# TECHNOCRATS AND HUMANIST INTELLECTUALS IN THE THIRD WORLD: CASES FROM A SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN EUROPE

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**ABSTRACT:**

Development studies rarely considers in depth the career choices and inner lives of civil servants, academicians and activists in the Third World. This paper draws on life stories of twelve former students of the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, from diverse countries, in the context of wider literature on Third World intellectuals and on identity in the late modern era of globalization. The paper argues against dichotomizing `humanist intellectuals' and `technocrats', and for a more composite representation of professional identities. It questions associations of economics with technocracy and highlights the multi-vocal nature of economics. Recommendations for pedagogy at schools of development studies are put forward.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Certain groups of people who live and work in the `Third World' are the subject of this paper:

- civil servants and those employed in parastatals, whose daily work consists in addressing developmental realities through established systems of governance that often can be rather fragile.
- academicians who specialize in various knowledge systems that they seek to apply to particular developmental problems in their countries.
- activists linked to non-governmental organizations, who confront long-established social realities at the same time that they resist relatively new structures of governance that they feel impede rather than facilitate transformation of these social realities.

Galjart and Silva, who are among the relatively few who have written on this subject, define the group that we are interested in as:

> social scientists or intellectuals who occupy themselves with the *development problems* of their society... They can be high-level bureaucrats, technocrats, professional scientists, advisers or NGO staff... Not surprisingly, in the course of development new roles are created for academically trained people, and they also increasingly tend to occupy existing roles. New are roles in universities, in the media, in NGOs and as consultants for political authorities (1995b: 269-70, emphasis given).

Why is there comparatively little interest in this category of Third World inhabitants?.`... intellectuals and technocrats... are rarely integrated into the analysis of political elites in developing countries' (Silva 1995: 21). Most analyses of Third World situations, especially in the context of development issues, concentrate on `categories at the bottom of the social hierarchy' rather than `the "educated" people, and the "intellectuals"' (Bayart 1993: 182). Such analyses tend to highlight `the politics of the belly' -- to use the title of Bayart's book -- rather than the politics of the intellect or the imagination, a choice based on exigent material need in many parts of the `Third World.'

Intellectuals who are from the Third World also generally concentrate on the poor and the powerless when they join debate on development issues. They do not discuss themselves because they see their position as on the sidelines, studying actors who play more pivotal roles in struggles for change (or studying the absence of such actors). `... to see themselves as belonging to a strategic group requires them to take too much distance' (Galjart and Silva 1995a: 10).

The inverted commas between which Bayart puts the words `educated' and `in

tellectual' are symptomatic of widespread ambivalence and even negativism towards those who exemplify capital (including cultural capital) in societies where poverty is endemic. Third World intellectuals are themselves uncertain about their role, as illustrated by Danielle, a woman in our sample who was particularly concerned about income disparities in her home country: `Those of us who come to study at the Institute are not poor people, but middle class people, from the university-trained elite. Can such people change a country, however sensitive they are and concerned about the poor?' This is a gentler stance than that of Bayart, who describes the educated elite in some areas of the Third World as having `happily jumped on to the bandwagon of accumulative power' (1993: 192) instead of identifying themselves with the struggles of the poor.

The studies that are available of Third World intellectuals tend to be country-specific, as in Galjart and Silva's edited volume. The present paper brings together the stories of twelve individuals from as many countries distributed over several continents of the world. What gives these twelve narratives a formal unity is that they were elicited in a common setting, from those studying in the same year at a school of development studies in Europe.

Civil servants and activists – as well as academicians -- pass through institutions such as the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. Why do they seek contact with formal knowledge systems, however briefly? Partly because `In many aspects of life development consists precisely of the application of scientific knowledge to activities' (Galjart and Silva 1995a: 1). However, these people from the Third World often contest the `scientific knowledge' of First World-based development studies, in their minds, in classroom discussions and in private conversations, if not often in published writings (George 1997a). The major motivation to attend study programmes on development issues is to enhance their command over the `means of persuasion, whether they produce ideas, visions of this world or... policy recommendations' (Galjart and Silva *ibid.*). When they return to work, they seek to use their newly enhanced persuasive power to influence political power, whether from within a government ministry, a university department or a non-governmental organization. Some of those in our sample -- as we shall later see -- hoped to use political power as well as persuasive power, by seeking elected office at some further point in their lives.

The value of our small sample was that it brought together `developmental professionals' who were normally widely dispersed across the planet. The sample thus

allowed study -- however modestly -- of a population that is not otherwise easy to study because it is so scattered (George *op. cit.*: 65-66). It builds on earlier research with a sample that was almost ten times larger (*ibid.*). What the present sample lacked in scale was somewhat compensated for by its depth and focus. This study goes one step beyond the extrapolation from anecdotes and intuition that usually provides the basis for discussions of the category `Third World intellectuals.'

In addition to the somewhat sparse literature on Third World intellectuals, the present analysis links to the (again rather limited) discussions of identities in the context of `development'. A relatively recent `ethnography of aid', for example, questions conventional boundary lines between `developers' and those who are to be `developed' (Crewe and Harrison 1998). The present discussion does not consider multiple actors in concrete work situations, as Crewe and Harrison do. Instead we examine the consciousnesses of twelve individuals from as many parts of the globe who had briefly retreated from real life situations for purposes of reflection and study. These individuals were from the `Third World', and hoped to act as catalysts of development there.

Most broadly, we draw on Anthony Giddens' writings on self-identity in the late modern age. Giddens himself does not see his work as very pertinent to `people living... outside the most strongly "developed" portions of the world' (1991: 22), but his ideas prove useful here (e.g. George 2000: 47-52). We consider the wider applicability of his reflections on self and society at the end of the twentieth century, beyond what he calls `the core geographical areas of modernity' (*op.cit.*: 30).

**The setting of the study.** The Institute of Social Studies in The Hague describes itself as `the longest established school of development studies in Europe.' It was founded in 1952, in the aftermath of European decolonization, to contribute to the restructuring of relationships with ex-colonies. The Institute offered a problem-focussed and policy-oriented education in social science at the post-graduate level to those whose professions involved grappling with development issues and problems in the Third World. The working language was English. Students at the Institute are generally called `participants', to emphasize the fact that their prior work and life experiences play a significant role in classroom discussions and sometimes in written work.

At the time of the Institute's fortieth anniversary in 1992, I was asked to carry out a study of former students. I interviewed 112 men and women from eighteen countries, and reported on the relationship between their professional experience in the real

world and their period of study at the Institute (George 1997a). In the late 1990s, I was asked by the then Dean of the Institute to interview the current class representatives, in order to illuminate the `constituencies' from which students came and what these constituencies expected of the Institute.[1] The Institute then offered several master's and diploma programmes. The master's programmes ran for fifteen months, and the diploma programmes for six months. The first two-thirds of this period was taken up by course work, followed by a research paper that represented individual inquiry. At that time there were about twenty students on average attending each programme, and the large majority were professionals in mid-career. Every class elected a representative from among themselves, whose role was to liaise with the faculty, the administration and the student union's office bearers. I spoke with each class representative, in considerable depth and at two points in the academic year, first early on and then at the moment of `exit' from the Institute. The interviews traced the life stories and related perceptions of twelve protagonists.

Material from these interviews threw light on how people from all over the world -- and from both sexes, at least three major professional categories, and various ideological positions -- perceived their professional lives and their relationship to others. Connections could then be made between the twelve individuals interviewed and some themes within the relatively scant literature on Third World intellectuals.

**The sample.** The strategy of interviewing class representatives provided one student per class without bias being introduced through a choice by the administration or faculty. Later it became clear that this sample evinced a positive bias. The report described the individuals interviewed as possibly `more capable, focussed and successful than the average Institute participant' and suggested that the study provided `a "best case scenario" of what the Institute presently achieves at the upper end of the scale of success' (George 1998: 2). Therefore this paper's reports about the Institute -- as seen through the eyes of these twelve individuals -- also manifests a positive bias and should not be confused with evaluation of the Institute's programmes. The sample is used `to sensitize rather than [to] generalize' (Wiener and Rosenwald 1993: 33): to aid in refining existing understandings of intellectuals in the Third World and to generate insights for further examination.

[1] The exact year that the data for this study was collected is not revealed here, in order to help protect the identities of those who were interviewed.

I now list the full sample. Names have been changed to protect privacy. Women are identified as such: their life stories as narrated during interviews were far more self-conscious about the role of gender than were the men's life stories. The descriptive titles used capture only part of individual self-identities. Our sample includes:

a civil servant from the Horn of Africa (Terefe);
an East African diplomat (John);
a southern African human resources manager (Mitchell);
a West African woman lawyer (Mary);
a South-East Asian activist (Vern, a nickname he prefers to his name);
a South-East Asian academician (Sip, also a nickname he likes used);
a South-East Asian radical feminist (Chen Li);
an East Asian woman teacher of the humanities (Yumiko);
a Latin American woman environmentalist (Ingrid);
a Latin American woman economist (Danielle);
a Caribbean computer professional in the civil service (Antony);
and an intellectual from an immigrant family in North America (Omar).

They were all born between 1960 and 1970, many in the second half of the 1960s.

I have not specified individuals' countries of origin, only the sub-continents, for two reasons. The first is to help protect identities. The second is that in the Institute, the setting of the study, continental or sub-continental labels are often used to categorize people, a phenomenon that relates both to perceptions of the other *and* to new broadened self-perceptions -- in an environment where notions about the `Third World' gain some substance, both through the subjects of debate and those who debate them, a huge range of people from all over the planet and especially the poorer parts of the planet.

This group of twelve individuals:

- was almost equally divided between men and women (seven and five);
- was similarly rather evenly distributed between the three major regions of the Third World, with four people each from Africa, Asia, and the Americas and the Caribbean.
- was also divided among some major categories of `development professionals,' although not very evenly, with four government employees, five academicians, two employees of non-governmental organizations and one activist lawyer. The regional distribution was uneven; three of the four civil servants were from Africa, three out of

five academicians were from the Americas and the Caribbean, and both employees of non-governmental organizations were from Asia. This however does reflect some patterns at the Institute of Social Studies.

The sample then widely (if not perfectly) covered region, gender and developmental work.

**Structure of the paper.** The next section summarizes three of the twelve life stories. These narratives have been selected to cover three regions, both sexes and three different professional categories. They provide what the rest of the paper does not, accounts of individual lives that are both longitudinal and multi-faceted. These stories thus provide a context for the more thematic discussions that follow.

The three life stories are those of a civil servant, an academician and an activist. Section 3 goes on to classify our other protagonists in these terms and to discuss their professional identities. In nearly all cases the formal classification was insufficient to cover an individual's work interests and aspirations. Our protagonists had composite professional identities that included aspects linked to other kinds of developmental work.

This theme of the self as encompassing aspects of the other continues in sections 4, 5, and 6, where we question a distinction between `humanist intellectuals' and `technocrats' that is highlighted in the literature. Once again composite identities are apparent, and some of the reasons and implications are discussed. Readers in a hurry can go from section 4 to the conclusions in section 7. Those who wish to explore a range of Third World realities and consciousnesses are invited to go through the narratives in sections 5 and 6. The concluding section pulls together the threads of discussion, using Giddens' writings on modernity and self-identity in order to better understand humanist intellectuals and technocrats from the Third World.

The style adopted by the paper reflects the methodology used. Arguments are generally presented through the words and narratives of our twelve protagonists -- a manner of presentation that does justice to reality and complexity (George 1997a: 64-69).

> The truths inherent in personal narrative issue from real positions in the world -- the passions, desires, ideas, and conceptual systems that underlie the life as lived. People's personal narratives are efforts to grapple with the confusion and complexity of the human condition. Our intellectual task... is to write a superordinate narrative that encompasses them (Josselson 1995: 32).

The narrative mode of presentation is particularly necessary because we draw

on Giddens' analysis of self-identity in the late modern age. This involves `*the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography*' (Giddens 1991: 53, emphasis given), and is therefore best presented in the words and perceptions of our protagonists themselves.

The narratives of these twelve men and women help us to understand something of the identity frameworks of Third World intellectuals. `Through thematic dialogues and the exchange of stories with co-participants, learners strive to become the "transforming agents" of their own social reality. With the assistance of such discourse, they become *subjects* rather than the *objects* of their own history. Or, in other words, history is turned into biography' (Fischer *op. cit.*: 60, emphasis given). Sections 5 and 6 present twelve abbreviated narratives.

The narratives are often given in protagonists' own words -- with the following qualifications: minor editing has been carried out for correct usage, a few changes have been made to conceal details that might reveal a protagonist's identity, text has been slightly condensed, an occasional phrase has been added to clarify context, and excerpts from a single narrative that pertain to the same subject have been spliced together. Square brackets to mark additions and dots to signify missing content have been omitted, because they interrupted the flow of text and argument to an irritating extent in a paper that makes extensive use of narratives.

In broad terms, this paper attempts to bring to life a small but global sample of Third World intellectuals who are interested in isssues of development. It does this with reference to debates in the literature as well as in terms of the everyday realities of their lives. The small sample size is an asset here, in that it allows us to probe in some depth the lives of a limited number but wide range of individuals.

## 2. SELF-IDENTITY IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: THREE NARRATIVES

The twelve individuals on whom we focus -- as well as their contemporaries who remain in the background of our discussion -- grew to maturity during the second half of the twentieth century, in various parts of a world that was increasingly drawn tightly together by intricate threads of history, politics, economy and technology. As Giddens puts it:

> One of the distinctive features of modernity, in fact, is an increasing interaction between the two `extremes' of... globalizing influences on the one hand and personal dispositions on the other... ...in forging their self-identities, no matter

> how local their specific contexts of action, individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications (1991: 1-2).

Thus our twelve protagonists attained adulthood in a world where `the connecting of the global and the local has been tied to a profound set of transmutations in the nature of day-to-day life' (*op. cit.*: 22). These protagonists were `also able... to grasp the new opportunities which open up as pre-established modes of behaviour become foreclosed, and to change themselves' (*op. cit.*: 12).

Central to our discussion is the self-awareness and self-actualization that accompanied this coming of age in the twentieth century: `The reflexivity of modernity extends into the core of the self. Put another way... the self becomes a *reflexive project*... ...the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change' (*op. cit.*: 33, emphasis given).

The narratives retold in this paper, based on long interviews with their protagonists, embody what Giddens calls `self-identity'. This is autobiography `in the broad sense of an interpretative self-history produced by the individual concerned, whether written down or not' (*op. cit.*: 76) -- in the present case produced by individuals in the course of interviews and written down by me.

The stories that follow are critically about personal choices, but personal choices made in particular local settings as well as amidst the global configurations of the twentieth century. The three life narratives give a sense of the individuals and issues examined in this paper. These stories are from three regions of the Third World and also exemplify three main professional categories among those who work on developmental problems: civil servants, academicians and activists. Each of the three protagonists was trained in a different `branch' of knowledge -- the civil servant in the `hard' social science of economics, the academician in the `natural science' of enviromental biology, and the activist in the profession of computer science. Two protagonists were men and one a woman. Their ages ranged from the early to late thirties.

I give the three stories the titles of `an African civil servant', `a Latin American woman environmentalist' and `an Asian activist' -- although these titles are obviously inadequate. I use `an' or `a' in our descriptive titles and not `the': self-evidently, African civil servants, Latin American environmentalists and Asian activists vary greatly among themselves. The three narratives are drawn (as already explained) from a sample of twelve. The other narratives will be presented later in the paper but more narrowly,

in terms of specific themes.

**An African civil servant.** Terefe was born in 1961 into a feudal landholding family in the Horn of Africa. Formal education became increasingly important in his generation. His favourite subjects at school were physics and mathematics, and he planned to train as an engineer. When he was in high school, the political situation in the country became extremely unstable. At the age of eighteen, along with many of his peers, he read Mao's Red Book: `I joined the revolution without a clear idea of what I was doing. I was sent to jail and it disrupted my education, but I became interested in social science. I hadn't studied history in high school, but later on I got an `A' in a history exam.'

Soon after, a socialist regime took power and Terefe was sent to the University of Havana in Cuba to study social science, even though engineering was still his first preference. After a while his frustration subsided somewhat and he found that he enjoyed studying economics, `particularly political economy, economics influenced by Marx, I liked the philosophical and historical emphasis, we had good teachers. I did nine courses in economics and learned about the socialist way of national planning, something that was applicable at home.' He returned to his country after graduation: `I knew that I'd changed. I looked different, and I had become liberal, compared to the conservatism at home. I'd been influenced by Cuba even in things like dancing -- my friends who had been to university at home didn't dance. It's not just a question of education, it's the community in which you are educated.' He re-encountered and married a former girlfriend (who had been declared dead during the political upheavals) and they had two children.

Terefe was first assigned to the Ministry of Trade, but he applied for a change and moved to the Ministry for Economic Development and Co-operation. He was sent from the capital city to work in a port. His boss had an American doctorate and was a demanding superior: `I think he played a critical role in my development.' In a few years, both the boss and Terefe had done well, had risen in the Ministry and were transferred to the capital city where they worked at a broader level, no longer with regional projects but now with sectoral development and macro-development. When the economy was liberalized and criteria for project evaluation changed, Terefe was one of the three people selected from the Ministry to attend short computer courses organized by UNIDO.

His academic interests were still keen: `Six years in Havana wasn't enough time to read all that I wanted to.' He looked around for a place where he could study further. No qualifications higher than his present degree were offered at the national university. He was accepted by universities in Cairo and in Sussex, but without financial support. Admission to the Institute of Social Studies was linked to a fellowship. He joined the six month diploma programme on `development planning techniques', a programme that many of his seniors in the Ministry had attended and had recommended strongly.

At the end of his studies at the Institute, Terefe returned to his job in the Ministry but he remarked: `In an NGO I think I would get more job satisfaction -- I would work in a limited area, I would be able to show the impact of my interventions, I could speak for myself.'

**A Latin American woman environmentalist.** Ingrid was born in 1970 in one of the poorer Andean countries but into a wealthy family. Most of her paternal uncles lived in the USA, but her father had stayed in his country (partly in repugnance at the Vietnam war) although he had married a Scandinavian woman whom he had met in New York. Ingrid said. `I feel a mixture. When I'm abroad, I feel how engrained Latin America is in me, I'm very Latin -- but I'm also very western, not just Scandinavian.' She attended the American international school in her country: `I can't say the school gave me much of a Third World perspective. We were encouraged to be critical in our studies and I found that liberating, but the studies weren't very appropriate to the reality around.'

In her late teens, Ingrid had to specialize in her studies: she enjoyed biology and chemistry and was already interested in forestry. `From the time I was very young, I've always liked plants, I had this feeling of `me and Nature', I wanted to save trees.' Rather than study forestry in her own country at a rural university of doubtful reputation, she was sent by her parents to a college in midwestern USA. `I studied environmental biology -- now I think that environmental science or environmental studies would have been better, broader. I found laboratory work dull. I also studied sociology, it became a passion, I remember feeling overwhelmed during the first class. I became involved in feminism, we had classes in the sociology of gender, I worked at a women's centre. It was all rather westernized, there were few people around with whom to discuss Southern perspectives. During my annual visits home, I worked with local environmental projects and I realized the connections with policy -- something that was lacking in my

study of environmental biology.'

Ingrid graduated and returned home: `I was ready to go home and work. I wanted to change the world, I was passionate rather than angry. I had a mission, to go back and be useful. I'd prepared myself for a shock but it was still a great shock. I found it hard to relate to my old friends, for them education had only meant a way to get a job. There were limits on feminism and radicalism. College had been a bubble, I'd felt that I could do anything later, go home and get the job I wanted with the kind of people I wanted to work with.' Ingrid found employment as a consultant, mainly on environmental impact assessments, `not anything political or transformatory.'

She then took up a well-paid position as environmental co-ordinator with a petroleum company, and was the only woman in a workforce of around a thousand men: `In such an extreme situation, I realized the limits to my feminism, I couldn't cope, I wished that there was at least another woman working there to join forces with. I found that though I loved nature and the rainforest, I felt isolated living the year around in the forest, I needed to be in contact with people and with society. And I realized what the petroleum company was doing, I felt that I had a mission to work against it, so I quit. I made contact with people in environmental movements, I made trouble for the petroleum company, I also made a name for myself. I realized that my place was not in the field but where policy was made.'

She was later able to find a job with an ecological non-governmental organization: `I worked with biologists who were very concerned about environmental problems. All the same, I felt the need to address social and political issues. This reaffirmed my ideas about combining biology and social science.' She attended short courses in other Latin American countries in order to add `social perspectives' to her `technical expertise' (and she formed a durable attachment to a man she met at one of these courses).

`I didn't feel very prepared for the work that I wanted to do in life, in spite of all my previous study -- environmental biology hadn't given me enough political and social science, and the other courses I'd done had been short, not in depth. I wanted interdisciplinary study. I also wanted a Southern perspective, to break away from the US-dominated mainstream. I wanted to combine environmental and developmental issues. I also wanted to get out of the region for a while and Europe felt important, it had culture, history and academic resources. I love Latin America but you are secluded there,

especially in small countries like mine, especially in academic work.' She applied to the Institute of Social Studies and was admitted with a scholarship. She joined the master's programme in the `politics of alternative development strategies.'

**An Asian activist.** Vern was born in 1968 in a south-east Asian country and spent nearly all of his life in the province where he grew up. He studied in a primary school in the small town where his parents lived, and English and Art were his favourite subjects: `I was good at Art, at portraits and scenery. I wanted to become a writer. When I was ten, I wrote a book, it was written in English and illustrated -- `The Man Who Ran Away From Home To Look For His Fortune', I think it was influenced by stories about an uncle.'

Vern attended high school in the provincial capital where his grandparents lived: `It was exciting to move to the city. I continued to live with my grandparents when I moved on to study at university, I was seventeen then.' There were two important but very different consequences of his move to the city. The first was in his subject of specialization: `In the third year of high school, in the summer vacation, I atttended a basic course on computer programming, I did well, I graduated as the valedictorian, I thought "This is the future!"' At university, encouraged by his parents, he enrolled in a computer engineering programme, building on a long-standing interest in science that had thus far been subordinated to his love for the creative arts.

Secondly: `When I moved to the city it was at the height of the insurgency problem, my friends were political, they were in a rebel party, I attended `teach-ins' on Maoist and Marxist ideology, so from my schooldays I was politically involved.' In his later years at university, he worked on the student magazine, but as a political rather than a creative writer: `The magazine published critiques of subjects and methodology, and discussed the reigning social issues in the post-dictatorship period. I became editor-in-chief.

`Because of my political activity, I graduated only with average grades. I had no idea about my future after graduation. Should I do computer-related work? Or should I go in for journalism or creative writing?' He worked for two years with the biggest local newspaper, but then moved to a non-governmental organization that was actually a network of 64 smaller organizations: `One attraction was the chance to travel around the province and even around the country to attend national conferences -- I travelled a lot and enjoyed it. The organization did pioneering work in developmental advocacy,

research and communication, mainly in the field of politics and governance. I'd missed formal training in these fields, so I appreciated the informal training on the job, getting some working knowledge.'

Vern took a major decision: `I decided that upto the age of thirty I would work for the public interest, and later I would look after myself. So I didn't pursue opportunities in the US, though my chances would have been good -- I had family there and I had a qualification in computer engineering. My former classmates are doing extremely well, but I had priorities.' He married a local schoolteacher.

As he neared the age of thirty, Vern had second thoughts about now `looking after himself': `Now I'm close to thirty, I'm not sure what I'll do. I may continue with the work I'm doing or take advantage of other opportunities -- I may work in local government or run for election or go in for developmental consultancy work. I could move back to computer studies. I enjoy my present work. It's partly still the travel that's attractive, but the core reason is the opportunity this kind of work gives me to grow inwardly, the continual learning processes, the opportunity to share with the underprivileged. In my work at the regional level, I'm dissatisfied with the strategies formulated at the national level of the organization. I was invited to join the national secretariat but I refused. The career opportunities would be better there but I think that I can contribute more at the provincial level.'

Vern then decided to continue working for `the public interest' until he was forty, after which he would return to the creative arts. He considered how he should prepare himself for the coming ten years of public contribution: `I felt that I needed a more adequate framework on land use planning. The local government code in our country now allows NGOs to participate in local planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring. That's an attempt to institutionalize the relationship between NGOs, the state and the people. We are planning a strategic arm for the NGOs to influence local development policy. If I studied something more specialized, I could support local groups. There are more than two thousand municipalities, they should be brought into the mainstream.'

Vern was admitted to the diploma programe in `rural policy and project planning' at the Institute of Social Studies, with a scholarship: `I wanted to organize the bits of information that had gone into my head through various training courses, I felt I needed some sort of comprehensive framework. I gave priority to coming to the Insti

tute because I thought that I would have a chance to find out about NGO dynamics outside my country, through my classmates and co-participants from other parts of the world. And I would have opportunities to establish contacts with NGOs and funding agencies here in the Netherlands. I hoped that the Institute would organize symposia and conferences on developmental issues for NGOs.'

## 3. CIVIL SERVANTS, ACADEMICIANS AND ACTIVISTS

The three brief life histories just presented illustrate how limited labels such as `academician', `civil servant' and `activist' are. Terefe, a civil servant, was attracted to work in non-governmental organizations and had keen academic interests. Ingrid was an experienced activist but now saw herself as an academician trying to combine the social and environmental sciences. She said: `My master's programme here has this combination of academicians and activists -- I don't fully fit into either category.' Vern had chosen activism but came to the Institute in search of a `comprehensive framework' of knowledge in which to locate his ideas and impressions. Vern was therefore something of an intellectual activist whereas Ingrid was more an activist intellectual. Nine of our other ten protagonists were also better described by hybrid labels.

**Academia and activism.** Three others combined activism and academia. Sip saw his work as a university teacher as a form of activism: `After I finished the master's degree, I stayed on at university, I joined the faculty. I now saw that social problems are structural problems, cultural problems, they are problems of perspective. You can change society by working with people, and I thought I would work with the new generation. I wasn't disappointed in my job, I was happy. Changing perspectives is a long term process, but I did see some things changing for the better. As advisor to the students' union, I helped change things.' He also thought about more direct forms of activism to pursue alongside academic work.

Chen Li represented the converse. She viewed her life in activist organizations as providing material for reflection and understanding: `Before my final year at university, I got to know some local NGOs well. It was exciting, meeting new people and learning new things, putting some of the theory I'd learned into practice. I was invited by one NGO to work with them.' She came to the Institute because `it would be a change from rushing around doing things. I was so busy with day-to-day work that I had no time for developing the critical process -- I felt I had to get away from that

situation for a while, to do some reading and thinking. My intention was and is to go back to the organization I work for, and to build up their research and documentation and publication.' She thus visualized herself as playing an academic role within an activist organization (conversely to Sip, who saw himself as an activist within an academic institution). `So far I've not been a public mobilizer, I was always a planner and a thinker rather than an executor,' Chen Li said. And at another time she reflected: `I haven't done enough work to call myself a feminist historian, I'm just a feminist who likes history.' She was thus an intellectual activist like Vern, whereas Ingrid, Sip and Omar are better described as activist intellectuals.

Omar had earlier been strongly involved in activism. `In my third year at university, I got politicized, involved in student movements. I sometimes got into trouble, as when I protested against the Gulf War. I was also politically involved in a strike at the university by the support staff. It was a predominantly female union, of people who kept the place running but who were paid miserably. The strike was ultimately busted, by students who were focussed on themselves.' Later he had worked briefly for the government, `as a social worker, on the bottom rung. Social work was a way to get a sense of what "doing" is about. I found it very depressing, to see how social control was exerted.' He now wanted a future in academia but with continuing activist involvements: `I would like to do a Ph.D. on globalism and find a teaching position somewhere, but I would also like to be involved in praxis other than teaching that has an influence on the world.'

Omar's brief period working for government had left in him no desire to repeat it. In contrast, another three of our protagonists -- Danielle, Antony and Yumiko -- had strong academic interests yet saw their futures as associated with government, even if at some distance, through advisory work or research on policy. None was drawn towards activism, although all saw themselves as working towards socio-economic change through frameworks of analysis and praxis.

**Academia, policy and projects.** Danielle said: `I'd always wanted to work in an office, I thought as an accountant. But my final years at school were when the dictatorship was coming to an end. I developed political awareness and wanted to become something that would be useful to the country. I thought of becoming an economist. I'd studied a little economics at school. I realized that in all developing countries the economic issues are important and basic.' After graduating in economics, she joined a pol

icy research institute and enjoyed her work there. At the same time she found that she was not fully equipped for this work: `I found holes in my training, things that were lacking. The holes were related to the topics that I worked on, I was not adequately prepared for what I was doing. I was working on social policy, but I had never been trained in how to develop policy, how to manage projects. I lacked some empirical things.'

She deliberately chose further education at a school of development studies rather than at a conventional university, and selected a policy-oriented programme at the Institute that attracted mainly civil servants. She reported of the programme: `I'm getting what I expected, I'm learning useful approaches and techniques to evaluate projects.' And she said of her mostly bureaucrat classmates: `They are very important in my experience here, I am with people who are so different from myself in style of life and ideology and world view. I learn informally from their work experience.' She noted that her civil servant classmates were not in search of intellectual excitement, `maybe because they are people with a lot of practical experience.' She herself had for this phase in her professional life chosen useful skills over intellectual excitement: `I like theoretical structures but don't want to be limited to them.' Danielle was very clear about her plans: `I would like to be involved in public affairs in my country, but as an academician rather than a civil servant, though I would work on public policy.'

Yumiko resembled Danielle in wanting practical skills to complement intellectual interests. At home, she taught the humanities to undergraduate students but had increasingly found herself drawn to issues in development. She had come to the Institute to be initiated into development studies: `My interest in development was theoretical, to satisfy my interest. But if I was to earn my livelihood, I needed to know some practical things, how to manage and evaluate projects.' Yumiko talked about working for a non-governmental organization because she thought that her chances of employment (after a late shift to development work) were better within such an organization than in the civil service. It was clear however that -- wherever she worked -- her interest was in cumulative improvements through the dedicated `administration of things', rather than in activist scenarios of resistance and transformation.

Given this orientation towards `doing', why do we classify Yumiko among the academicians? She herself said: `It's strange. Although I feel that I'm not very good at scholarship and academics, I don't want to be separated from them. Maybe I'm fright

ened of the real world -- the academic world is more protected from conflict. The main question is what would be a good job for me? I think I would enjoy teaching what I have learned here. I need to go through what I studied, and teaching will give me a chance to digest it.' Yumiko was still focussed on `digesting' and reflecting, at the same time that she felt her way towards opportunities for `doing' -- thus in our classification we situate her within academia but as increasingly oriented towards administration (here associated with the civil service).

**Civil servants.** Antony shared Danielle's and Yumiko's desire to span theory and practice, but unlike them he already had practical skills and wished to use them within a broader analytical framework. He had earlier trained as a computer scientist and then joined the civil service: `I started work a month after I graduated from university, it was easy to get a job. I had a bond to work with the government because of my scholarship at university. I had no problem about joining the public sector. The private sector was then less clear about the use of computers, they were so new in my part of the world.' Antony went on: `After I had worked with computers for a while, it was no longer so thrilling. I now feel that my role is more analytical than technical. It looks as though the whole pattern of work has shifted towards analysis and policy. I was working on changing laws on tariffs and customs, I was interacting with various governments in the region, and I found that software is only a tool. I already have a technical base but I need to integrate it with development studies. In policy making, there's a role for people who understand technology and can integrate it into development. I felt that I had to fill in a gap in my studies, I needed to do some policy analysis.'

John was the only one of our protagonists who seemed not to be a hybrid professional, and was `just' a civil servant. We now briefly run through his life story in order to substantiate this. John was a career diplomat, specializing in international relations at the Institute. `When I was a student, there wasn't much career guidance in my country. Everyone was worried about getting a job and that showed in the education system. I chose political science because I saw it as a means to enter the Foreign Service. One of my uncles was in the Foreign Service and I liked his way of life. After I graduated, I joined the Foreign Service. Getting in was quite competitive, I remember the interview. My income dropped, compared to my earnings as a weekend disc jockey during my student days and also compared to what I had earned as a journalist while waiting for the interview to the Foreign Service. But the work was interesting. My first

position was in the Protocol Department which I liked the most, but there was no blueprint for the work that I had to do. I tried to write reports -- I wrote the only report ever presented in consular affairs -- and I tried to be more professional. This was noted by the Permanent Secretary.

`After a while I wanted more specific qualifications. I couldn't keep drawing on what I had learned at university, I had to keep abreast of new developments, I also wanted some more theoretical knowledge. International relations is generic to our kind of work, every Foreign Service officer needs to study it, we have to know about world political economy and trade issues. Given my familiarity with international relations, I had a general idea of what a course in it would be like. For example, the two specializations here at the Institute are similar to what I'd expected, one on diplomacy and international law and the other on trade relations. I've chosen trade relations, I can use my inside knowledge on sustainable development and structural adjustment in my country.'

John was very clear about what he hoped to get from study at the Institute: effective inputs into his career in the Foreign Service: `I want a course that is of practical help in my career.' He was also pleased to be studying in a class that had recruited diplomats from around the Third World. They exchanged perceptions and ideas, and compared the structure and functioning of the Foreign Service in different countries. John said: `I had less academic interests as well when I came here to study. I had questions about aid, about development assistance. In my country we don't always understand the logic behind it. Here I can see the context of donor fatigue, and how development aid functions in a certain political environment, how there are problems such as unemployment here.'

Another of our protagonists, Mitchell, also worked for an African government but with a parastatal. He had similarly come to the Institute with intentions of furthering his career within his sphere of employment -- but had then found his mindset changing. His life story linked this change to earlier professional shifts in his career:

`I was ambitious, but when I was a child there wasn't much on career development. So in secondary school I decided to be a teacher. For that I needed university education, a bachelor's degree in education -- within that I took history as a major. After I graduated, I worked for a few months with the Anti-Corruption Commission. It wasn't the career I wanted, I didn't enjoy interrogating people, and the Commission wasn't effective at high levels of corruption. I next taught in a provincial school for ten

months. I didn't like the environment. It was a mission school and the relationship between the headmaster and the teachers wasn't good. I found it difficult after the flexibility I'd enjoyed as a university student, the room for innovation.

`I had done a course in administration at university and had read about human resources management. So I took up a correspondence course for a diploma in personnel management and industrial relations. I was used to reading and so could read on my own, teach myself. The materials were sent to me by a college of professional management in the UK. It was quite an expensive course but my father helped me put together the fees. I attained a distinction.

`Now I could look for a better job. I thought of the national electricity supply corporation. It paid well, so everyone wanted to work there, it was very competitive. I had an advantage because I was fresh from study and had done a very practical course. It was a parastatal, and under the new government's liberalization policy it was forced to be more competitive and commercial. There was some hiring and firing aimed at increasing productivity and profits. The human resources department was expected to contribute to this change, to take it up as a mission, to draw up business plans. I was first appointed as human relations officer in one of the seven provincial divisions, and then transferred to the head office as human relations development officer. My job was to focus on policy issues in human resource training. The diploma course I had studied really helped, both at the interview for the job and later. I thought about studying for a master's. At the moment my parastatal was asking only for graduates, but that might change in the coming years. The competition was increasing, including international competition. I felt that I must increase my skills.'

Mitchell joined the `employment and labour studies' programme at the Institute, with a scholarship. He reported early on in the year: `We have a lot of reading to do. The question is, at the individual level how can all this material be related to the practical situation? How do we make practical applications -- isn't that the whole point of being here?' But his initial focus on practical skills had already begun to expand: `I came here to study human resources development because it is relevant to my job. But here I discovered that human resources development is only part of a much broader field of study and that there are many other sub-fields. Some are equally interesting, for example patterns of labour. My initial area of interest is sometimes superseded by others when I think of the global context. These are things that I hadn't studied or been ex

posed to before.'

At the end of the academic year Mitchell reported: `For me, the course was very useful, it gave me some macro-perspectives. I realize now that we need a new kind of human resource development, not just to increase productivity so as to be competitive. Now my focus is on how to change the culture of management.' He looked back on his life and had some second thoughts: `I was encouraged by my lecturers to remain at the university, to go in for research and staff development but that didn't work out, though it probably would have been the best for me.' Mitchell was thus closer to Antony in being an intellectual civil servant, than to John who saw study mainly in terms of contribution and promotion in his line of `the service'.

Our fourth civil servant, Terefe, as we have earlier seen, would have liked to work for a non-governmental organization. The person in our sample who had the most experience with non-governmental organizations – Chen Li -- would however have described herself as having little in common with Terefe. He saw such organizations as settings more conducive to the `administration of things' than the civil service he had experience in: therefore his opinion that `In an NGO, I think I would get more job satisfaction -- I would work in a limited area, I would be able to show the impact of my interventions, I could speak for myself.' His approach was somewhat similar to that of Yumiko, discussed earlier. For Chen Li, however, non-governmental organizations were not about administration but about activism and the transformation of relationships. We return to this below.

**Law and activism.** Mary, the protagonist who remains to be classified, could (as we shall see) have been a civil servant or an academician but had chosen the law as her profession: `At university, I wanted to read history and geography but my older brother was already a historian and he said "Do something different. Read law." I liked the idea -- law was interesting, challenging, it had possibilities.' Mary attended the crowded federal university, sitting in classes of two thousand students where the lecturer spoke through a microphone. `In any case, classes and lectures were only a general guide. We worked with tutors who were less qualified than the professors. I read a lot on my own, the books weren't easily available in my country but I went to a big neighbouring country and bought books there. I read cases for pleasure.' She went on to a post-graduate diploma in law, but despite completing coursework and internship none of the students received official certificates: `There was a problem between the rector

of the university and the professor who organized the course. There was also trouble between the university and the government.' Had Mary received an official diploma she could have continued working in the bank where she had been an intern, dealing with mortgages and property law. As things stood, she had spent several years working for a post-graduate qualification but had nothing to show for it. She still hoped that the red tape could be disentangled and that she and her coursemates would receive their certificates.

`I worked as a researcher for a lawyer who had taught me at university. The pay was very low and my name wasn't on anything that was published. But through this lawyer I met my present employer who invited me to join his chambers.' Mary opted to work as a junior lawyer in chambers rather than take the alternative paths available, which were to write the competitive examination to enter the civil service or to study for a further seven years and then teach law. (If she had done either of these, she would have been differently classified within our sample, either with the civil servants or the academicians.) After a period in chambers Mary felt that she needed additional training: `I was doing background work on cases. This was important work but my education was not enough for this. I had not had any methodological inputs, I had difficulties in compiling and writing up material, the research I did was written up by others. I felt that I should have the ability, I should acquire writing and reading and research skills.' She was admitted to the Institute for a diploma in `international law and organization for development', with a scholarship.

Mary had strong substantive interests as well as a keenness to acquire technical skills: `My research paper is on the rights of the child, based on working children in my country. There I'd noticed of late that there were more children on the streets during school hours, selling small things. It disturbed me. What about their future? Some of them are hooligans and thieves, but they can't be held responsible, they started out innocent. For children to claim their rights they must know what their rights are. I may only be able to raise questions in my research paper, not answer them.'

There was clearly an activist side to Mary: `When I return home I'll collect data for a research study, data on how many working children there are, in what categories and what are their reasons for doing this kind of work. I can see what to do, approach NGOs, get some funding to train children in fields where not much education is required, fields that are suitable for both boys and girls. Who knows, I may be successful

in addressing the problem.'

Mary's willingness to become involved in activism was part of her self-image as a lawyer: `I think about a life in chambers, about my future as a lawyer. I could be a successful activist, but as a lawyer you can achieve more, you can work free for people whose rights are being violated.' I therefore classify Mary as an activist lawyer, closer to the activists in our sample. Her study was focussed very sharply on problems of concern to her, and she did not share the more theoretical orientations of our activist intellectuals Omar, Ingrid and Sip nor of intellectual activists Vern and Chen Li.

**Overlapping classifications.** If we divided a circle into three sections marked respectively `civil service', `academia' and `activism', our twelve protagonists would be distributed over it as follows. John would be well within the section marked `civil service'. Terefe would be in this section too, but closer to the section labelled `activism'. Antony and Mitchell, on the other hand, would be in the `civil service' section but on the side adjacent to the section marked `academia'.

In the compartment `academia', Danielle and Yumiko would take positions just on this side from the section `civil service' (looking across at Antony and Mitchell). In contrast, Omar, Sip and Ingrid would be on the other side of the `academia' section, close to the border with `activism'. And across from them, within the section `activism' but near the border with `academia', we would find Chen Li and Vern. For Mary, we would have to create a small section `law', next to `civil service' but with Mary herself very near to the line demarcating the `activism' section.

**Tensions.** Spanning more than one category contributed to blurred divisions between those engaged in different kinds of work. Yet divisions and distinctions were still apparent, notably along the boundary where there was the least blurring, viz. that between the `civil service' and `activism' (a division that only Terefe spanned, and that only in his inclinations). In other words, polarization was sharpest between those who sought to work for change within or through existing political structures and those who saw transformation as taking place outside these structures and in spite of them. Chen Li said fairly soon after joining the Institute: `I'd visualized this place as a hive of Third World activists, but now I see that it caters a lot to bureaucrats and policy makers.' Vern also said at that early period in the academic year: `I'm slowly building up links with my classmates but only three of them are from NGOs. That's a disappointment, I was expecting more of an NGO presence but now I interact mainly with people from

government agencies.' He extended this to the content of study programmes: `In class, "policy" is usually equated with government policy.' He perceived behavioural differences between professional groups: `Those of us who are more vocal and open with our criticisms of the study programme come from non-governmental organizations. People from government are more diplomatic in public but critical in private.'

Such tensions are exemplified by Ingrid and Danielle, both Latin American women of around the same age who saw their future in academia and thus had much in common. Both however gave unsolicited negative opinions of each other's programmes in the course of interviews, negativism that related less to the content of the programme than to those who attended it. Thus Ingrid with her activist involvements spoke scornfully about `people from government just sitting in class and not really discussing things.' Danielle, an academician who worked on policy and had therefore chosen to enroll in a course mainly attended by civil servants, talked disparagingly of ideologues who `feel that they have to give their opinions about everything, they know about everything. The discussions don't get to the point, they just remain in outer space.'

Polarization was not only along the lines of civil service/ non-governmental organization. Chen Li reported, `At first I found my classmates so conservative. They were either from policy-making backgrounds or from conservative NGOs' -- thereby grouping certain kinds of non-governmental organization with the civil service. Chen Li did however say fairly early in the academic year: `Now I like the diversity in class, I appreciate my classmates for what they are, not for their compatibility with me, I see that some of them have qualities that I lack. One of my good friends -- I remember when I first saw her in class my reaction was "Ugh!"' The woman referred to was from a country very close to Chen Li's and of similar ethnic origin, but any feelings of commonality were eroded by negativism towards the woman's conservative professionalism as displayed in dress, demeanour and speech.

Ingrid described a tumultuous process of social learning, across professional and ideological lines: `I expected a safe nice place with progressive people without prejudice, "like me." I found that people were radically different, not what I'd expected but more real. Working for an NGO, I'd lived in a little bubble, I was an ecologist plus a feminist plus an anti-racist, a perfect little progressive. I came here with the wrong expectations. I clashed a lot and it hurt a lot. It's helped me learn about myself, and to take people as they are without great expectations, not reacting to them. So this has

been a "university of reality." People here have real problems, they are not a whole lot of progressive intellectuals, but it's taught me how people really are, how I really am.'

**Composite professional identities.** While some hostility continued to crackle, notably along the civil servant/ activist axis, a blurring of categories took place not so much at the level of the group as of the self. Nearly all our protagonists evinced hybrid professional identities, exemplified by the labels that were used to describe them. Yet even the larger groups of `hybrids' -- the five identities between academics and activism or the four between academics and the civil service -- did not perceive themselves as distinctive clusters or form `lobbies'. Complex professional identities had emerged within the crucibles of individual lives and were seen as intensely personal, not easily generalized, part of a unique self, whereby that self could move between different categories with a sense of belonging to more than one.

## 4. `TECHNOCRATS' AND `HUMANIST INTELLECTUALS': DICHOTOMOUS CATEGORIES?

We now relate the cases of our twelve protagonists to broader discussions of Third World intellectuals. We use Gouldner's (1979) work as a general framework, since he makes specific reference to `the third world of developing nations' (*op. cit.*: 1). We also draw on applications by Galjart and Silva (1995) of Gouldner's and other insights to intellectuals from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

A sharp distinction is made in the literature between what are called `technocrats' and `humanistic intellectuals': Gouldner for example offers us ``a *general* theory of the New Class as encompassing *both* technical intelligentsia *and* intellectuals' (*op. cit.*: 5, emphasis given). Humanist intellectuals are defined `as "those thinkers who deal with the production of ideas and symbols with regard to the social construction of society". The term technocrats, by contrast, referred to "individuals with a high level of specialist academic training, particularly in economics and engineering, who operate on the principle that most of the problems of society can be solved by scientific and technical means, rather than through politics and political awareness in society. In their view, those who are called upon to solve these problems must have specific scientific knowledge to deal with them"' (Galjart and Silva *op. cit.*: 7, citing Galjart and Silva 1993).

In sections 5 and 6, we shall apply this distinction to our protagonists and shall

see that in almost no case is it as clear-cut as presented here. Analysts use categories heuristically, as aids to discussion, and these categories should not be applied too narrowly. Is this why most of our protagonists do not fit the ideal types? Or do the ideal types have to be modified? What reasons can explain why our sample differs from the ideal types?

Galjart and Silva define technocrats as essentially apolitical, in Third World environments as in the First World. They cite for example Eduardo Silva's (1995) work on the `Chicago Boys' in Pinochet's Chile, that `uses a conceptual distinction between activist and technocratic intellectuals. While the former believe that the translation of ideas into policy requires the political awareness and participation of the various forces in society, the latter by contrast consider social demobilization a necessary condition for the adoption of rational policies' (*op. cit.*: 12).

**Another blurred classification.** Below we range our twelve protagonists along a continuum from `technocracts' to `humanist intellectuals'. We begin with those who received a specialized technical education (in econometrics, computers, agro-industrial product development, management and environmental science). Some of those placed close to the `technocratic' end of the continuum on grounds of their education, however, moved towards political activism fairly early in their lives (Vern and Ingrid), or became sceptical about technocracy (Sip and Mitchell). Even Terefe, placed at the extreme `technocratic' end because his work continued to involve the application of planning techniques to Third World reality, had a very political history and was aware that he operated in an extremely politicized environment. Antony, although a computer professional and placed next to Terefe on our continuum, chose further study not about `chips and technology' but about the economic and political context within which computers have to be used in government work.

We next discuss the six protagonists whose training was in the social sciences and humanities (including law) rather than in science and technology. John, the career diplomat, would have been classified by Gouldner among the `intelligentsia' rather than the intellectuals, since John enjoyed learning and even theory but was concerned mainly with the application of these to the smooth conduct of international affairs. Mary was similarly interested in applying what she learned, in her case to the activist issue of `street children'. Thus both John and Mary harnessed ideas in the pursuit of important everyday ends.

The other four protagonists we place in this category were more interested in ideas for their own sake. Danielle, however, had redirected her interest in theory in order to concentrate on what she considered crucial issues of poverty and inequality, and she sought to address these issues in a technical way through the minutiae of social policy. Yumiko focussed on the abstract issue of the relationship between `development' and `happiness', but because she wanted to gain greater exposure to situations where she could reflect more fully on this relationship, she sought work as a `development practitioner' and was therefore currently engaged in acquiring `project management' and other skills. Omar now felt committed to the study and praxis of `struggles around capitalism,' but had earlier if brief experience of applying social theory to social problems as a government social worker. Chen Li's life seemed to most exemplify the unswerving pursuit of ideas and ideals through activism -- but even she currently showed inclinations for involvement in more conventional policy research.

**Time**. One explanation for this blurring of categories -- apart from the heuristic nature of ideal types -- can be drawn from the literature. Patricio Silva (1995) argues that in the 1960s and 1970s `nationalist projects' (especially among the `new nations') enhanced the role of humanist intellectuals. In the 1980s and the early years of the 1990s, in contrast, these intellectuals' influence declined and technocrats instead enjoyed status and power as a consequence of economic crises and structural adjustment.[2]

Silva argues for a further dramatic change in these trends later in the 1990s:

> I contend that in the coming years -- as a result of the breakdown of traditional ideologies and the current processes of democratization taking place in several parts of the Third World -- a revitalization of the role of the intellectuals in developing countries can be expected. Both events have produced an urgent appeal for the engineering of new moral, ethical and political guidelines for the reorganization and recreation of the political and social orders in those societies. This time, however, the traditional *zero-sum* situation between intellectuals and technocrats could probably vanish as the strengthening of the intellectuals is likely to take place *vis-a-vis* the consolidation of the power of technocrats In the previous decades, the direction of the pendulum between the supremacy of the intellectuals and technocrats was in fact mainly governed by the objective of either strengthening *civil society* (mainly the domain of intellectuals) or *the state* (mainly the domain of technocrats). Today, however, the goal of strengthening both state and civil society could lead to a simultaneous empowerment (*op. cit.*:20, emphases given).

And:

> ... numerous Third World intellectuals have abandoned the long standing idea that revolution constituted a *sine qua non* for the achievement of any acceptable social order... The profound economic and financial crisis of the 1970s and

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[2] Silva's arguments may have to be modified for various areas within the `Third World.'

> 1980s has... made many humanistic intellectuals aware of the importance of having a well functioning economic system in order to solve the social needs of the population... ...many technocrats have learned in recent years that no solid and lasting financial and economic goals can be achieved as long as state institutions operate in almost complete isolation from the main social and political forces active in civil society. ... a kind of tacit mutual recognition has been gradually emerging between humanistic intellectuals and technocrats. They are both beginning to realize that they are not necessarily representing two irreconcilable ways of looking at society (*op. cit.*: 29-31). They are trying to elaborate new socio-political guidelines, avoiding the ideologised populist models of the 1960s and the radical neo-liberal programmes of the 1970s and 1980s (*ibid.*).

Our protagonists were interviewed in the late 1990s, the beginning of the period when Patricio Silva predicted there would be a greater convergence between the roles of `technocrats' and `humanistic intellectuals.' In our sample, as we shall see, every `technocrat' was to some extent a humanist intellectual -- and every `humanist intellectual' had a history (again to a varying extent) of attempting to apply knowledge to achieve certain concrete and inevitably narrow ends. Does our case then take Silva's argument a step further? Do the `composite professional identities' identified in the previous section include a blend between `technocracy' and `humanist intellectualism' *within* the self?

Patricio Silva emphasizes the late 1990s and afterwards as a period of increased convergence between technocracy and humanist intellectualism. He describes the preceding decades as characterized by swings of the pendulum between the political influence of `humanist intellectuals' and `technocrats.' Our protagonists' narratives given in the next two sections provide the context of what was happening during those decades -- for most of our protagonists were born in the 1960s -- not in circles of influence and power but at the level of ordinary lives in different parts of the Third World: the crucibles within which `composite' professional identities emerged in the form that they took in the late 1990s.

**Place.** In other words, our narratives emphasize the role of *place* as well as of *time* in the emergence of professional identities that blend technocracy and humanist intellectualism. The place is somewhere known loosely as the Third World (which gains substance as an empirical referent in the course of our narratives). A wide range of contexts is covered, across continents. The `Third World' is not only the tumult of revolution that interrupted Terefe's education, nor only the passivity of a country under authoritarian rule that Chen Li was determined to challenge. It also includes the relative political stability within which Antony realized that he needed to better understand po

litical contexts before applying technological means. It is the place that Yumiko saw as less anomic and more socially and emotionally integrated than the rich countries she had known. Omar, the only one in our sample who looked at the `Third World' from the outside, said of visits to the part most familiar to him, his parents' native country: `There's a life and vibrance that you can only appreciate when you are there.' The presence of Omar – a North American immigrant -- in our sample illuminates the Third World within the First World, when `struggles against capitalism' are waged there. Fischer calls this the `ideological and political' use of the term Third World, in contrast to its `geographic' use.

Everyday reality in the Third World is permeated by politics. John's memories of his schooldays in East Africa provide an extreme but not atypical example of this: `My family returned to our own country after the dictator was overthrown. But there was this sense of disillusionment, the economy was getting worse, there was political violence and killing... I think that was the worst period in our country's history. All this affected my studies, I had to redo the O-level exams. I also did A-levels twice. After I failed the first time, I appeared as a private candidate. It was my own decision to repeat the exam, I wanted to make something of myself, I paid my own fees with money I earned from part-time work. You could say that was an important period in my life, I began to focus, I went into university more focussed.'

The Third World is thus a political place, as even the `technocrats' in our sample had to take note of. Yet those who are seriously interested in structural change in various contexts within the `Third World' can come to feel that this is possible only if brought about systematically, step by step, in a carefully thought out and executed manner. In other words, it can best be achieved through the formulation and implementation of policy that is designed to achieve certain concrete ends -- the satisfaction of the basic needs that Danielle focussed on, or the rehabilitation of street children that was Mary's goal, or the end to domestic violence that Chen Li was concerned with.[3]

The `Third World's' future depends on the creative application of technical means to desirable ends, as even the `humanist intellectual activists' in our sample seemed to feel. Ingrid said of the Institute’s `synthesizing exercise' that was held at the end of the academic year: `It's useful as a group exercise that is different and not so

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[3] Chen Li ’s discussion of domestic violence is not included in the present paper.

scholarly and academic. It's fun. There's less reading and more thinking, we have to try and be practical, it's good for those like me who are hung up on intellectualism. We work with others in a group, brainstorming within a group, formulating policy and recommendations, not sitting up in the clouds.' The exercise had forced students -- in a

master's programme that was oriented largely towards activism -- to apply their minds to *making transformatory politics operational*, by formulating appropriate policies. As Ingrid put it, `The issue is how to challenge the system and incorporate new ideas into decision-making.'

This creative use of techniques and technology to facilitate transformation within the Third World has to contend with an entrenched simple `technocentrism' within the same environment that encourages conventional technocracy. Some of the narratives that follow describe how in various such settings science and technology were seen as the way forward for `new nations' as well as for the individuals who were to `build' these nations. Engineers enjoy a high social and economic status in most parts of the `Third World' -- as a result of the material infrastructure required for `development projects' as well as more abstract perceptions of the need to `engineer' the future. Opportunities for highly remunerative work at home and abroad act as more personal spurs. Such an environment had influenced both Antony's and Vern's decisions to become engineers (and in their case, even more prestigiously and lucratively, computer engineers). In Third World contexts, `management' too brings material rewards and status, given perceptions that the future has to be `managed' as well as `engineered': Mitchell tells us a manager's story.

Antony described the push to technocracy: `At the time that I was studying, the educational system in the Caribbean encouraged good students to go in for science -- social science was seen as something for weaker students. So I had no exposure to economics, nor to social science, that's a pity, people should know what the alternatives are. I wasn't exposed to "arts" subjects like history. Later, when I was working in development and with economic policy, I felt that something was missing in my background. When I was in school, I had no clear idea about my future. The menu of options was very narrow, all along the lines of the natural sciences. Later I enjoyed studying computer science, but I still felt that I wanted something more.' Sip's narrative below describes parallel processes at work in South-East Asia: from here too Chen Li reported, `History was my favourite subject, learning about the past, it's a continuing interest. But I went into the science stream and wasn't happy there.'

Of our sample of twelve, all five women are placed away from the `technocracy' end of the continuum and towards the `humanist intellectual' end (Ingrid is in the middle and Mary, Danielle, Yumiko and Chen Li are on the other side from `technocracy).

Conversely, five out of seven men are close to the `technocratic' end, John is somewhere in the middle, and only Omar is at the `humanist intellectual' end. Of course, the distribution represents `starting points' as well as outcomes. Vern studied computer science but went on to activism. Sip trained in technology but then found his own version of an activist role. Mitchell was politically active at university, later worked in support of a liberalizing economy, but then moved towards a more critical stand.

All the same, the distribution may point to a trend whereby pressures towards technocratic training were especially exerted on boys in earlier decades, as prospective `bread-winners' and status bearers of families. Class factors may be at work here as well. Ingrid, from a wealthy family and with a mother in high-status work, trained as an environmental biologist. Chen Li, also from the established urban middle class and with a professional mother, was firmly directed by her family towards training as a doctor or dentist or accountant, but wriggled away into activism.

In the previous section we distinguished between those of our protagonists who were oriented towards the `administration of things' and those who worked for the `transformation of structures.' We now need to underline that these too are not dichotomous. Danielle for example sought the transformation of structures (in her case, unequal structures of income distribution) through the administration of things (in her case the drawing up of appropriate and effective social policy). Antony focussed on the administration of things (in his case, international trade through Third World regional organizations) but this was directed towards the transformation of structures (the unfair weighting of international trade towards rich and powerful countries and trade blocs through the global institutions that they control). The business of consciously trying to give form to the future (Galjart and Silva *op. cit.*: 3) requires not only a vision but the carving of a road towards that vision.

The connection between technical means and transformatory visions was masked by a dominant technocentrism that reinforced current structures. Those who protested against current structures found themselves also protesting the technical means that maintained them and in the process often associated the `administration of things' only with current structures. Conversely, those involved in the `administration of things' within conventional structures had to struggle in order to envisage how their work could be directed towards `transformation' -- and they then experienced a continuing struggle to retain this vision.

For this reason, the `continuum' given below -- that places protagonists' narratives between the `technocratic' and the `humanist intellectual' -- does not neatly coincide with the distribution of protagonists in the previous section over a circle that was divided between the civil service, academia and activism. The continuum begins with the civil servants Terefe and Antony, goes on to activist Vern and academician Sip, before reaching another civil servant, Mitchell. He is followed by academician Ingrid and then the fourth and final civil servant, John. Next comes activist lawyer Mary, the two academicians now oriented towards the `adminstration of things' (Danielle and Yumiko), activist intellectual Omar and intellectual activist Chen Li. The civil servants tend to be placed at the `technocratic' end and in the middle of the continuum, whereas the activists and the academicians are found at the `humanist intellectual' end and in the middle. However, the distribution is not clearcut because -- as said earlier -- we take starting points as well as outcomes into consideration when delineating `composite selves'.

**A multi-vocal social science.** Galjart and Silva associate technocracy with `a high level of specialist academic training, particularly in economics and engineering' (*ibid.*). The narratives that follow, however, support this more in the case of engineering – whereas economics, these narratives suggest, speaks in many voices and has definite transformatory potential.

Antony and Vern were trained in computer engineering, Sip in agro-industrial product development, and Mitchell in the `social engineering' of management studies. None of them described engineering as a `transformatory' field of learning or one with political potential. Mitchell in fact had grown sceptical of social engineering as applied in personnel management. Antony said clearly that his study of technology had not been enough. Vern had not practised his technical profession but had opted for activism. Sip had subordinated techniques and technology to participatory programmes.

Economics, in contrast, had not been perceived as narrow or limited or confining. Antony had deliberately sought to study economics, to provide a developmental context and vision within which technology could be applied. Vern was looking for `an alternative economic framework.' Sip had taken social science subjects -- including economics -- to balance more narrow technical studies.

Engineering was depicted as a unified profession, but economics was presented in a more differentiated way. In other words, there was economics and there was eco

nomics. Vern talked of `an alternative economic framework' as a contrast to `neo-classical economics.' Terefe described how, when studying economics at university, `I particularly liked political economy, economy influenced by Marx, I liked the philosophical and historical aspects.' All the same, it was clear that most protagonists spoke in a post-Marxist framework. Vern questioned the relevance of Marxism in the post-industrial information era. Chen Li reflected on her student years: `I used to think that I was interested in history because I was a Marxist, but I was never really a Marxist, I was labelled as such by conservative people. At university I followed my peers who were Maoist.' Chen Li provided a good example of space and options within economics: ``My parents wanted me to follow a conventional profession. I took economics as a step towards accountancy and studied econometrics. Later I moved towards political economy, but my parents still think that I studied straight economics!'

In this context, Patricio Silva uses Gouldner's (1979: 30) notion of a `speech community' that shares a technical discourse: this in turn `creates a special solidarity among the technocrats... it also unifies those who use it and establishes a distance between themselves and those who do not' (Galjart and Silva *op. cit.*: 26). Our protagonists' presentation of economics as a multi-vocal social science implies that it allows the discourse of disagreement and even of confrontation as well as the discourse of agreement that Silva emphasizes. Omar indeed was able to locate -- as the second supervisor of his research paper -- an economist within the economics master's programme at the Institute who maintained that he too `hated economics.'

We explore this further:

> Third World technocrats have become the national counterparts of international financial teams which frequently visit the developing countries to assess the performance of the local economy under the framework of several adjustment programmes. As Centeno points out, the communication between the foreign financial experts and the local technocrats is facilitated by their common academic backgrounds. They `not only share the same economic perspectives, but perhaps most importantly, speak the same language, both literally and metaphorically...' (Silva *op. cit.*: 26, quoting Centeno 1993: 325.)

Sip from our sample echoed this when he reminisced about involvement as a student in protests against the building of a dam and described the engineers as `using the language of economics.' Others among our protagonists, however, provided examples of how the same `language' could be used to contest the stand of dominant global institutions. Terefe was the kind of `local technocrat' described by Silva and Centeno, a civil servant at the Ministry for Economic Development and Co-operation: `My Minis

try is a good place to apply what I've learned at the Institute -- a lot of technical work is being done there, we're negotiating with the World Bank and the UNDP, if you have the guts you're in a position to influence your bosses and challenge projects. I can now evaluate the World Bank proposals more critically.'

Similarly, Antony had -- in his research paper at the Institute -- used arguments from economic theory to oppose the stand taken by dominant global economic institutions: `The research paper was the most substantial piece of writing that I've done so far. The central argument questioned the prevalent view that with free trade, global welfare would increase and the world would be a better place. I was able to challenge the assumptions, to show that this was not likely to happen, and that global welfare would be negatively affected by liberalization. My findings in a case study are interesting because they could refocus the direction of discussions. So far one perspective, that of the World Bank, was taken as "the" perspective. My data doesn't support that view, the World Bank thesis is not strong. It's the old story of control by the North and the international institutions, with the USA dictating through the World Trade Organization to the European Union and the Third World.'

At the same time, Antony had had an opportunity to take a counterstand to his own: `For our synthesizing exercise, I headed the "World Bank group" in the negotiations. Oh, it was just arbitarily assigned to me. But I've found real advantages in speaking for the World Bank, it helps you understand what the World Bank position is in the context of structural adjustment, it helps bring out little things that you hadn't really thought about, things you'd read about in books but had not thought about in a focussed way. So it's been a very useful exercise.'

Thus -- obviously -- not all economists are `Chicago Boys'. Centeno makes reference to `graduate degrees from U.S. universities' (*op. cit.*: 326). Antony says in his narrative below: `To study real economics you go to Europe, not North America' (emphasizing again that there are different kinds of `economics', some of which he considered `real'). Sip elaborated: `My seniors encouraged me to study abroad and some suggested the US. But I had a dislike for the US, my experience with seniors who had studied in the US was not good. I found their perspectives narrow, focussed only on the economy and not suited to our context.' Danielle reflected: `If I had been a neo-classical economist, I would have gone straight to the US to study.' She added though, `I still have an ideological problem with studying in the US, but there are places there

that are interested in Latin America and are progressive.'

Before crossing the geo-political line between the First and the Third World, then, our protagonists had often made a deliberate choice over where exactly to cross and in which direction to head. Antony said, `I feel that Europe has some interest in what happens in the Caribbean, whereas the USA doesn't really care about political options for development in the Caribbean.' The social sciences -- and economics among these -- was part of the First World's intellectual tradition, but the latter was something of a magnetic field wherein certain areas exerted ideological repulsion and others greater ideological attraction. `The First World is becoming unglued,' Omar reflected, referring -- among other things – to faultlines created by intellectual history and culture.

`Our sample' is small and not statistically representative. We need to look at larger numbers of Third World professionals who are engaged with issues of `development'. I have suggested that `place' (i.e. the Third World of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s within which nearly all our protagonists grew to adulthood) rather than `personality' was responsible for the combination of technical and humanist interests in our protagonists. Nearly all their classmates – and the universe they represented -- had also grown up in various parts of the Third World in that same period, and had been exposed to realities and life experiences there that would probably also have contributed to composite identities.

## 5. `TECHNOCRATS': TEREFE, ANTONY, VERN, SIP, MITCHELL AND INGRID

**Terefe.** The person who comes closest to the `technocrat' as generally defined is Terefe, whose life story was summarized earlier in this paper. Although strongly inclined towards engineering as a profession, he was directed by state planners to study economics in a `socialist' environment: `I learned about the socialist way of national planning, something that was applicable at home.' He then worked at the Ministry for Economic Development and Co-operation, `in project planning, doing things like running the capital budget and appraising projects.' In due course he moved to a more senior level, `dealing with sectoral departments and macro-development.' Later: `When our economy was liberalized, there was a change in criteria for project evaluation. Three of us were considered to have expertise and were selected for short computer

courses organized by UNIDO.'

At the Institute, Terefe attended the diploma programme on `development planning techniques': `I chose it because it seemed extremely relevant and systematically organized. Those who have studied in this programme or the Institute's master's in economics are doing well in the Ministry -- our Minister, his deputy and many others, including my head of department, also other heads of departments. Our Ministry produced a national document in which good use was made of what was learned here.' He commented: `Studying in this programme has radically changed my working style, I now have a more technically sophisticated approach to data. Cost benefit analysis is extremely useful, a way to evaluate projects economically and financially and socially. In my research paper, I'm trying to develop a model based on the system of national accounting matrix.' He said of his diploma programme: `It was dominated by practical work and I think this should be encouraged. In fact we should have more exercises if possible, especially in modelling and econometrics -- of course, we would need time to assimilate this.'

Terefe seems to be close to the `ideal type' of a technocrat in his application of `planning techniques', but he was nevertheless something of a political animal -- after all, he had left school to join a revolution, and attributed his interest in social science and history to this experience. Within economics, he had `particularly' liked studying `political economy, economics influenced by Marx.' He spoke of political issues: `the instability in much of Africa is very disturbing. That's not the case here in the Netherlands, here there's more emphasis on human rights. Here it's not majority rule in the sense that a hundred people can kill one person, but the hundred people will stand before the law, there's a respect for human rights first and other things follow.'

He was well aware that the technical was circumscribed by the political: thus his view that a non-governmental organization would provide a working environment that was more conducive to his application of planning techniques than a government body. His preference for non-governmental organizations seemed partly to rest on the conviction that these were less negatively politicized than government bodies. Presumably he was thinking of the local offices of international non-governmental organizations and saw these as relatively insulated from local power-play. `In an NGO I wouldn't have the problem of ethnic nationalism.Senior people in our government think on ethnic lines, favouring some groups for opportunities.'

Although the closest to a `technocrat' as defined in the literature, Terefe departed from the `ideal type' in his awareness that technical abilities are exercised in political environments. Was this because he operated in a `Third World' context where political stability could not be assumed? Our next case however illustrates how a relatively stable political setting also `politicized' a technocrat.

**Antony.** Antony was another of our protagonists to whom the term `technocrat' can be applied since he had trained and worked as a computer professional. He grew up in a more stable political environment and (perhaps relatedly) did not take part in student politics: `When I was at university I wasn't politically involved, although there too I was the class representative.' Antony described what it was like to study computer science: `I was thrilled about studying computers, it was a new thing, at that time only one or two people on our island had computers on their desks, it was an exciting new area. The future wasn't a problem because I was studying a subject that was in demand.'

After he graduated, Antony worked in a branch of the civil service. `I enjoyed working there tremendously -- it was my first job and an opportunity to demonstrate what I could do. The management didn't always understand what I was up to, but gave me its support. Information had to be organized and there was a lot of activity.' However: `After a couple of years, I thought of going back to school. I had worked awhile, the management wasn't moving at the pace I'd wanted, perhaps I was over-zealous. I felt the momentum slowing. I hadn't really accomplished as much as I'd hoped to do in my job.' What line of study did he plan to pursue at the time? `I thought about studying more in management information systems, in the USA, in Illinois or California, I could learn about chips and technology at one of the big computer schools. I couldn't do that in the Caribbean. I changed my ideas about study when I got a new job.'

The new job was with a confederation of regional governments in that part of the Caribbean. `The Confederation had a clear agenda, it knew what it wanted to do in the area of budgetary allocations. It was good for my career too, there was wider scope, I had more contacts within the region and beyond, through technical co-operation missions. When my first contract with the Confederation came to an end, I was satisfied and ready to go back to school -- but I agreed to a second contract. When you 're working it's difficult to get away, I literally had to pull myself away to come here and study, otherwise you just keep going on.'

When Antony extricated himself from an absorbing job and went away to study,

it was not to a `big school' in the USA that taught `chips and technology.' `Because of my experience in my job, I felt that I had to fill in a gap in my studies, I needed to do some policy analysis. I could see that the paradigm was shifting, my study had to be development-related. I was now interested in subjects like law, economics and political science. My orientation had shifted from North America to Europe. To study real economics you go to Europe, not North America.'

He outlined his reasons for choosing the Institute: `I wrote to some of the older universities in Europe, they hadn't been doing development economics for much longer than the Institute, so the differences were low and marginal. The programmes the older universities offered seemed too traditional, too much of a strait-jacket. Here at the Institute the programmes seem to have adapted over the years, there is even a programme on `alternative development' -- however successful `alternative development' may be -- so the programmes aren't stuck in the 1960s and 1970s. If I studied at the Institute I thought I could learn from the other participants -- from my experience within and outside the Caribbean, I know that working with people from other cultures can be very interesting and exciting.'

Antony therefore seemed to have moved away from the ideal type of the `technocrat' -- through his experience of challenging work in regional government within a relatively stable political environment ( unlike in Terefe's case, where an unstable political environment had diluted technocratism.) He was now interested in social science, open to `alternative development' and keen to integrate experience of cultural diversity into his further education -- all of which diverge from the usual image of a `technocrat.'

In Antony's story, economics provided a window opening out of narrow technocracy (contrary to Galjart and Silva's bracketing of engineering and economics as technocratic disciplines). Antony had enrolled in the master's programme in development economics at the Institute: `Economics is new to me, I read a lot, I learn on my own, I go beyond what we do in the classroom. I find economics quite interesting -- I don't rule out the prospect of a Ph.D., especially something on international trade, or something that's important for developing countries, like structural adjustment or balance of payments. I'd like to write something on development, something that integrates technology, technology is a focus for the developing world as a whole and not just for the Caribbean. I'm pretty excited about studying, a new area is always exciting, and this is an exciting field -- what development is all about, how to go about it...'

Antony was unusual among our protagonists in that he was financing his own studies at the Institute: unlike Terefe (and others) he had not waited for a scholarship to become available but had grabbed the chance to study before becoming totally immersed in work: `If I had waited a year I could have got a fellowship, but then if I'd spent one more year at work I might have changed my focus. I was prepared to pay for myself, I knew that I had no background in social science and it might be difficult to get into a social science programme.' The earning power that accompanied computer skills was crucial in enabling him to fund himself. He looked ahead to the future: `I have to integrate what I'm learning now with my background in computers, work out an approach to development, combine traditional economic thinking with technological innovation. All this has to be put to use in the Caribbean, to see what can be done when we lose our comparative advantage in trade, when protection goes.'

His study of development economics had not replaced his technological interests but had served to provide a context for them: `Information systems play a strategic role in development, even economics cannot replace that. I already have a technical base but I need to integrate it with development studies. In policy making, there's a role for people who understand technology and can integrate it into development -- otherwise there may be contradictions.' Antony was therefore a `technocrat', but with a difference. He was not apolitical -- in fact he suspected that his political views had brought him less than his usual top mark in one assignment at the Institute: `It was marked by an economist, and the paper was of a political nature that he's uncomfortable with.' Antony indeed considered entering politics.

**Vern** provides a interesting juxtaposition to Antony. Vern too had graduated in computer science, but unlike Antony had been extremely active politically in his time at university (as described earlier). This was partly due to differences in personality, but also to variation in political context: `when I moved to the city it was at the height of the insurgency problem, my friends were political, they were in a rebel party. My social conscience came from my political involvement and my contact with insurgents.

`Computer hardware and computer engineering were interesting,' Vern remembered, `but by the fourth year at university my interest had waned. I was heavily involved with the university magazine', in political and critical writing. `With my political activity I graduated only with average grades.' Rather than a computer-related career, or following up his long-term interest in the creative arts, Vern chose to work with

a network of non-governmental organizations engaged in advocay and research on politics and governance. Initially he made this commitment for a decade of his life, after which he planned to use his computer skills to `look after myself'. At the end of this decade Vern extended the period of work with non-governmental organizations for another ten years: `I can apply what I've learned in the last ten years, I can contribute.' After this he would `give most of my time to art -- painting, music, creative writing.' He was aware though that such decisions were not carved on stone: `But can we really talk in terms of such time frames? People's attitudes change.'

All the same, Vern did not repudiate or denounce his `technocratic' education in computer science. `I have no regrets -- computers are very useful in the modern world, they are a tool for my future, I'll focus on them later. My computer skills aren't entirely wasted in my present work and I can return to them sometime.' He considered writing his research paper at the Institute on the use of computers in agriculture and rural development. He was interested in planning techniques more generally -- in `land use planning', `area resource accounting' and `social accounting'. Vern therefore saw computer technology (and technology more generally) as tools to be used towards developmental ends, but these ends were to be determined through participatory processes co-ordinated by non-governmental organizations, where possible in collaboration with governmental agencies.

In this Vern was both similar to and different from Antony. Antony too saw `technology' as something that had to be integrated into`development', but the organizational context he focussed on was that of regional government structures and not non-governmental organizations. Terefe was somewhere in between: although he worked in government, he thought that a non-governmental organization would be more conducive to the exercise of his technical skills, but in terms of professional environment rather than the link to participatory politics.

**Sip.** Sip described some of the early pressures that had been exerted in his choice of a career: `My favourite subject in school was social science. I was close to my mother, she had studied law and worked in the juvenile court with the Ministry of Justice, and we talked about social problems. But social science is not popular in my country, because of the economic situation, so I chose engineering which is popular because it can get you a good job. There was also streaming in school, and top students were separated out and sent to study subjects like engineering.' Of Sip's two brothers,

one was a chemical engineer and the other a mechanical engineer (although they had chosen to teach rather than to practice their profession -- as Sip did).

Sip said of his choice of profession: `After school, I chose a university where I could study agro-industrial product development. It was a popular subject with scope for a job, but didn't involve a lot of mathematics and physics. It was a four year course and close to my experience and interests, though I didn't much like the laboratory work that we did in the later years. Where I could, I took subjects that were oriented to social science, like economics and marketing. A subject like consumer behaviour draws on psychology.'

Why was Sip interested in agro-industrial product development? `Although we lived in the capital city, we had family farms in the south of the country. We would visit the farms twice a year, the journey took between six and eight hours. I got to see food in the form of raw materials and I thought that agro-industries were beneficial. I wanted to be a manager of agro-industries and I planned to go on to an MBA.' His viewpoint shifted after a different kind of exposure to rural areas: `I joined the university student union, it ran training courses and other activities. We visited rural areas all over the country. The perspective was different from when we went to our family farms, it extended beyond kinship. Now I was more exposed to peasants' problems. I saw many agro-industries in rural areas but the people there were still poor. I became involved in a protest over the building of a dam. My plans for my life changed -- I thought I can't be a manager. I wasn't clear about my future.'

Rather than going on to a masters in business administration as he had originally planned, Sip specialized in agricultural economics. Like Antony, he presented economics as a subject that opened windows of reflection and exposure beyond the narrowness of technology. `It would have been difficult for me to chose economics earlier, there was no one to stimulate me to study it, my choice was very limited.' Sip could be very critical of the use of economics, saying of his experience during the protest over the dam, `I realized that the government engineers weren't speaking the same language as us, they were using the language of economics.'

After a master's degree in agricultural economics, Sip joined the economics faculty at his university. As described in an earlier section, he saw his role in academia as that of an activist: `You can only change society by working with people, and I thought I would work with the new generation. I did see some things changing for the better.

Uptil then, new entrants to the University were taken outside the city for a picnic, and their relationship to their seniors was rather feudal. As advisor to the students' union, I helped change things, and new entrants were taken to the rural areas and asked to play with the local children, to work for the village and later to relax at a party with the village people.

`I was in charge of the computer unit in our department and I got the students to run it, because otherwise they didn't have much access. It was the first computer unit in the university managed by students and a learning process for us. We bought five new computers with a loan sanctioned by the head of department and we generated a profit that helped students with their living expenses. After this success, the Dean of Student Affairs invited me to be Assistant Dean.

`I began to think about the future. My job was interesting and I wanted to keep it. I also thought about setting up a consultancy that would give support to small scale rural enterprises. For that I needed more knowledge. Where should I go to study rural development? Material about the Institute of Social Studies was circulated among the faculty at our University. I knew about two alumni of the Institute who are famous in my country as political activists. I remember my parents taking me to hear one of them speak in public, long back in 1973.'

Sip said of his period at the Institute: `Studying here has broadened my perspective, plus it has shown me new ways of teaching. When I go home I plan to teach some new courses. One will be on food and population -- my study here has given me a different focus from the one I had at home. I would also like to teach about peasant movements, in my country peasants are viewed as passive actors, I would like to teach the new generation that peasants have ideas to express. My research paper was on rural community-based enterprises, working on it was my main purpose in studying here. I learned a lot -- if I hadn't come here, I wouldn't have asked certain kinds of questions, for example about differentiation. I'm more and more aware of how much we need to change the way of thinking, teaching and doing research in my faculty at home. Now I'm looking forward to going home and working with rural people. My research paper didn't say enough about the political side. When rural people with their own ideas about development interact with the government, to what extent can their lives be changed and improved?'

Like Terefe, Antony and Vern, Sip combined technical expertise with an inter

est in economics and the social sciences. He was more critical of economics than Terefe and Antony were, frequently distinguishing between `narrow' and broad applications of the subject. He resembled Vern in his focus on processes of participatory change in rural society and in his sympathies for activism. However, unlike the other three, he had chosen to operate within an academic environment -- which he found hospitable to both his academic interests and his activist ideas (the latter extending to change within his faculty and university) -- and not in a government or non-governmental organization.

**Mitchell** can be placed within the technocracy but in the category of `manager' rather than `engineer'. In an earlier section we traced the changes in his career. After school, he had chosen to be a school teacher (like his father), knowing little about other career options. He had studied education and history at university but had taught only briefly, in a provincial school where he had felt restive and constrained by the headmaster.

A correspondence course for a diploma in personnel management and industrial relations from a British college -- that awarded Mitchell a distinction -- had opened new avenues of employment. He had opted to join a parastatal, the national electricity supply corporation, where remuneration was attractive, and he had risen rapidly in the human resources department. The practical training acquired through the correspondence course stood him in good stead as -- under the country's new liberalization policy -- he and his colleagues worked to make the parastatal more commercial and competitive. Mitchell felt the effects of competition on his own career and thus the need for additional qualifications. He decided against another correspondence course, preferring direct exposure. A degree in management at the national university would have taken more than two years, so he looked abroad.

Here there occurred a deviation in the increasingly technocratic path along which his career had been advancing, a deviation related to latent aspects of a composite self. Mitchell may have now been a profit-oriented manager in a liberalizing economy, but he had not always been so inclined. He reminisced from his student days: `There was a strong students union, politically articulate, and I was active in it. We demonstrated against the IMF conditionality, the introduction of school fees... The university was closed down. It was an interesting time. You have to balance education and politics.' His current work may have been built on a course in administration that he

had studied at university, but his main subject had been history: `We studied a combination of African and European history, there were some similarities to development studies.' When considering eduction abroad, Mitchell remembered that a lecturer from his university days who had taught him development studies and whom he admired had studied at the Institute of Social Studies. `I wanted to study where he had. A friend who had studied there also recommended it. The programme on "employment and labour studies" seemed to have what I wanted on human resources development.'

In the first interview conducted in the early months of the academic year, Mitchell said, `My study here has helped me redefine some areas of my work. I see now that human resources development is much more than conducting training programmes. When I return, I have to think of new channels of education at the micro-level.' At the same time he sought the `practical' implications of what was being taught in class: `While we appreciate what is being done, we do have some problems. Some of my classmates are not so interested in theory, they are more practical and policy-oriented. Our lecturers try to help us, but they find it difficult to answer questions about the practical relevance of what is taught. And we don't get very far when we discuss among ourselves ideas that we are not familiar with.'

By the time of the exit interview -- as described earlier -- Mitchell expressed overall satisfaction with the course: `Things improved. There was more of a focus on the real world, case studies were used, the synthesizing exercise was linked to practical issues.' However, `practical' relevance was no longer of paramount concern to him. Instead he described a deeper relevance: `I took the specialization on "structural reform and labour", to understand more about the dynamics of labour with regard to the external environment, and I took the the specialization on "human resources development" because of its macro-focus, its stress on increasing human options rather than an emphasis only on management. The issues I was most interested in were there, labour issues, participation in the labour market. All sorts of links were made and I found the courses complementary.'

The shift in Mitchell's focus was exemplified by his research paper: `Before I came here, I was planning to look at new management systems in a liberalized economy. But instead I'm working on labour relations during the period of structural adjustment in my country. I've enjoyed the research paper, I've always been motivated when working on labour issues. It's about increasing options in human management.

Structural reforms encourage efficiency, provide incentives to work harder, create a reward system, but they aren't good for those with low skills who can't survive competition in the labour market. These reforms aren't very good for labour but they are good for capital.'

Mitchell had thus moved away from a `technocratic' focus on efficiency, competitiveness and profits. Clearly a broad master's course on `employment and labour' had encouraged this more than further studies in `personnel management' would have done. Something that had been latent within Mitchell had, however, responded to the wider issues that the master's course had opened up -- otherwise he would have been disaffected and resentful that the course had not offered only `practical' blueprints.

The parastatal for which Mitchell worked had some similarities with the state agencies where Terefe and Antony were employed, and Mitchell had something in common with these other two in his combination of practical and academic interests. But whereas in the course of study at the Institute practical questions had remained at the centre of Terefe's and Antony' focus, albeit with a substantial penumbra of political issues, in Mitchell's case the technocratic core was now suffused with political content. In this, Mitchell resembled Vern and Sip, although for them the dominance of the political over the technocratic had been manifested much earlier in their professional lives. Also they had already long found their professional `homes', one in a non-governmental organization and the other in a university. Would Mitchell be able to `fit' back into his parastatal?.Or would he have to find a new professional home?

**Ingrid's** life story has been narrated in some detail at the beginning of this paper. When she had needed to specialize, in her teens, her long-standing affinity for `nature' had led her to study environmental biology. Applications of this science could have directed her to a `technocratic' career, and certainly she had brief experiences of this later in life, when she carried out `environment impact assessments' or was employed as an environmental co-ordinator for a petroleum company at work in the rainforest.

From early on, however, Ingrid was dissatisfied with narrow applications of science, and wished that she had chosen a broader field of study about the environment. She had been sent for undergraduate study to the USA, but her annual visits to her home in a Latin American country had exposed her to nascent environmental movements and local projects: `I realized the connections with policy -- something that was

lacking in my study of environmental biology.'  After the first years in college, she was bored with laboratory work and wished to change her subject of study, but it was too late to do so. The social science subjects that she studied on the side were however far from dull: `Sociology was very satisfying, even though to finish studying it I had to stay an extra term.'  If she could have changed subjects, she would have dropped environmental biology for political science.

When she returned home after graduation, she was unhappy with the employment opportunities that came her way, because they were technical rather than `political' or `transformatory'. Later she joined a non-governmental organization but even there, among `biologists who were very concerned with ecological issues', she did not find a satisfying professional home. She defined herself as `an environmentalist, not an ecologist,' and her distinction between the two terms seemed to be socio-political.

Her quest to combine biology and social science had brought her to the Institute of Social Studies. `I was looking for a real-life university with real people. I thought that coursework would be easy, given my background, that there would be a lot of repetition, but it isn't so. There is a lot of additional information and I spend a lot of time studying. It's been an intense academic experience. I knew when I came that the technical discussions on environment wouldn't be at the level I was used to, I was interested in deeper questions about the relationship between environment and development. Personally I've achieved a lot of what I wanted to do. I'd hoped for some intellectual shopping around, and I've done that. I realize how much is available, in fact in some ways more than my expectations. At the same time I'm aware of the advantages that my technical education gives me.'

At the Institute, Ingrid had joined the master's course in the `politics of alternative development strategies.'  By the end of the academic year, her ideas had evolved further. Initially she had thought about a career in `urban environmental management, where my interests lie, bringing together the social and the political, environmental issues and poverty. I would like to work on urban environmental management for my research paper.'  At the exit interview, however, her focus was no longer on `management' but on `movements': `My research paper is very political, about urban environmental movements and their role in democratization processes. At the research paper seminar, someone commented that the environmental part is largely absent and the paper is very political -- the environmental part is all in my head, I just took it for granted.

I'll keep on trying to bring ideas about the environment and society together, it's still an incomplete process. But I won't go into environmental management work, I prefer political ecology. I still want to pursue both politics and ecology through research and participatory action.'

In this period, Ingrid's perceptions of `environmental' and `ecological' seemed to have shifted, and she now saw `ecology' as the less technical and more political of the two (probably influenced by usages in social science). But regardless of the terms used, the distinction between `technocratic' and `political' approaches to environmental issues continued to be crucial to her. In fact she represented a combination of the two. At the moment of the exit interview, the political was uppermost since her exposure to it was recent and exciting. But technical environmental issues were `all in her head', and it looked as though much of her later professional life would be spent in trying to integrate the two.

## 6. `HUMANIST INTELLECTUALS': JOHN, MARY, DANIELLE, YUMIKO, OMAR AND CHEN LI

We now consider the other six of our protagonists, who would generally be classified as `humanist intellectuals' because of their training or work or both.

**John**, the career diplomat, exemplifies what Gouldner calls the New Class within the bureaucracy, an intelligentsia that differs from the older `"line" officials whose position depends simply on their rigorous conformity with organizational rules, obedience to their superiors' orders, the legality of their appointment and sheer seniority' (*op. cit.*: 50). In contrast, John belongs to `a task-centred and work-centred elite having considerable confidence in its own worth and its future' (*op. cit.*: 51).

Thus John described himself as qualifying for the Foreign Service through his university studies in political science: `I saw political science, as linked to international relations. I thought it would bring me closer to the Foreign Service, studying the problems around, like regional integration, political economy, underdevelopment, trade relations, classical diplomacy.' When John gained entrance to the Foreign Service, his approach was somewhat different from his predecessors: `there was no blueprint for the work that I had to do. I began to focus on various problems, and two years went by before I knew it. I worked on protocol and information and consular affairs. I tried to write reports -- I wrote the only report ever presented in consular affairs -- and I tried to

be more professional.'

In his third year in the Foreign Service, John was assigned to his country's embassy in Washington. He was dismayed by a lack of professionalism in conducting foreign affairs: `We felt that the President's state visits to the US were not always necessary and that an ambassador could have covered some of those things. There were ongoing tensions betwen the Foreign Service and the President's Office, between career diplomats and officials who were exported to embassies either to get rid of them or to return a favour.' All the same, John learned a lot during this posting: `I was "jack of all trades" at our small embassy in Washington, where I had been randomly assigned. I escorted ministers to Bretton Woods institutions and I joined delegations in order to record proceedings. In the process I learned a lot about my country, especially about health and transport and communications there.'

During his years in Washington, John studied part-time for a master's degree in communication at Howard University (of this more in a later section), and wrote a research paper on `African diplomatic perceptions of the US media.' When he returned to his country, he was eligible for leave but `I declined it because I did not want to lose touch professionally. Instead I sought out the director of the international communications department and got myself assigned there. I found the work relevant and interesting. I felt I was now able to steer things a little.

`A couple of years later, I started thinking about studying again. I viewed international relations as part of communications, which I had now specialized in, but others in the Foreign Service might not think so and I might get transferred to the Ministry of Information. I wanted a more specific qualification, I calculated the pros and cons of various possibilities.' This brought John to the Institute of Social Studies, and a diploma programme there in international relations.

He found the substantive content of the course very useful, and liked sharing experiences with classmates who were diplomats from other parts of the Third World, including experiences with seniors (the `line' officials described by Gouldner): `You know the problem in the Foreign Service everywhere -- a classmate of mine here from the Caribbean told me that her experience is the same -- the seniors keep the best opportunities for themselves. For example, I was the desk officer for environmental issues and sustainable development, and I did all the background work for our presentation at the population conference in Cairo, but it was a senior who attended the conference.'

As Gouldner put it: `The New Class intelligentsia, then, feel a certain contempt for their superiors: for they are not competent participants in the careful discourse concerning which technical decisions are made' (*ibid.*).

Gouldner would place John among the intelligentsia, not among the intellectuals `whose interests are primarily critical, emancipatory, hermeneutic' (*op. cit.*: 48). He goes on to say, however: `By comparison with line bureaucrats, the technical intelligentsia of the New Class are veritable philosophers' (*op. cit.*: 52). John described an earlier Permanent Secretary's philistine attitude to study leave: `He headed our Ministry for a long time and he was anti-training and against further study. "We don't want any professors working here, just people who can buckle down and do the job," he used to say. Later on we had a new Permanent Secretary with whom I was able to negotiate some study leave.' At the end of the study period at the Institute, John said: `These six months have been a good professional break, I have a motivation to start afresh, I'm looking forward to my new assignment. I get impatient with the way things are done at home, I want to go back and change things. I hope I'll be able to use what I've learned, that work won't be frustrating after this.'

Yet Gouldner adds: `By comparison with the intellectuals, the intelligentsia may seem *idiots savants*' (*ibid.*). Thus some of the `humanistic intellectuals' in our sample -- notably Ingrid, Chen Li, Vern and Omar -- would have viewed John as offering little for the political and intellectual future of the Third World, as one of the cogs that kept the leviathan bureaucracies of the Third World running.

John was not atheoretical: `Our diploma is at the post-graduate level, it's not purely academic, yet we still do theories in some depth. From time to time we need to keep in touch with theory and history.' He was prepared to teach at the national university if some political upheaval cost him his job in the Foreign Service. Yet his priorities were clear: `For me, I'm in mid-career, I already have a master's degree, I want a course that can be of practical help in my career. Later on I would like to do more diploma courses like this, which have a useful focus.' He continued however: `I wanted a short, focussed course, but not overly focussed because that might be disappointing, a strait-jacket that would pin me down. We need freedom to wander around a little.'

**Mary.** We place Mary next to John here, although we have classified John as a civil servant and Mary as an activist lawyer. We juxtapose them now because of similarities in their approach to study at the Institute. Like John, Mary was interested in

material that was of `practical relevance', in her case as a child-rights activist focussed on the plight of street children. They had both enrolled in diploma programmes and not for the longer master's degree. Mary and John (as we shall later see) were among those of our protagonists who did not seriously consider doctoral research in later life. For them -- even more so than for `technocrat' Terefe -- the main purpose of study was its later application. Yet they both enjoyed courses that allowed them (in John's words) the `freedom to wander around a little.'

`When I looked at the course outline,' Mary said, `I knew that I would get a blend of skills and theory.' In her case, however, there were additional attractions: `We're exposed to radical discourse as well as to useful practical information.' Radical discourse would have been of limited use to John in a diplomatic career, but it was vital to Mary's activism. When Mary spoke of future research, it was directed towards a cause: `Here I've looked at the problem by reading related studies, at home I can approach the problem directly. I'll collect data for a research study, data on how many working children, in what categories, and what are their reasons for doing this kind of work. I can see what to do, approach NGOs.'

Had the coin of fate fallen differently, and Mary received the post-graduate diploma in law that she had studied for in her own country, she might have been a legal technician, working on foreclosure of mortgages and property law in the bank where she had been an intern during her postgraduate study. Would she even so have been struck by the number of children out of school and vending on the street, and have engaged in activism on their behalf?.Such questions are difficult to answer. Certainly when she did not receive the post-graduate diploma in consequence of university politics, as described earlier, the position she found of a junior lawyer in chambers was more hospitable to activism than work in a bank:

> I was confronted with human rights issues every day at home when people came for advice. My research paper will be in the area of human rights, something that will benefit society as a whole. I had this idea even before I came here, I'd trained as a jurist but didn't know enough about the area. I'd never done a course on human rights, though I'd thought about these things. It could be dangerous, protesting violations of human rights, but a jurist's work involves risk, advocating justice.

Mary had technical concerns in the practice of law, that her education at the Institute was intended to address: `What I expected from my training here was to be in a position where if in my office I am given a topic and asked to prepare a document, I can perform adequately. Now that I can operate the computer, that's important for con

fidential documents.' Mary's technical concerns were, however, clearly circumscribed by her political commitments. She planned to use both when after a few years she opened her own chambers.

**Danielle**, too, had technical interests and political commitments. Political concerns gained predominance in her final years at school, when a long period of dictatorship came to an end, and her earlier ideas about becoming an accountant evaporated: `I wanted to become something that would be useful to the country, I thought of becoming an economist.'

At university, Danielle `enjoyed studying economics. Theory gave me elements with which I could understand reality, understand what I read in the newspaper, there was a clear relation to what was happening around me. I learned a lot from economic modelling. Perhaps our course was a little too theoretical, but I have no regrets. In a way my involvement in politics was a means to apply the theory I learned.' After university, her political activity declined: `I felt more and more alienated from what was going on. I felt that my party had moved too far to the right. I still haven't found a place for myself in my country's politics.'

Economics however continued to give her satisfaction as she took up work in a `think tank' on policy: `I enjoyed my work. My colleagues were good people and good professionals, and I was working on topics of great interest. At first I worked on international trade, but then I found topics that interested me much more, topics that were more related to ordinary people and how to improve living standards.' Danielle began to think about economic policies directed towards the political ends that continued to be important to her. Now alienated from politics, she still saw great promise in economics.

The limits of an education in general economics, however, soon became evident to Danielle: `Now I was working on social policy, but I had never been trained in how to develop policy, how to manage projects. I lacked some empirical things.' Or -- to use the terms of our discussion -- she lacked some technical skills. To remedy this, she applied to the Institute: `I chose training that was more focussed than when I had been at university. I knew that a place like the Institute wouldn't be purely academic, I could do research on income maintenance policies in my country, capacity to protect living standards of people, poverty alleviation and how to satisfy basic human needs. I've found what I was looking for when I came here, tools for further work.'

As we have seen, Danielle chose not a specialized course in economics but one in `public policy and administration', where she sat side by side with civil servants -- people who would develop, implement and change policy. For her research paper, she examined `theoretical and methodological issues and applications to social policy, using the existing studies on poverty and income inequality in my country.' In the later part of the academic year, she took a course offered by the economics programme. `I found it a very good exercise. I learned more about the social accounting matrix, you know, the adaptation of national accounting to social issues,' she reported, but also gave the impression that she found it rather narrowly technical and she concluded -- `I now feel no more nostalgia for economics!' Speaking of the future, she said, `I'd like to continue in the line of social policy, studying households, their survival strategies and how social policy helps.'

When she had planned further study, Danielle had made an explicit choice of the `useful' and `practical' over the `exciting' and `theoretical.' (John's and Mary's focus on the `relevant' and the `practical' had not involved this deliberate subordination of a strong attraction to theory.) Danielle's was a political choice. If for Antony and Sip, economics had provided windows beyond the narrowly technological, for Danielle -- who unlike them had begun professional life as an economist -- the subject had opened doorways that had led her to social policy.

Danielle would not have agreed with views that economics is mainly an instrument of capitalism. According to her, economics should help forge policy instruments that could -- and must -- change the world. She explicity rejected `tinkering with the capitalist system' in her use of economics: `It is necessary to repair the damages of colonialism and capitalism, but while doing this we must think about working towards an alternative system. I don't think it's possible to solve problems within the present system, to address inequality without addressing the source of inequality.' For Ingrid, Chen Li and Omar, an alternative system was to be brought about through protest movements, but Danielle's early and intense political involvement had left her `sceptical about possibilities for a change, about democracy as a social system -- I know that democracy can be a bluff that doesn't change the world.' For her, relevant and effective policies were the means whereby the present capitalist system was to give way to one that was fairer to poor people.

**Yumiko.** Like Danielle, Yumiko combined theoretical and practical interests.

There was some overlap in the practical interests: Yumiko had come to the Institute to study `some practical things, how to manage and evaluate projects, analyze problems, find finance, use human resources.' She had pressing reason for this -- `to earn my livelihood.' She was strongly interested in development studies but would have to give up an established career as a teacher of the humanities if she were to follow these interests, and she therefore wanted to earn a living as a development practitioner.

Yumiko's and Danielle's theoretical interests could not on the surface have been more different. Danielle concentrated on material issues in the study of poverty. Yumiko, however, was mainly concerned with the non-material and the intangible -- she was interested in the relationship between `happiness' and `development.' She was the only one of our protagonists who focussed so high above material questions, and perhaps her background in the humanities (also distinctive in our sample) was responsible for this. She attributed this interest to her experience of travelling and studying in various parts of the world: `In rich countries, there seemed to be more isolation and loneliness, less happiness. In poorer countries, the life was less sophisticated, the tools were old, so were the systems that the people there followed -- but people were happier there, they were kind, they enjoyed life.'

Yumiko had long been interested in other countries. `Ever since I was young and in school I'd wanted to see foreign countries, the USA and Europe -- I didn't think about other Asian countries. At university, I studied for a four year bachelor's degree, in American literature and English language, I chose these subjects because I was interested in foreign countries. English is a world language, it's very common for people in my country to study it, I just went along with the mainstream. I don't think that I made a smart or mature choice. I didn't know what an English department was then. I was interested in practical English but instead I had to study novels and poetry.'

She studied further, at home and abroad: `For the bachelor's degree, I did a small dissertation on Willa Cather's "My Antonia." For my master's, the professor suggested that I work on the characters in John Steinbeck's novels. I began work as a lecturer in a women's college linked to a university. I liked the work environment and my colleagues. I mostly taught practical English, plus one class in literature. I felt that my ambition had ben fulfilled. I'd achieved a status that was considered very good for a woman, I felt that I'd proven my abilities. I enjoyed teaching even after many years of it. I also needed to do research, write papers, make presentations, but I found that I

wasn't very motivated, I had to force myself, it was painful. I found the topics that I had to work on so limiting -- not just John Steinbeck but the theories as well, post-modernism, deconstructionism.'

Yumiko also travelled, now in Asia as well, visiting friends she had made during study abroad. `I found out more about the problems in Asian countries and this made me start thinking about development studies. I fell ill and needed an operation. I think the cause was dissatisfaction with my life and my job. I was less and less interested in what I was doing. I now felt that I should do what I really wanted to. I looked around for clues and I thought, study about development.' She explored various possibilities for study and finally applied to and was accepted at the Institute of Social Studies (partly self-financed), for the master's programme on `local and regional development': `It seemed general enough for me, a combination of the theoretical and the practical, it wasn't narrow.'

At the end of the academic year, Yumiko reflected on her experience: `My original motivation has actually been realized. Through the year I thought that I was just keeping up with classes, in the first term, second term, third term... Recently I reviewed the whole year and realized that I could relate the different courses to each other and see what I had learned. Of course it's only the basics of development, only very basic tools, and I'll have to adapt what I've learned to the reality outside. At the beginning of the year, I stood at the entrance to development studies -- now I've entered, but only just. Now I have an overview of development studies.'

Yumiko had acquired some practical skills: `One of my specializations, on project management, was useful for a future job. We were taught methods that could be applied later, tools rather than theory, it was practical and good.' As a `humanistic intellectual', however, she had not progressed much in understanding the relationship between `development' and `happiness' -- `What is happiness?.How do we balance modernization and happiness? Is there more happiness in traditional or modern lifestyles?' -- but this is a subject that development studies itself does not yet have much of a handle on. Yumiko wondered whether she would now have to combine earlier learning in the humanities with her recent education about development in order to answer this question more adequately.

**Omar.** Terefe and Antony had built careers on their technical expertise. Vern and Sip were more sceptical about techniques and technology, but used them in the

service of their activist interests. Ingrid's political ideas had at the moment submerged her technical training. John and Mary were not technologically trained, but valued knowledge mainly for its applications, he in the civil service and she in legal activism. Danielle had deliberately subordinated her theoretical interests to concentrate on addressing urgent issues of poverty. Yumiko wanted to explore difficult abstract questions about `development', but was currently engaged in acquiring skills that would find her employment as a development practitioner.

Omar and Chen Li (the last two to be discussed here) were less oriented to technology and skills, in their training as well as their life paths. They had received little technical education, and had not sought skills in later life with which to render a humanist education more practical (although Omar had made some effort in this direction by training and briefly practising as a social worker). They had been educated as `humanist intellectuals' and they proposed to live and work as such -- for political reasons.

To Omar, it did not matter that the master's programme he had enrolled in at the Institute was not `skills-oriented' -- `I was looking for expansion of debate.' Omar's focus was on the theory and practice of `struggles around capitalism', stimulated through growing up in North America as part of a family that had immigrated there from a poorer country and that depended on manual work to earn a living. `I loved learning but I hated school. It was part of growing up in that intolerant place, that small town where people were culturally intolerant and didn't understand. I loved learning, I consumed geography -- I had heard so much about my parents' country -- I was interested in political geography, though I didn't know about it then, interested in Muslim countries and in cultural politics.

`College gave me my first encounter with political science, that was exciting. It was also good to be in a bigger town with room for my own identity -- that environment provided broader perspectives and cosmopolitan possibilities. I made some friends who came from elsewhere and were interested in discussion, the kind of people who spent time in the library... that was new to me. I moved to a university in a big city and enrolled for a BA in international relations. That seemed hybrid and interdisciplinary, less of a monolithic construction than political science. The faculty in our programme were right-leaning, so there were clashes in the classroom. The arguments we had in the professors' offices were better. I was conscious of the division between the

Right and the Left when I chose courses. By this time I knew what my focus was going to be -- essentially inequality, but not necessarily class conflict.'

Omar was also becoming politically active in protest movements, as described earlier. At the same time, he had to realize his underdeveloped potential: `The first two years at university were a struggle, I wasn't as schooled and skilled as most of the others, I did a lot of reading and writing, it was a catch-up game. In the third year my grades shot up, and in the fourth year they shot up further. I'd finally learned how to write a paper. But my overall grades were too low for graduate school. So I enrolled for one more year at the university, for what was called "unclassified studies." I loved that year, with the pressure off, choosing optional subjects purely according to interest.

`I was interested in social work as well, and in that "unclassified" year I covered various prerequisites for studying social work, for example statistics. I stayed another year at the university, for a bachelor's degree in social work. Social work was "micro"', while international relations had been "macro", but our social work programme had something of an international focus, with ideas about international social policy and international development. Studying social work was a way to get a sense of what "doing" is about.

`When I graduated, I joined the governmnent as a social worker, on the bottom rung. It was the first time I'd worked with middle class people, and I found it very depressing to see how social control was exerted. I was in that job for a year and a half. I couldn't do it for life, I couldn't go on taking children away from problem homes and that sort of thing. But I had a chance to see what works and what doesn't work in social policy, to look at the nature of the welfare state and its distributional policies. Even now this experience comes back to me when I listen to "development debates" about improving standards of living.

`I was still interested in struggles around capitalism. Even when I worked as a social worker, I knew that I would go on to graduate work. The question was where?' Omar rejected his university because `the student polity seemed to me largely pragmatic, skill-oriented, rightwing.' On further thought he rejected North America `where debates are narrow and there's this emphasis on "managing development". A historical orientation is lacking, and for this I looked to Europe. I think you find more emphasis on social theory in Europe than in the USA, apart from places like the New School of Social Research in New York.'

Omar hesitated between studying in Britain and the Institute of Social Studies but decided on the latter, specifically on the master's programme in the `politics of alternative development strategies': `I liked its emphasis on "resistance."' He was self-financed and stretched for cash, having already taken student loans for earlier study, although the Institute waived tuition fees in his case. At the end of the year he reflected: `I took a conscious decision to be away from the USA, to get a sense of different capitalisms and of different ways of seeing the world. Of course this can never be fully achieved. Being here has helped me rethink alternatives. It's taken me beyond polarization, beyond looking at the free market in terms of a dichotomy. My views are more nuanced now. After being here, writing and thinking about European politics, it's given me new perspectives on North American politics.

`Writing so much this year has taught me that things get done. Sometimes you go back to something -- it's not regression, it's rediscovery, it's not something that wasn't there before. When I first came here I didn't know much about development, I went to the library and read, it was destabilizing, there was so much information -- plus the contact with different cultures, plus the reflections on my own. I've learned something here. Back home there was the sense that if something was wrong we had to get rid of it, but here you see it as part of the struggle, you get away from the crass politics of neo-liberalism. Instead there's a long term sense of process, it comes from study, from different schools of thought -- where do I place myself?'

Omar planned to return to North America, to apply to universities there for place on a Ph.D. programme and later a teaching position. But he also sought `involvement in praxis other than teaching that has an influence in the world. I want to write some things, on politics. I'm interested in transformation.'

**Chen Li.** Omar had some experience of `doing' within conventional political structures, from his short period as a government social worker. Chen Li had however in her adult life always remained outside conventional structures. She was similar to Omar in having been born into a minority group within her country, a minority that felt itself politically and economically discriminated against. Her parents found the money to send her to school in Australia when she was sixteen years old, and then to the University of Sydney.

`They wanted me to follow a conventional profession, to become a doctor or a dentist or a lawyer. They encouraged me to go into the science stream at school, even

though my favourite subject was history. I was influenced by their ideas -- I had no strong preference and they were supporting me. I took economics as a step towards accountancy, and studied econometrics, economic history and government.'

Chen Li diverged widely from the path that her parents had so expensively carved for her. They had arranged for her to live with an uncle in Australia: `In my final year of school, I moved out of my uncle's house. He was upwardly mobile and a tyrant.' They had visualized a future for her in a lucrative profession, based in Australia or elsewhere in the First World. But Chen Li did not join one of the `professions' and she returned to her country. These two developments were related. Ironically, the First World university that her parents sent her to was where she was encouraged to question and to resist – by peers from her part of the Third World.

`The University of Sydney was a completely different world from my earlier experience. I moved to live in the inner city, I joined a Third World students' collective, I was exposed to Third World politics and to feminism -- it was the formation of the person I am now. I was mostly with other South East Asians, but we also tried to link to Latin American students. It wouldn't have been the same if I had gone to university at home, there would have been less student activism because of the legal prohibitions. In my country, the educational system doesn't foster the asking of questions. Those who come out of university there don't question authority.'

In Chen Li's story, too, economics played a double role. Her parents saw economics as a road to the accountant's profession, but Chen Li found room for manoeuvre: `I moved towards political economy, but my parents still think that I studied straight economics! I was now interested in women in the Third World, I had new intellectual needs. I studied for an honours degree in economic history, by now that was my favourite subject. In the second year I was awarded the prize for the best woman student. My main interest was in South East Asian history and my thesis was on the history of Indian women plantation workers in my country.

`Before my final year at university, I returned home for a year, to see if I could go back to live there. I got to know some local NGOs well. It was an exciting year, meeting new people and learning new things, putting some of the theory I'd learned into practice. That was a year in which national elections were held, and I worked for the opposition candidate who was supported by the NGOs. All this gave a sense of exigency and excitement that isn't always present in NGOs.

`I then returned to Australia to finish my studies. By then I'd spent six years in Australia -- it would have been easy to carry on there and continue studying. Ultimately it was peer group pressure that took me back to my country, an invitation from an organization that I'd become involved with during my year back there. They needed people, it was hard to get anyone to work in NGOs because of the low salaries.'

After a busy period of work, she came to the `women and development' programme at the Institute (on a scholarship), to explore areas that she considered under-researched: `I find that history and sexuality are not at the moment a priority in women's movements. I hope that my research paper here will help put them on the agenda. Those who do recognize the importance of women's history and sexuality don't know how to deal with them.'

Chen Li reflected: `I have no regrets about coming here to study, I enjoy what I'm doing, the time to learn, read, explore theories and debates -- there's no chance of doing this at home. I'm exchanging ideas with people from all over the world, also something that I couldn't do at home. My colleagues there are committed to what they are doing but they have no time to explore theory. I enjoy the discussions in class.' All the same, she looked forward to returning home, to continue her activist work there.

We have placed Chen Li last, in our discussion of our protagonists as relatively `technocratic' or `humanistically intellectual', implying that she was the closest to the latter. Her background in economic history had involved a close study of `ideas and symbols with regard to the social construction of society' (Galjart and Silva *op. cit.*: 7). She appears the antithesis of `the principle that most of the problems of society can be solved by scientific and technical means' and she strongly upheld addressing these problems `through politics and political awareness' (*ibid.*).

It was instructive, however, to hear Chen Li speak about her study of research methodology at the Institute: `It was great, it stimulated me to think about looking at policy. Inspite of my background, I found the discussion of quantitative data more interesting than the qualitative material, especially the different ways of looking at numbers. The course taught me how to read numbers when thinking about policy, and how policy is affected by how you interpret data. I like the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. I was scared about the statistical computer programmes, I didn't know how I would cope, but the exercises were structured in a way that everyone could understand, now I'm more confident. We had about fifteen assignments.'

Some things that Chen Li said suggested that she might shift from transformatory politics to becoming an actor in conventional political structures, if an extremely contentious actor: `As an activist, I might move into the area of research on policy, there's so much to discuss about policies on women in my country. It's too important to be left to "experts" who work within a man/woman framework and think that "gender" equals "women." Policy debates create an opportunity to express views. I'm a middle class, university-educated woman, I should use my opportunities and abilities to effective ends. I've learned about the limits to activism and organizing, I can try something else as well and see if that works better.' She went on: `If I stay with the organization that I work for, it will be as a volunteer. I enjoy the friends that I have there and the opportunities to pick their brains. Now I'd like to focus on research and policy, if not through my present organization then some other way. I need to find people to work with, like-minded people.'

## 8. CONCLUSION

We have used twelve autobiographical narratives to help us understand perceptions, self-perceptions and mutual perceptions across several continents, two genders and various kinds of `developmental' work. Ways now have to be found to follow up and test what is suggested here about different sub-groups of Third World intellectuals. Our dozen narratives `do not of course add up to a single narrative, but they depend on, and also in some ways express, unities of thought and consciousness' (Giddens *op. cit.*: 26). They provide what Giddens describes as a `collage effect' (*ibid.*) typical of the late modern age.

Our sample contained intellectual activists and activist intellectuals, as well as academicians who were keenly interested in policy and policy-makers who were keenly interested in academics. (Only between `civil servants' and `activists' was there little overlap.) Polarization between categories was therefore weakened by the presence within professional identities of some aspect of another professional identity. Most professional identities were thus composite.

Similarly with the distinction made in the literature between technocrats and humanist intellectuals (Gouldner 1979; Galjart and Silva 1995a). The life stories of those in our sample showed that many who had received a technocratic education or were engaged in technocratic work nonetheless manifested significant political, social

and cultural sensitivity, if to varying degrees. On the other hand, those who had been educated in the social sciences or the humanities and were now working in related fields showed -- again to varying degrees -- considerable awareness of the need for systematic application of suitable techniques.

This finding complements suggestions in the literature that the late 1990s and beyond would witness less polarization and greater convergence between technocrats and humanist intellectuals in the Third World (P. Silva 1995). We found among our protagonists such a convergence not only between professional groups but within composite professional selves. We accounted for this in terms of the ubiquitous nature of politics in the Third World, its thorough permeation of life there, so that technocrats deny it at their peril (literally). At the same time as the imperative for change is evident, academicians or activists who are serious about change have to address the issue of how to make tranformatory politics operational. Policy – what technocracy focusses on -- and politics (what inspires humanist intellectualism) are thus inseparable if Third World realities are to be adequately addressed.

The multiple lines of thought and action that are implied here are illustrated by the `science' of economics, identified along with engineering by Galjart and Silva (*op. cit.*) as a guiding spirit of technocracy. None of our protagonists who had trained in branches of engineering said anything about the field that could be construed as transformatory. The case of economics was different. Those who had trained as engineers described economics as a path out of narrow technocracy. At the same time, the multivocal nature of economics was highlighted. Economics could speak in the voice of neoliberalism, but it could also speak in other voices, notably the voice of political economy, now in a post-Marxist framework. Notions of a `speech community' that shares a technical discourse (Gouldner *op. cit.*, Centano *op. cit.*) need therefore to be modified. Also, those who took issue with neo-liberalism and the institutions that preach it had to learn how to use neo-liberalism's own arguments against it. Some people from the Third World, when deciding on where to study, seemed to view Europe as a more conducive place to listen to the multiple voices of economics than the USA.

**Pedagogy.** The pedagogical implications of this study stem from our findings about composite professional identities and their latent dimensions. Because schools of development studies attempt to cater to multiple professional constituencies -- civil servants, other development practitioners, academicians and activists -- a certain

amount of cross-fertilization is possible, not only between these categories but within composite selves. Interaction takes place between individuals and those from other professional categories, and also between the various dimensions of a composite professional self that includes the other within.

In Chen Li's case a composite identity -- in which some stirrings of interest in technical policy-making could be noted within a professional personality that had hitherto been largely oriented towards activist politics -- seemed to be the result of interaction at the Institute with classmates from `policy-making backgrounds or conservative NGOs'. It also seemed to be related to course material: exposure to quantitative methods through sensitive teaching, as well as a specialization on `women organizing for change' where `we looked at the relationship between gender-based groups and the state, talking about spaces to negotiate rather than complaining about oppression.' Thus when Chen Li graduated at the end of the academic year, she had become more of a `composite personality' in terms of the technocrat/ humanist distinction than when she had embarked on development studies at the beginning of the year.

Chen Li was identified in section 7 as the least composite of our protagonists when it came to blending `technocracy' with `humanism' and `activism'. Most of the others had arrived at the Institute as fairly composite professional identities, and many had explicitly come in search of what they felt was under-represented in the `blend' -- Vern in the hope of a `comprehensive framework of ideas' with which to balance a technical formal education, for example, or Yumiko in pursuit of skills that would help her as a development practitioner and that had not been part of her earlier studies in the humanities.

The lesson here for schools of development studies is the need to cater to latent professional selves as well as to overt professional affiliation, i.e. to allow exposure not only to `more of the same' but to the other, through a curriculum that juxtaposes both in a stimulating way. This can be illustrated by Danielle's and Chen Li's experience of a methodology course that combined quantitive and qualitative approaches. We have already quoted Chen Li on the course: `It was great, it stimulated me to think about looking at policy. In spite of my background, I found the discussion of quantitative data more interesting than the qualitative material, especially the different ways of looking at numbers. The course taught me how to read numbers when thinking about policy, and how policy is affected by how you interpret data.'

Danielle's background and interests were already strongly policy-oriented. Her comment on the methodology course was: `I was unfamiliar with qualitative methods, so I found that more interesting, and we were given very helpful tips and ideas. I had a comparative advantage in quantitative methods but I wasn't bored in those classes, some things there were also new.' The course thus took Danielle further along paths that she had already progressed in professionally, but also allowed her glimpses of new vistas that she might not travel along immediately but might be able to link to some-day.[4]

Other findings relate to the structure rather than the content of education. Our twelve narratives depicted not only the life as lived in particular local settings, but recent experiences after protagonists had been disembedded from these local settings for further study within a global microcosm: `A person may make use of diversity in order to create a distinctive self-identity which positively incorporates elements from different settings into an integrated narrative. Thus a cosmopolitan person is one precisely who draws strength from being at home in a variety of contexts' (Giddens *op. cit.*: 190). Such a global setting provided a useful environment for our protagonists to work further on their individual attempts to bring about `harmonious human co-existence on the global level' as well as `psychologically rewarding self-actualization on the personal plane' (*op. cit.*: 223).

**The self.** Conversational interviews held during time away from the home setting drew on reflective tendencies and processes of `becoming' that were encouraged by a period of study. And during this period, exposure to other kinds of involvement in development work as exemplified by classmates and yearmates could stimulate both manifest and latent professional identities. The perceptions of their future expressed by our protagonists in the course of the interviews were the very opposite of carved in stone. Such perceptions in fact had often shifted subtly or even altered substantially in the months that elapsed between the first and second round of interviews. These twelve lives -- and life stories -- represented `work in progress.'

`The reflexive project of the self,' Giddens reminds us, `which consists in the sustaining of coherent, *yet continuously revised*, biographical narratives takes place in the context of multiple choice...' (1991: 5, emphasis added). Ideas about the future ex

[4] For a more extensive discussion of pedagogy at schools of development studies, see George 2001.

pressed in the interviews were an example of `reflexively organized life-planning' (*ibid.*),` a means of preparing a course of future actions mobilized in terms of the self's biography' (*op. cit.*: 85).

For many of our protagonists, looking ahead, the future was what Giddens describes as `"open"': `there is much to be gained, but there is unexplored territory to be charted, and new dangers to be courted' (*op. cit.*: 13), `in that mixture of opportunity and risk characterisitc of the late modern order' (*op. cit.*: 180). Such protagonists exemplified the creativity described by Giddens as `a commitment that is a "leap into the unknown", a hostage to fortune which implies a preparedness to embrace novel experiences' (*op. cit.*: 41). `The more tradition loses its hold, and the more daily life is reconstituted in terms of the dialectical interplay of the local and the global, the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options' (*op. cit.*: 5).

This paper has concerned itself with intellectuals from the Third World. What about those from and in the First World? It is quite possible that some of the arguments put forward here apply to them as well. The paper has after all emphasized overlap between categories rather than tight divisions between them. It will be interesting if discussions of Third World intellectuals can feed back into the discussions of First World intellectuals from which they originally drew.

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