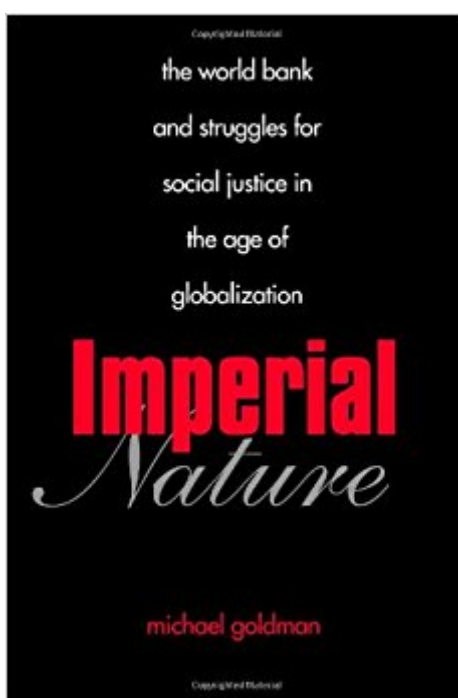


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# Imperial Nature: The World Bank And Struggles For Social Justice In The Age Of Globalization (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)



## Synopsis

Why is the World Bank so successful? How has it gained power even at moments in history when it seemed likely to fall? This pathbreaking book is the first close examination of the inner workings of the Bank, the foundations of its achievements, its propensity for intensifying the problems it intends to cure, and its remarkable ability to tame criticism and extend its own reach. Michael Goldman takes us inside World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C., and then to Bank project sites around the globe. He explains how projects funded by the Bank really work and why community activists struggle against the World Bank and its brand of development. Goldman looks at recent ventures in areas such as the environment, human rights, and good governance and reveals how—despite its poor track record—the World Bank has acquired greater authority and global power than ever before. The book sheds new light on the World Bank's role in increasing global inequalities and considers why it has become the central target for anti-globalization movements worldwide. For anyone concerned about globalization and social justice, *Imperial Nature* is essential reading.

## Customer Reviews

This probing study of the World Bank examines not its brute financial muscle but its "hegemony"—the rhetorical strategies, training programs and patronage networks that let the Bank frame debate and cajole even critics into endorsing its agenda. Sociologist Goldman focuses on what he calls the Bank's "green neoliberalism," a fashionable development ideology that packages poor nations' public services, natural resources and environmental diversity as undervalued economic assets to be profitably managed and conserved through the market. He explores this creed through interviews with Bank employees and onsite studies of Bank-financed projects, looking at the Bank's Policy Research Department, a project in Laos that links construction of hydroelectric dams with the set-aside of nature preserves, and an ambitious initiative to privatize water utilities. Goldman levels a biting but nuanced account of the Bank's dubious scientific studies, its cooptation of environmentalists and the "neocolonialism" of its new enthusiasm for pristine eco-tourism zones that are often as disruptive to traditional communities as old-style development. Unfortunately, he overlays it with a great deal of dense theory, heavily indebted to Gramsci and Foucault, about "power/knowledge regimes," adding little insight but lots of jargon. That's a shame, since this clumsy rhetorical strategy partly obscures an excellent critique of the Bank's inner workings and external image-making. Photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Michael Goldman's brilliant book will be widely read, admired, and quoted. Many ships will sail in its wake." —James C. Scott, Yale University  
 "In this compelling book, Michael Goldman offers powerful new insights into how the World Bank has emerged as one of the most important sites of knowledge production in the world today. Yet by chronicling the practices and processes through which such knowledges become authoritative and how they shift under pressure the book also contributes to the possibilities for more politically enabling alternatives." —Gillian Hart, University of California at Berkeley and author of *Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa*  
 "Michael Goldman's brilliant book will be widely read, admired, and quoted. Many ships will sail in its wake." —James C. Scott, Yale University

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