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James McGann, Director of the Think Tanks and Foreign Policy Program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, defines think tanks as “public policy research, analysis, and engagement institutions.” Until recently, McGann did not consider the World Bank a think tank because of its relationship with rich governments. In 2009, McGann ranked the World Bank Institute, a division within the Bank, among the top think tanks worldwide. McGann does not consider other research branches of the World Bank think tanks. However, the Development Economics Vice Presidency, known as DEC, is the central research arm of

the Bank and exemplifies all think tank characteristics. My research examines the degree to which the World Bank acts as a think tank on global issues.

The research methodology is historical and archival, drawing on documentation on the World Bank's website as well as published sources. It synthesizes reviews and critiques from inside and outside the Bank about the purpose, methods, and impact of World Bank research, including the World Development Reports and thousands of other World Bank publications. Finally, interviews of former and current World Bank employees provide additional evidence. Overall, after analyzing the different departments within the Bank and their research, it is evident that the World Bank goes beyond McGann's definition.

Last year the Bank spent \$750 million on “knowledge,” or research, and in 2009 it was top-ranked among research institutions on development. The World Bank’s budget for research has declined significantly since a 2006 evaluation report, which ironically recommended just the opposite. Nations and donors should recognize the need for the World Bank to sustain the research budget in order to support the work and knowledge produced by DEC and the other research-intensive departments. This will continue the Bank’s role as a super think tank on global development and public policy advocacy.