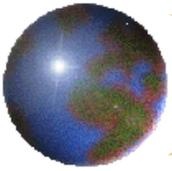# *Sustainable Management in International Development and the Reinvention of Cross-cultural Management Studies*

The Foundations of Sustainability SAMS/JMS Conference Loughborough, UK, 27th – 29th September 2010

Terence Jackson

Middlesex University

…….approximately 80 percent of the world's population…live and work in countries characterized as developing.' (Punnett, 2004:387)


'I would advise you not to specialize in Africa as a management academic, it will ruin your career.' (Advice from colleague circa. 2000)

'Africa exists as an invention….of the West's imagination' (Ahluwalia, 2001: 13)

'…some bodies, including the World Bank, have interests entrenched in an African crisis; their importance, the resources they command, perhaps even their very existence, depend on a perceived need to rescue Africa from disaster' (Rimmer, 1991: 90)

Official development assistance rose from about USD 50 billion in 1990 to just over USD 100 billion in 2005 (Source: OECD, 2008).

There are still over 30 million people living with HIV worldwide, of whom about 22.5 million live in sub-Saharan Africa, and an estimated 1.5 to 2 million people dying in this region every year of the consequences of AIDS (Kickbush, 2007)
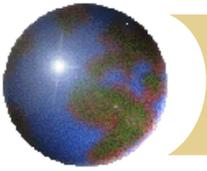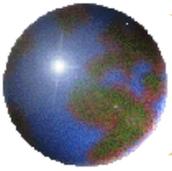
The Issues

- Efforts of the international development sector to address issues such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic affecting countries like South Africa appear to **self-sustain an industry** yet appear **not to provide sustainable solutions** that meet local social and welfare needs.

- **Cross-cultural Management Studies (CCMS) may provide insights** into appropriately managing international (and cross-cultural) programmes and projects in this area, **but remain impotent and irrelevant.**

- But CCMS could learn from a critical analysis of the **structural and phenomenological aspects of the global governance structure** within which this sector operates

- This involves critically examining the **structural and phenomenological aspects of power dynamics** that influence the appropriateness and sustainability of development solutions.

- This suggests a rethinking and re-invention of Cross-cultural Management studies itself, which can contribute directly to theories and methodology of sustainability.
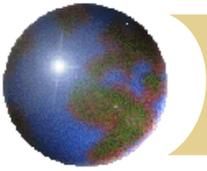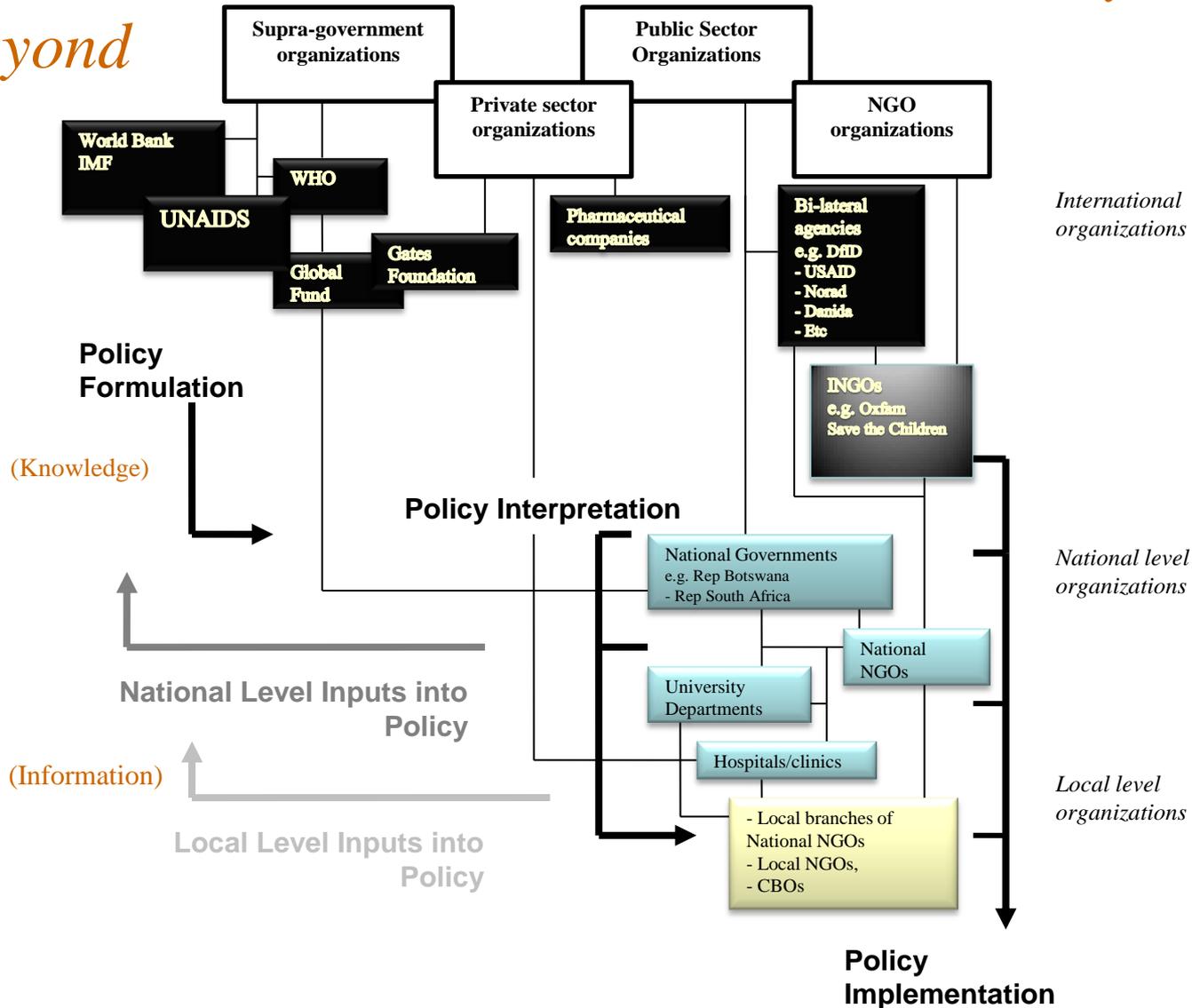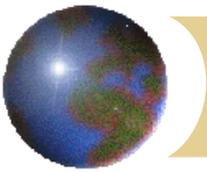
Cultural Appropriateness and Sustainability

- **Appropriateness**: extant cross-cultural management theory challenges the transferability of management and organizational knowledge (Hofstede, 1980/2003; Boyacigiller, and Adler, 1991)
- **Transferred-in knowledge** to local situations may be both imposed and inappropriate, suggesting a need for more sustainable approaches.
- Appropriateness, begs the question: **appropriate to whom? (stakeholder theory)**
- Yet stakeholder analysis inadequate in grasping the full geopolitical context within which international operations and knowledge transfer takes place: hence **social network theory.**
- But network analysis is only structural: What about the phenomenological aspects? **Postcolonial Theory and beyond**
- A rethinking of CCMS: towards **interface theory**

Global Governance Structure: Stakeholder Analysis and Beyond

Supra-government organizations

Public Sector Organizations

Private sector organizations

NGO organizations

World Bank IMF

WHO

UNAIDS

Global Fund

Gates Foundation

Pharmaceutical companies

Bi-lateral agencies e.g. DfID
- USAID
- Norad
- Danida
- Etc

INGOs e.g. Oxfam Save the Children

International organizations

Policy Formulation

(Knowledge)

Policy Interpretation

National Governments e.g. Rep Botswana - Rep South Africa

National NGOs

University Departments

Hospitals/clinics

- Local branches of National NGOs
- Local NGOs,
- CBOs

National level organizations

Local level organizations

National Level Inputs into Policy

(Information)

Local Level Inputs into Policy

**Policy Implementation**

5

Barnabas Trust and its Connections: Beyond Network Analysis

❑ Network analysis focuses on the 'interdependence of actors and how their positions in networks influence their opportunities, constraints, and behaviours' (Rowley, 1994: 8940

❑Structural power is a function of a network's density and the centrality of an organization within this.

6
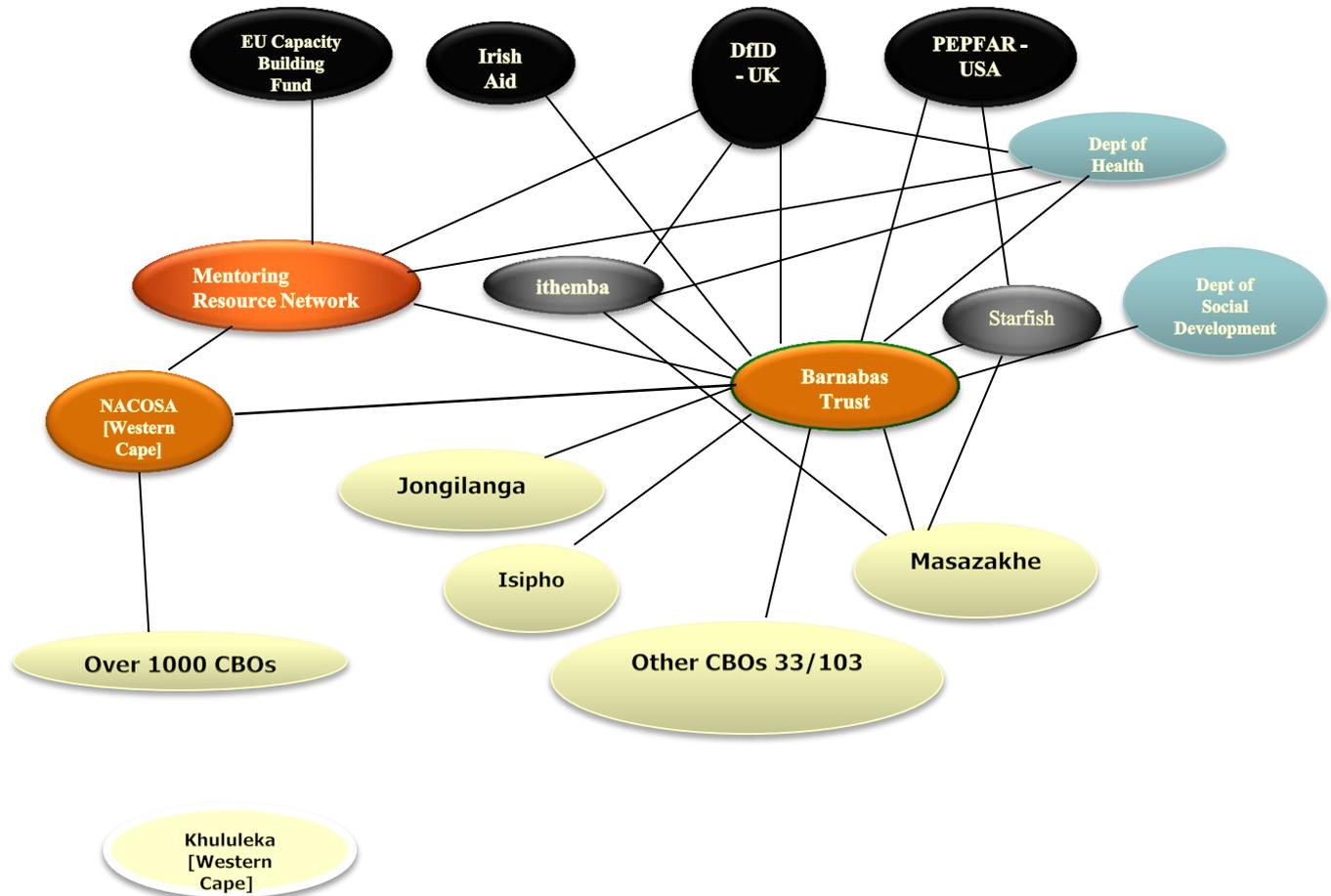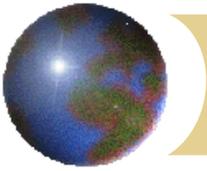
Structural Power within the Network

- The professional world for Barnabas Trust is determined by its funders: **no funders, no Barnabas Trust**. They do not just **control vital resources**; they also **lay down the institutional rules and values** that need to be complied with in order to gain membership of the network, as part of the global governance structure.

- Barnabas Trust in its turn acts as **gatekeeper to this network**, and hence entry to the global governance structure. Masizakhe, Isopho and Jongilanga have been granted access through Barnabas, yet possibly others have not (e.g. Khululeka Men's Support Group, W Cape)

- There **may be alternative routes** into the global governance structure. Yet the **extent to which there is not**, is one determining factor in Barnabas Trust's structural power relationship with its various stakeholders (**high centrality and low density)**

- One of the issues of the growth of civil society organizations is the paradox of their entry into what might be termed the 'formal' global governance structure: one's acceptance, and position in the network (global governance structure) is also **dependent on one's conformity to this discourse**, and one's ability to influence this discourse.

- Value of social network analysis is its emphasis on relationships within a **wider structural context, involving power dynamics that facilitate or militate against successful and appropriate transmission of materials or information** (norms, beliefs and values, as well as insider knowledge associated with indigenous groups), **its weakness is that it doesn't do anything with these!**
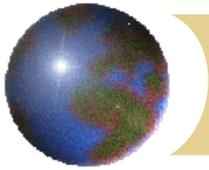
Beyond Network Analysis: Structural Dependency

- Development efforts that assume or ignore geopolitical cross-cultural dynamics that ensures a dominance of 'solutions' from a particular cultural context (broadly speaking, the 'West') over local solutions and ways of doing things and do not provide mutual and equal learning, are bound **not to be appropriate in the short term and sustainable in the long term.**

- CCMS does not appear to recognize this context and the structural relationships driven by power dynamics that **give rise to various forms of hybrid structures and content through the interactions of different cultural spaces**, that then contribute to further hybrid cultural spaces or **Third Spaces** (in Bhabha's ,1994, terms).

- **Postcolonial Theory** focuses on the wider geopolitical dynamics having a major impact on the nature of knowledge, the way knowledge is transferred internationally, and the nature of local knowledge resulting from and contributing to this dynamic.

- It begins to explain **the phenomenological relationships within the global governance structure**, explaining its ideological dependencies and the formation of cultural identities at any point of interface within this network of relationships.

- **Interfaces** represent 'the intersections of modes of life, worldviews, interests and strategies in which power relations are important for the emergence of new institutional contexts' (Bartsch, Hein and Kohlmorgen, 2007: 30)
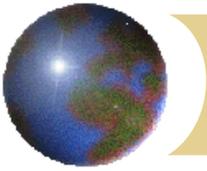
Ideological Dependence and Representation

- The intellectual discourse of the West regarding the 'orient' is accepted by the colonizers, but also by the colonized through sheer force of economic and ideological power: the colonized **'mimic' (**Bhabha, 1994) the colonizers. This enables the colonizers to control the unfamiliar, or, to gain acceptance of transferred-in knowledge.

- Hence, **local organizations need access to the global governance structure in order to gain legitimacy**, in order to gain access to resources, yet appear to lose their local 'authenticity' in the process. They have to buy in to the global (modernizing) discourse, to adopt management and accountability processes that may not have been locally appropriate, nor reflect local stakeholder interests and needs.

- Barnabas Trust plays a key role in the schooling in and adoption of this discourse and processes: e.g. *The Toolbox*: 'The Toolbox is a book that tells you how to run an organisation, capacity building, reports, conflict management, management and finances' (informant, Masizakhe).

- It does not do so in a state of critical enlightenment, but more as **an NGO chasing donor's funding:**

   - 'NGOs participating in funding relationships in which they are regarded as a service delivery tools, gradually internalize certain ways of relating and thinking that are independent of their community relationships'. The '..internalisation of specific ways of thinking are often called "capacity-building programmes"' which manifest through endless training sessions … to teach the correct implementation of tools'. This leads to using '..the correct language for communication with their target groups … it is in this process that the transfer of cognitive maps of international policy thinking occurs'. (Seckinelgin, 2005:359).
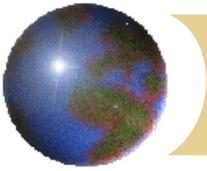
Some Conclusions: Is it Sustainable?

- It is questionable to what extent an organization like Masizakhe is contributing to the global development discourse.

- Spivak (1988) questions the ways in which the voice of the 'subaltern' is being expressed, particularly focusing on the position of women in Third World countries and arguing that this voice cannot be heard as her life-world needs to be translated into Western concepts and categories.

- This 'epistemic violence' means the subaltern can never speak for herself as she is constantly caught in translation as outside development experts need to interpret and translate her life-world into categories and concepts that are 'scientific' and understandable to Western aid agencies

- In the case of Khululeka Men's Support Group, authentic voices may be spoken, but there appears to be no one to listen.

- Masizakhe's voice when heard is being translated and made understandable to Western donors at best, but at worst being '...trivialised and invalidated by Western scientists and experts' (Briggs and Sharp, 2004: 664).

- Is Barnabas Trust providing useful agency in socializing CBOs into the governance structure, and filtering resources (including knowledge) from the large international donors and enabling their stakeholders to 'meet in the middle'; or, are they acting to integrate CBOs like Masizakhe into the structure, schooling them in imposed knowledge as a means of control and compliance, while taking them further away from their local stakeholder base and authenticity?
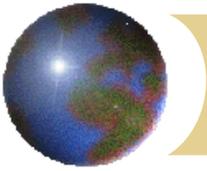
Where do we go from here?

- International development still remains with an issue of self-sustaining an industry, but not fully addressing local social and health issues in a sustainable way. The task appears to remain to:
  - strengthen feedback loops;
  - understand how the governance structure works;
  - understand each organization's situation as an interface within this network having various cultural and other influences on it;
  - understand the way power relations operate within this international network both in a structural and phenomenological way; and,
  - be able to manage these dynamics from a position of critical enlightenment, rather than remaining blissfully unaware of the effects of these dynamics on development efforts that clearly are not sustainable.
- Reinvent cross-cultural management studies as a critical set of theories that take into consideration real world geopolitical dynamics as both structure and ideology, and which can inform the direction of international development, and through so doing can learn and evolve into a discipline more central to Management Studies itself, while contributing to (local and global) issues of sustainability.