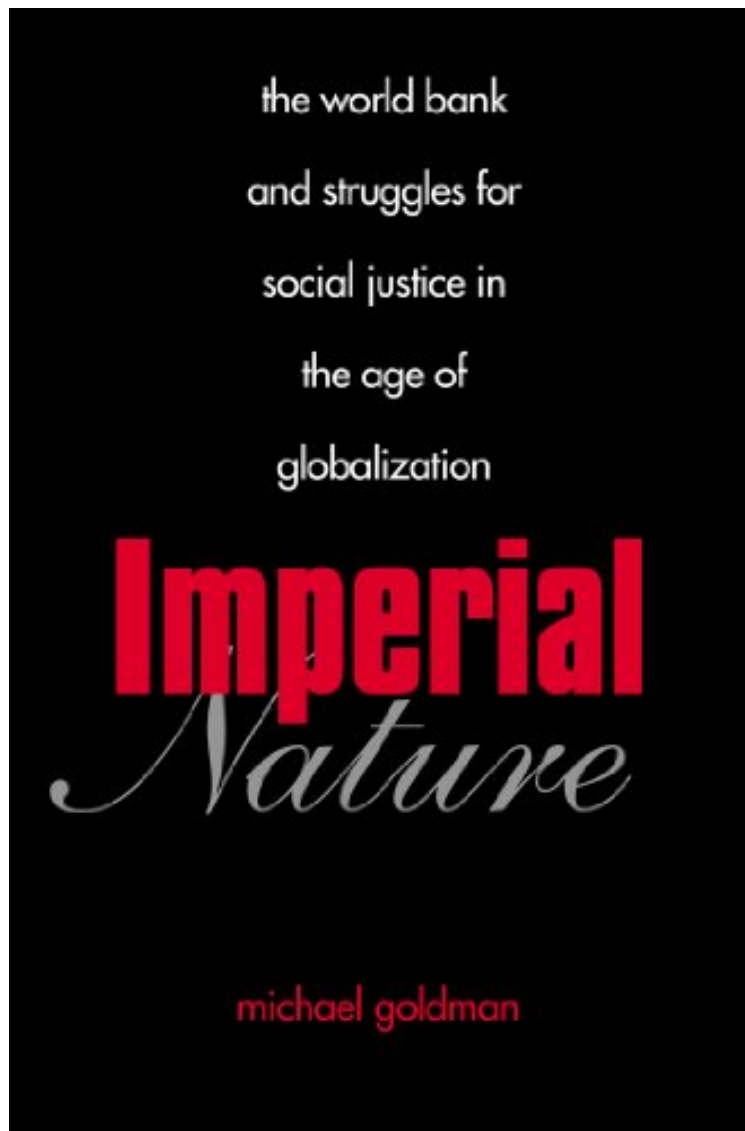


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## Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)

*Michael Goldman*

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**Michael Goldman : Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization (Yale Agrarian Studies Series)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization (Yale Agrarian Studies Series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. World Bank is a fraudBy SueI purchased Imperial Nature to add

depth to a Biblical World View class I am writing on the World Bank. The book is excellent BUT very technical. Michael Goldman reports first hand and from everything else I have read is spot on. The information in the book is not well known and should be. Goldman exposes the World Bank as a fraud. The elite are exposed. Praises to Michael Goldman. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A description and critique of 'World Bank' practice. By Shalom Freedman. This book provides a history of the 'World Bank' and a description and critique of its major operating practices. According to Goldman the 'World Bank's operations often fail to achieve their stated goals, and may do more harm than good. Goldman analyzes the way the agenda of the major fund-providers for the World Bank, the leading industrial states impinges upon the operation of the 'Bank'. He describes the World Bank philosophy which places emphasis on green environmentalism and capitalist neo-liberalism. He shows how the World Bank's institutions produce the information and knowledge which often leads their policies in the wrong direction. He goes into great detail in describing and analyzing a World Bank water project in Laos which causes more harm than good. Is this overall a fair critique? Does it do justice to the full variety of the work, the 'World Bank' has done in the more than sixty years since its inception? I don't consider myself knowledgeable enough to answer. But that the World Bank does have in many areas a good need for soul-searching is made extremely clear in this fine book. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Informative. Read by Daneo. Michael Goldman's *Imperial Nature* provides a compelling account of the ongoing struggles between the World Bank and its borrowers. It is unbiased in analyzing World Bank activities and their effects on the global South. The Bank's financial support for various projects merits applause from authoritative figures in diverse intellectual fields. However, its dealings in implementing policies stemming from this support can be viewed as less than wholesome. Goldman provides a good deal of history behind this, from American involvement in 19th century world development to the creation and expansion of the World Bank in the mid-twentieth century. Goldman describes Robert McNamara's reign as a period of change for the World Bank. It was made both highly efficient and hegemonic. The efficiency factor allowed the World Bank to accrue funding from many international sources, and complete projects within short time spans. However, this same efficiency set the standard for future projects- that those researchers who wanted project funding and promotions would abide by bank rules. Important information involving local peoples would be excluded, adding to the bank's increasing hegemony. Negative consequences for the environment would also be ignored, so long as a neoliberal agenda for development was promoted. The World Bank wields enormous power over the global South, as many national governments rely on it for economic prosperity. It has no system of checks and balances, nor is there another entity fit to replace it. As Goldman states, "A few well timed political victories could send tidal waves through the international financial system and create many new opportunities for social movements to create alternative structures." Thus we are left with the question: is there an alternative to promote economic development while maintaining environmental and social sustainability?

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.

From Publishers Weekly. 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 copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "We have grown accustomed to indictments of the World Bank for the devastation it has wrought, but Goldman goes several steps further. Opening up the Bank and its projects to the ethnographic eye he shows not only how environmental catastrophes occur but also how the Bank responds to those catastrophes with an ever more insidious regulation, by creating new knowledges, absorbing opposition, and refabricating states-all in the name of protecting the environment. Grassroots opposition may mount but the Bank's overarching hegemony is strengthened. A must-read for anyone interested in the role of global agencies in development."-Michael Burawoy, University of California, Berkeley  
About the Author Michael Goldman is associate professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota and is affiliated with its Institute for Global Studies.