

Master Class:

Political Economy and Power Analysis:

Features, advantages, limitations

Face to Face Meeting
Decentralization and Local Governance Network
Aswan, Egypt
May 13, 2013

What we intend to do (in this session)

- to discuss the ***advantages and limitations*** of political economy and power analysis (PEPA)
- to share a ***working knowledge*** of the main PEPA components
- to identify ***key entry points***, loopholes and bottlenecks affecting (or enabling) the impact of SDC operations
- to think about ***PEPA implications*** for cooperation strategies, portfolio development and sector assessments

What is Political Economy and Power Analysis?



So, what is it exactly?

- It is a systematic way of thinking about ***the politics of formulating, adopting, implementing and monitoring development cooperation interventions***
- It is an approach to understanding the ***visible, hidden and invisible dimensions of power*** at work in country and programme contexts and relationships
- It is a systematic way to understand the ***formal and informal incentives and motivations*** of key actors
 - ***to produce and sustain coalitions for change***
- Its a systematic ***set of tools*** to analyse the actors, the coalitions for change, the legal frameworks, and the sanctions that facilitate cooperation over time.

Political Economy Analysis	Power Analysis
understands political actions and strategies through the lenses of economic institutionalism	comes from critical social theory, including anthropology, political sociology and feminism
focuses on key actors, their interests, and what enables or hinders their cooperation; structures and “rules of the game” considered, with emphasis on the visible	explores socialised and internalised norms and behaviour and the links between agency and structure; also focuses on actors, with emphasis on hidden and invisible dynamics

Both approaches share the common objective of unpacking the visible, hidden and invisible dimensions of relationships between key actors involved in producing (or blocking) meaningful development changes.

Political Economy and Power Analysis



Advantages, uses and applications

- Explains ***individual behaviour and motivations*** not in ideal, moral or normative terms (should) but rather as strategic responses to specific constraints— building coalitions for support
- Analyses power at ***different stages of the policy process***: formulation, approval, implementation, monitoring.
- Recognizes the ***formal and informal role of practices and institutions*** to shape development outcomes
- Explores the ***socialised and internalised norms, attitudes, beliefs and narratives*** that shape context and actors
- It helps to explain ***change over time*** (transformative change, structural change, sustained change or resilience)
- Uses ***quantitative and qualitative information*** to document policy changes

PEPA Criteria

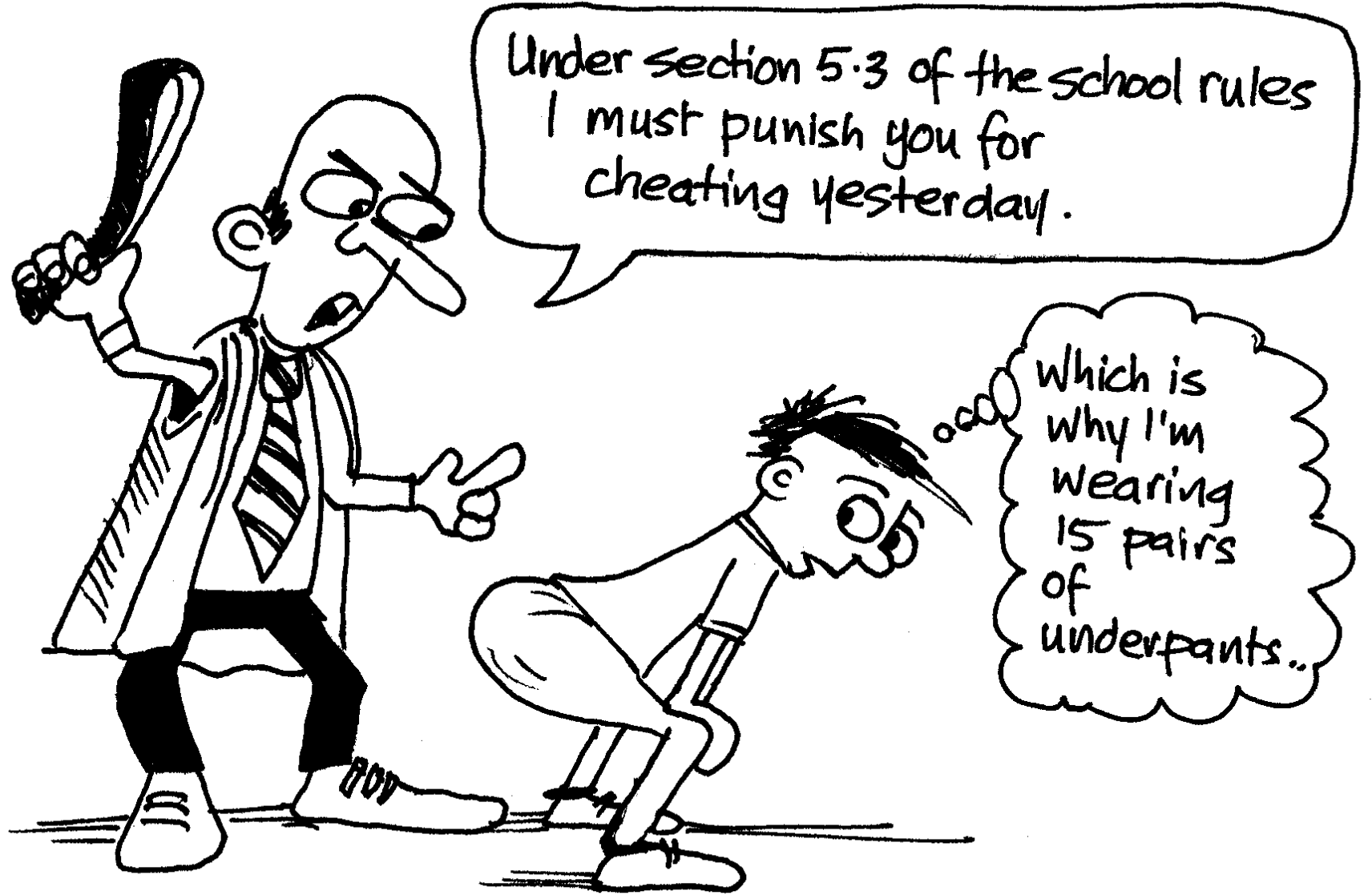
	Political Economy	← →	Power Analysis
Dimensions of power	Visible	Hidden	Invisible
The role of institutions /rules of the game	Taken as given, formal and legal, difficult to change	informal or traditional institutions, resilient	Social and cultural institutions, internalized, source of identity
The role of individuals	Individual and strategic decisions	Combine individual and collective actions	individual and collective consciousness
Cooperation and contestation	Collective action is the sum of individual motivations	CA comes from individual motivations and social norms	Collective action results from social and cultural norms
Sanctions and enforcement	Formal (legal) ways to enforce agreements (contracts) or punish defections	Informal sanctions outside official or legal channels	Fear of exclusion or loss of identity; internalised social norms
How they explain change over time?	Change from above: preferences and strategies change but institutions not	Change from below: Institutions change to reflect “what works”	Change from within: Changes in critical awareness and empowerment
Example: how to ensure effective service delivery from local governments?	What are the legal, political, and financial resources allocated to local governments?	Who performs local government functions <i>in practice</i> ?	Who is neglected from local governments or does not benefit from delivery of services?

The 'Power Matrix'

Forms of power	Strategies used by actors
Visible Power: making and setting the rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Institutional reforms, legal frameworks, formal political processes• Advocacy, campaigns, negotiation, representation, engaging in politics
Hidden Power: setting the agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Mobilising bias' and influencing key actors 'behind the scenes'• Organizing communities and popular support, networks, information
Invisible Power: shaping meaning and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shifting narratives and discourses, shaping opinion via media, education• awareness-raising, building self-esteem, participatory research

Guiding questions

- What are the ***existing formal and informal rules of the game*** (norms and practices) affecting local actors? What are the socialised and internalised values and behaviors?
- Who are the ***main actors, motivations and strategies***?
- ***Why change does not happen***? What are the potential drivers or impediments of change? How are **change coalitions** produced and sustained?
- What are the explicit or implicit “models of change”?



Under section 5.3 of the school rules
I must punish you for
cheating yesterday.

Which is
why I'm
wearing
15 pairs
of
underpants..

Additional (reference) slides

1. Institutions matter

- Institutions are ***the rules of the game...***
 - a set of legal or customary practices established, reinforced and sanctioned by a set of well known norms
- They reflect different values, beliefs, and cultural traits over time (legitimacy)
 - But they may also reflect the preferences of a minority or elite group who made the rules in the first place
- They help to solve conflicts, reduce uncertainty, enforce action
 - They may be formal or informal
 - They may be visible (expressed beliefs and practices) or invisible (tacit, internalised norms and habits)
 - They change over time

2. Actors and motivations

- Who are the main stakeholders required to enhance ***civil society participation***? (different according to different policy areas)
 - What are their prerogatives, attributions, responsibilities?
 - What are their sources of power and influence? How do these reflect prevailing social structures and narratives?
 - What are their preferences, interests, strategies?

3. Networks and coalitions

- Who do the main actors work with? What is their motivation to cooperate with one another?
 - Duty, responsibility, self interest, fear?
 - Do existing institutions enable (or constrain) actors' actions?
- How do they overcome cooperation problems?
 - Through formal agreements? Informal pacts? Material exchanges?
- What are the spaces in which they interact, advocate, contest, negotiate, represent, cooperate, etc?
 - (e.g. formal, invited, claimed)
- What do “coalitions for change” look like?
 - Do they have a positive, negative or neutral impact?
- How are coalitions formed and sustained?

4. Enforcement and implementation

- How do actors overcome **cooperation** problems?
 - What happens if they **abandon** agreements?
 - Are there **other types** of retaliations?
- How **effective (and credible)** are existing arrangements (institutions) to enforce agreements?
 - Are there any formal or informal ways to sanction?
- Are there any other (external) **enforcements**?
 - Are these credible, legitimate?

5. How does change happen?

- Who are the critical actors needed to produce change?
 - What do the coalitions for change look like?
 - What are the relevant formal and informal rules existing?
- What are their incentives to cooperate, how do they enforce agreements?
 - How is cooperation encouraged?
 - How are defections punished?
- Are there any virtuous (vicious) cycles or automatic (self reinforcing) dynamics?
- What are the explicit or implicit “models of change” behind expected interventions?

power is an 'essentially contested concept' ... with no unified theory

Is power...

**something 'held' (or not)
by powerful (or powerless)
people or groups, used
'coercively' to control**

**limited, 'zero-sum' (with
winners and losers)....**

**'negative', with some
having control over or
dominating others...**

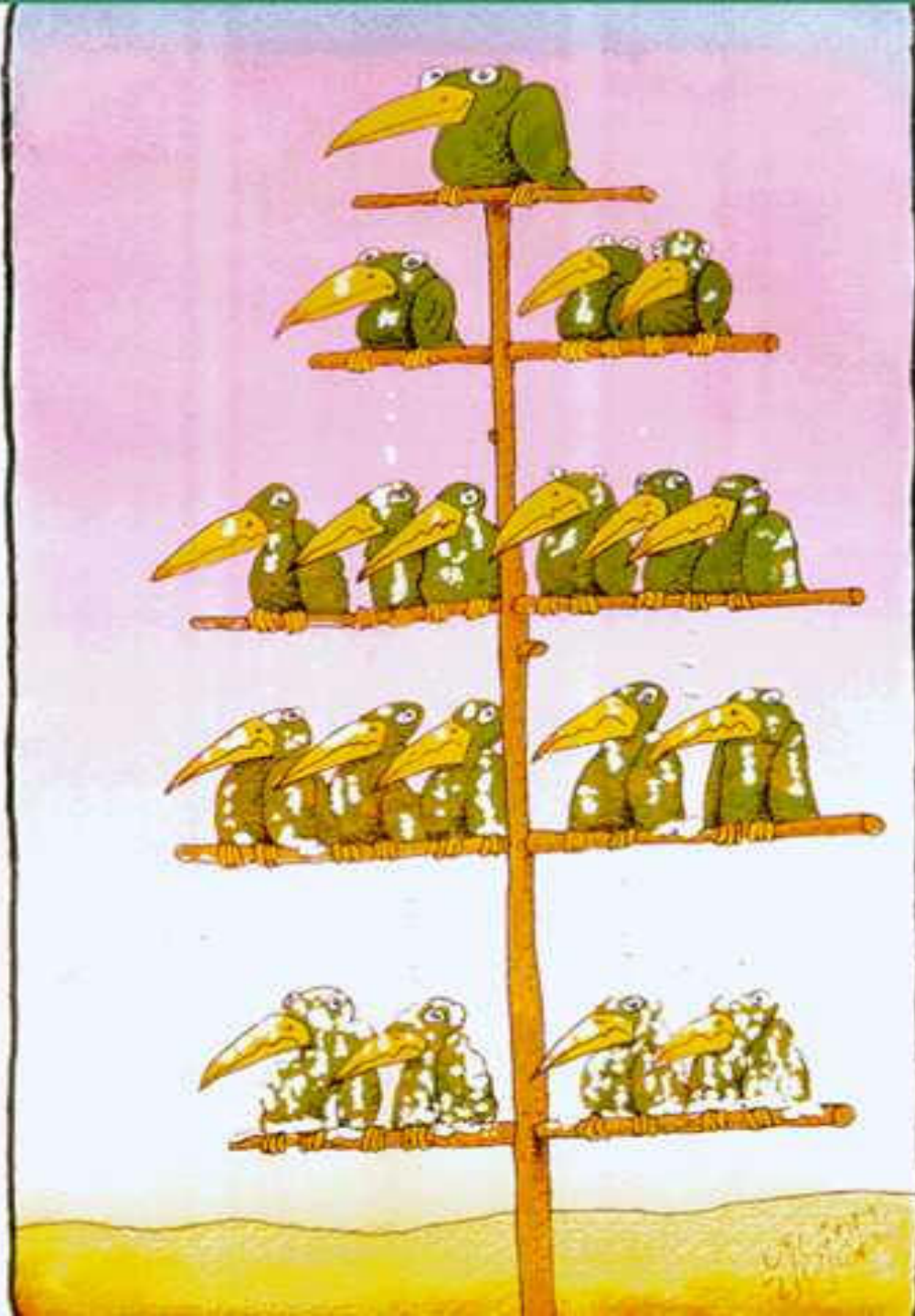
**formal and visible
institutions, laws and rules**

**....or something that pervades
and shapes all relationships
and social behaviour, creating
'consent' to a social order?**

**....or something fluid and
infinite?**

**...or something 'productive',
necessary for all action and
change?**

**... or informal relationships,
social and cultural norms?**



'agency' or 'structure'?

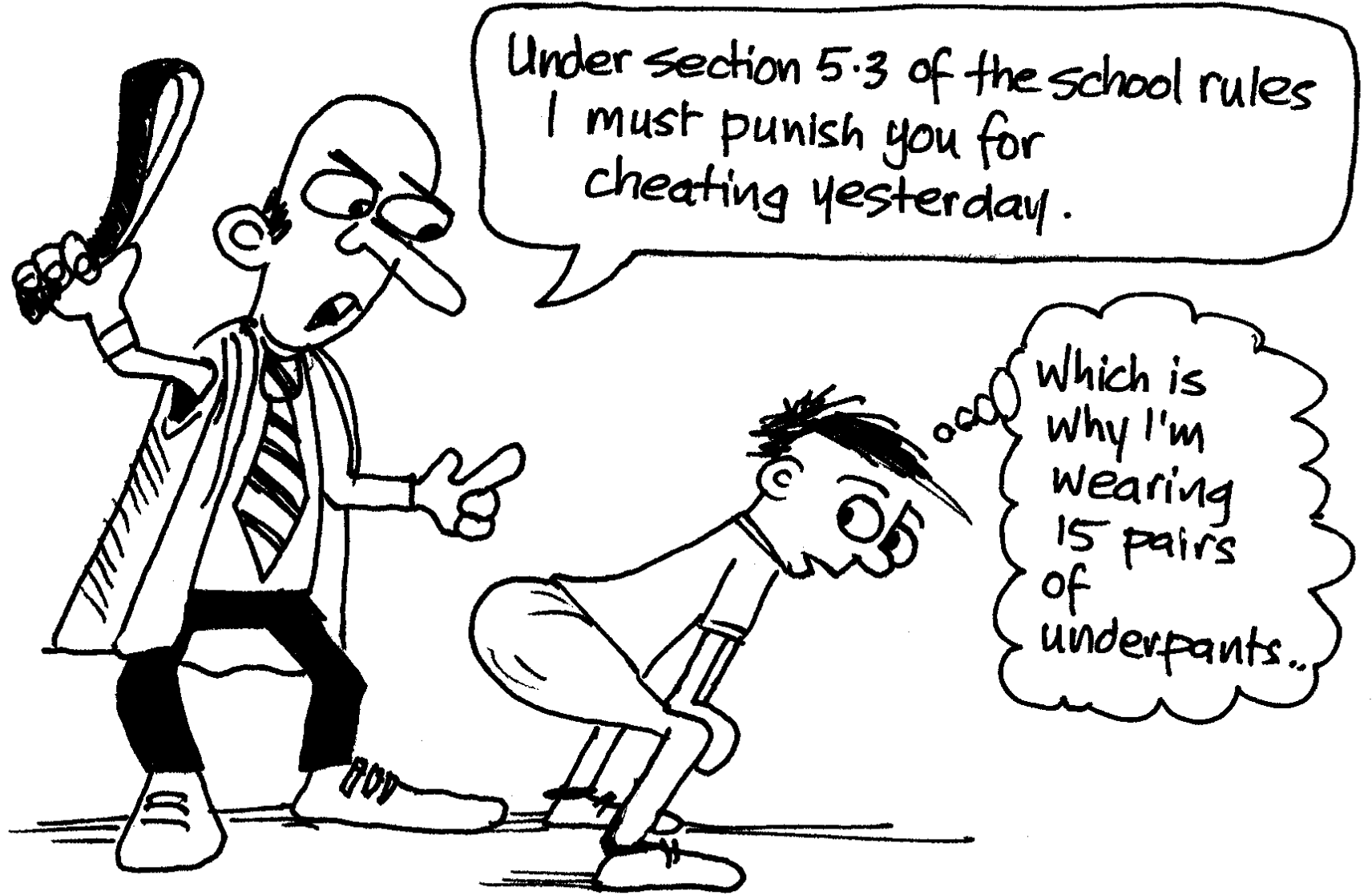
two competing ideas about power...

an 'agency' view:

'power refers to an ability or capacity of an agent or agents, which they may or may not exercise' (Lukes)

a 'structure' view:

...power is *'a network of social boundaries that constrains and enables action for all actors'* (Hayward)



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'expressions of power'

(from Rowlands 1997; VeneKlasen and Miller 2002)

- Power over... (domination, control)
- Power to... (agency, capacity to act)
- Power with... (solidarity, mutual support)
- Power within... (dignity, self-esteem)

'three faces of power': (visible, hidden & invisible power)

Steven Lukes: *Power: A Radical View*
(1974) ('three-dimensional power')

John Gaventa: *Power and
Powerlessness: quiescence and rebellion
in an Appalachian valley* (1980)

Lisa VeneKlasen & Valerie Miller: *A New
Weave of Power* (2002)

1. *visible power* (or “*first face of power*”)

- Formal operation of power in visible institutions and political processes
- Concerned with who participates in decision-making (in public arenas)
- Who is able to influence decision-making?
Who wins and who loses?
- Can be observed and measured

2. hidden power (or “second face of power”)

- Concerned with who sets the agenda behind the scenes or “backstage”
- barriers and biases which determine:
 - who is included in decision-making
 - which issues can be addressed
 - whose voices are heard
 - ‘mobilisation of bias’
- “non-decisions” are also decisions

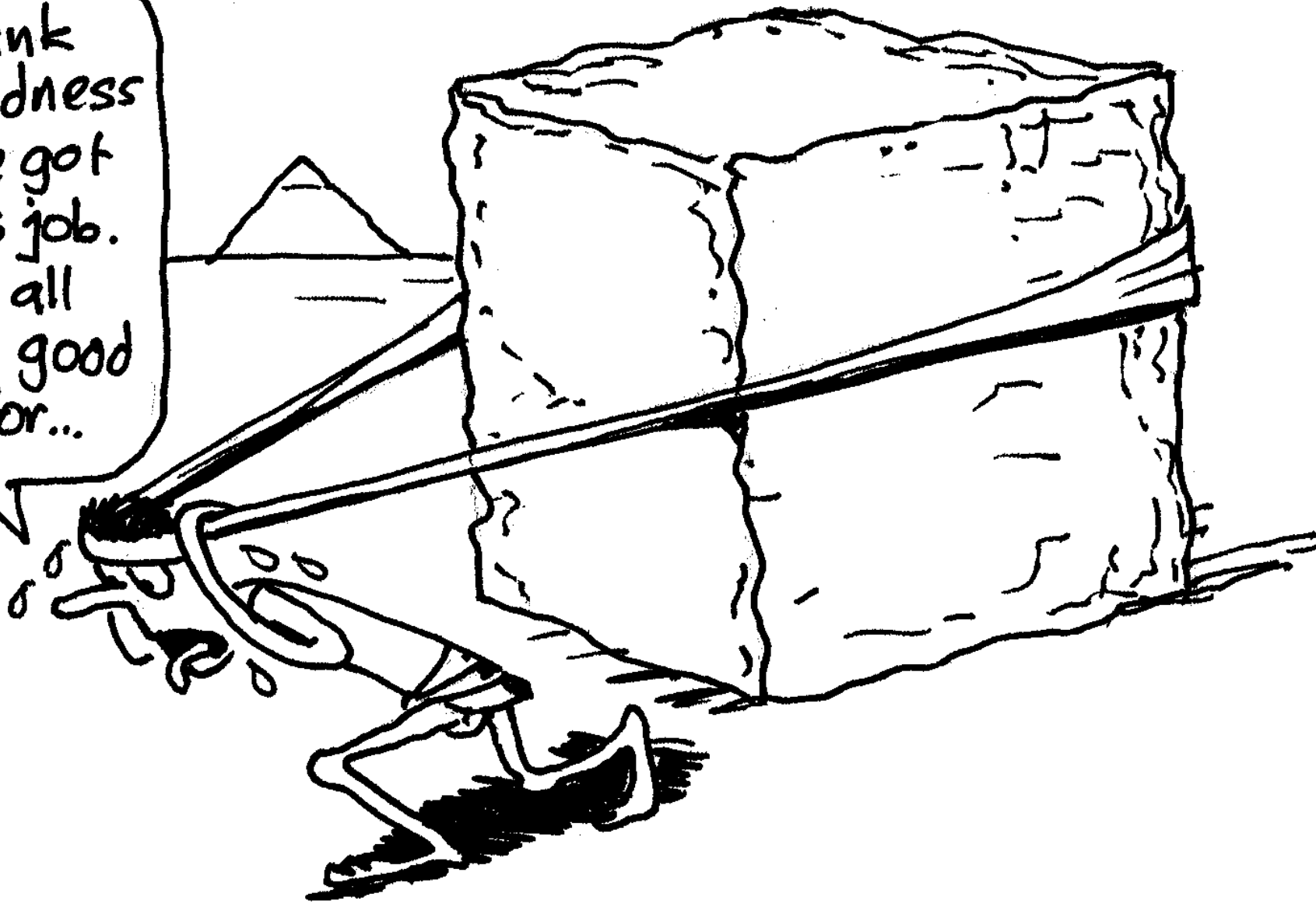
You need a translator?!
Sorry.. protocol insists we
present in English.



3. *invisible power* (or the “*third face*” of power)

- Concerned with how people’s perceptions and needs are shaped
- Manipulation or reproduction of social, cultural and ideological norms
- Affects internalised sense of power or powerlessness; agency and self esteem
- Not always observable or even detectable (but this doesn’t mean it’s not there)

thank
goodness
I've got
this job.
It's all
I'm good
for...



two kinds of 'invisible power'?

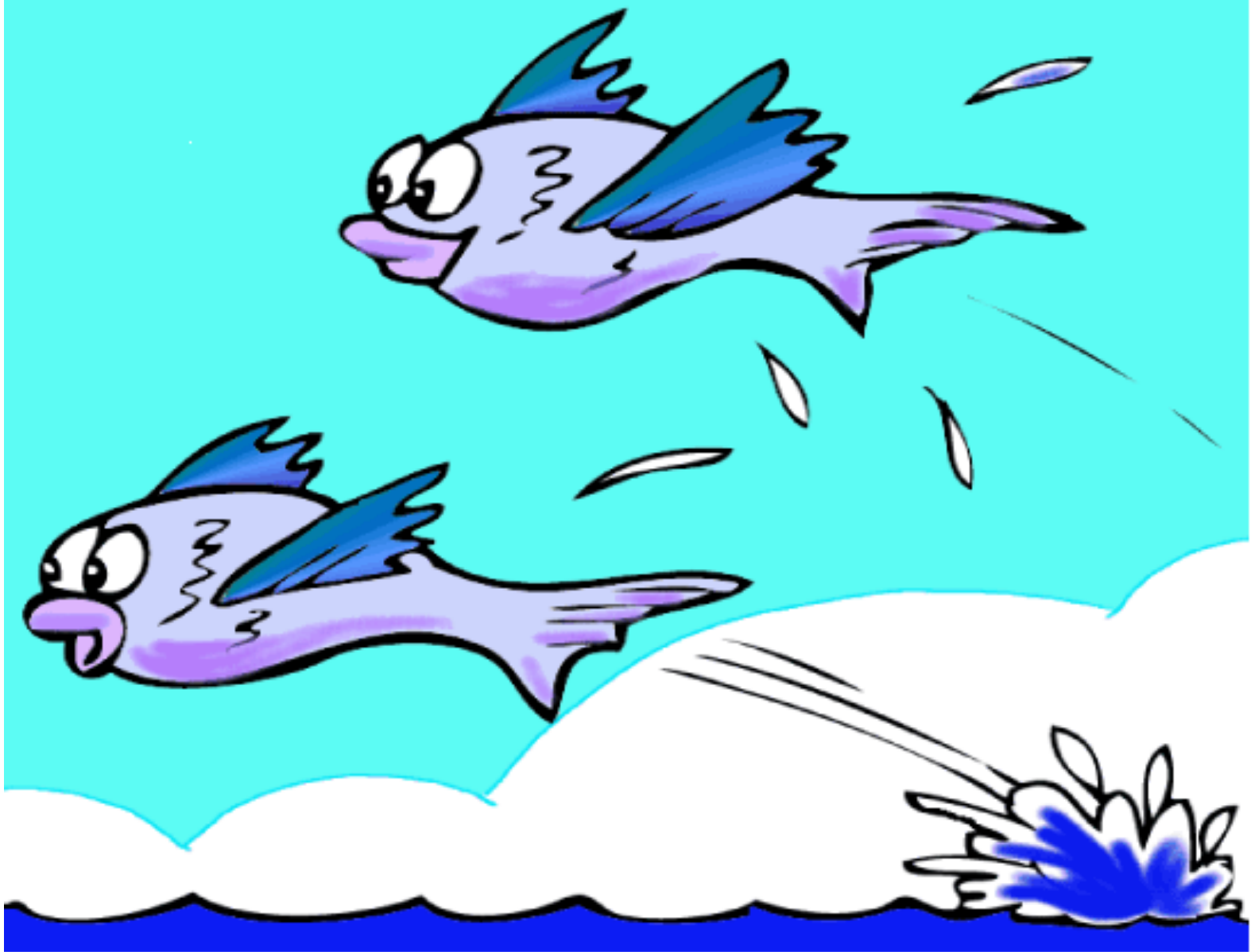
1. The intentional manipulation of public opinion...

through propaganda, ideology, images, control over the media, religion or education as intentional ways of shaping or delegitimizing beliefs (invisible power as something that can be 'exercised', a form of 'agency')

2. Power as values, beliefs, social and cultural norms, ideologies, discourses, dispositions...

'networks of social boundaries which enable or constrain all actors' (Hayward); internalised and embodied norms (power as pervasive, *unconsciously* reproduced structures)

Both ultimately affect both the 'powerful' and 'powerless' and shape our sense of 'power to' and 'power within', dignity, agency and self-esteem



*'You see that blue stuff down there?
...that's what I'm talking about!'*

the power spectrum

actors and processes...

...norms and beliefs

Power:

Visible and hidden
Power over
Domination and control
Power to do things



Power:

Invisible and internalised
Norms and values
Social conditioning
Knowledge/Truth

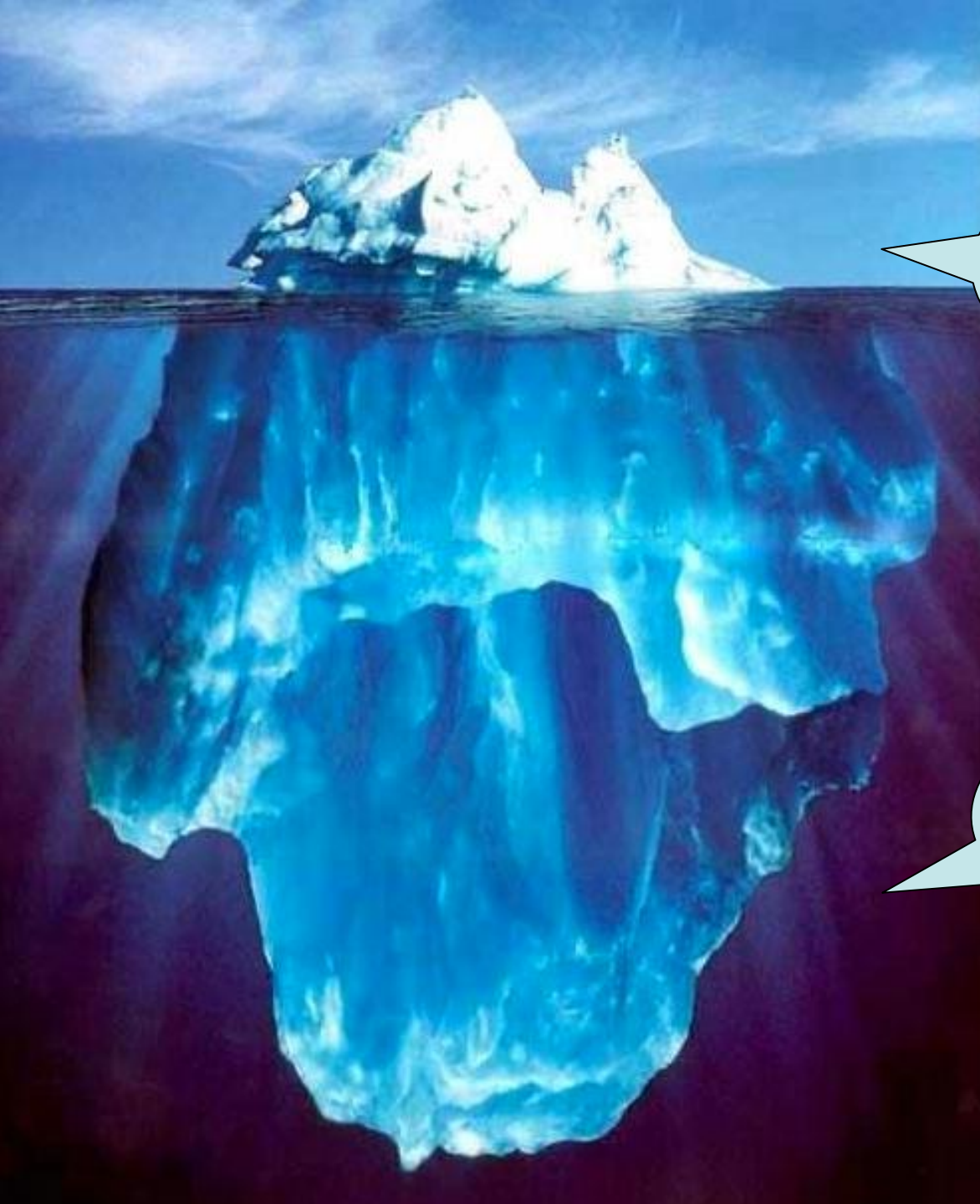
Implications:

Strengthen capacities
Representation, access
Lobbying, advocacy
Formal spaces



Implications:

Consciousness-raising
Strengthening dignity
Cultural action
Informal spaces

A photograph of an iceberg floating in the ocean. The top part of the iceberg is above the water surface, while the much larger bottom part is submerged. Two speech bubbles are overlaid on the right side of the image. The top speech bubble points to the visible tip of the iceberg, and the bottom speech bubble points to the submerged part.

Actors and
processes

Norms and
beliefs

empowerment is...

‘Empowerment happens when individuals and organised groups are able to imagine their world differently and to realise that vision by changing the relations of power that have been keeping them in poverty’

(Eyben, Cornwall and Kabeer 2008: 6)



www.OutThere-byGeorge.com

I can't believe I've never thought of this before

spaces of power

(John Gaventa – ‘powercube’)

● Formal / Closed Spaces

enter by formal position, membership, or representation



● Invited Spaces

enter by invitation from those who created the space

● Claimed / Created Spaces

enter by creating and controlling your own space

Adaptation of the powercube in analysing civil society participation in Colombia (Netherlands CSP study, 2006)

Spaces   Levels	Formal by invitation	Formal by right	Created by institution	Created by orgs	Collective action
Internat.					
National					
Dept.					
Provincial					
Municipal					
Communal					
Barrio					

What goes on inside the spaces?

- Decision-making
- Debate
- Building agreements
- Influence
- Interlocution
- Lobbying
- Protest
- Accountability
- Making visible
- Pressure
- Articulation
- Follow-up
- Formation of public opinion
- Scrutiny and recommendation
- Resistance
- Proposal
- Negotiation
- Peace-building
- Complaint
- Encounter
- Mobilization

- Pearce and Vela, Colombia study on
Civil Society Participation, 2005

Defining scope and TORs for doing political economy and power analysis

When (in cooperation cycle)?

- Country strategy preparation
- Programme design, credit proposal preparation
- Mid-term review or when designing new phase
- Stimulate dialogue and debate
- Responding to unexpected changes
- Identifying partners

Why?

Define the purpose clearly: understanding context? actors? sector? political realities? historical trajectories of power? What can be learned from existing analyses? What gaps?

Defining scope and TORs for doing political economy and power analysis

What?

Define the core issues and questions, including what you think you might need to know about...

- Structures and norms (invisible, under waterline)
- Actors and organised interests (visible and hidden)
- Politics and contestation

Identify the concepts and frameworks needed:

- frameworks of power
- theories and models of change
- perspectives of different actors

Defining scope and TORs for doing political economy and power analysis

Process and TORs

- Define criteria for kind of support needed
- Clearly define TORs, with others
- Consider forms of reporting, sensitivities, authorship
- Identifying and procuring consultants or partners
- Monitoring and accompanying process
- Reporting and follow-up, learning