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16

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# Folk and the Formula

– pathways to capable states

15.00–17.00

27 September 2012

House of Nobility /Ritarihuone

Ritarikatu 1, Helsinki

INVITATION

After fifty years of development efforts, 80 per cent of states are still at low, stagnating or failing levels of capabilities. Why? What could be done better?

The 16th WIDER Annual Lecture will be delivered by Lant Pritchett, currently Professor of the Practice of International Development Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Prior to returning to the Kennedy School in 2007, he was Lead Socio-Economist in the Social Development group of the South Asia region of the World Bank, resident in Delhi, 2004–07. In 2011 Pritchett was featured in Foreign Policy's Top 100 Global Thinkers.

'Development needs a state that can carry out its responsibilities -formulating effective policies; delivering the mail, educating children, enforcing the law, and collecting taxes. But most developing country states are still failing or stagnating.

The Weberian civil service as the backbone of state capability can work well. But this formula has failed when transplanted to many countries. Increasingly a crisis exists: postal workers don't deliver the mail, teachers don't teach, police don't police, and the taxman does not collect taxes.

If the current formula was sound, it should have worked by now. The reality is that success in building state capability typically comes from a struggle to replace bad institutions with good ['folk practices'], based on learning from experience – and not from imposing a rigid formula unsuited to local conditions.'

- Lant Pritchett

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