

THE WORLD BANK GROUP ARCHIVES

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH

**MICHAEL CERNEA**

Interview By: John Heath

Washington, D.C.

December 22, 2016

[Transcribed from a digital sound recording]

The following is a transcript of an interview conducted for a special oral history project on the McNamara years. The project, led by John Heath from 2016-2018, was a partnership between the 1818 Society and the World Bank Group Archives to capture a social history of the experiences of staff during President Robert S. McNamara's tenure (1968-1981).

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## INTERVIEW

**HEATH:** So this is the World Bank Group Archives in Washington, D.C. Today is December 22, 2016. On behalf of the Special Oral History Project on the McNamara years; I'm John Heath and this is the 13<sup>th</sup> interview in the series.

I have with today Michael Cernea, a Former Senior Advisor at the World Bank, who entered on duty in 1974. Michael, it's a pleasure to have you here.

**CERNEA:** Thank you, John.

**HEATH:** I read the stuff you sent me with great interest and I was particularly struck by the circumstances in which you joined the Bank, and how in fact it was quite difficult for you to get permission from Romania, if that's the right word.

**CERNEA:** That's correct. Yes.

**HEATH:** So why don't you tell us something about that?

**CERNEA:** Well, I was a sociologist, a budding sociologist working in Romania and I was interested in social issues, and hoping for social change, and transformation and progress. But as time passed by I realized that it was really difficult and unlikely to achieve. Not just the lofty goals of changing the big international freedom, but even to do the elementary work for the sociologist who is supposed to be out in the field and report.

The system there was supposed to know in advance what the reality is and to define it top-down, and so the information bottom-up was not welcomed. I, however, managed to break some barriers; and my group of social researchers in an institute of philosophy. We were interested in social philosophy. So we got fed up with repeating known truths and accepted the doubtful versions of how facts are. So we wanted to do fieldwork and we succeeded to do it; and

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conditions in which Romania had a contradictory situation. It was a country with a large, long, rich tradition of research, particularly in the rural area, which was of interest to me too, but the sociologist's discipline was declared a non-science, a bourgeois science, and it was forbidden for a number of years.

So, there was a thought with a certain time in the beginning, the '60s. They took advantage and I dared to organize some research, and we came out with the first actual book which had the term sociology in the title of the book, like Sociological Research -- Field Research.

That was a big breakthrough, and in this narrow break, not only we have broadened that, kind of, but others started to follow. That got the attention of some international scholars who were coming to really look at the work, so they came always to visit my department, and one of them apparently had the good idea to recommend my name to a very major think tank, which, if it were for myself I wouldn't have dared to aspire, because some of the names there, they are all the elephants and giants of social sciences.

Lo and behold, I received a letter inviting -- asking whether I'd be interested, should they decide to invite me. It was not an invitation, but they wanted information and references, and if I am, in principle, interested. So I said, yes, in a period very difficult for me, my wife passed suddenly because of a brain hemorrhage, an aneurism, and had two children and so on, and small. She was also a sociologist.

Anyway, to make it shorter, I decided eventually that I should apply because that would have been a window and a possibility to go. Fortunately, I was accepted.

**HEATH:** Which is the think tank you are referring to?

**CERNEA:** This is the Center for Advanced Studies and Behavioral Sciences, located in Palo Alto, integrated now with Stanford, which is regarded for decades as a single, top -- or most important center, in which all the luminaries, (inaudible) and [Seymour Martin] Lipset, and then on the whole I mean, everybody who has a name in social science.

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**HEATH:** And you were there from '70 to '71; is that right?

**CERNEA:** Exactly. So, I felt that I needed to go back, although I was asked whether I could undertake work and stay there, by colleagues, not by the center. But I had two children so small, I went back, and I kept receiving invitations for the US, although last one was in '74, which you know already, grown up. Then I received an invitation, I came, and the World Bank was trying to meet me. I don't know if you know the details, but I came in '74 to a World Congress of Sociology, invited by the (inaudible).

**HEATH:** I was there myself, in Toronto, that same --

**CERNEA:** No kidding?

**HEATH:** Yeah. I was a student of -- an undergraduate in sociology, so that's --

**CERNEA:** The world is small.

**HEATH:** That's right.

**CERNEA:** So in '73 there was somebody from the Bank who came to Bucharest and wanted to meet with me. He called me and asked, was I in principle -- not in principle -- interested to consider working for the Bank should I be --

**HEATH:** Do you remember the name of the person who was looking for you in '73?

**CERNEA:** No. But I am in the process of trying to get to the archives to see my file and it's so difficult to break through the bureaucracy here and to get to that, and I talked to that about, this to (inaudible) to the others. I don't remember the name, but the facts are very clear.

**HEATH:** The approach was made by the Country Office in Bucharest?

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**CERNEA:** No, no. It was somebody from the center.

**HEATH:** From Washington?

**CERNEA:** From Washington.

**HEATH:** I see.

**CERNEA:** There is an article describing that in very great detail, which will be ready -- I read it, and it's not ready but in two weeks I can give it to you and it can be useful.

**HEATH:** Mm-hmm.

**CERNEA:** So, in short, that person called me asked whether I want to meet him. I said, yes. He said, all right, you'll get a formal call, because they'll arrange for me to call the ministry.

Romania was the first socialist country who joined the Bank, so there was the desire to hire some people from the Bank. My name didn't come from the Romanian side, the Bank had, independently of anything else, reached the idea that they need to have a sociologist to support work on poverty, which, because they looked -- it was a very novelty division at the center created by McNamara, and led by a former McNamara Assistant, whom you interviewed, Leif Christoffersen.

**HEATH:** Leif Christoffersen, right?

**CERNEA:** Yeah.

**HEATH:** What was the name of the division that you are referring to?

**CERNEA:** The Rural Development Division.

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**HEATH:** I see. All right.

**CERNEA:** An experimental division intended to test out a new pattern of projects, rural development, integrated rural development.

**HEATH:** Before we get to that, let me just ask you a bit more about the circumstances of your recruitment to the Bank. So you were in Toronto, they sent Leif Christoffersen to interview you. Is that right?

**CERNEA:** Yes. The point I was reaching is that that person asked to meet with me. The ministry, and although he knew that I was there, he was told that I was not there, and he didn't believe, he checked again when I left and he said, all right, you are here, I'm waiting for that. I was duped and told a lie. You'll hear from us. I didn't hear from him. But when I was at the Congress in Toronto, I got a sudden phone call. I don't know if Leif told you about this.

**HEATH:** No, he didn't mention it.

**CERNEA:** Well, what happened is, by coincidence, at the same time the Bank sent another person to Bucharest. Leif had interviewed a number of people in that entire year, and it so happened that he didn't like any of them, and although they were very good in my view, but they weren't really -- Anyway, he could say better why he didn't.

**HEATH:** Other sociologists?

**CERNEA:** Other sociologists; so he interviewed many including the President of the European Rural Sociological Association who was also Norwegian, Leif is Norwegian. But he really didn't like him. I was Vice President of the Society elected in absentia, because Romania did not give me permit to go to the Congress, where there were elections. So they knew about my work and elected me. So this is how my name came from that society and maybe from other sources, on the Bank's list, the personnel of potential candidates to be considered.

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**HEATH:** Right. I see.

**CERNEA:** So, they failed. In Bucharest the next year, again, in Bucharest the person asked for me, he was told, Professor Cernea is away overseas, tell me what it is; I have too much (inaudible). Then, he was convinced that it's another lie. He telexed to Washington, Washington checked, and lo and behold, I was indeed at this Congress. So, they asked me to come to Washington, but I didn't have a visa to enter the States, it was only to enter Canada.

So, he said, I'll come there. He came there, we have a meeting, a discussion, two hours or more. He said, let's talk over dinner again, so it was another. Then I heard him say, literally, you know, and I don't forget the words, because they changed my life, he said: Michael, I exhausted you through meetings and I think you could help us, but I would like my colleagues also to see, I don't like to make a decision to offer you the job, unless they also meet you and we have a collective decision-making. So, come.

I said, I don't have a visa. Don't worry now; you'll get a visa at the frontier point. It all happened fast. They arranged for a visa and after Congress was finished, I went there, I found my US visa, I crossed the frontier. I stayed in Washington with a friend whom I met at the Center for Advanced --

**HEATH:** Can I ask you about that first meeting in Toronto with Leif Christoffersen? You say you talked for two hours, what did you talk about?

**CERNEA:** Well, he was interested in my research. What did I do actually as a rural sociologist? More than that, he was interested in why I'm doing it and what do I expect to say. Apparently what he liked was that he felt that I'm interested in improving the conditions of life and the conditions of agriculture; and not simply to make the description of more, sort of across those, sort of anything -- funeral rites, or these kinds of things.

He said; the sense of activism, I feel that and this is why I think you can help us because we want

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to work to improve rural development and reduce poverty. So, I came. He said, prepare to give a seminar on whatever you do.

So I took the paper I had to present at the World Congress and I presented at the Bank, not as a paper, but I spoke to it, and the topic was very interesting. If you want to know I can tell you. Romania had a collective system, in collective agriculture, which was a failure. I have written a book about it, which, as it happened, came out in '74.

In that book I had a chapter which said that because of the failure and there was lack of produce and, you know, really you cannot buy anything the agriculture didn't produce. So the system the government allowed the year before, or the period before, for each member of the collective farm to have a family plot.

Lo and behold the family plot, which was one-tenths of a hectare, produced enormously at the higher productivity than anything was reached in fact. Everybody, you know -- an official line was that it was a success of the system which is creative and allows (inaudible), but the truth was that it proved that the family of farmers can produce, but the system was bad, the dominant system was rotten and they did not have incentive, everything was taken away.

So I explained this in my paper and I sent that to the Bank, and I explained that the family has a type of social unit and has the capacity of mobilizing fragmentary resources of labor; from children, elderly, from the adults who come back home, and use that labor on their plot of land intensively, with commitment, and this is how they produced that.

**HEATH:** So this must have been music to the Bank ears at a time when they were essentially believing --

**CERNEA:** It was. Yes but it was not enough, because Leif said, you know, fine, the center was very well, the discussion and so forth, so come next day we'll have some more talk. Well, next day they were prepared, four or five teams of two persons each, like going through a gauntlet of interviews; team, after team, after team, after team. At lunchtime I finished, and I went to Leif

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and he said, hi, let's go to lunch.

**HEATH:** Can I just ask you if you remember any of the names of the people who interviewed you?

**CERNEA:** Oh yes I remember. They were David Turnham, there was Peter Knorringa, there was Ted Davis, there was Scott McLeod, people who became colleagues of me, very good; Andrew Mercer, and so.

**HEATH:** Were they mainly economists?

**CERNEA:** All of them were.

**HEATH:** All of them.

**CERNEA:** Economists or agricultural agronomists, there were no sociologists in here, so the lunch, they have, in short told me, you know, everybody give me very good feedback, they want to work with you, so I'm ready to offer you a job. So this was it. I accepted the job. Then the problem became to get my family. I mean, poor Leif, it didn't even pass his mind that there can be a problem. But I knew that it should be a bit dicey.

So, indeed, I cabled back to Bucharest, I recruited friend to say, please, help my children to get back -- my mother was with the children, and who was in force and could manage the two children. So they promised to do so. But my Institute did not want to give me any leave of absence and they told me to come back, because they checked with authorities and that I shouldn't have accepted, I should have come back and explain why I did accept the job and why am I interested to work in Washington -- so it was clear that if I go that sent off --

**HEATH:** They wouldn't let you out?

**CERNEA:** Not only that, but my career in sociology could be -- I would need to look for a

change, so this is when the Bank -- I mean, immediately the Bank said, they didn't assume it will be difficult to get me, so they say, until we get the approval, please go out on a mission in Tanzania. So I went and I did well, apparently.

**HEATH:** This was the Kigoma Integrated Rural -- the Ujamaa.

**CERNEA:** The Kigoma, yeah. I had to interview people, there was a time when I slept in a village, that apparently was very unusual for the mission, very important, very well, and again the answer didn't come, and then what can I do? So I knew that in order to go to the center, three years before, I also was refused three times, but I managed at that time to convey through an American scholar, whom I trusted, the true reason why I was not allowed.

I told him, the only way is if the center would send a letter expressing a desire in this appointment to the absolute top, to the Ceaușescu, because not in his quality of party boss, or President of the country, but in one of his many qualities was to be Honorary President of the Academy of Sciences. So maybe you are right about this.

So I told Leif if the Bank would send, Leif who spoke to McNamara, McNamara had been informed of my recruitment, he was very glad I was told that, there is the first sociologist, he agreed to write the letter. He wrote the letter.

**HEATH:** So if I can just say, the letter is dated November 6<sup>th</sup>. It's from Robert McNamara, that's November 6, 1974, addressed directly to Nicolae Ceaușescu, as you said, was the Honorary President of the Academy of Social and Political Sciences, and essentially the letter asks permission, shall we say, for you to join the Bank, and looking forward to having you as a member of the staff.

**CERNEA:** Yeah and the letter was that Romania wants to cooperate with the US and with the World Bank, it became a member of the Bank. But the idea -- I believe it was to place at the World Bank people who were checked and went through the controls, and I was not on this list, of course.

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So in short, I was prepared to leave Romania anyway. As it happened, I had with me, I took with me not knowing about the Bank, all my field notes because I knew that I don't need books to come here, I need the field notes of my research to be able to write and so on. I had to decide and I decided to accept the job, and to have to extract the children through pressure and public fight.

**HEATH:** So how old were your children at that point? What ages were they?

**CERNEA:** The children were pretty young, it was '74, and my young boy was 9, and my daughter was 13/14, delicate ages.

**HEATH:** Yes.

**CERNEA:** My luck was that my mother was an extraordinary dynamic person and trustworthy, and reliable, and capable, and so on, took good care, I could rely. It took about almost a-year-and-a-half. Friends whom I met at the Center three years before and who got friends with me, and asked whether I would like to stay; and I told them, I would like but I cannot; and they say, do what you feel you need to do, but count on us when you think it's time, let me know, and we will help. One of them was a lawyer, Alan Dershowitz, you would know.

**HEATH:** Sure. Yes.

**CERNEA:** So it was the right person and he mobilized the legal network, they reached the Senate, the President -- Vice President Hubert Humphrey, who was already a Senator -- and the Senate put me on a list of family reunification, which Romania was in default, and it was a condition negotiated previously, of granting Romania the most favorite growth nation.

So once on that list, after a while, a long while, it was more than a year and a few months, the Embassy called me and said, Professor Cernea, your family was approved, they will come. So I said, I don't believe, I talked to them yesterday and they don't know anything. Believe us, we know. I cannot believe I was, so I said, you know, you don't need to believe, just do us a favor;

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inform the Office of Senator Humphrey that the Embassy told you that the family case was resolved.

That gave me the real indication that indeed it was resolved and this is where was the delicate leverage point for them, they were interested for the Senate to know that. So this is how I had to wait until the arrangement. They came and this is the story of my recruitment here.

**HEATH:** Great. I'd like to ask you, first when you joined the Bank in '74 what was the official title you had?

**CERNEA:** I sent you today a note. Did you see it?

**HEATH:** I haven't seen it. No.

**CERNEA:** Oh. There was no title; it was a first-time position, so I was called Staff Sociologist.

**HEATH:** Staff Sociologist. All right. Okay. So if we look at the period '74 to 1981, which corresponds to the McNamara years, what other titles did you have after that?

**CERNEA:** I was really nicely promoted and encouraged, supported, the ambiance was wonderful. After about three years I was promoted -- I never asked for any promotion, I was offered a job of Chief of Monitoring Unit, because I wrote about it -- I wrote a paper on monitoring, but I wanted to do my sociology, not to be an administrator of this thing, so I said, I'll remain a sociologist.

So shortly thereafter I was promoted to Lead Sociologist, and then what happened is I took an initiative, a proposal, and I proposed a policy. Do you remember the disaster at the Bank, one of the (inaudible), Sobradinho [Dam]? When did you join the Bank?

**HEATH:** 1990, many years later.

**CERNEA:** Much after, yeah. Yes.

**HEATH:** But this is the Involuntary Settlement Guidelines that you worked off of. Yes.

**CERNEA:** That's right, so I got the guidelines, I offered to -- (Crosstalk)

**HEATH:** That was in '79, I believe.

**CERNEA:** -- I said, we have to have some guidelines to not repeat the goddamn thing. So he said, if you think you can do it, why don't you try? So I did but it took about more than a year to process it through the Bank and to get, you know, the climate and the support from the interested department, because that required new things to be done, in all projects, in all dam projects, resettlement plans, social input, and so.

So it was not easy there were many supporters, there were many adversaries. Eventually, yes, this prevailed, in my department, Leif and Montague Yudelman, who was very close, incidentally, to McNamara, supported. So what my guidelines revised (inaudible) went to Warren Baum, who was a Vice President. He also liked them and the test was, he told us, he sent to McNamara.

Well, to everybody's surprise, in 24 or 48 hours, McNamara called Yudelman and said it's great what we've done, I commend you, I want this to come out not as guidelines, technical, an OMS. OMS, as you may know was a --

**HEATH:** Operation Manual Statement.

**CERNEA:** Statement that was the theme for the Bank, you know, business incorporation policies. So it was like a law for a state, as a policy for the Bank. So to get that as an OMS, was institutionalizing, it was a heavier status.

**HEATH:** Right. That's right.

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**CERNEA:** So that really opened up things and I received though the commitment, or whatever, and the next year I was promoted to Social Advisor.

**HEATH:** That would have been in 1981?

**CERNEA:** 1981, yeah.

**HEATH:** I do have that, yeah.

**CERNEA:** So what happened is, I mean, Social Advisor was very important because in the organization of the Bank then, all projects had to go through CPS from the very first stage, the project concept stage.

**HEATH:** CPS is Central Project Staff?

**CERNEA:** It was Central Projects Staff, yeah. So the Bank was still divided, had been through projects and programs.

**HEATH:** Yes.

**CERNEA:** Which had a good feature to it, in my view, which was resisted by many, and eventually it was demolished, because the programs were checking on projects and they created an atmosphere of debate, which was, in the McNamara time, it was the hallmark. I mean there was debate over debate and it was a very great space for having ideas and for being open about it. Even if you don't agree with something and you have the arguments, then you can say that you are safe, no matter -- and the arguments was in facts, I mean, the currency of the Bank was to have the facts and the logic. So that was, once that was created, shortly thereafter I was promoted to Social Advisor which had the responsibility to review projects in their initial stage, when they are the project concept and the appraisal mission goals, and the signal then, at appraisal, what the appraisal should look at if anything is missing.

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**HEATH:** So this was no longer in the Rural Development Division?

**CERNEA:** No, no. It was in the Rural Development Division.

**HEATH:** I see. Okay.

**CERNEA:** Where we had -- not me, it was a roster of advisors, one for rain-fed projects, one for irrigated projects, one for forestry, and one for social issues and projects. So I was given the responsibility to be either Lead Advisor, which is for some projects which were basically counted social, like the rural extension, agricultural, to farmer, (Inaudible), wanted to be Advisor number two on projects like dams, where there is a large resettlement in the social work.

**HEATH:** So who was your boss at that time, when you were promoted to be Social Advisor?

**CERNEA:** Leif Christoffersen.

**HEATH:** Leif Christoffersen.

**CERNEA:** The other Co-Director who was then, Don [Donald Carrick] Pickering. Don Pickering, who also like very much my work, and in fact I went from Leif to Don, because Don was in charge of the advisors, and I became Advisor. I reported to Don, but it was the same department; well, Leif was in the department. So all right; this gave me the opportunity, the responsibility to review dam projects outside, this is how I identified Narmada. Narmada came to me by breaking -- with broken rules, it should have come with a project concept in the terms of reference for appraisal.

**HEATH:** Michael, before we go forward, I'd like to go back a bit and ask you, given that the focus of these series of interviews is on the McNamara years, did you have any personal dealing with McNamara, one-to-one?

**CERNEA:** I didn't -- I met McNamara in public, but I did not have dialogue with him. But McNamara was, for me, a presence, exalting presence, because I knew that I owed him and management my presence at the Bank, because when push came to shove, there are people who said that you shouldn't upset Romania, let him go back and we'll see if we bring them in, if not we'll find --

So it went to all the management, to Warren Baum, I don't know whether Warren Baum consulted with McNamara, but McNamara wrote this letter. So for me, I mean, the philosophy of McNamara was the North Star, I should say.

**HEATH:** Yes. I see.

**CERNEA:** The other even more substantial fact is that Montague Yudelman was a favorite -- not a favorite, you know, he was very close to McNamara. McNamara recruited him, he was the economist who argued that small farmers can produce more, which I argued in Romania. So he was an intimate of McNamara. The tradition he had obligation or privilege to attend Board Meetings every week and he was very democratic; and we had one of the very few departments in the Bank in which we had every single week a meeting in there, in which Montague would report to us what happened on the Board that week and what Bob said, what Bob came out of this, and Bob came out of the other, and Bob did that.

We were working as a department, based very much on this type of impact, because Bob wants that, Bob said the other. So these two ways of one was -- I felt myself kind of (inaudible), how to say, to McNamara. But I did not meet him personally.

**HEATH:** Let me just read into the record a letter that McNamara wrote to you on November 3, 1996, when you were on the verge of retiring at that point, you left him in '97.

**CERNEA:** Yes. Yes.

**HEATH:** Quote: "As the first sociologist hired by the Bank to follow up on its program to

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attack poverty throughout the developing world, you performed nobly. You will be long remembered as a tireless champion of the poor and a driving force in pushing the social agenda of the Bank. Tens of millions of the poorest of the poor are in your debt. With best wishes: Robert S. McNamara." That's quite a eulogy. Yes.

**CERNEA:** Wonderful letter, yeah; a wonderful tribute and he gave me wings, and he gave me courage, and I stayed longer, of course many more years. In fact the way McNamara go to write the letter, because when I retired, I was already pretty well-known at the Bank, it was Wolfensohn already here and Wolfensohn happened to be the one candidate which McNamara proposed to be made President when McNamara completed his work, as you may know, and that was not possible, because Wolfensohn was still an Australian -- an Aussie citizen.

**HEATH:** Yes. Right.

**CERNEA:** So Clausen came. But it was the reception for my -- by that time I was pretty well-known at the Bank, so the reception wasn't -- I'd say it was (inaudible), and the invitation went to many, and we sent one to McNamara too. McNamara happened to be there in Ouagadougou, so it reached him and it was fantastically nice together, now --

**HEATH:** Michael, I'd like to take you back to the '70s and your early experience when you joined the Bank, in dealing with the economists, who were in those days, still -- well, I guess they still are today, you know, the main power brokers, in a sense, in the Bank, intellectually, shall we say. What was it like being a sociologist dealing with economists in 1974 when you joined the Bank?

**CERNEA:** It was not easy, but it was interesting. I mean, we had many economists and some of them were very good, very respectable, a pleasure to talk to them, but there were also others, who were very narrow, so I felt what was happening, they were all good -- well trained, but the training of economists, like other professions, say, in order to be an economist, you have to focus on economics, and to understand well and to eliminate the fog, you have to abstract out any other thing, and I saw the economic variables and their interaction. So they abstracted out the social

and the people, and so on and so forth, and this I called the reductionist, the reductionist economics.

There were some economists that knew economics from my training. I like to -- somehow, well, I understood early enough, still in Romania that economics, you cannot do rural sociology interestingly if you don't look at the rural economy and how it works. I was very interested, for instance, in how the peasant thinks and once this -- and the economic mind of the peasants. So I started that and I wrote articles about the economic psychology of the Romanian peasant, and how he was negotiated, (inaudible) how he plans, he thinks, and what mattered to him, and so on and so forth, which I wrote to Romania.

I knew pretty good economics more than the usual sociologist, I would say. I was able to sustain a conversation with economists. I accepted, I learned a lot from the good economists and I had to have also some clashes with economists who said that this doesn't matter, Michael. We have to do some other things and we have to forfeit --

I said, you cannot do other things if we want to reduce poverty, these are the poor, those poor don't leave just by your calculus. I mean, those poor need certain things, if you give them, they will work better, if you make so that the revenue goes to them, too, this is how you reduce poverty. If the revenue goes to the state, or to the owner of the land, then you'll never reduce any poverty. So I did have clashes with some and others I was supported by. There was an eminent economist, I don't know if you know, by the name of van der Tak?

**HEATH:** Yes, of course, Herman van der Tak.

**CERNEA:** Yeah. The one, for instance, he got interested because he was also -- the topical (crosstalk) --

**HEATH:** The architect of cost-benefit analysis in the Bank?

**CERNEA:** Yes, exactly. The social right of return; so he heard of him, got interested and came

into my office and said, Michael, I've heard a lot of things about you. When you go next to the mission, let me know, I simply want to go with you to see what you do in the field, why do people say that.

**HEATH:** Right.

**CERNEA:** That was pretty scary. (Laughter)

**HEATH:** I just want to take you up on something you mentioned earlier. You said that possibly one of the reasons why Leif Christoffersen liked you better than other sociologists he interviewed, was because you had an action orientation.

**CERNEA:** Yes. Yes.

**HEATH:** You know, focusing on how you could help peasants, in particularly, do better in their lives and it occurred to me that as a sociologist sometimes one is criticized for being too descriptive simply, you know, as you've said earlier, focusing on the burial rituals and the customs. Whereas economists tend to be hungry for, you know, they want to know: what can we do in this situation? You know, what is the action? Where does this lead this, you know? I think perhaps that as some of the --

**CERNEA:** Yes, John, my challenge was to convince the economists that I am happy to work for the economic goal where they pursue, but propose additional ways of approaching it to be more effective, that I don't come there to create obstacles and sideline the project. I said, we cannot achieve that, if we don't do the other.

For instance take the irrigation projects which were, you know, the bread and butter of the Bank, all the irrigation projects of the Bank I read, that I saw them, and I was already advisor, dealt with the government and the money of the Bank went to government, the governments dug the channels with the engineers and the water company. It seems for years the system deteriorated, and the Bank had to do a follow-up rehabilitation project.

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Why was that? It is because the system was under the bureaucratic apparatus of the state who owned the system. I knew from my readings that the best irrigation is in Java, where the farmers are organized in groups which are irrigation associations, on the religious structure and the Hindu temple was -- in Java there are Hindu's (inaudible).

The Hindu temple helped them organized and they managed the system, and they distributed the task, I mean, divided the task; who repairs here and who repairs there? What does it take to help the guys from the front part of the channel? When do we move and help the guy who gets the water last?

**HEATH:** As Clifford Geertz described in his work on Java, right. (Crosstalk)

**CERNEA:** Exactly, exactly. So you know, there are others, so I advocated that.

**HEATH:** Now, let me challenge you, okay; because some sociologists who would never ever dream of working with the World Bank, or any other neo-imperialist organizations would say that, if you are a sociologist, you don't take the political status quo for granted, you question it. As you know the Bank is, in the Articles of Agreement it says that we don't deal in politics, we are above politics. Some sociologists might say, well, okay, you were working on these irrigation projects, but you weren't challenging the government, even though possibly the government was responsible for much of the things that weren't working. So you were in a sense going along with the status quo.

**CERNEA:** Well, as a sociologist, but I'll make a point. I do think that sociologists have that narrower approach to the people's behavior and look macro. I, being a rural sociologist in Romania, had the traditional role -- the role of sociology was very close to what here we know as anthropology, and anthropology focuses on the individuals and on the small groups, and how they work, and what is the role of their thinking and culture, basically.

I always define myself both as a sociologist and anthropologist, in truth, because I had the

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training in that. In Romania I did village monographs. I did the first village monograph with my team after 25 years of interruption of village monographs in Romania and it was for two villages comparing them, one in the east and one the west. So I did that by going to find out how the farmers do and think, and how do they remit to the technologies.

This is not ideal here, too. In the irrigation, to come back to this thing, I argued that every time when we have an irrigation project, we should push for the participation of the farmer in managing the system, by creating water, we use as associations. It's simple, so like so, I wrote memos describing how it's simply just to --

**HEATH:** So if I can say, you were looking for the leeway, for the margins of freedom at the micro level, to why change could really be implemented, even though the broader system was possibly dysfunctional, you weren't really taking on the broader system, were you?

**CERNEA:** Yes. I was looking to the existing patterns of social organization. I believed that this is the concept, and once I understand the pattern, I can see whether the pattern is functional or dysfunctional for a certain purpose.

**HEATH:** Yes. I see.

**CERNEA:** Then I can isolate, you know, what's laser-wise. Where is the dysfunction? What could be done to really adjust that pattern? To modify it, if we need to add the function, to add the response, in order to address that constraint. So it's very simple, but the idea, frankly, was not difficult to advocate, because the people in the Bank my colleagues worked with, they knew and suffered, because their projects were failing three years after they worked on it.

They knew intuitively that, yes, the farmers are smart, but the farmers didn't have power and I said, let's give them power and the idea was bought – (Crosstalk)

**HEATH:** So is it the case that --

**CERNEA:** -- and the breakthrough -- John, was once when a project in Pakistan for which I advocated, when there and negotiated with the government, that all regions of Pakistan where the Bank had projects, ramifications with the projects, should adopt decrees, regional decrees, you know, Pakistan has six. In the institutionalizing role for the farmers, groups in the management, and the responsibility to maintain the canals, and to weave the canals, and one needed to -- so, that became part of the project. That was a fantastic breakthrough and proved to many others, then it started to replicate because the Bank is a very intelligent organism and there are a lot of great people, so even the non-believers embraced it.

It was one of the major success by proving how my sociological construct was working for the purpose with both the economists and the technician (inaudible), in the same project. This is why, frankly, I had a good life at the Bank, I didn't have enemies, they wanted me; they came to borrow me to work for other divisions or the other and I militated for hiring more, not for me. So I felt that the Bank was a wonderful system, where once you have a good case, you can make the truth to succeed.

**HEATH:** Now, based on what you are saying, you are willing to believe that peasants could efficient, I suppose following the arguing --

**CERNEA:** It goes without saying.

**HEATH:** Right.

**CERNEA:** The peasants, I acted for what were the peasants' interest was, the peasant wanted to have a say in getting water, so --

**HEATH:** Right. But I wanted to get a sense --

**CERNEA:** So the bureaucracies are corrupt --

**HEATH:** I understand.

**CERNEA:** -- which gets money to give the water only to the front worker-- anyway.

**HEATH:** Did you find that most of the economists in the Bank that you dealt with, were persuaded of the innate efficiency of peasant farmers, or did you find there were still many economists who believed, you know, that farming had to be done by large units by commercial people rather small farmers? Was there still an issue about that?

**CERNEA:** No. I mean, the Bank's economists could not have reached that level of stupidity to say that we can reach large plots and large farms in countries which is fragmented in plots of 1.5 acres. So that was unrealistic, that they didn't agree, but it was difficult for them to think that this illiterate farmer who is shirtless and barefoot can, you know, be an organizer, can negotiate, and we can task him to manage the worker distribution.

I say, try it. I discovered eventually that in Burma, now Myanmar, the farmers themselves devised a fantastic intelligence.

They had also a kind of farmer rural association, and by tradition, and good understanding it was by design that always the last farmer or the channel should be the head of the farmer association, because he is the most interested in seeing that the worker comes equitably to everybody, so it reaches him, too.

**HEATH:** He should be the tail-ender.

**CERNEA:** Exactly.

**HEATH:** Right. Okay.

**CERNEA:** So I'm in marvelous of peasants' intelligence, so yes, we spoke, I have also very good colleagues in my department, Fred [Frederick L.] Hotes an engineer of irrigation was talented and was very receptive. But I mean, we spoke about peasant engineering, the peasants

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can design an irrigation system, along the soil, and better than an engineer who comes from the Bank for two weeks, so I have really strong arguments to that, and it was, as I said, the Bank calls it the free discussion.

Unfortunately, the Bank is not the same now, the management decides -- managers decided out there if you whistled in the church, your contract is not renewed because there is no tenure any longer in the Bank.

**HEATH:** So you are saying that there was a real intellectual ferment in the 1970s and you don't -- you think disappeared (crosstalk)?

**CERNEA:** Yes, exactly. You are right. It was an atmosphere in which people were motivated. I mean, the concept we used; we go on mission, so it was a bureaucratic concept but it had a moral underpinning, that this, we have a mission to help reduce poverty, which was a noble mission, as McNamara said, and that made people kick, you know, made people act.

**HEATH:** Right.

**CERNEA:** So this was the beauty of that atmosphere and this was characteristic of the McNamara year. The management, it was known that McNamara wants statistics and facts, so those who had the facts were kings. So, work in the fact is to look at the reality.

**HEATH:** You were an empiricist, par excellence, where you are used to collecting facts. (Crosstalk)

**CERNEA:** Yes, exactly. I felt very comfortable to go in the meetings, the discussions and to say, sorry, my dear fellows it's not so. You are making a miss-assumption, look what is the situation; and they would say, let's try. You say you believe so, you come with me, and show me that in the fields. I said, that's a deal, I come with you on your mission. I had already the chance in my department to write my own tickets. You know, as a Social Advisor, you decide where you need to go for the --

**HEATH:** Now, Michael, I'd like to ask you about Kigoma, that first experience -

**CERNEA:** About whom?

**HEATH:** Kigoma.

**CERNEA:** Kigoma, yes.

**HEATH:** That was your first mission, effectively, when you joined the Bank?

**CERNEA:** Yes, exactly. Yes.

**HEATH:** What was your impression of how integrated rural development was playing out in that? Because that was very much a pioneering case of integrated rural development. What impressions did you have?

**CERNEA:** Well, integrated rural development was a concept which was right, but came too early. There were two handicaps. The Bank was not equipped to actually implement it, and the country was even less equipped, so we argued integrated rural development, but without knowledge, without expertise. Here you slap or add a social health component here and literacy, hear the other thing, but we did not have depth in doing that integration, depth of knowledge to say that could actually organically fit and this is not for this project that we can integrate in a different project.

The product was what we called, you know, what the point of Christmas tree to make it as integrated as possible and to put all the things. But they were improperly designed, the integrated parts, not staffed too well, and the country was even less capable because there was no capacity at the district level to work on health and to realize corporation with agriculture, or school it was a bit better, so the road, even the road was difficult.

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This is why I say, it was ahead of time. The idea I feel is correct, because we have to approach development without blinkers. You don't develop only the economic factor, you have to develop, to mark the senses, you know, we have to produce things with people who want and need, they don't eat GDP (Gross Domestic Product) numbers, no matter what you produce, I mean, there are polemics, Amartya [Sen] being criticized for that and I called him in my paper.

For instance, now I am not so sure how much that idea is discussed in the Bank, but now we have much more facts and substance to integrate our things. We have a major component; look at the distributional impact of the project and at the distributional dysfunction, because you don't want, even today, to let the benefit be captured by some end, and only benefit, and go back into the same sector. You want the benefit from a major sector to be used for the largest, so to what extent this is possible to be not much better than them, but now we like the philosophy, the passion.

**HEATH:** Right. The other aspect to Kigoma of course was that it was part of the Ujamaa Program in Tanzania of forced villagization. Now you came from Romania with a tradition of collective agriculture, what perceptions did you have of the Ujamaa Program when you saw it?

**CERNEA:** I mean, yes, farmers have a tradition of cooperation, of mutual help, but not of collective work. I was pretty familiar with what it means to force the farmer into a farm which he doesn't like, and where he loses total control on the product of his labor, because this was a collective farm, you know. I went to Kigoma, it was Ujamaa, and I went to the place, started to discuss and I felt that since I flew, I mean, so I said to my team, sorry, I didn't finish, they wanted to move and say, no, you have to move Michael, come on, come on. I say, no; I have to finish, so I said, you know, I'm ready to stay here. Where? In the village here I stay for the night and when you finished where you go and come back, you pick me up. Are you sure? I said, yes, fine. So they accepted, they respected what I said, so I stayed and frankly I found everything I needed. And I came --

**HEATH:** Where did you stay?

**CERNEA:** -- and what I found -- if you look at my report on Kigoma it should be somewhere in the file. I came and I stayed. To my dear friends in the Bank: in this, Ujamaa, we have two structures, one is visible and this is a visible organization I'd point this out, and the other one is the spontaneous leaders of the village, which are typically the more knowledgeable, the better farmers, to which the other farmers look up.

Those are the opinion leaders. If we want to have early success, do not make the mistake of working with the official thing only. You have to respect them to consider, but let's design the project so as to evolve those people who are the opinion leader. It's black and white in my report on Tanzania for that project. So that was accepted, and do you know what happened, they joined – (Crosstalk)

**HEATH:** So where did you spend the night? I'm curious.

**CERNEA:** Oh. I slept very little. We make a fire, because there is no hub (phonetic) and they brought food, and we start to discuss, I had a translator, and we discussed and I asked: who is the best farmer and how much do you get per blah-blah-blah, et cetera; and how much do you get and they said, you know. So where do they get the seeds? I deconstructed the process, I didn't ask about who are the opinion leaders and I found how things work out at grassroots, and who does what and who is looked at, and who goes to help the other, and how and when.

I realize, I mean, I put two and two together in the information and I was able to understand there is a real network of people who are considered good farmers, and there are others who want also to be good farmers, replicate. So it's not my fantastic personal intelligence.

**HEATH:** No, I know.

**CERNEA:** It is to do your job, to do what a social specialist has to do.

**HEATH:** This fact stating analysis of social networks that you described, were you able to introduce this into the future design of projects in anyway? Or did you meet resistance when you

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tried to?

**CERNEA:** No. No. That was a project of my division. My division was very receptive, really. I mean, the leader of that division, of that mission, was Scott McLeod, younger than me, by more, and after the mission I wrote my report, I mean, it was a very difficult mission because it was my first mission, mind you. I wrote the report and then after two days he comes to my office and says, Mike, I read the report, quite interesting. I can tell you when Leif told me to take you on a mission, I was hesitating, I didn't know, but Leif said, let's see, now I can see that I understand what a sociologist can do. Well, you know, (laughter) if you took my weight on that day, it's 70 -- I got inflated, because in a time of uncertainty. John, honestly, I was not certain at all that I would succeed in this institution --

**HEATH:** Yes; of course.

**CERNEA:** -- because it was no -- I don't know what the Bank is, I don't know how the World Bank works, I was totally green, so I had to learn, honestly, where the restroom is in every building. Then to go to see how you do the economic analysis and what is a disbursement curve; I never had that concept before, and on and on. But I had to learn fast and to adjust, and to find the one thing which I did at the time, I realize that I alone might be helping two projects, three, or five, or six, but that's it. That is not a success for a divisional, for sociology, that we have to have some sociologists everywhere obviously.

So I started to work and to advocate multiplication to get the critical mass, that was not easy because it happens in other places and they had to allocate slots. But in my division, it was a very nice place and very conducive, and open to innovation. I mean, Leif selected those people, like he selected me, he had the authorization as assistant from McNamara who appointed him, to say, McNamara told him, go and select the best people, to come, he wants in the Bank. They will be allowed to come to this division with no obstacles.

**HEATH:** But Michael, can you specifically point to a project design that changed as a result of your observations as a sociologist?

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**CERNEA:** Well, some extension projects in India, although extension was not unqualified success, there were many failures. It varied from state-to-state, I designed the new system and then I went after a year to see, I was disappointed in many places because they got my paper and they did nothing.

But in some places they did and followed up, and the training was improved of the extension agents, and going to the villages I verify that indeed, things were working out and those agents who choose to sit on their butts were starting to go and to have meetings. Then they respected the day of the week when they had to go to the Agricultural Research Center to be instructed, the agent, and then to have something to say. So it was clear that that system worked where it was taken seriously.

**HEATH:** Now, is this before the Danny [Daniel] Benor T&V [Training and Visit] Initiative? Or it was part of it?

**CERNEA:** Yes, exactly. But it didn't work everywhere, and --

**HEATH:** I'm sorry. It was part of the T&V Initiative?

**CERNEA:** It was, yes. It was.

**HEATH:** Correct? Okay.

**CERNEA:** Yes. The document existed, the whole Staff Working Paper, published in 1977, which started the monetary evaluation of the Agricultural Extension System, which is a pretty complex system. Maybe I overdid it by putting too many surveys and too sophisticated, not everybody could do it. I may accept that, you know, in retrospect, but in India, they are also good people, including statisticians and others. Where it was taken seriously, it worked.

Other things, you know, I worked in Azad [Jammu and] Kashmir in Pakistan and in Senegal, in

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Eastern Senegal, it was a ball, I mean, a fantastic thing, again, people's association in which, you know, it was an Anglo pastoral area and there was always conflict between agriculturalists and pastoralists, because pastoralists come with their herd and their temple, and so on and so forth. But they needed to get the herd to the water, so finally we created some pastoral associations. We had a Belgian technician who was able to map the area, to say, these are the waterholes, and these are the distances, and so on, and this is our capacity; and you have to use the waterholes in this order. Namely, first use the waterholes with a little water which evaporates and leave the richer one to the end and go on the sink. Then they arranged between them a pass for the cattle and it worked.

So really, I was the organizing mind, but I did not do -- except to do my job, to give idea to send the potential to organize the society in a way which was better functional -- more functional for its own goals.

**HEATH:** Yes. Now you mentioned T&V, did you have much to do with Danny Benor?

**CERNEA:** Yes; pretty much.

**HEATH:** What was your impression of him as a person?

**CERNEA:** You know, I mean, there were good things, very good things about Danny Benor, and some unpleasant things as a person. He was a very good specialist, he was too military in his approach and too firm, and sometimes arrogant and overrated himself, which made a lot of people reacting and didn't like, but the gist of what he said, was good.

Where the gist was affected was when he became too rigid. I mean the kernel of his system was valid, because it instituted a control over in-built and not with special supervisor, but the program of work itself was the controlling instrument.

So this is your number of villages, you don't have to cover too many because you won't be able to, but this you can cover if you use one a day for two villages only. In those days you go to the

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village, in the days you go to the center and get the instruction for what is to be done in that week given the conditions and the rain. Then the next, let's say, Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and so, and you go to the village in turn and talk with the people about that.

So that was a good system, which did not exist before in India. They were sitting and, you know, producing, more active is the Saturday, and so -- But then Daniel Benor was a bit overbearing and some people didn't like him, you know. I didn't care about that and in fact got on along well with him.

**HEATH:** One of the observations made by a previous interviewee, Kevin Cleaver, you probably know, was that T&V worked during the implementation phase when the funds were flowing, but as soon as the project ended, there just weren't the resources in the government to keep it going, because it was extremely demanding in terms of the funds needed to sustain it.

**CERNEA:** No. But what is doing that? If you starve the resources, why should the people work? I mean, the Indian system didn't pay the extension agents. When we came and we say, I made all the calls and started for reasonable salaries, and so on, and there was money for the project, and the salaries were better there, so people did their job. I mean, when the Bank finished it, the Indian system had to take it over, had to do the same, but the macro system did not perform, so the micro system suffered.

**HEATH:** Right.

**CERNEA:** This is why it didn't function, not because it was unsustainability built into the approach, it was the connection between the responsibility of the state and the performance of the system. Once the response at the state didn't fulfill its responsibility, the system couldn't function. It was a very tight system.

**HEATH:** All right. I mean, this takes us back to what you were saying earlier --

**CERNEA:** But didn't Cleaver say the same?

**HEATH:** Yes.

**CERNEA:** But maybe not, I don't know.

**HEATH:** This distinction between micro --

**CERNEA:** I agree with what you say, John.

**HEATH:** Right.

**CERNEA:** That his observation is factually correct, but it's not to make a factual, correct assessment, the challenge is to understand why.

**HEATH:** Right, right.

**CERNEA:** So I try to offer the explanation. I agree with his assessment, but that the conclusion that the system was bad, if you drew that conclusion, I disagree because it was not the system. I mean if you have a water network and faucets, but you did not give the water, people still die of thirst.

**HEATH:** Yes.

**CERNEA:** Right, so this is the same thing. If Cleaver said that the system was bad, it's not correct. The system didn't function because a certain chain in the link stopped to do its task, he's right.

**HEATH:** But there is this repeated paradox between the micro and the macro. I mean, as a sociologist, your strength as a close observer of village-level reality, is that you bring a dimension to the micro that economist typically doesn't. But the problem, however, is that the micro is inserted in a larger institutional context which, if it is sufficiently dysfunctional because,

for example, of fiscal imbalances, it's going to stop the micro working as well.

**CERNEA:** That's correct. I fully agree, yes, yes.

**HEATH:** But isn't the frustration that you face?

**CERNEA:** Well, very frustrating.

**HEATH:** Right, right.

**CERNEA:** It was very frustrating, but I know where to put the blame and if I spend a lot of time, I know where I have to repair. That is the challenge, to know what you have to fix. If I go, I would not throw the system and say let's import the French extension system, instead of T&V. No. I would say, let's see where the dysfunction was and put the nuts and the bolt where it's -- to move it at the (crosstalk).

**HEATH:** It's a sort of tinkering at the margin, what you are proposing, essentially --

**CERNEA:** Well, sometimes it may take tinkering in the center.

**HEATH:** I see. Okay.

**CERNEA:** You know, tinkering sounds pejorative as the minor thing, but tinkering also can be very creative.

**HEATH:** Yes. Indeed, yeah. Sure.

**CERNEA:** Look all those billionaires around the city, they all started by tinkering in their garage.

**HEATH:** That's right. Yes.

**CERNEA:** Creativity grows all over, you know, you have only to see it, encourage it and create, you know, feed it, give it water and air.

**HEATH:** Michael, I'd like to ask you now about your mentors when you joined the Bank in the 1970s.

**CERNEA:** My mentors?

**HEATH:** Yes. The people who most inspired you in the Bank, who were the people who you looked up to and who gave you help in developing as a career -- your career?

**CERNEA:** I thought you wanted me -- my mentors in theory in sociology.

**HEATH:** Well, we'll come up to that afterwards. (Laughter)

**CERNEA:** Okay. Fine. First of all, we had good people in our division. Honestly it was above the average division because it was preselected. You know, I knew how exacting -- Christoffersen was instructing me, I mean, he told me that the story, how many people he interviewed, and how he couldn't stand them and keep them out of the office. I knew -- and they were indeed good, very good.

Now, the interesting thing that a good number of people, they have the role of the sociologists, and they were not sociologists, kind of started to be interested, and came to me and said, Michael Cernea, I am Francis Lethem, you know, I heard you are a sociologist, that's very interesting, you know, with this institution. How is your day? How is your work? Let's have lunch together.

So we did -- there were many people outside, or Herman van der Tak. Herman came eventually with me and the next time the mission was in Mexico. I understood Herman and he was a very respectable economist, and a respectful economist, and a very smart guy. So what happened at that mission, he was a very attentive what I do. I worked from villages and in one of them he

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followed an anthropologist. So fine, we were able to get information and started to talk, and he turned out to be also Dutch.

Herman talked to him in Dutch and then would go to English, and I asked one of my questions about, so what do you produce, what are the new products, and so on and so. He was very hesitant, saying no, don't quite get. I don't know. Eventually, I said, what are you studying? Oh, he said, I'm studying something very interesting. What it is? Well, they have very interesting funeral rites here and I found things which I didn't meet in any other place, and this is it --

He was good, but he was useless for the type of work. The outcome was that Herman was very happy, he said, Michael, now I understand why Leif and the other guys like you. From then we became friends, I mean, and he was a big guy in the Bank and I was in the beginning --

**HEATH:** If I can understand, they liked you because you were -- or Leif liked you because he felt you were practically oriented. Is it the idea?

**CERNEA:** Ask him. I mean, why should I say?

**HEATH:** No, no, sure, I understand.

**CERNEA:** Ask him. I mean, yes, he said that, you know, I have a sense of reality that I have an activist orientation and he said, we need people who want to do things with their sociology, and not to lecture.

**HEATH:** Yes. Yes. I see. Were there any other people in the Bank who particularly influenced you?

**CERNEA:** Yeah. I created a volunteer sociology group to promote discussion, because it was very few, and I realized that if we do have interaction with many staff who have only an interest, we can be more useful and influential. I advertised, particularly once I became Advisor, Social Advisor, and had more opportunities and so.

So I advertised those meetings and it became a regular sociological group, and a lot of people who had nothing to do with sociology. Francis Lethem and then Karaoko Fraser (phonetic) who was in health, they started to come and a good number of others who became regulars. Then we invited a project which was successful, and the team leader would present the project. Katherine Marshall, for instance, came.

Then we know that the project was a failure and we would invite this guy and say, tell us the truth, what happened there? What do you think of the project? The person would be pretty honest and say, you know, we didn't do that and that, but the others seem to (inaudible), they did not want to, and didn't react. We debated collectively what could have gone wrong there, and so it was a very interesting discussion.

Then we eventually started to invite the bigger guys in the Bank, and we had this speaker, Executive Director, Eveline Herfkens, and others. Warren Baum came, was to speak in this group.

[Visvanathan] Rajagopalan who is the vice president in 1990; he was still vice president of the center. I have the memo, I don't know, I didn't bring any, but I have the minutes of the social sociology group to describe the discussion, and you will see there was not the usual Bank memo, but it was all about Bank work in a different perspective. So, a very important thing after the policy on the resettlement; I think that the resettlement policy was an immense success, perhaps the most important thing.

**HEATH:** Before we get to that, we are going to talk about it, I wanted to ask --

**CERNEA:** Oh. You want to go --

**HEATH:** -- but I wanted to ask you first about Warren Baum. In one of the things you sent me, you said that he was quite receptive to your -- you know, this idea of introducing a social dimension to the project cycle. Can you tell us something about that?

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**CERNEA:** Well, Warren Baum was both operational, he was a thinker. He was the one who conceptualized the project cycle. There was a brochure that became a little guide or a Bible, or so. It helped; that brochure helped me very much to structure my thinking along the Bank's process which I had to grasp. I didn't know how projects are prepared so I understood that all.

The direct connection, after Leif Christoffersen walked me through many missions in which I was once on preparation, once on appraisal, once on supervision, once on whatever, so I covered all the roles. With the project cycle pattern of Warren Baum, I wrote a paper titled Entry Points for Sociologists in the Project Cycle, arguing that, in fact, the sociologist is not a kind of luxury to use at one moment or the other.

He could make a good contribution if he learns to adjust his output or input to the needs of the best project cycle stage; and that was speaking to my colleague sociologists, whom I tried to recruit for the Bank as consultant and others, to be realistic and to be job oriented, and to the issue, to know what to do.

So in this respect, I think, Warren heard about my paper and about the seminars which was giving in the Bank and was pleased, you know. Well, he helped me; he's married because he is a person, he didn't know me at that point, but he helped initially in overcoming the hesitation of the Personnel Department, and particularly of the External Relation of the Bank, who, External Relations were very, you know, delicate to treat Romania with gloves; and if Romania said no, we don't want this guy, or we cannot endorse him. He would say, why should we be upset a country for a guy?

**HEATH:** I see.

**CERNEA:** So Warren Baum intervened when heard that. Montague Yudelman and Leif Christoffersen went to tell him, you know, those guys in Personnel don't know exactly how to do, and William Clarke is putting pressure on them, we don't want to send Michael back, because we just got him, they said. So I was told -- really, this is interesting, Montague and Leif told me

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that in their presence Warren picked up the phone, called [Wilfred P.] Thalwitz, and said – Thalwitz was the Vice President of Vice Presidency -- Martin, I hear that there are difficulties with our guy in Sociology, Michael Cernea. We are working on them and we'll resolve, but I want to ask you one thing. Please, don't make any decision about him without checking with me first because he's in my Vice Presidency. So that was pretty strong. (Laughter)

**HEATH:** So are you saying that Thalwitz maybe would have been willing to terminate your contract?

**CERNEA:** I don't know.

**HEATH:** Oh, no. Okay.

**CERNEA:** I cannot say anything, probably it was nice --

**HEATH:** But there was pressure put upon Personnel by the Romanian Government --

**CERNEA:** Well, I know that.

**HEATH:** -- to get rid of you, or what?

**CERNEA:** I know that the President for External Relations was very cold about my appointment and his argument was known. I mean, he said, why do we want Michael Cernea, or to have good relationship with the first country from the Eastern Bloc? The point was to say, listen the country is -- the response to him: the country is interested to be in the Bank and they will not get out of the Bank because we take a Romanian sociologist, right? They should be thankful for that. So it was a ridiculous argument and he didn't win, of course.

**HEATH:** Let's go on to the work you did in the late-'70s on developing --

**CERNEA:** But John, really we talk so much, that's going to be a lot of text.

**HEATH:** No. It's all right. Most of the interviews are two hours in length and we've still got 25 minutes to go, so that's all right. Don't worry; if it's okay with you.

**CERNEA:** Okay. Oh, then; fine

**HEATH:** Okay. So, tell me about -- You mentioned Sobradinho, that's the Brazilian --

**CERNEA:** Yes, yes, the dam.

**HEATH:** -- was that the dam, that's right. How did that develop into your work on the resettlement guidelines?

**CERNEA:** Well that was the dramatic event which belonged to the category of catastrophes which promote change. It was a big dam which was known from the appraisal that its reservoir is inhabited by about 60- or 65- or 70,000 people, really in that order, and that of course once you build the dam the reservoir should be empty.

I didn't know. It was not my project, not our department project, it was Latin America; nobody thought of giving the project to us, and I didn't have any review function in the Bank in '78, with our (inaudible). But all of a sudden the newspaper started to write about it and what happened is that the project build the dam in time, they were good engineers, but nobody was moved and there was not any provision -- the appraisal report, as I found out later.

The only thing with the appraisal report, says there are so many people who have to move out and this will be the task of the local administration, et cetera. The local administration in Brazil in '78; I mean, you tell me about it, they didn't hear about it, they didn't exist any, I mean, villages or districts which would have the capacity to move and to absorb 60-70,000 people.

It was a totally thoughtless paragraph and totally is irresponsible because the appraisal team

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should have realized that -- I mean, it's a huge human problem, and you have to do something, you cannot leave that. So when the dam was ready everybody wanted the water to flow and the turbine to start, so the farmers were there.

The Bank sent people to -- I mean, the newspaper started to write. What happened is Brazil being Catholic, the church got involved and said, you know, people have to be helped, so the World Bank started to -- well, the World Bank is drowning the people at the Sobradinho Dam.

**HEATH:** Which state was this in Brazil?

**CERNEA:** I don't remember the state.

**HEATH:** It's in the Northeast? Was it the Northeast, or?

**CERNEA:** I don't think so. It was the São Francisco River.

**HEATH:** Yeah. The Northeast --

**CERNEA:** Northeast? Yeah.

**HEATH:** -- the Northeast State, that's right. Yes.

**CERNEA:** So I don't know what portion of the São Francisco River, which is locked.

**HEATH:** Right. It could have been in Bahia or maybe -- Yeah, right.

**CERNEA:** Yeah, maybe, but I know the river, right. That I remember. So the church played a very important role and the news came to our departments with the type of meeting I described you, I mean, Montague Yudelman said, you know, Bob is really upset about those things, I mean, all the newspapers are writing, the Bank is inundating -- flooding the people out, and it's chasing them out, like mice, you know, with water.

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So it is in that context, I knew about some dams in Romania and what happened, and I inquired and I knew about displacement. So I went to Montague later and I said, you know, fine, this we cannot do anything, it's not our problem but it would come up again, and I said, isn't it the time, perhaps, to write some guidelines how to prepare that in advance and to plan? He said, sure. So do you think you can do it? I said, well, I can try.

This is how it started. I tried, and it came out and I really worked a lot, and it took more than a year from that conversation until we had the final text which could go to Warren Baum. We processed it very democratically through virtually all the regions. One time we did a synthesis paper; I went through the files and looked at the experience in other Bank projects.

In the Bank always you have to know the history and the precedence, how did they do when this happened somewhere else. The story was pretty glib and other things, because it was not part of international development assistance, it was always farmed out to the local guys, because this is a local matter, we deal with infrastructure. Now when this was institutionalized all of a sudden, the Bank needed more manpower to help the divisions do it.

So this, once I started to work on policies and I sensed that it is important for my work to be efficient, to move from addressing work through my department piecemeal, part of my project, to be working on guidelines, on policies, because the policy is a multiplier. A policy result is that the entire 10,000 people of the Bank staff have to work for its implementation, have to respect it, and if they don't have people competent, they will have to hire in the country, a consultant, or bring more people in the Bank, this is what happened, more people came.

This is a led -- built policy itself led to increasing the number of social specialists in the Bank, and once the number increased, we could propose more policies.

**HEATH:** So to extend the which basically?

**CERNEA:** Yeah. Oh, yes. We got a piece of real estate or a leverage point.

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**HEATH:** Was there resistance at first to the guidelines within the Bank?

**CERNEA:** Very, very spread off because it was a new task. We had very good hydro engineers, but they were hydro engineers, I don't know how to do it and if you don't know; why do you ask me?

**HEATH:** Right. It's not (crosstalk).

**CERNEA:** I said, fine, take someone and so why should we do that? Let the country do it. I said, look, the country doesn't do it, we cannot absorb the blame because of the country. Look at what happened in Sobradinho, we counted on the country and the local administration, and not only that, but the central government didn't do anything, so we have to make sure, when we start involvement that the country is committed.

**HEATH:** So in Sobradinho the water started rising and there was no attempt to move people off in an organized way, they were just left to their own device?

**CERNEA:** No. No. There was no site identified where to move those people. So fortunately, Brazil is wide and there was land, so eventually they didn't yield to the Bank pressure to stop the water and to open the gates, and to let the water flow. So the Brazilian Government was under pressure from McNamara, and so they sent military trucks and loaded everybody with their cattle, with their sheep, with the furniture and dumped them somewhere in the Pampas.

**HEATH:** Sure.

**CERNEA:** There was no road and everybody promptly forgot about those people because there was nothing so you can follow up, and the Bank was not set to follow up what is happening to the victims of that project.

**HEATH:** I see.

**CERNEA:** Now, when we pooled that and we saw that, we knew how the practices and where was going to be the resistance point, so one of the new provisions was paradigmatic. We say, when we have to displace, we have to make sure that the resettlement of the people is planned as well, and as timely as the rest of the project in advance.

That control point is - and that was put in the policy - no appraisal mission for a project could go out to appraise unless during the preparation for them. During preparation, a resettlement plan for the reservoir people is prepared and becomes part of the appraisal, and of the financing of the project, so there is a budget for that.

This was a very important clause we had to, you know, create the system which will work, you don't have to advocate for each case, separately. So the system worked and when it didn't work, one case might have escaped us, and two or three, but there was a major project in India. One couldn't escape, so I caught on with the reviewer, and I immediately --

**HEATH:** This was in Narmada?

**CERNEA:** Narmada, yes.

**HEATH:** Yes, fine.

**CERNEA:** So they did not send the documentation of the project to the center, where Fred Hotes was the main Advisor, and I was the second Advisor on the list of Don Pickering, which the region knew, they had the obligation, but they deliberately didn't send it. But in order to cover their backs, to say, they sent the documents two weeks into the mission's presence in the field. We looked at the date and said, what is that they sent, we looked at the date. I mean, and the mission is there, so why do they?

So well, we forgot something. I don't know why this -- but it was clear that they did not want to -- and to make the story shorter, because no matter how much, how insignificant you have to

show it, the Narmada occurred because of the resistance. You have resistance; that was the case of utter resistance.

The division deliberately didn't want to get involved in this. They knew that the Indian -- they have an excuse, I agree. The Indian worked 10 years to prepare the plan for Narmada because there were three states involved, Maharaj, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, and all were competing for the site of the dam and the power plant, and all had to support each other and how you move people from the reservoir which stretched in two states and the power plant was in the third state.

The state with the power plant would benefit, of course, of the entire power, and the state which had victims and lost the land for the reservoir wanted its share. So our team was naïve and assumed that the Indians covered that.

**HEATH:** Right.

**CERNEA:** The Indians didn't cover that, maybe the tribunal. The tribunal did have something in their decisions about resettlement, but the guys who were preparing the plan for the Bank were not the tribunal, the judges who said, so they didn't do anything for that. I saw that the appraisal is in the field and there is no resettlement plan, so I started to press. Telexes went out, it was too late, the guy comes back and said, sorry, we don't have time, we won't get the plan.

The Indians told us, they've got your telex, there is a plan, they will get it next time, that somebody will bring it, or somebody came back and he thought, you know, I got the plan, but the Xerox machine broke down and I had to run to the airport. So it was Friday; we wait again. They eventually said, sorry the machine didn't break down, there is no time for Xerox.

**HEATH:** Michael, I need to speak (crosstalk) --

**CERNEA:** So we have to create a mission, but the division didn't want to finance; I financed from our central budget. I mean, you want resistance?

**HEATH:** Yes.

**CERNEA:** This is it.

**HEATH:** I'd like to --

**CERNEA:** We agreed one thing, I was broke, you know, this is one case where I was broke, because I made the noise, the India Division Chief didn't want to allow me to go to help in the field. So I said, fine. Well, take another anthropologist. He said the same thing, we have to have a plan.

**HEATH:** Just remind me, what year was this?

**CERNEA:** It was 1982.

**HEATH:** '82?

**CERNEA:** '82, yeah.

**HEATH:** All right. Okay.

**CERNEA:** Shortly after the (inaudible). But, you know, don't take the '81, if you do for McNamara, the Bank remained the McNamara Bank for many years after McNamara left, that was his merits. He created a different culture in the Bank.

**HEATH:** So even when Clausen took over in '81 and [Anne O.] Krueger came in as a Chief Economist, you don't think the Bank changed fundamentally?

**CERNEA:** No, no. The Bank didn't change that. The Bank, as far as I can perceive, functioned still as a good spirit, it was a good culture, freedom; the initiative was supported.

**HEATH:** Right. Yes.

**CERNEA:** He felt good if you have a good idea. I mean, even if that called more work, it was recognized. The bad thing was in '87, when the division between program and project was abolished, and the function which the Program Division exercised, many don't agree with me, they said it was a good thing, that it was abolished.

I felt and I think it was a context which institutionalize debates, namely, the rule was, when an appraisal mission goes into the field and comes back and proposes the appraisal, the discussion is called Issue Paper Discussion, and by definition it's chaired by the program director, not by the project director.

So that program director, who was interested in the long-term, had the best interest for the project to succeed in the long-term, not to meet the end-of-the-year deadline and to measure how much was lent. He wanted the project to be good, so he listened to the objections and said, guys, please do that, because I have to sign off, so revise the project. If you need to do a post-appraisal do it, because you should have done it the first time.

The creative tension was very production focused on quality, so that led to the time, but our product is not time, our product is a good project.

**HEATH:** So just to understand. How did that change in 1987, that tension between the program?

**CERNEA:** Yeah, because the Program Department was abolished, so that was only a Program Department left.

**HEATH:** The project departments were abolished?

**CERNEA:** No, the Program Department.

**HEATH:** The Program Department.

**CERNEA:** The projects were maintained, they were producing projects. The Program Department were the ones thinking in the long-term. The function of the program was maintained, but its authority, intellectual authority over discussing the input into the program, disappeared.

**HEATH:** Right, right.

**CERNEA:** So they resumed themselves to think broadly in terms of the program for the country; very important too, but lack of control of the immediate program. So that allowed a lot of weaker projects to get into the stream.

**HEATH:** Got you.

**CERNEA:** This existed until, I mean, Conable was better, much better. He brought in environment and he was open to recognition that things go back to many projects.

This is when the Narmada exploded and Narmada to come back exploded. Why? Because after we, so to say, won the round in the first stage and the project didn't go to the loan committee until the resettlement plan was done, we succeeded. I'm on record, I mean, the Narmada Report of the [Frank Bradford] Morse Commission gives me credit for being the one in the Bank which objected to that.

But the agreement was that a first-year resettlement program was prepared by that mission which went after my request, and it helped to become a rolling plan in first year of the project, the next year, so be prepared. But the division which was led by somebody who was really narrow-minded said: the heck with him, screw him, we do our work and the Indians will do the rest. Nothing happened and they deliberately didn't pay attention. At that time, the system did not allow us to intervene from the center, we didn't have jurisdiction over implementation.

**HEATH:** I see.

**CERNEA:** So this is how it reached to – (Crosstalk)

**HEATH:** I'd like to take you back to 1975. There was a sector paper produced, agricultural sector paper, which included within it a strong advocacy of land reform, and also in the early '70s there was some work done in a major farm survey done in the northeast of Brazil and by Pasquale Scandizzo, which also came out advocating land reform. I wonder if land reform was a topic on your agenda at any point in your career in the 1970s.

**CERNEA:** Land reform was a topic on my mind but not on my agenda. I was not asked to get directly involved. I was very interested in land reform, and one of the main books I studied when I came to the Bank to understand, was [Wolf] Ladejinsky's book. I don't know if you saw it ever. Ladejinsky was a very smart guy who was a scholar and wrote a report on land reform in Asia, including the land reform in Japan, after the victory there; right?

**HEATH:** Yes.

**CERNEA:** Those reports went to McNamara and when I got that book, I saw that it's gold in it, and I read it and read it, and I even have today that. But then I simply was not asked to participate, I also read on land reform in Romania; it happened in '45 and read the literature. I was too young in '45 to participate. I wasn't yet a sociologist, I was a high school student, but the literature existed, and I witnessed the effects.

So, the land reform was good in Romania because it took the large estates and gave the land to the peasants, only later came collectivization when the state grabbed the land back. So in Romania the peasants were very poor and had revolts, and not quite revolution, but in 1907 there was thousands of peasants killed because they went up in arms and protested the exploitation.

I mean, they were dying of hunger on working on large boyars estate, who got the money and played the cards in Paris; (Laughter) and, you know, so land reform was a good thing in many

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places, but in India, I know about it because I was interested, but not as a Bank project, and there was a good law which was used against the zamindars, and the zamindars were --

**HEATH:** Tax collectors.

**CERNEA:** Yeah. They were nationalized and the land was acquired and given to the peasants. My impression is that the Bank who was well supported -- on a good idea to support -- because those countries were the colonial force that, you know, look up a way to absorb that population in industry, and to allow large properties to operate so that happened only later.

So now there is a problem when, indeed, India needs to reduce the rural population and to observe much more of the rural population in urban settings, and the job, industrial job, and allow for more concentration of land. The Chinese now are doing that intelligently and there is a huge difference between China and India. One which recently wrote a long paper, if you are interested in publishing about this --

**HEATH:** Let me ask you about another McNamara interest, which was family planning.

**CERNEA:** Yes.

**HEATH:** You know, there was a lot of talk in the early-'70s about the population explosion and the adverse effects on the environment.

-Short Break-

**CERNEA:** I remember that's the merit of this trip, I remember something important about the start of the discussions with McNamara.

**HEATH:** Yes, please, tell me.

**CERNEA:** One thing which started then and ended a bit after he left was, so I told you, I

adjusted my advocacy to the pattern of Bank work, and reported the project site. So what I was really shocked from the beginning when I was back in my first appraisal mission. I didn't know what's an appraisal was, so I asked, what is an appraisal? Well, really there is an appraisal – OMS (Operational Manual Statement) sorry; I didn't find anything which I could do.

It was all economics and nothing on the social work. So since then, I felt that this was not good. When I became more recognized and I started to say, what we do, we have to have a social analysis, we have only an economic analysis, commercial analysis, this is not enough. I wrote the memo inside, it went out, it didn't get enough traction, but it started. Once I had the role of Advisor, over the reviews, I was asking in the appraisal, please, when they prepare me the project concept, make sure you have a social specialist on the team, and so.

It started to happen, they hired the social specialist. But then I wanted to change the OMS and Herman van der Tak helped, because I made the same case, so eventually he created a group to review the OMS on project appraisal, and it took three years of discussion and advocacy, and so on. The social group I mobilized and finally the OMS social appraisal was fully written and I was given the task to write the social analysis at project appraisal.

I can tell you, after the resettlement policy, incorporating the requirement for a social assessment in the pattern of appraisal, as an operational policy, was one of my most influential, most consequential, like the others say, contribution to the Bank work, because all of a sudden, you know, people knew that with the appraisal you have to, not only social, not only economic and technical and so on, and at that time also from van der Tak's office, and after research, introduce and I contributed, institutional appraisal, so we had two legs in the new OMS 2.20, the number was maintained the same, 2.20 Project Appraisal, but it had social -- no other multilateral agency have that requirement.

**HEATH:** Do you remember what year this was, Michael?

**CERNEA:** This started in; the year, it started in 1980 with memos, in which I -- '79, '80, I started to prepare the book, *Putting People First*, all right, which was very influential, too, and

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was my “cri de guerre” --

**HEATH:** Published and edified as first --

**CERNEA:** -- as they say in French --

**HEATH:** Yes.

**CERNEA:** -- which was a manifesto and which, if you read this first chapter, this is from the first paragraph, going to, you know, the declaration of friendly battle. I said, so far the economic sciences have been presiding over development work, so the social science was neglected. You have the actors of development who are people and we have to know the people, and we want to put them first, so we have to study them and to include them. So that was the whole book.

**HEATH:** I just wanted to ask you about that, because I read in one of the pieces you sent me, that there was initially some delay in the publication of that book, because of resistance within the Bank.

**CERNEA:** How do you know that?

**HEATH:** It was mentioned in one of your pieces.

**CERNEA:** Well, I prepared the book in those days. I started in McNamara's era, but it took time because as an editor I'm pretty scrupulous, I wanted every paper to be presented first to Bank staff, I wrote it with outside scholars. They made the paper based on my contract with them, commissioned, addressed Bank issues, and blah-blah; this is for livestock, this is for forestry, this is for irrigation, every paper is discussed in advance.

They wrote the paper, presented the paper, discussed to the Bank staff of result, and their feedback, good, bad, critical, they had to revise and then to transform into. So my input at first; is how to put people first sector by sector, in irrigation, and so on and so forth; if you look at this

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(inaudible). So, that was the parallel.

So finally, in '83, shortly after McNamara left, it was approved, and it came out from the very beginning, January or February of '84. It took several years of lobbying and of mobilization and of discussion, because it was a very major structural change.

**HEATH:** Who was resisting? That's what I'm trying to get at.

**CERNEA:** Well, a lot of people, a lot of them saying, we cannot do it, you know, social, that is covered by social impact. But I said, but nobody is doing social impact. Nobody was doing environmental impact at that time. Remember we were beginning in '80s, it still was, you know, a cowboy country in terms of today's demand. So we were advanced, you know, ahead of the curve, let's say, and indeed when we put that, the entire Bank felt that.

The other MDBs [Multilateral Development Banks] started to replicate. They resisted too. I mean, their resettling policy was such an obvious need, came out in February, '80 in the Bank, during McNamara, right. But no other MDB replicated the policy when they were really like -- I would not like to say. They were (inaudible) on the scene, but they were copying everything which the Bank was doing, that was how.

In that respect, they sat on it and I went to ADB (Asian Development Bank) to advocate it. I got the most cold audience in a meeting where I talked to the hydropower engineer, and I was already a Social Advisor with the Bank -- I mean, that was an important grade.

**HEATH:** So people were still feeling that --

**CERNEA:** They listened to --

**HEATH:** -- this is our business, we are engineers, we don't need that?

**CERNEA:** Exactly. Exactly, exactly so.

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**HEATH:** It's going to complicate the projects, it's going to be more difficult to negotiate with the government, et cetera.

**CERNEA:** When I speak, you know, attractive ways, to convince people. No smile on the faces. I finished finally. I felt the trouble and said, well, who has questions, raise your hands. Nobody raised a hand. So given the thought that, you know, I guess that you don't like everything we have. Say it, I don't mind. Please, object.

**HEATH:** Sure.

**CERNEA:** Nobody said anything.

**HEATH:** There was no response?

**CERNEA:** Nobody, nobody. So this is all the meeting there and I didn't get any. So ADB didn't allocate, didn't do a resettlement policy. It's not a normalized project, ADB realized it's a mistake on the proposal, precisely because we did have a policy, but our guys didn't do it.

They understood and the President of the ADB in '92 sends a memo all over ADB saying, from today on, the World Resettlement Policy, World Bank, is our policy. We are starting to prepare another in our format, but until then all staff do the appraisal. This is the replication, this is how things went, and you know, it was still McNamara, important.

I mean, McNamara pushed the resettlement, then the social appraisal had also very much impact inside the Bank, an interesting example was when Wolfensohn came to the Bank, it so happened, one of his first Board Meetings was on Azerbaijan, or one of the stems there, immediately he came in '96 --

**HEATH:** '95.

**CERNEA:** -- in fact '95; so the system collapsed and the countries started to become members. Nobody in the Bank knew anything about those countries, nobody. So we have to do the project, we read the social assessment and a number of social assessments were there. Here comes Wolfensohn; first said, everybody responds to what he's saying, at the first meeting, first project.

He said, you know, quite interesting, I like the project, but you know the most interesting thing which I found for this report, is the annex, the annex here, which is called social assessment. That told me something about that country, not the appraisal report, I'm sorry to say, this is what I want to see in all our reports from now on.

**HEATH:** Well, Michael, I think that's a good point to end because you have made it very clear how your legacy lived in after the McNamara years, and how, in a sense --

**CERNEA:** You know, but I'm so sorry that --

**HEATH:** -- came to fruition much later.

**CERNEA:** Huh?

**HEATH:** Just finally. Are there any aspects of your work with the Bank in the early-'70s, the mid-'70s that you didn't like, that there were things that, you know, you've described what an exciting place it was to work, the intellectual ferment, the created tension between projects and programs? Was there any aspect of the work at the Bank that was less appealing to you?

**CERNEA:** Frankly, this is a secondary thing, but I felt always uncomfortable with the luxury of the missions I was going on, in the context of misery and poverty. It was really uncomfortable. We went to the best hotel, it's lavish, lobster thermidors, and so everybody order. It was very nice, but I think the Bank spent too much then on expenses like that.

It should have been, but I cannot say that it affected the morale. Some people were very open and then a bit later, you know, they started a fight between the Staff Association and the

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Management when people were open and said, listen, they are cutting our perks. I came here because there are more perks than another. Well, I looked at them, but I did not sympathize, you know. But not many, not many; I think the culture --

**HEATH:** Because McNamara travelled economy, didn't he, when he went abroad.

**CERNEA:** Yeah. Well, not -- it was the culture then, you know. You come from Washington, it's a big, big bank, and we had a phenomenal reputation, everybody trembled when they came. I was told we have to be seen as being in the best places, and the best hotels, and so on.

**HEATH:** But that didn't stop you spending a night in Kigoma by a fire and not in a fancy hotel?

**CERNEA:** Well, yeah, I did but I learned so much, I mean, it was a very nice night with the fire, in the open, and the people.

**HEATH:** Yeah. Right, yeah. Michael Cernea, it's been a pleasure talking to you. You've left us some very good impressions.

**CERNEA:** Thank you for spending time and all that. Thank you.

**HEATH:** All the best.

**CERNEA:** Okay. Thank you.

\* \* \* \* \*