areas in Mexico and North Africa tell me that there is no simple relationship between remittances and development, understood as sustainable improvements in overall quality of life for transnational families. Half-constructed houses, young students with new sneakers and backpacks, and newly painted elementary schools and churches do not constitute development. In my view the "negative aspects" that Martin mentions above still hold. Regardless of whether development occurs or not, in this chapter I analyze the renewed linking of remittances and development as an issue of struggle between experts across different academic, institutional, and ideological fields; anthropologists and sociologists (temporarily in the losing camp) and development economists and officials (temporarily in the winning camp).

Part of this shift is due to the difference in the diffusion of and access to the ideas produced by each of these camps. A Google search will produce hundreds of free, downloadable publications from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), IMF, World Bank, and many other UN organs that for the most part extol the great development potentials of remittances; while more balanced academic papers, new and old, are harder to access by policy makers, journalists, and the public in general since they are buried in obscure academic journals, hidden behind passwords and university subscriptions. This lopsided access makes it seem like the debate is closed. As Easterly attests, UN reports feed off of each other, and thus repeat the same mantras (2006: 185), creating a circular argument that reiterates *ad nauseum* the latest policy fad. Furthermore, publications by large and powerful institutions such as the World Bank carry much more authority than those by junior scholars writing from outside of policy centers. This has resulted in the creation of an authorized discourse about remittances, one in which half the players are bound and gagged, prevented from entering the playing field, or doing so only with heavy penalties.

Alternative Hypotheses

There has been an impasse in the discussion around the developmental impact of remittances in academia since the 1970s (Alarcón 2000). Nevertheless, the debate has been reignited by certain perceived changes in the field. In order for my argument about expertise to be correct, I first need to discard other popular explanations for the growing recognition of remittances as a possible development tool. Here I provide some of the new arguments coming from outside the development field, and my assessment of why they do not significantly change the situation in the ground. Moreover I address how, while enabling it, they cannot justify in themselves the discursive shift addressed in this chapter.

Hometown associations: There is a growing literature on community projects at the place of origin financed by collective remittances coordinated by so-called *clubs de* *oriundos*, transnational civil committees, hometown associations (HTAs) or emigrant federations (Alarcón 2000; Bada 2003; Levitt 2001: v; Moctezuma 2003; Orozco 2003; Smith 1995, 2006). Although collective remittances are indeed used for community projects and sometimes even productive investments, they can only substitute partially for the lack of basic governmental services and infrastructure (Alarcón 2000). The documentary "The Sixth Section" (Rivera 2003) shows the limited impact of implementing solutions learned in the U.S. in the Mexican rural context; for example, in one scene, a donated ambulance stays parked in its newly built garage due to a lack of drivers. Furthermore, HTAs are contingent upon political organization and cooperation and are frequently prey to power struggles (Smith 2006) since HTAs act "as a vehicle for some migrants to realize positions of leadership that might otherwise not be available to them" (Alarcón 2000: 23).

Government programs: National and local governments have started initiatives to connect with their diasporas and attract investments from their citizens abroad. Israel, Ireland, Italy, India, the Philippines, China, and Mexico have been leaders in this respect (Alarcón 2000; Moctezuma 2003; Smith 2006). Nevertheless in the case of Mexico, programs like the "three for one" (*tres por uno*) matching fund are not available in all communities and often are more talk than action. Furthermore, when successful, partnerships tend to be temporal, and the opportunity for exploitation and corruption high. One could claim that the main interest of national authorities in these programs is not economic but political because they help keep ties and loyalties to the country of origin and its current government.

Coordination and codevelopment: Codevelopment is a new fad in development circles that proposes that migrants are a developing factor for their countries of origin and destination. It is another way to frame remittances as a tool for development, and migration management as an area for binational partnerships, leading to an international convergence of policies. International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the IDB, the IMF and the WB have put forth considerable efforts to become meeting points for foundations, development experts, policy makers, NGOs, creative academics, and any other proponents of codevelopment. Unfortunately, in many cases binational development agreements boil down to the provision of loans in exchange for contracts with national companies (Jackson 2005; Easterly 2006). This can be exemplified by French President Nicholas Sarkozy who often talks about codevelopment when visiting developing countries. Then French companies sign new contracts in industries such as pharmaceuticals, food, aerospace, armament, and civil nuclear technology, but migration controls are tightened (Beaugé and Jakubyszyn 2008; *Le Monde* 2008; Sciolino 2008).

Growing volume of remittances and studies devoted to them: Recent years have seen an increase in the accounting, visibility, and volume of remittances. The Bank of Mexico has improved its accounting of remittances, and looked at the impact of remittances on the national balance of payments and macroeconomic indicators, both very important issues for economic experts and technocrats. IFIs have commissioned studies and large surveys to map the scale and distribution of remittance corridors to development officers such as Dilip Ratha and Raul Hernandez-Coss, external consultants such as Jeffrey Passel of the Pew Hispanic Center, Manuel Orozco of the Inter-American Dialogue, Sergio Bendixen of Bendixen and Associates, and at Columbia University's Earth Institute. Nonetheless, these numbers represent aggregate flows by increasing numbers of migrants because of underdevelopment at home; growing remittances do not only represent more wealth among individual households but also entail family separation (Parreñas 2005; DeParle 2007).

In this chapter I will not return to the discussion of hometown associations and governmental programs, but will instead focus on the increased accounting of remittances, the growing interest in them, and the international coordination of development organizations to deal with them.

Definitional Struggles over the Jurisdiction on Remittances

Despite the use of the same word (subject/signifier) "remittances," the meaning (object/signified) differs widely in how it is conceived, measured, talked about, and acted upon depending on the interlocutors. The aim of this chapter is to show that what economists and development experts call "remittances" are identical neither with the "real thing" (what migrants simply call "money") nor with the discursive object of anthropologists, sociologists, and economists who were the first to highlight them as an object worthy of study as an example of altruism and the strength of social commitments across distances (Ballard 2005; Massey et al. 1987). Contrary to an ethnographic logic of documentation and description, policy actors are eager to intervene and change their "object" of study. Through national quantification, remittances are embedded in a different narrative allowing them to be plotted and compared with foreign direct investment (FDI), or gross domestic product (GDP), whose increase is assumed useful in creating development.

Different subcategorizations of remittances have been proposed in the literature (Goldring 2004), including: family remittances, private economic transactions happening outside the market; collective remittances, money sent by clubs and associations for specific projects entailing collective action and self-organization; social remittances, defined as the habits, values, created needs, and expectations brought from another country as a by-product of transnational migration (Levitt 2001); and emotive remittances, the sentiments transmitted in the processes of departure, distance, and reunion (Castellanos 2007).

Relational accounts emphasize local dynamics and social meanings and see remittances as a by-product of migration and family separation. Alternative conceptions pose remittances as: wages of the transnational households (Parreñas 2005; Smith et al. 2004); indicators of social ties, personal commitments, trust networks, and circuits (Zelizer and Tilly 2006; Tilly 2007); materialized reciprocity and cultural expectations (Ballard 2005; Cohen 2004); acts of patriotism, heroism, concern, and membership that keep emigrants as important members of their original communities (Sassen 2006; 295-296); examples of "globalization from below" since they are part of an exchange of goods, ideas, information and cultural values between underprivileged people across nations (Orozco 2003; Guarnizo & M. Smith 1998); the new foreign aid (Barletti 2006); a form of social insurance, a poverty reduction strategy (WB 2006); a link to *bankarization* (Samuels 2003; Terry 2005); a development tool (IAB 2005; IMF 2005; WB 2006; MIF 2007); in sum, the latest "developmental mantra" (Kapur 2004). These framings result in powerful discursive effects that distance remittances from their real dimension as money earned through hard work and sent as private intra-family transfers in order to guarantee survival (Hernandez and Coutin 2006). This chapter poses remittances as an object of government policy and developmental expertise.

Remittances as an Issue of Governmentality

Sennett (1980) recounts how in the nineteenth century, the "enshrine[ment of] individualism itself, the expert – the engineer, doctor, or scientist with modern technological skills – working alone according only to the dictates of his expertise, yet controlling others, became a figure of authority." In an analogous manner statesmen borrowed the model of liberal professions to create a science and technology of government.

Foucault (1991) explains how the concept of the *economy* meant the good management (government) of the household (*oikos*) to the Greeks, but centuries later shifted in meaning and came to be applied to a whole population and territory. This change came along with mercantilism, the use of statistics, and an overall shift from government and sovereignty by the state as an analogy of the authority that a father had over his family, towards a new art – governmentality – that used certain technologies and self-understandings so that the subjects would regulate themselves in a more efficient manner without explicit state surveillance or control.

Remittances, understood not as a microsocial phenomenon but as a macroeconomic variable, became the object on which economists, international development banks and developmental experts can apply their expertise and through it claim to know the real meaning of these flows, and call for certain policies to be implemented. The monetarization of remittances allows developmental experts to indirectly give opinions on immigration policy, not through direct recommendations on immigration regulation but through technical interventions and claims to foster global economic health. Framing remittances as a tool for development implicitly makes the case for a more open international labor market, for migrants to foster development of the global south and, by extension, for the reduction of the region's need for foreign aid. Through the production of new knowledge about remittances in high-level places of policymaking, IFIs justify and reclaim their authority, entering a new field of jurisdiction in a clear example of the power-knowledge equation elaborated by Foucault (1991).

Remittances and the Neoliberal Agenda

Some draw a link between migration and personal empowerment: "Since the early 1990s, at least 600,000 Albanians have *availed themselves* of the option of temporarily or permanently emigrating" (Sjöberg et al. 2005, emphasis mine). Here is an exaggerated assumption of agency, where migrants "avail themselves of the option" of migrating without a discussion of the social, political, and economic context. These authors then describe remittances coming to Albania and their implications for development. In order to understand the diffusion of the discourse around migration and remittances throughout the world, we have to describe the larger ideological background against which interested actors can easily make these claims drawing from available accounts and world views:

> Given the magnitudes of these flows, remittances represent an enormous range of potential opportunities not only for individual families, but also for local communities and national economies. At the macroeconomic level, remittances can have a powerful impact through the multiplier effect —on GDP, job creation, consumption, and investment (Terry 2005: 10).

Terry presents a now widespread view; developmental officials, consultants, government officials and journalists have become familiar with this argument. Many newspaper articles, academic and policy papers see remittances as a developmental tool (Barletti 2006; Davis 2006; DeParle 2007; Goldring 2004; Suri 2006; Terry 2005; WB 2006). As a journalist wrote in 2006, "The British are not investing a great deal in the developing world, but remittances from Britain are emerging as a growing counter to poverty." He quotes Gareth Thomas, UK's Minister for International Development:

> Immigrants and their families from South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean remit … We welcome the fact that they are fighting against poverty by sending money to their families and friends. We all have responsibilities to our parents and families. This is clearly a way in which people here recognise that responsibility and we welcome it (Suri 2006).

Remittances are indeed a way for migrants to keep their family commitments (Parreñas 2005) but in the translation to an expert discourse about development, migration and remittances become a way to fight poverty in the developing world in which individuals take responsibility for their own welfare, instead of governments, either in the developed or developing world. This is a view compatible with the neoliberal turn in policy circles across the world (Somers and Bloc 2005; Portes 1997; Davies in this volume).

Neoliberal discourse implies that the main role of IFIs in the twenty-first century is not to provide actual capital to fund projects as in the past, but mainly to provide expertise about how to create development by easing the conditions for the investment of economic resources, including remittances (Jackson 2005; Mitchell 2007). Technocrats posit that remittances can lead to development given neoliberal structural adjustments such as privatization, inflation control, balanced budgets, and other policies proposed by this school and pushed by IFIs, as well as transnational and local elites (Babb 2001; Bockman and Eyal 2002; Centeno 1994). Some call the dogmatic adhesion to neoliberal ideology "market fundamentalism" (Somers and Bloc 2005; Stiglitz 2002).

Paul Wolfowitz, former President of the World Bank, mentions that the "Global Economic Prospects 2006," a World Bank publication, "shows how *sound* domestic policies and an investment-friendly climate can significantly increase the contribution of remittances and migration" (WB 2006: vii) and tells us that "migration [and the incurring remittances] should not be viewed as a substitute for economic development in the origin country—development ultimately depends on *sound* domestic economic policies" (WB 2006: xi, emphases my own). The term "sound" leaves room for official economic policy experts to determine what this means, and in these texts the words "sound" and "investor friendly" imply neoliberal policies. These citations tie the legitimate interest in promoting development through remittances with conditions for an "investment-friendly climate" and economic policies along the lines of the Washington Consensus (Centeno 1994; Portes 1997).

While there are important internal debates, in general reports published by IFIs have espoused a neoliberal view that concentrates on macroeconomic consequences, leaving aside migratory issues and family dynamics (an exception is Ballard 2005). For example, according to the *Wall Street Journal,* during a talk in Washington, D.C. to promote his candidacy to head the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mr. Dominique Strauss-Kahn, former Finance Minister of France, said that in order to "insure financial stability in the world and to help the most people possible benefit from globalization," an IMF chief needs two characteristics: "The first one is to believe in free markets. The second is to have enough social concern. If one of the two characteristics [is] missing, you can't succeed" (Gauthier-Villars 2007). This statement explicitly displays the ideology of many of the development professionals working at the IMF, the WB, and regional banks such as the IDB. They want to help poor people in the developing world, and they believe that free markets and private initiatives are better at solving problems than the state (Jackson 2005), as if global poverty was due to personal failures, rather than to external forces and policies.

Even some development workers realize that economic liberalization was oversold and has had negative consequences in the developing world (Babb 2001; Centeno 1994; Easterly 2006; Portes 1997; Scott 1998; Stiglitz 2002). Some development practitioners view their "role as to offset the negative effects of neoliberal structural adjustment policies…our focus is to work on programs which target these vulnerable communities in order to maintain a basic level of food security" as one professional at CARE[3] told Jackson (2005: 108); paradoxically by doing damage control, more drastic structural reforms can continue to be implemented.

Jackson argues that by using the words "aid," "help," and "development," ideological, political and economic agendas get hidden "behind the shiny veneer of beneficence" (2005: 17). Moreover, "'development' makes global agendas (and, by extension, international development organizations) immune to criticism" (Jackson 2005: 17). Nonetheless, opposition against neoliberal agendas has gained momentum as shown by, for example, the neo-Zapatista uprising of the EZLN in Chiapas, Mexico in 1994; the protests during the World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference of 1999 in Seattle; and the South American leaders who have made expressed their criticism against the IMF and World Bank and acted upon it by paying their debts and opening, in 2007, the Bank of the South. International development organizations are looking for new ways to deflect criticism and justify their existence. Remittances as a development tool represent a new way to show interest in helping some of the most disenfranchised people in the world: migrants. Influential actors at international financial institutions claim that migrants can take better care of their own poverty rather than depend on their local government for assistance, services and infrastructure to get out of poverty, an account compatible with the neoliberal ideology.

This helps us explain why there is so much interest in the reframing of remittances in a way that allows development professionals to show their social concern for migrants' wellbeing without questioning their neoliberal beliefs. By pretending to speak on behalf of some of the most vulnerable human beings in current times, their stance on migration could shield them against some of the criticisms that these institutions have received from activists in both the developed and developing world in recent years. This framing allows them to get the support and cooperation from progressive individuals, NGOs, and institutions that see themselves as working for the empowerment of the poor. This optimistic framing of migration is indeed much better than the criminalization of undocumented migration that one can observe in many contemporary political speeches and immigration legislation around the world, but it still hides the economic, social, and psychological costs of migration and family separation and creates unrealistic expectations regarding economic development to be found in official reports. As a regular consultant to the UN told me in 2006, "UN official reports on migration, remittances and development are more often 'feel-good' papers" with an *a priori* message rather than a serious representation of the complexities on the ground." As Easterly states, even if "researchers have tried many different statistical exercises…the aid policy community is tempted to select the study that confirms its prior beliefs (known as "confirmation bias") – even though other statistical exercises may find no evidence for it" (Easterly 2006:48). Thus people looking for hope, support, or the commitment of resources to policies around remittances and development tend to highlight optimistic studies and disregard any evidence to the contrary as the result of the authors' pessimistic dispositions. One study accepts that it "is based on the *assumption* that workers' remittances have a *potential* beneficial impact on the development of recipient countries and that this impact is reduced due to imperfections that hamper the flow of remittances and their productive usage" (EIB 2006, emphases my own). In this manner, the developmental potential is presumed rather than proven.

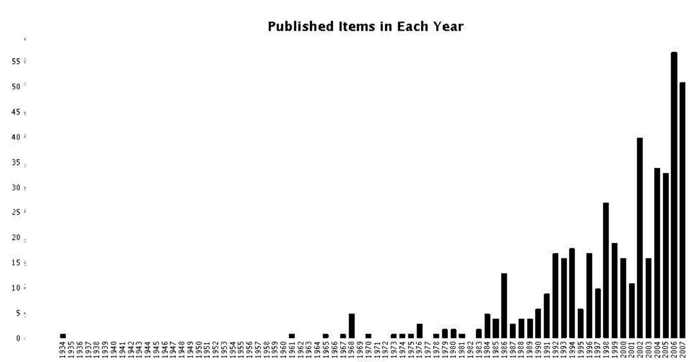
Despite the enthusiasm of the developmentalist school, and their agreement on some policy prescriptions, economists disagree on the extent to and the conditions under which remittances foster development (WB 2006: 104-105). Most papers are based on secondary sources or on results from close-ended surveys, national accounts, or econometric models that try to simulate real life events, and are thus very different from conclusions drawn from context-rich ethnographic data. Sociologist Gil Eyal discusses a similar definitional struggle over expertise in Arab affairs in Israel between experts with direct knowledge of Arabs and their culture and another group that relied more on texts rather than on direct contact with their objects of study. The consequences of this growing distinction between Jews and Arabs could not have resulted in a more contentious situation (Eyal 2006).

Making Remittances Legible

Social scientists such as Douglas Massey (sociologist), Jorge Durand (anthropologist) and Edward Taylor (rural economist) not only used existing household surveys but also collected their own data by carefully conducting surveys of small localities. Their relatively close connection to informants, their use of surveys and quantitative data, along with interviews and ethnographic data (Massey, Durand et al. 1985), and their interdisciplinary collaborations allowed for empirical studies that greatly advanced the understanding of circular migration from Mexico to the United States, including the crucial role of social networks.

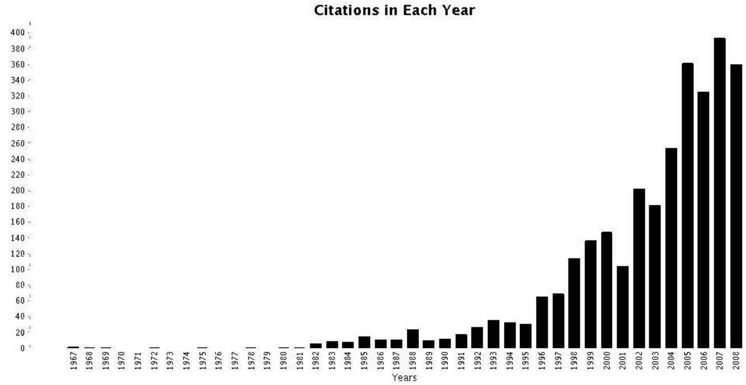
Later a different kind of quantification would take place. In 1996, the Mexican Central Bank started reporting a category of what it called remittances within the national balance of payments and foreign trade. It categorized remittances as any financial transfer from an individual in the United States to another in Mexico. This could include economic transfers between members in migrant transnational households, tourists, expatriates, international students, small transnational firms via personal checks, and U.S. social security compensations to people living in Mexico for both ex-*braceros* (former guest workers) and retired American citizens. Despite this complexity, it has been assumed by the experts doing the accounting and quantitative analysis that the bulk of this accounting category represents remittances between migrants and their families. By creating this category, quantifying it and reporting it every trimester, Mexican and other national central banks created a new element for them to control and regulate, about which to write reports and press communiqués for journalists and researchers to report and reproduce, creating at the same time new jobs and demand for experts. We can test this hypothesis by looking at the increasing number of academic papers on remittances written in recent years.

[INSERT FIGURE 1: Number of Articles on Topic of Remittances as of 2007].



[CAPTION: Articles written on the topic of remittances. Source: Thompson SSCI (1934-2007)].[4]

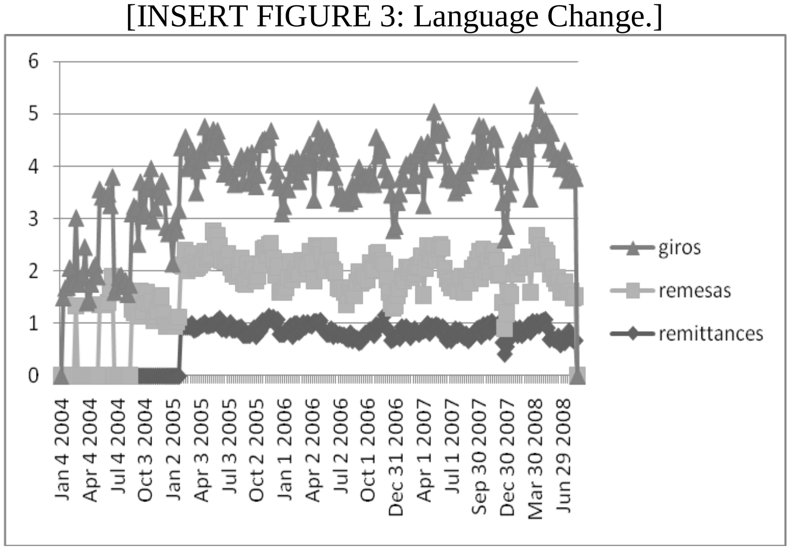
[INSERT FIGURE 2]



[CAPTION: Citations of articles on the topic of remittances. Source: Thompson SSCI (1934-2008)].[5]

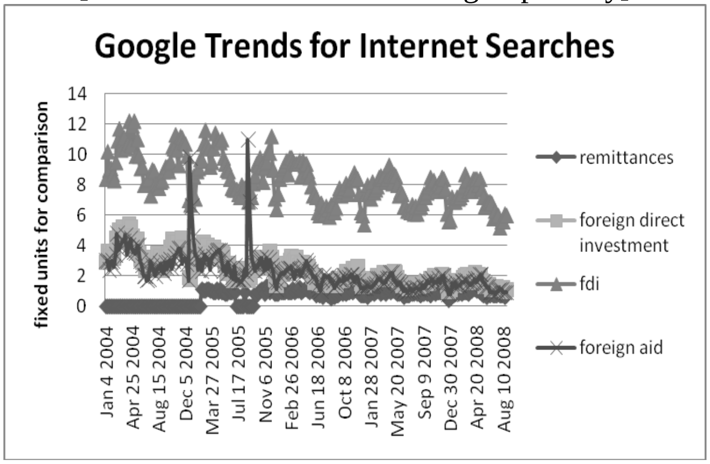
The exponential growth of citations shows an active discussion around remittances in the last few years. As the number of research papers and academic articles on remittances has increased we see the success of the term "remittances" itself. As historical internet search data tell us, some years ago the term "remittances" was not a popular term. An important topic in Latin America, remittances in the recent past were referred to in the media there simply as *dinero* (money), *envios* or *giros* (wire transfers). The Spanish term *remesas* (remittances) became more widely used in the press around 2004. The figure below indicates the lag in the use of the English word remittances in the early part of 2004, as well as an overall increase in all these terms at the beginning of 2005. Since then we could say that the interest in these terms has keep constant.

[INSERT FIGURE 3: Language Change.]



[CAPTION: *Giros* and *remesas* are Spanish terms for remittances. Author's graph using search data from Google Trends (January 2004- June 2008).]

[INSERT FIGURE 4: Growing Popularity]



[CAPTION: Graphs made by the author with public data obtained using Google Trends based on general internet searches.]

This graph shows how interest in remittances has now almost equaled the interest in foreign aid, although it is interesting to note how the more technical term of FDI is still even more popular. As Mitchell argues, "What economics does is not to represent what was previously unrepresented, but to try and reorganize the circulation and control of representations" (Mitchell 2007:13). The quantification and repackaging of remittances by technocrats in international financial institutions has altered the definition of the concept and how we talk about them. No longer seen as a series of transactions among peripheral actors in the informal economy, remittances now require the intervention of financial experts in order to help underdeveloped areas of the globe. This is a shift towards the commodification and incorporation of new areas, people, and resources into the global market (Mitchell 2005, 2007).

In June 2004 the Group of Eight (G8), formed by the U.S., U.K., Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, and Russia, "called for more coordinated international efforts to enhance the development impact of remittance receipts" (Ghosh 2006: 7). In November of 2007 the G8 released a joint statement acknowledging the importance of measuring remittances, maintaining their interest for their developmental potential (G8 2007). Policymakers and politicians seem to be adhering to the new discourse on remittances as a market mechanism to reduce poverty and to balance global inequalities, maybe in the hopes that remittances will absolve them from providing direct aid to the poor without appearing uncompassionate. Studying remittances was about documenting the strategies of the weak, but now it is all about fitting remittances into a neoliberal project.

A New Indicator to Follow?

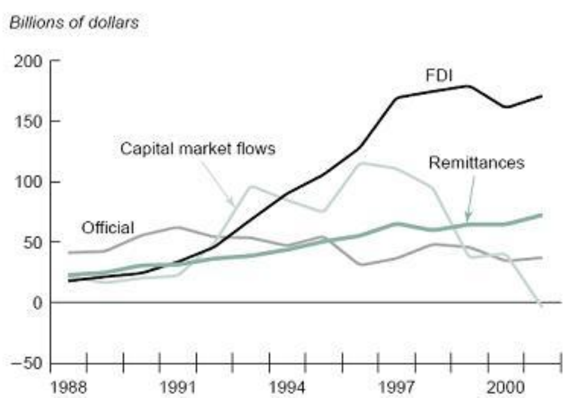
Bruno Latour (1999 [1983]) explains that scientific expertise is not "to be found in cognitive, social, or psychological qualities" but in making things "readable, recurrent and recordable" (272). In the same way, once recorded and made readable through simple graphs, remittances became part of the jurisdiction of development experts.

After their “rediscovery” through large-scale quantification, remittances quickly came to the attention of the Multilateral Investment Fund (MIF), a unit within the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), which includes a “Project Cluster on Remittances as a Development Tool” that has been organizing large conferences on remittances at least since 2001. The IDB is the largest of all regional banks. It works alongside the World Bank, the IMF and the UN, but is to a large degree independent. The IDB indeed provides the largest sums of development financing to countries in Latin America and the Caribbean even more than the World Bank and the IMF (Jackson 2005).

Given the important growth of the figures captured as remittances by the Mexican Central Bank, IMF and IDB, the World Bank started reporting remittance flows for different countries, beginning with the publication of Chapter 7 of *Global Development Finance 2003* (WB/Ratha 2003).

[INSERT FIGURE 5: Workers’ Remittances.]

Figure 7.1 Workers’ remittances and other inflows, 1998–2001

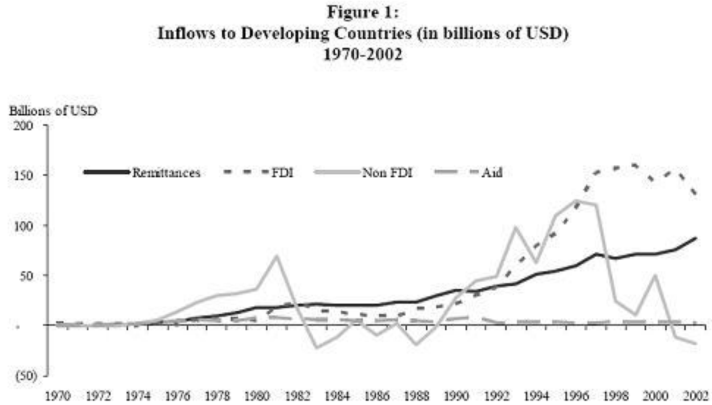


Sources: World Bank, *Global Development Finance*; IMF, *Balance of Payments Yearbook*, various years.

[CAPTION: Remittances going to the developing world. Source: WB/Ratha. 2003.]

Studies often compare remittance flows as reported by central banks and IFIs to unrelated flows such as international aid, foreign direct investment, gross domestic product, and oil exports. In so doing, these comparisons often imply causal connections between these different indicators. As increases in foreign aid are supposed to create development at their destination (Easterly 2006: 46), so should remittances. Beyond their accuracy, graphic representations change the mental conceptions around remittances and attract attention to them. It is for this reason that these graphs should be read not only as a neutral display of scientific data but also as sociotechnical devices (Beunza and Stark 2004) that pretend to represent relations between different social phenomena which are under the jurisdiction and authority of the expert producing and reproducing them. They allow for these flows to be made legible and thus susceptible to government intervention (Scott 1998).

[FIGURE 6: Inflows to Developing Countries]



[CAPTION: Source: Aggarwal et al. 2005.]

This graph shows the growth of remittances and its comparison with other international financial flows. But it is also an example of the spread of the discourse of remittances as a development tool because, while Aggarwal et al. updated the data, they mainly reproduce the analytical logic proposed by Ratha and company in the previous chart, which in turn comes partly from the technocratic thinking at the Mexican Central Bank, by experts often trained in the U.S. (Babb 2001; Centeno 1994).

Sensational Headlines and Hyperboles of Development

My contention is that once remittances became systematically quantified by central banks and then reported in the IMF's *Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook,* "remittances" not only became the object of economists, and developmental experts interested in showing avenues for development in places outside of the market (Mitchell 2005), but also they became increasingly monitored like any other macroeconomic or financial indicator, and often reported on, specially in relation to countries with large diasporas. With headlines such as "Latin American remittances to hit US$55bn this year" (MIF 2005), or "Remittances, toward another historical record" (Bravo 2005), or "US$ 520.24 million remittances received in March, showing 22 per cent increase" (Pakistani United Press 2007); "Philippines: Overseas Filipino Workers Remittances Up" (Davao 2007); and "Fewer Mexican Immigrants Are Sending Money Back Home, Bank Says" (NYT 2007), we see the reporting of remittances as financial stocks or macroeconomic indicators. It is common to see China, India and Mexico portrayed as "leaders" in the field because they receive the largest inflows, as if these countries were competing to be number one in the export of labor (Delgado-Wise and Cypher 2005).

A big deal is made in the media every time remittances to a certain area surpass FDI. But what is the conclusion that one should draw from this? If one were to plot Mexican capital invested abroad, or overall imports, they would also surpass FDI or foreign aid; why are these comparisons not made? The purpose of comparing between remittances and foreign aid is partly ideological since so much has been made in the past about the developmental effects to supposedly derive from foreign capital. After the monetarization of remittances, egregious claims can be seen in multiple newspaper articles. As a *New York Times* editorial put it,

> [The IDB] announced last month that Latin American migrants working in the United States will send a record $45 billion to their families back home this year. At that level, remittances represent the largest and most direct *poverty reduction program* in the region, topping by far the amounts of foreign aid provided by the United States (NYT 2006, emphasis my own).

Thus repatriated wages are now meant to be taken as an "anti-poverty program." The *Times* then offers important information: "Most of the cash arrives in monthly wire transfers of about $300 apiece, and is spent on basics like food, shelter and health care," facts derived from empirical research; unfortunately then the *Times* concedes to the authority of the self-proclaimed experts: "But development bankers estimate that some $10 billion of remittances could be saved or invested – if people had access to banks and were encouraged to use them." This logic says that:

> By banking part of their remittances, recipient families could earn interest, establish credit and provide money for local investment. The result would be more resources to help pay for schooling, starting small businesses or home ownership. Such saving and investment lead to economic growth. And growth at the bottom of the economic scale is the surest way to actually lift people out of poverty (NYT 2006).

By giving these strong opinions an editorial board constitutes itself as expert on development simply by repeating IFIs' discourse. They propose a mechanism which, to the average middle class *New York Times* reader, will appear logical. But at $300 a month plus one extra remittance for holidays or emergencies, we have yearly incomes of around $3,900. If the recipients could save all the remittances they could make a couple hundred dollars yearly in interest (when interest rates are high). Unfortunately these families need to spend this money for basic consumption as soon as they cash it (Massey et al. 1987).

This editorial then reprimands banks and calls on them to educate this underdeveloped *homo economicus:*

> Most banks in Latin America that receive remittances simply dole out the sums to recipients, after collecting part of the fee paid by the sender. They make no attempt to turn the recipients into bank customers. Bank officials and the politicians that oversee them need to do more to educate the poor about banking and to offer them services. Banks need to be reminded that such lending can be profitable – and will further broaden national goals for economic growth (NYT 2006).

The newspaper then takes the bait from the IFIs' reports and asks for further intervention for them:

> Remittances deserve a more prominent place on the agenda at the meetings of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Group of 8 leading

> industrialized nations. Unless those billions in remittances are banked, money that could fight poverty is not being used to its fullest potential.

The title of this editorial, “Wiring Development” says it all. If only it were that easy! IFIs and newspapers can make any claims they wish without fearing any future consequences if their predictions fail to materialize because they have no legal, moral, or academic accountability to the public – and much less to the migrant families (Jackson 2005).

The New Goal: Bankarization or Banking the Unbanked

At the same time that development experts underline the importance of remittances, they lobby for ways to facilitate remittance transfers, to bring these transnational households into the formal economy and to channel them through commercial banks in what they call *bankarization*. “Having the right to a bank account” is something that has lately been presented as a human right (MIF Conference on Remittances 2005).

To disseminate this understanding, Charles Klingman, Deputy Director at the Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Compliance Policy of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, frequently distributes policy statements, company memos, and international newspaper articles that are “relevant to the subject of the unbanked” to an e-mail list. The articles and documents come from large news organizations such as *Time Magazine*, the *Washington Post*, or the *NYT* but also from local and international newspapers, policy centers, think tanks, and private companies written mainly in English but also in Spanish, French, and other languages. While the quality of the writing and the reporting varies enormously, most articles carry the same message about new government policies, programs and commercial ventures to bring people to the banking sector by, for example, providing services like “The Poni Card,” an ATM card specifically for the unbanked in Mexico, which make up 85% of population (*Noticias Financieras* 2006).

In France the issue of the unbanked has been correctly discussed as one of exclusion (*l’exclusion bancaire)* (Gloukoviezoff 2001; Pastre 2008) but the solutions proposed are the same: bankarization *(accessibilité bancaire)* and microcredit (*Secours Catholique* 2008). In the United Kingdom, members of the Parliament, private banks, public and civil institutions, like the National Consumer Council, the Competition Commission, and the Financial Services Authority, are working to bring down the number of unbanked people from the three million found in 2003 (House of Commons 2006; O’Reilly 2006). Furthermore, Terry (2005: 10) claims that bankarization is a way of achieving “financial democracy.” Despite the democratic language, the parallel framing of remittances and bankarization is compatible with neoliberalism since it makes private banks the central intermediaries of social life and calls for the formalization and accounting of resources which were previously off the books.

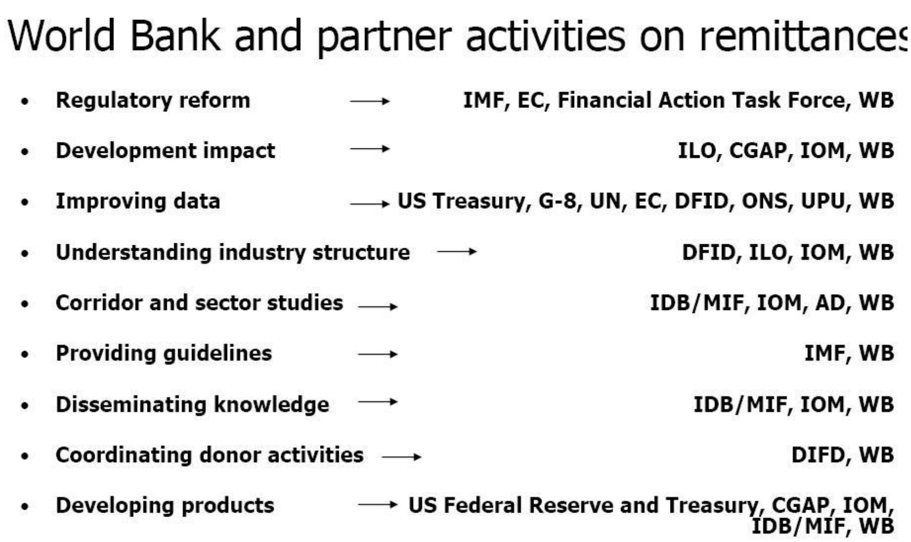
The concept of remittances has experienced a semantic change from a series of transactions in the informal economy towards one that requires the intervention of financial experts. After its quantification and repackaging for a capitalist discourse, remittance-related policy now includes in its goals to educate members in the periphery about the good practices of citizenship under capitalism, which include having a bank account and being a recipient of credit.

Remittances' Discursive Network

Key actors in this discursive network are: Donald Terry, MIF's Director; Manuel Orozco, a frequent consultant to the IDB and a prolific writer of reports and studies on remittances and their different implications; as well as Ratha and Hernandez-Coss and a group of young researchers at the World Bank, who are the main "competition" to the IDB's analysts. Not being a regional bank, the World Bank has exceeded the influence of the IDB on the subject of remittances. Other UN bodies such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the UN bodies dealing with women and children (INSTRAW and UNICEF) are also competing to be at the forefront of the topic of the day, remittances being an example, in order to please their funders in developed countries (Easterly 2006).

While I will emphasize some individuals as examples of points in this discursive assemblage (MacKenzie et al. 2007; Sassen 2006), discursive changes are not created by single individuals *ex nihilo*. They depend on a certain network or assemblage that achieves the correct moves and "translation" into other dominant agendas and discourses. After the IDB, IMF and the WB got on board with remittances, other UN organizations followed suit so as to not be left behind in this policy fad, driving so much media attention, thus producing ample developmental policies around competition, reduction in remittance fees, and *bankarization*. The next figure represents the growing UN network working around remittances:

[INSERT FIGURE 7: World Bank and UN Partner Activities around Remittances]



[CAPTION: The acronyms represent different development organizations: please see appendix. Source: World Bank/Hernandez-Coss 2005.]

Latour claims that the difference between a scientist and a politician is not "knowledge" but access to an experimental setting, such as a lab; and that part of the status and authority of science comes from the ability to make predictions based on what previous experiments have shown will happen. Economists count on different kinds of laboratories including the real world (Bockman and Eyal 2002; Callon and Muniesa in MacKenzie et al. 2007; Stiglitz 2003), so do developmental experts (Easterly 2006), who now make projections about future remittance inflows as if talking about a futures market or a macroeconomic indicator (Mitchell 2005). By trying to profit from exchange rates from remittances in foreign currency, governments and the private sector may create a self-fulfilling prophecy where a sudden decrease in remittances would indeed destabilize a country's economy.

Latour (1988) claims that in order to gain authority scientists have to extend their laboratories into all of society to the point of changing it in the process, what Michel Callon calls "performativity"[6] (MacKenzie et al. 2007). Building on this concept but going beyond semiotics, Callon proposes seeing economics not as depicting a reality "out there" but as a set of concepts, instruments, and techniques that paint a picture of the world (MacKenzie et al 2007: 4). Performativity refers to the loop between society and economic propositions; a "theory effect" (Bourdieu 1991, cited in MacKenzie et al. 2007); not simply a process of scientific discovery but also one of engineering. The implication is that, "the performative power of economics does not rest on the accuracy or inaccuracy of its representations" (Mitchell 2007:269) but on the authority it is given to act on the society through the respect and expertise provided to its practitioners.

Economists have been successful in legitimizing their expertise and in being granted scientific, pastoral, and prognostic powers (Eyal 2003). In Mexico and other countries economists have acquired the prestige of modern priests (Babb 2001; Miller 2005, cited in MacKenzie et al. 2007: 297). But how did economists, and their cousins, development experts and officials, get hold of the legitimate knowledge and authority over remittances? Latour (1988) shows how Pasteur succeeded in capturing the attention of previously uninterested but influential actors in government, journalism, and public opinion in his political crusade to "pasteurize France" (Latour 1988). For Latour (1987) the laboratory boss's role is as much scientific as it is political. The laboratory boss, or the senior scholar, has to leave his laboratory to ask for funding and support, acting as an ambassador for the research that his team conducts. In selling the importance of remittances in the world of developmental policy, Donald Terry has played a parallel role.

Since its inception in 1993, Terry has held the title of Manager of the Multilateral Investment Fund of the IDB. The aim of the $1.3 billion fund principally sponsored by developed countries is to "accelerate the market transformation of economies" in the Americas (MIF 2008). Examining Terry's trajectory can help us see his dispositions. In terms of academic credentials, Terry holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Yale University (1968) and a law degree from the University of California at Berkeley (1972). He graduated from the Senior Managers in Government Program at the Harvard Business School in 1978. Before joining the MIF, Terry held a number of key positions in the U.S. Congress (as staff director of the Joint Economic Committee, and on the House Committees on Ethics; on Small Business; and on Financial Services). Terry served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Treasury from 1979 to 1981 where he was principally involved in shaping US policy toward international financial institutions. Thus his personal social networks span government, law, banking, policy, and development. Policymakers know that in order to succeed they have to bring allies into their cause. Don Terry has managed to engage a number of actors and institutions.

Raul Hinojosa, a Mexican-American academic who talks enthusiastically about the potential of remittances to bring development, democracy, and happiness to Mexico, claims that he interested Terry in the subject (personal communication). While Hinojosa had previously made a $50 million deal (selling just the conception of a previous business idea) in the case of remittance-related financial products and telecommunication services for transnational communities, he was unable to sell an actual company he founded with the promise to offer these services. Nonetheless, he was able to spread his vision and convince others to act accordingly. His business model was later copied and actually implemented by others, often helped by MIF funds, with Don Terry as its main proponent and better salesman. According to Terry, "most [remittances] will still be pulled out for consumption… Our goal is simply over the next few years to get 10 percent of that flow into Latin America into microfinance institutions… that could be lent to entrepreneurs in those countries" (Cummings 2005). This is the wish that Terry repeats time after time. He and other developmental experts have formed a very extensive, robust and redundant network that systematically repeats their message. Sociologist Sarah Babb got it right when she told me half-jokingly that this was "a remittances epidemic" (personal conversation 2007).

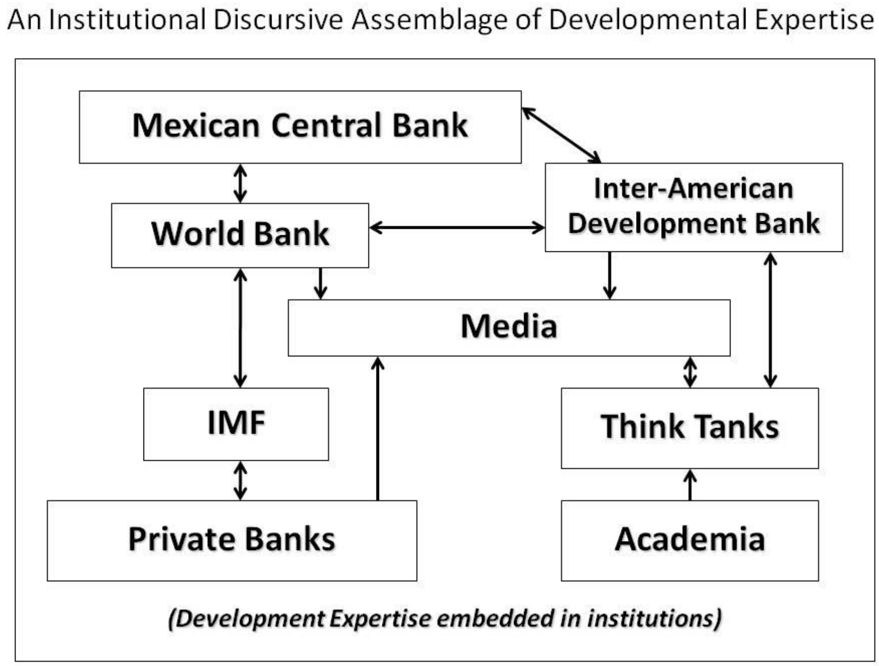
Emulation, cooperation, and networking are crucial in becoming part of a dominant discursive network, and the resources and fame that accompany it. Yet intense boundary work is done in order to keep laymen, unauthorized experts, and deeply dissenting voices from gaining authoritative expertise. By commanding important funds, and by having direct access to the media, congressmen and influential officials, IFIs not only shape public understandings but are also able to influence academic research through the funding of certain research projects and through directing the production of "data." After being introduced to Terry at a remittances conference in 2005, I told him how much I had used the data on remittance flows that the IDB had produced. He replied, "Obviously, everyone is using our data. We are the only ones capable of producing so much statistical data in such a speedy fashion by commissioning large surveys in the Americas. No graduate student can do serious work on remittances without relying on our data." Thus Terry is conscious of his active role in shaping knowledge and creating a new discourse on remittances.

Another influential person is Dilip Ratha, an Indian economist who has been a prolific and central actor, writing the official World Bank views on migration and remittances. Because of his visible and privileged position within the developmental field, his views have attained considerable authority and have been widely read and emulated by new entrants to the field. Ratha is also a proponent of and agent in the securitization of remittances by Central Banks and international bodies.[7] While cognizant about the personal aspects of the migration drama, Ratha is very conscious of his role as developmental expert and the implications that the framing of this issue has in creating interest in the developing world (meeting with Ratha at Columbia University, March 7 2006; DeParle 2008). Translating family transfers into financial flows is a way to make these social facts legible to policymakers who are trained to think in terms of descriptive statistics and economic framings.

Who has the expertise, authority, and right to speak about and for the migrants and remitters (by definition people from the developing world living in the developed world)? This issue gets further complicated when the speakers come from the developing world, as is the case of visible actors in this field: Manuel Orozco (Central America), Hernando de Soto (Peru), Raúl Hernández-Coss (Mexico), or Dilip Ratha (India). A story about Ratha published in the *New York Times* better explains the gap between good intentions, policy recommendations, and crude reality; or between expertise and experience-based expertise (Collins and Evans 2002). Born and raised in Sindhekela, India, Ratha is one of the few to have left his town, and become successful abroad. Like the people he studies, he sends remittances to his family religiously. But Ratha is puzzled that his father refuses to sleep in his new bedroom, built with remittances (DeParle 2008). World Bank reports often claim that remittances can be invested in education and health; while it is true that remittances sent by Ratha helped two siblings get graduate degrees, a half-brother preferred to buy a motorcycle. Furthermore, Mr. Ratha was "annoyed that the money he sent his father for medical treatment went to a relative's wedding" (DeParle 2008).[8] These examples from Ratha's own family show that personally gained experience and embodied knowledge about the complexities of social life and authoritative expert-knowledge are two different things. Nonetheless, which version gains authority depends on policy actors and broader ideological currents in and outside of the scientific field.

This chapter has shown how the struggle over the definition of what remittances are and their implication for development has resulted in the creation of a field of expertise where the position-taking and differences among actors are not just rhetorical or symbolic but have real implications for migrants and the ways they may be able to circulate and continue sending money home. The actors have become so invested in the definitional struggles in the field (what Bourdieu would call *illusio*) that in addition to witnessing passionate intellectual debates, I once observed a leading authorized expert in the field and a promising graduate student shouting and almost coming to blows after a panel, regarding competing claims and conclusions about the developmental potential of remittances. The famous researcher felt he endangered his prospects for future commissions of more lucrative policy reports (which had established him as one of the prophets on the virtues of remittances) by being overly credited for contributing comments to the report being presented about the dire prospects of development from remittances.

[INSERT FIGURE 8: Remittances Discursive Network.]



[CAPTION: Remittances Discursive Network. The arrows represent the flow of data, documents, citations, and conference of authority.]

The expansion of this successful discursive network occurs because portraying remittances as tools for development can benefit all the actors involved in this network. Development officials such as Terry find new areas where they can allocate the funds they have to spend each year in order to avoid being seen as under-using resources. Commercial banks can profit if they become the main carriers for these flows. Academics get a "hot" area to study. Journalists get seemingly shocking stories and are provided with figures and sound bites in press conferences organized by well known institutions. Consultants get new areas on which to consult (Jackson 2005). People genuinely interested in development are happy to see new issues on which to work. Immigrant NGOs and community organizations may add services around remittances and bankarization in order to get grants and donations. Interestingly enough, the ones who are rarely consulted in any serious manner are those who send and receive remittances. While they are the main agents, migrants are not for the most part participants in this discursive network, which is at the end about them, but voiceless objects of top down policy and expertise.

Conclusion: Remittances as a Neoliberal Developmental Discourse

A parallel to my argument can be found in a critique of Hernando de Soto's (2000) arguments about the wealth hidden in developing countries by the lack of property titles for formal and informal housing. According to de Soto (2000), "live capital" is created by techniques of representation (such as land property titles in his case) that bring out previously invisible resources into a new economic parallel life where they can be used for commerce, to obtain credits, and mortgages. Nonetheless, as the recent subprime mortgage crisis demonstrates, the issue is not that simple. Mitchell (2007) and Easterly (2006: 90-93) show how property titles appeared historically as a response to bottom up practices of settlement, and not the other way around. If historically inaccurate, why did de Soto's explanations become so popular in development circles? His arguments posed the poor as "as competent economic agents who need to acquire only the proper technical equipment to be brought into the market… They provided a way to bring the poor into arguments and programs of neoliberalism" (Mitchell 2007: 250). Mitchell (2007: 247) proposes that the role of development economics is to extend the rules of the market to the boundary areas conceived as outside of capitalism and free markets. Like the shaping of remittances as a development tool, de Soto's ideas were "part of a potential powerful apparatus for redistributing access to, and control over, assets" (MacKenzie et al. 2007:14).

The repeated references in the media about the growth and fall of remittance flows and their connection to development creates a "monetarization" of remittances and an official story about them that is hard to change. The reframing of remittances from a matter of survival and a response to failed government policies to one of personal responsibility has been a rather successful product of a coordinated campaign by actors interested in gaining jurisdiction over remittances, who justify their interventions as a means to drive development.

One should not criticize the efforts of developmental organizations *a priori*. But the social science literature documents many cases in which developmental aid has increased poverty and dependency while expanding the authority of the powerful, thus making it harder for excluded agents, the supposed original benefactors of these policies, to improve their condition (see Babb 2001; Centeno 1994; Easterly 2006; Jackson 2005; Stiglitz 2003; Scott 1998). This story would be only a linguistic note, part of intellectual and policy history, only if it had not the threat of causing so much entrenched poverty and other unintended consequences. Fighting to end poverty is a worthy act, and I believe that most of the developmental experts are well intended people who chose this field out of a legitimate desire to eradicate poverty. But to better achieve this, development officers should be held accountable to those outside of their field; because when their policies fail, the people who they are trying to help often have to pay the bill, both economically and in terms of bearing the consequences.

Regardless of their good intentions, development experts at IFIs are imbued with institutional authority and power and thus may be seen as the heirs "to the missionary and the colonial officer" (Easterly 2006:24). Development experts should be more self-critical and aware of the shortcomings of their expertise, especially regarding their "data", and respect their clients' worldviews, if they really want to help those in need. Interestingly enough, this call for restraint and self-criticism runs contrary to their aim of professionalization, respect, and independence (Abbott 1998) and therefore it is hard to conceive of a retreat from these positions. It is thus dangerous to leave the issue of development and remittances to development experts alone. Outside observers and those who are directly affected should make their voices be heard. We need to question developmental expertise and their large interventions, and consider piecemeal approaches that aid in recognized and urgent needs of the poor (Easterly 2006) but we primarily need to find ways to tackle at their root the processes that produce inequalities and underdevelopment in the first place.

Appendix 1

AD Affiliated Distributors
BANXICO Banco de México
CGAP Consultative Group to Assist the Poor
DFID Department for International Development UK
EC European Commission
EU European Union
EIB European Investment Bank
EZLN Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional
G8 Group of Eight (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, UK, US, and EU)
GDP Gross Domestic Product
HTAs Hometown Associations
IADB Inter-American Development Bank or
IDB Inter-American Development Bank
IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFIs International Financial Institutions
ILO International Labor Organization
IMF International Monetary Fund
INSTRAW International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IOM International Organization for Migration
FDI Foreign Direct Investment
MIF Multilateral Investment Fund
NYT New York Times
OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODA Official Development Assistance
ONS U.K. Office for National Statistics
SSCI Social Science Citation Index
UK United Kingdom
UN United Nations
UNDP United Nations Development Program
UNICEF United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPU Universal Postal Union
WHO World Health Organization
WB World Bank
WTO World Trade Organization
UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
US United States
USAID US Agency for International Development

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Notes

[1] All amounts are given in U.S. dollars.

[2] One of the other offered proofs of development comes from statistical simulations of the multiplier effects of remittances, "experts as Edward Taylor at the University of California at Davis argue that even consumer use of remittances stimulates economic activity, particularly when households spend their remittances locally. The multiplier effects of remittances can be substantial, with each dollar producing additional dollars in economic growth for the businesses that produce and supply the products bought with these resources" (Martin 2002). I will not deal with the issue of the multiplier effects in this chapter.

[3] CARE "is a leading humanitarian organization fighting global poverty" www.care.org

[4] Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) Databases=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI. N=459

[5] SSCI Databases=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI. N=459

[6] A performative utterance is that which becomes true by the simple fact of being uttered (Austin 1962 cited in MacKenzie et al. 2007:3). This happens only under the right circumstances (Bourdieu 1991 cited in MacKenzie et al. 2007) for example a monarch could make someone an "outlaw" simply by declaring that person to be one (MacKenzie et al. 2007:3).

[7] This means that international organisms and credit rating agencies take into account estimated amounts of foreign currency that will be brought into a country as remittances, in order to estimate exchanges rates, risk of devaluation and to use as collaterals for lending in foreign currencies (Interview with Ratha 2006). This is a clear example of the use of remittances as an economic indicator and as a tool to produce risk assessments by national governments, financial institutions, and rating organizations such as Standard & Poor's. This could be the area in which the new framing of remittances may prove to be the most performative on real world economies.

[8] The fact that remittances earmarked for a specific use are put to another use is something I often observed in my fieldwork in Mexico and North Africa.