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ANTHROPOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT AND
THE POST-MODERN CHALLENGE

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ANTHROPOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT AND THE POST-MODERN CHALLENGE

KATY GARDNER AND DAVID LEWIS

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PREFACE

We have chosen to write this book for two main reasons. The first is that, to our knowledge at least, there is no single book in existence which attempts to bring together the various histories, opinions and debates which have emerged during the relationships between development people and anthropologists in the contemporary period. Lucy Mair's path-breaking *Anthropology and Development*, published in 1984, has certainly made our task much easier, but Mair's book was written well before both subjects embarked upon their respective periods of intensive self-reflection, as the debates around post-modernism raged during the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is therefore our modest hope that this book fulfils a need among students, teachers, researchers and practitioners.

Our second reason is a more personal one. Both of us have for some time wished for an opportunity to try to make sense of disparate experiences working (over the past decade or so) at different times as anthropologists, researchers and development practitioners – in the field, at universities and research institutes, behind desks in development agencies and within interdisciplinary consultancy teams.

It might be useful to provide the reader with some short biographical notes before they embark on reading the text, in order that he or she knows something of the personal career trajectories of both authors. Katy Gardner and David Lewis both studied social anthropology as a first degree in the early 1980s. Katy Gardner's PhD research involved fieldwork in a Bangladeshi migrant village. After completing her dissertation, she spent a year working for the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) as an assistant social advisor. During this period she was involved in short visits to various projects in South Asia as well as administrative work in London. Since leaving the ODA Katy has worked as a full-time lecturer in anthropology and development at the Universities of Kent and Sussex. She has also been involved in a range of consul-

tancy work for both private and governmental agencies. She is the author of *Songs at the River's Edge: Stories from a Bangladeshi Village* (Virago, 1991) and *Global Migrants, Local Lives: Travel and Transformation in Rural Bangladesh* (Oxford University Press, 1995).

David Lewis moved from anthropology into a more interdisciplinary study of development. After a postgraduate course in development studies, he completed a PhD in rural sociology, in which he studied the effects of rural technological change in a Bangladeshi village. A five-year period of freelance research and consultancy work followed, during which he worked as a Research Associate at the Overseas Development Institute in London and as a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Bath. He undertook research and consultancy work for a number of government and non-governmental agencies in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Albania before becoming a full-time lecturer at the Centre for Voluntary Organisation, Department of Social Policy and Administration at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is the author of *Technologies and Transactions: A Study of the Interaction between Agrarian Structure and New Technology in Bangladesh* (Centre for Social Studies, Dhaka, 1991); co-editor of *Non-Governmental Organisations and the State in Asia: Rethinking Roles in Sustainable Agricultural Development*; and a co-author of *Reluctant Partners?: NGOs, the State and Sustainable Agricultural Development* (both Routledge, 1993), and of *Trading the Silver Seed: Local Knowledge and Market Moralities in Aquacultural Development* (Intermediate Technology Publications, 1996).

Of course, everyone's experience of this varied field will be different, and no doubt there are many perspectives which others might equally seek to reflect in a book such as this. We make no claims to comprehensiveness, though we have tried to provide at least an indication of the wide terrain which might be covered. We have for example largely left out (due to the limitations of our own training and expertise) a detailed discussion of areas such as medical anthropology, ethnicity, macro-economic development issues, population studies, the environmental movement and refugee resettlement. Nor have we reflected, at least in any direct sense, the opinions of those 'acted upon' in the name of development.

It might be useful to finish with a few words about our overall intentions. We believe that many of the current assumptions about and approaches to development are flawed or basically wrongheaded, but we do not see much value in simply being critical without trying to offer any creative alternatives. Instead, we favour the creation of options which are rooted in reality rather than simply

in rhetoric, in breaking down the barriers which exist between the 'developers' and the 'developed' and in the need for a full and critical discussion about 'development' which reflects a true multiplicity of voices.

We believe that there is a pressing moral and political responsibility to work towards improving the quality of life for the bulk of the world's population, and that in general a poor job has so far been made of this task. We are not arguing here that anthropology can somehow 'save' the development industry, or necessarily make the process of planned change a more benign one. However, we do believe that anthropologists and development practitioners may have something to learn from each other, in order that better futures may be imagined and, perhaps, brought into being.

Katy Gardner
David Lewis   May 1995

Note: In writing about some of these experiences as ethnography (and this has been attempted in Chapter 6 in particular) we have, for obvious reasons, disguised the particulars of these accounts in terms of places and organisations, in keeping with the anthropological tradition of preserving the anonymity of their informants.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GLOSSARY

Development jargon

accountability making development interventions more responsive to the people they seek to assist; also used by donors to mean making sure that money is used for the purpose for which it was intended

applied anthropology the application of anthropological research to solving practical problems in development, public health, administration, industry, etc.

appropriate technology the idea of viewing technology in the context of people's needs, drawn originally from the work of E.F. Schumacher in the 1970s, in reaction to Western 'hi-tech' solutions to problems of poverty

basic needs a development strategy devised in the 1970s by governments and UN agencies in reaction to disillusionment with 'trickle down'

beneficiaries those people whom a development project is intended to assist

bottom-up interventions which come from the grassroots as opposed to government planners or development agencies

community development the attempt to strengthen the institutions of local communities in order that they will sustain the gains brought about by a development project

conditionality the imposition of terms by an aid giver upon a government or an organisation receiving the assistance (e.g. a bilateral donor gives a loan to an NGO provided it is used to support particular activities)

donor usually refers to government agencies such as the UK Overseas Development Administration (ODA) or United States Agency for International Development (USAID), or to multi-lateral agencies such as the World Bank, but also includes NGOs

such as Oxfam who fund partner organisations in the countries where they work

empowerment the transformative potential of people to achieve positive changes in their lives by asserting their rights as women, citizens, etc., usually by group action, and thereby gaining greater power to solve problems

evaluation the task of assessing whether or not a development project has been successful in meeting its objectives

non-governmental organisation there are many types: international, national and local; large and small; specialised (e.g. health, agriculture) or general (combining many sectors of activity); membership or non-membership. NGOs are non-profit development organisations, many of which depend on donations from members, the public or development agencies. In the US, NGOs are often known as private voluntary organisations (PVOs)

the North along with 'the South', the term originated recently as less pejorative alternatives to 'First World' and 'Third World'. But both terms continue to cause problems by insisting that poverty can be geographically specified

participation used to describe greater involvement by 'beneficiaries' in deciding the type of development projects they need, and how they are run. The degree of this involvement can, however, vary greatly

project an intervention aimed at promoting social change usually by, or with the support of, an outside agency for a finite period (anything from a few years to several decades)

social development a new term used in the UK to describe the 'softer' elements of the development process as distinct from economic and technical issues – education, health-care, human rights, etc.

social movements groups around the world taking issue-based action in a variety of areas (human rights, environment, access to land, gender rights, peace, etc.) usually local, without outside assistance at least in the first instance

the South see entry for 'the North'

structural adjustment policies which became common during the 1980s, introduced by the World Bank, as conditionality on loans, aimed at improving efficiency by reducing public spending, cutting state subsidies and rationalising bureaucracy

sustainability the desire by planners and agencies to avoid creating projects which depend on their continued support for success; also used in its environmental sense to ensure renewal of natural resources

targeting the attempt to ensure that the benefits of a project reach a particular section of the population – women, farmers with no land, squatters, etc.

Third World originally designated the poorest areas of the world after the Second World War (as distinct from the capitalist First World and the communist Second World)

top-down interventions imposed on local people by those in authority – the opposite of bottom-up

trickle down the assumption, which comes from neo-classical economics, that if economic growth is achieved then benefits will eventually 'trickle down' from the 'wealth producers' to the poorer sections of the population

Anthropological jargon

acculturation originally used to refer to changes in cultures as they came into contact wth each other, the term later became synonymous among US anthropologists with the idea that non-Western or 'indigenous' cultures went into decline after contact with industrialised ones

applied anthropology the application of anthropological knowledge and research methodologies to practical issues, born out of anthropologists' involvement in colonial administration and development policy in the 1930s and 1940s

cultural relativism derived from the work of Franz Boas (1858–1942), this concept encouraged anthropologists to understand each culture on its own terms, instead of making evolutionary or ethnocentric generalisations

diffusionism a term associated with E.B. Tylor (1832–1917), used to explain the transmission of cultural traits across space, through culture contact or migration

discourse based on the ideas of Michel Foucault, discourse theory refers to the idea that the terms in which we speak, write and think about the world are a reflection of wider relations of power and, since they are also linked to practice, are themselves important in maintaining that power structure

ethnocentricity the idea that a tendency exists to interpret other cultures according to the values of one's own, a term first used by William Sumner (1840–1910)

ethnography a term which means both the study of a community or ethnic group at close quarters and the text (usually known as a monograph) which results

evolutionism in contrast to diffusionists (see above), evolutionists believe that universal human psychological characteristics eventually produce similar cultural traits all over the world, although these evolve at different rates in different places

functionalism a theory which tries to explain social and cultural institutions and relations in terms of the functions they perform within the system; heavily criticised because it fails to take account of historical factors such as change, conflict and disintegration

indigenous used instead of the more pejorative 'native' to refer to the original inhabitants of an area which has been occupied by migrants; but still brings problems in many situations by implying that there are somehow 'legitimate' inhabitants of land with greater rights than newcomers

participant observation the foundation of anthropological field research since the pioneering work of Malinowski (1884–1942), in which the anthropologist seeks to immerse herself as fully and as unobtrusively as possible in the life of a community under study

post-modernism the wider cultural and epistimological rejection of modernity in favour of a broader pluri-cultural range of styles, techniques and voices, including the rejection of unitary theories of progress and scientific rationality. In anthropology in particular, post-modernism has led to the questioning of the authority of the ethnographic text and in part to a crisis of representation

structural-functionalism a theoretical perspective associated with the British anthropologist Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955), which stressed the importance of social relations and institutions in forming the framework of society, while at the same time functioning to preserve society as a stable whole

structuralism following from the work in linguistics of Saussure and Jakobson, the anthropologist Levi Strauss (1908–) argued that that culture is a superficial manifestation of deeper structural principles, based on the universal human imperative to classify experience and phenomena

ACRONYMS

BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
ECLA	Economic Commission of Latin America
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisations
FSR	farming systems research
GAD	gender and development
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITDG	Intermediate Technology and Development Group
NGO	non-governmental organisation
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PRA	participatory rural appraisal
SDA	social development advisor
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WID	women in development

1 ANTHROPOLOGY, DEVELOPMENT AND THE CRISIS OF MODERNITY

Development in ruins

Like a towering lighthouse guiding sailors towards the coast, 'development' stood as THE idea which oriented emerging nations in their journey through post-war history … Today, the lighthouse shows cracks and is starting to crumble. The idea of development stands like a ruin on the intellectual landscape. Delusion and disappointment, failures and crimes have been the steady companions of development and they tell a common story: it did not work. (Sachs, 1992: 1)

Within some intellectual circles, the concept of development has been declared dead. It has become a non-word, to be used only with the inverted commas of the deconstructed 1990s. 'Development', the argument goes, represents the world as in a state of linear progression and change in which the North is 'advanced', and the South locked into static traditionalism which only modern technology and capitalist relations of production can transform. We now know that these understandings of the globe's shared history and shared future are deeply flawed. By the mid-1990s it has become clear that the supposed benefits of modernisation are largely an illusion: over much of the globe the progressive benefits of economic growth, technological change and scientific-rationality have failed to materialise. Combined with this, it has been suggested that the concept is embedded in neo-colonial constructions of the world and is a key ideological tool in global power relations (Escobar, 1988; 1995). Sachs, for example, talks of development's 'ethnocentric and even violent nature' (1992: 5). In this view, it is a construct rather than an objective state, a dream perhaps, but one which many people assert has justified a starkly political project of continued Northern dominance over the South.

1

And yet, so persuasive is development as a concept that many people discussing global poverty continue to use the term as a working tool, even if deriding it philosophically. This is not simply because notions of development are deeply interwoven with our understandings of the world – although in many post-industrial societies this is certainly true. As well as being a series of interlinked concepts and ideals, it is also a set of practices and relationships. Development agencies are actual institutions, which affect the world around them and spend billions of dollars a year. Likewise, development plans, workers and policies are all objective entities. We cannot simply will them into non-existence by insisting that they are constructs, however questionable the premisses on which they rest may be. In what follows, we therefore assume that development is an enormously powerful set of ideas which has guided thought and action across the world over the second part of the twentieth century; it involves deliberately planned change, and continues to affect the lives of many millions of people across the world. In speaking of development we take its highly problematic nature as a given, using the term to describe a set of activities, relationships and exchanges as well as ideas.

This book is concerned with anthropology's relationship with these interconnected and problematic domains. In the chapters that follow we shall argue that both development and anthropology have been recently facing what are often referred to as 'post-modern' crises. Rather than throwing up our hands in horror, however, we suggest that both have much to offer each other in overcoming the problems which they face and in moving forward. Anthropological insights can provide a dynamic critique of development and help push thought and practice away from oversystemic models and dualities (traditional as opposed to modern; formal as opposed to informal; developed versus undeveloped) and in more creative directions. Likewise, critical engagement with processes of planned and non-planned change offers considerable potential for anthropologists interested in understanding the workings of discourse, knowledge and power, and in social transformation. It is a domain for 'studying up' instead of the discipline's traditional focus on the less powerful. Lastly, it suggests one way forward for a more politically engaged anthropology. In sum, as anthropologists, activists and radical development workers approach the era of 'post-development' there are many ways in which they can work together to transform the existing status quo. The different roles may even be performed by the same individual.

In the rest of this chapter we shall briefly trace the trajectories of the contemporary intellectual quagmires facing both development and anthropology. We shall outline and critique conventional theories of development, discuss recent challenges facing anthropology and begin to set the questions which throughout the rest of the book we shall be attempting to answer.

Development: history and meanings

Arturo Escobar argues that as a set of ideas and practices 'development' has historically functioned over the twentieth century as a mechanism for the colonial and neo-colonial domination of the South by the North[1]. Its emergence was contingent upon particular historical conjunctions. Some of the most important of these are shifting global relations after the Second World War, the decline of colonialism, the Cold War, the need for capitalism to find new markets, and the Northern nations' faith in science and technology (Escobar, 1995: 26–39). Those using the term and working within development institutions are therefore helping to reproduce neo-colonial power relations even while many believe themselves to be engaged in processes of empowerment or the redistribution of the world's riches. To appreciate this more fully, let us examine the roots of the term.

In virtually all its usages, development implies positive change or progress. It also evokes natural metaphors of organic growth and evolution. The *Oxford Dictionary of Current English* defines it as 'stage of growth or advancement' (1988: 200). As a verb it refers to activities required to bring these changes about, while as an adjective it is inherently judgemental, for it involves a standard against which things are compared. While 'they' in the South are undeveloped, or in the process of being developed, we in the North (it is implied) have already reached that coveted state. When the term was first officially used by President Truman in 1949, vast areas of the world were therefore suddenly labelled 'underdeveloped' (Esteva, 1993: 7). A new problem was created, and with it the solutions; all of which depended upon the rational-scientific knowledge of the so-called developed powers (Hobart, 1993: 2).

Capitalism and colonialism: 1700–1949

The notion of development goes back further than 1949, however. Larrain has argued that while there has always been economic and social change throughout history, consciousness of 'progress', and

the belief that this should be promoted, arose only within specific historical circumstances in northern Europe. Such ideas were first generated during what he terms the 'age of competitive capitalism' (1700–1860): an era of radical social and political struggles in which feudalism was increasingly undermined (Larrain, 1989: 1).

Concurrent with the profound economic and political changes which characterised these years was the emergence of what is often referred to as the 'Enlightenment'. This social and cultural movement, which was arguably to dominate Western thought[2] until the late twentieth century, stressed tolerance, reason and common sense. These sentiments were accompanied by the rise of technology and science, which were heralded as ushering in a new age of rationality and enlightenment for humankind, as opposed to what were now increasingly viewed as the superstitious and ignorant 'Dark Ages'. Rational knowledge, based on empirical information, was deemed to be the way forward (Jordanova, 1980: 45). During this era polarities between 'primitive' and 'civilised', 'backward' and 'advanced', 'superstitious' and 'scientific', 'nature' and 'culture' became commonplace (Bloch and Bloch, 1980: 27). Such dichotomies have their contemporary equivalents in notions of undeveloped and developed.

Larrain links particular types of development theory with different phases in capitalism. While the period 1700–1860 was characterised by the classical political economy of Smith and Ricardo and the historical materialism of Marx and Engels, the age of imperialism (1860–1945) spawned neo-classical political economy and classical theories of imperialism. Meanwhile, the subsequent expansionary age of late capitalism (1945–66) was marked by theories of modernisation, and the crises of 1966–80 by neo-Marxist theories of unequal exchange and dependency (Larrain, 1989: 4). We shall elaborate on these later theories further on in this chapter.

While capitalist expansion and crisis are clearly crucial to the history of development theory, the latter is also related to rapid leaps in scientific knowledge and social theory over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A key moment in this was the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. This was to have a huge influence on the social and political sciences in the West. Inspired by Darwin's arguments about the evolution of biological species, many political economists now theorised social change in similar terms. In *The Division of Labour* (originally published in 1893), for instance, Durkheim – who is now widely considered one of the founding fathers of sociology – compared 'primitive' and 'modern' society, basing his models on organic analogies. The former, he suggested, is

characterised by 'mechanical solidarity', in which there is a low division of labour, a segmentary structure and strong collective consciousness. In contrast, modern societies exhibit 'organic solidarity'. This involves a greater interdependence between component parts and a highly specialised division of labour: production involves many different tasks, performed by different people; social structure is differentiated, and there is a high level of individual consciousness.

Although their work was quite different from Durkheim's, Marx and Engels also acknowledged a debt to Darwin (Giddens, 1971: 66). Marx argued that societies were transformed through changes in the mode of production. This was assumed to evolve in a series of stages, or modes of production, which Marx believed all societies would eventually pass through. Nineteenth-century Britain, for example, had already experienced the transformation from a feudal to a capitalist mode of production. When capitalism was sufficiently developed, Marx argued, the system would break down and the next stage – of socialism – would be reached. We shall discuss below the influence of Marxism on theories of development.

Closely associated with the history of capitalism is of course that of colonialism. Particularly over later colonial periods (say, 1850–1950), notions of progress and enlightenment were key to colonial discourses, where the 'natives' were constructed as backward or childlike, and the colonisers as rational agents of progress (Said, 1978: 40). Thus while economic gain was the main motivation for imperial conquest, colonial rule in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also involved attempts to change local society with the introduction of European-style education, Christianity and new political and bureaucratic systems. Notions of moral duty were central to this, often expressed in terms of the relationship between a trustee and a minor (Mair, 1984: 2). While rarely phrased in such racist terms, development discourse in the 1990s often involves similar themes: 'good government', institution building and gender training are just three currently fashionable concerns which promote 'desirable' social and political change. From these dubious beginnings, it is hardly surprising that many people today regard such concepts with suspicion.

By the early twentieth century the relationship between colonial practice, planned change and welfarism became more direct. In 1939 the British government changed its Law of Development of the Colonies to the Law of Development and Welfare of the Colonies, insisting that the colonial power should maintain a minimum level of health, education and nutrition for its subjects. Colonial authorities were now to be responsible for the economic development of a

conquered territory, as well as the well-being of its inhabitants (Esteva, 1993: 10).

The post-colonial era: 1949 onwards

Notions of development are clearly linked to the history of capitalism, colonialism and the emergence of particular European epistimologies from the eighteenth century onwards. In the latter part of the twentieth century, however, the term has taken on a range of specific, although often contested, meanings. Escobar argues that it has become a discourse: a particular mode of thinking, and a source of practice designed to instil in 'underdeveloped' countries the desire to strive towards industrial and economic growth (1988; 1995). It has also become professionalised, with a range of concepts, categories and techniques through which the generation and diffusion of particular forms of knowledge are organised, managed and controlled (ibid.). We shall be returning to Escobar's views of development as a form of discourse, and thus of power, later on in this book. For now, let us examine what these more contemporary post-Second World War meanings of development involved.

When President Truman referred in 1949 to his 'bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas' (cited in Esteva, 1993: 6) he was keen to distance his project from old-style imperialism. Instead, this new project was located in terms of economic growth and modernity. During a mission of the newly formed International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) to Colombia, for example, integrated strategies to improve and reform the economy were called for, rather than social or political changes.

Defining development as economic growth is still common today. Indeed, after the debt crises of the 1980s and subsequent structural adjustment programmes,[3] economic reform and growth are very much at the top of the 1990s agenda for organisations such as the World Bank. Behind these aims is the assumption that growth involves technological sophistication, urbanisation, high levels of consumption and a range of social and cultural changes. For many governments and experts the route to this state was, and is, industrialisation. As we shall shortly see, this is closely linked to theories of modernisation. Successful development is measured by economic indices such as the Gross National Product (GNP) or per capita income. It is usually assumed that this will automatically lead to

positive changes in other indices, such as rates of infant mortality, illiteracy, malnourishment and so on. Even if not everyone benefits directly from growth, the 'trickle down effect' will ensure that the riches of those at the top of the economic scale will eventually benefit the rest of society through increased production and thus employment. In this understanding of development, if people become better fed, better educated, better housed and healthier, this is the indirect result of policies aimed at stimulating higher rates of productivity and consumption, rather than of policies directly tackling the problems of poverty. Development is quantifiable, and reducible to economics.[4]

One major drawback to defining development as economic growth is that in reality the 'trickle-down effect' rarely takes place; growth does not necessarily lead to enhanced standards of living. As societies in the affluent North demonstrate, the increased use of highly sophisticated technology or a fast-growing GNP does not necessarily eradicate poverty, illiteracy or homelessness, although it may well alter the ways these ills are experienced. In contrast, neo-Marxist theory, which was increasingly to dominate academic debates surrounding development in the 1970s, understands capitalism as inherently inegalitarian. Economic growth thus by definition means that some parts of the world, and some social groups, are actively underdeveloped. Viewed in these terms, development is an essentially political process; when we talk of 'underdevelopment' we are referring to unequal global power relations.

Although the modernisation paradigm continued to dominate mainstream thought, this definition of development – as resulting from macro and micro inequality – was increasingly promoted during the 1970s and, within some quarters, throughout the 1980s. It can be linked to what became termed the 'basic needs' movement, which stressed the importance of combating poverty rather than promoting industrialisation and modernisation. Development work, it was argued, should aim first and foremost at satisfying people's basic needs; it should be poverty-focused. For some, this did not involve challenging wider notions of the ultimate importance of economic growth, but instead involved an amended agenda in which vulnerable groups such as 'small farmers' or 'women-headed households' were targeted for aid.[5] Many of these projects were strongly welfare-orientated and did not challenge existing political structures (Mosley, 1987: 29–31).

In the 1990s, the desirability of technological progress is being further questioned. Environmental destruction is an increasingly

pressing issue. Cases where technological change has been matched by growing inequality and the breakdown of traditional networks of support are now so well documented as to be standard reading on most undergraduate courses on development. It is becoming clear that mechanisation and industrialisation are mixed blessings, to say the least. Combined with this, the optimism of the 1960s and early 1970s, when many newly independent states were striving for rapid economic growth, was replaced by increasing pessimism during the 1980s. Faced by debt, the inequality of international trading relations and in many cases political insecurity, many governments, particularly those in Africa and Latin America, have been forced to accept the rigorous structural adjustment programmes insisted upon by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Development in the post-war period has of course involved the construction not only of particular ideas, but also of a set of specific practices and institutions. Before turning to the various theories which have been offered since 1949 to explain development and underdevelopment, let us therefore briefly turn to what is often referred to as 'the aid industry'.

The 'aid industry'

As we have already indicated, aid from the North to the South was without doubt a continuation of colonial relations, rather than a radical break from them (Mosley, 1987: 21). Donors today tend to give most aid to countries which they previously colonised: British aid is concentrated mostly upon South Asia and Africa, while the Dutch are heavily involved in South East Asia, for example. Although planning is a basic human activity, the roots of planned development were planted during colonial times, through the establishment of bodies such as the Empire Marketing Board in 1926 and the setting up of Development Boards in colonies such as Uganda (Robertson, 1984: 16). The concept of aid transfers being made for the sake of development first appeared in the 1930s, however. Notions of mutual benefit, still prevalent today, were key, for the aim was primarily to stimulate markets in the colonies, thus boosting the economy at home (Mosley, 1987: 21).

Despite these initial beginnings, the real start of the main processes of aid transfer is usually taken to be the end of the Second World War, when the major multilateral agencies were established. The IMF and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later to become the World Bank) were set up during the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944, while the Food and Agricultural

Organisation (FAO) was created as a branch of the United Nations in 1945. In contrast to what became known as 'bilateral aid', which was a transfer from one government to another, 'multilateral aid' came to involve a number of different donors acting in combination, none of whom (supposedly) directly controls policy. However, from the outset donors such as the World Bank were heavily influenced by the US and tended to encourage centralised, democratic governments with a strong bias towards the free market (Robertson, 1984: 23). Meanwhile, various bilateral agencies were also established by the wealthier nations. These are the governmental organisations, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID; set up in 1961) or the British Overseas Development Administration (the ODA; established as the Overseas Development Ministry in 1964), both of which are involved in project and programme aid with partner countries. Figure 1.1 shows the inter-relationships and resource flows between these different actors.
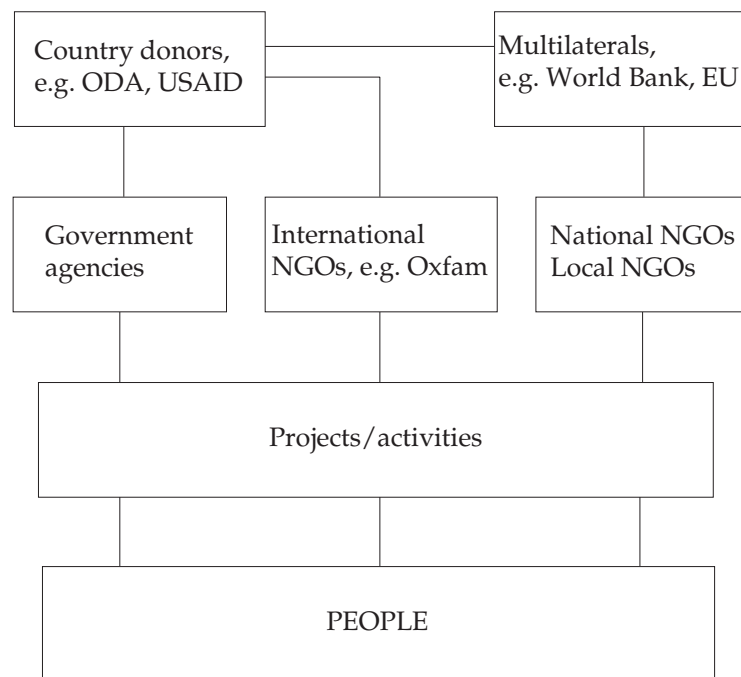
Figure 1.1: Resource flows and potential partnership links between different types of development agencies

Considerable amounts of aid were initially directed at areas in Europe which were devastated after the Second World War. By the early 1950s the Cold War made aid politically attractive for governments anxious to stem the flow of communism in the South. During this period the World Bank changed its focus from reconstruction to development. By the late 1960s, after many previously French and British colonies had gained independence, aid programmes expanded rapidly. Indeed, rich donor countries actually began to come into competition with each other in their efforts to provide assistance to poor countries, a clear sign of the economic and political benefits which accompanied aid. Keen to improve their product, many now stressed development, instigating grandiose and prestigious schemes. The 1960s also saw the first UN Decade for Development, with a stated aim of 5 per cent growth rates, and 0.7 per cent of donor countries' GNP being given in aid. Today few countries give this much: in 1984–5 the US gave 0.24 per cent, the UK 0.34 per cent, and Norway 1.04 per cent (Cassen et al., 1986: 8).

Since the earliest days of the aid industry, there have been significant shifts in those countries giving and receiving the most aid. Increasingly, for example, sub-Saharan Africa is receiving the largest proportion of aid, whereas earlier India was the largest recipient. Likewise, some countries have been so successful that they are now becoming influential donors: Japan and Saudi Arabia are examples. In the 1990s, new countries have also entered the aid arena, especially those which were previously considered to be communist, such as China and Vietnam.

While the individual players may have changed, aid continues to play a major role in the economies of many countries of the South, accounting for one third of all capital in-flows to the Third World in 1980–83 and worth approximately US$35 billion (Mosley, 1987). In 1988 the 18 Northern nations who belong to the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) gave US$48.1 billion (Madeley, 1991: 1). One quarter of this is multilateral aid; the rest is direct, government-to-government assistance.

Whether or not aid is a form of 'neo-imperialism' has been a moot point in development studies. Some writers argue that aid is simply another way in which the political and economic power of the North continues to be asserted over the South, developing only the dependency of recipients on their donors (for example, Hayter, 1971; Sobhan, 1989); but others stress that while there are undoubted benefits to donors (political influence perhaps, or the creation of markets for domestically produced products), aid cannot simply be

understood as exploitative.[6] Most aid, for example, is aimed at the neediest countries, rather than the biggest potential markets and allies, and many projects and programmes are planned with good intentions and genuine aims to promote desirable change (Mosley, 1987). Indeed, rather than the wholly negative picture presented by polemicists such as Hancock in his attack on the aid industry (1989), some writers have argued that most aid is successful in terms of its own objectives (Cassen et al., 1986). Others maintain a middle line, pointing out the complex reasons why aid projects fail and constructively suggesting how they could help, rather than accusing them all of being neo-imperial façades, and thus all 'bad' (Mosley, 1987; Madeley, 1991).

An interesting twist to these debates is given by Ferguson (1990) in his account of the development regime in Lesotho, part of which we discuss below in Chapter 3. Ferguson argues that, rather than deliberately setting out to perpetuate neo-colonial relationships between the North and South (for example, by bringing peasants into the global market under unfavourable terms of exchange, as some political economists have argued, or by securing markets for goods produced in the donor country), the role of aid projects is actually far more subtle:

Whatever interests may be at work, and whatever they may think they are doing, they can only operate through a complex set of social and cultural structures so deeply embedded and so ill-perceived that the outcome may be only a baroque and unrecognisable tranformation of the original intention. The approach adopted here treats such an outcome as neither an inexplicable mistake, nor the trace of a yet-undiscovered intention, but as a riddle, a problem to be solved, an anthropological puzzle. (Ferguson, 1990: 17)

Ferguson's contribution is therefore to distinguish between the *intentions* of those working in the aid industry and the *effects* of their work. As such it provides a very useful way of moving beyond the simple rhetoric of the 'aid as imperialism' school of thought.

Following on from Ferguson's approach, we do not think it worthwhile to spend too much time considering whether aid is or is not a 'good' thing.[7] Instead, we assume that it exists and shall continue to exist for some time. Rather than simply condemning aid and development work, what we are concerned with is how anthropology might be used to critique, improve and suggest alternatives to it. How this might be done is a central theme of this book. Before exploring these issues further, let us turn to a brief summary of the different theoretical perspectives informing developmental work.

Theories of development

Conventionally, development theory is described in terms of two oppositional paradigms, both of which involve a range of different measures. These have been discussed in detail elsewhere.[8] Like most 'grand theories', neither has stood up well to the onslaught of 1990s post-modernism. Today, there is no single theoretical model which is commonly used to explain development, nor is there any one 'solution' to the problems of underdevelopment. Indeed, contemporary understandings tend to draw from a variety of theoretical sources and suggest a variety of strategies.

Modernisation

What can be labelled 'modernisation theory' is a collection of perspectives which, while at their most intellectually influential in the 1950s and 1960s, continues to dominate development practice today. Many of the technicians and administrators involved in project planning are still essentially modernisers, even if their jargon is more sophisticated than that of their predecessors in the 1960s. Likewise, many development economists today still pin their hopes to the promises of modernisation. As Norman Long puts it, modernisation 'visualises development in terms of a progressive movement towards technologically more complex and integrated forms of "modern" society' (Long and Long, 1992: 18).

Industrialisation, the transition from subsistence agriculture to cash-cropping, and urbanisation are all keys to this process. Modernisation is essentially evolutionary; countries are envisaged as being at different stages of a linear path which leads ultimately to an industrialised, urban and ordered society. Much emphasis is put upon rationality, in both its economic and moral senses. While modern, developed societies are seen as secular, universalistic and profit-motivated, undeveloped societies are understood as steeped in tradition, particularistic and unmotivated to profit, a view exemplified by G. Foster's work on the 'peasant's image of the limited good' (1962).

As we have already seen, these ideas have roots in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century political economy, much of which sought to theorise the sweeping social and economic changes associated with industrialisation. Durkheim's model of an industrialised 'organic' society, Simmel's thoughts on the money economy and Weber's discussion of the relationship between Protestantism and industrial capitalism are all examples. More recently, the work

of economist W.W. Rostow illustrates the concept of modernisation par excellence. In his works on economic growth (Rostow, 1960a; 1960b), the forms of growth already experienced in the North are taken as a model for the rest of the world. While economies are situated at different stages of development, all are assumed to be moving in the same direction. Traditional society is poor, irrational and rural. The 'take-off' stage requires a leap forward, based on technology and high levels of investment; preconditions for this are the development of infrastructure, manufacturing and effective government. After this societies reach a stage of 'self-sustaining' growth; in its 'mature' stage, technology pervades the whole economy, leading to 'the age of high mass consumption', high productivity and high levels of urbanisation (Robertson, 1984: 25).

Some writers have attached particular social characteristics to the different stages, often with evolutionary overtones. For example, Talcott Parsons has argued that nuclear families are best suited to the highly mobile, industrialised world (Parsons, 1949). Others associate industrial society with (again) rational political systems, realism and the death of ideology (Kerr et al., 1973; cited in Robertson, 1984: 33). Interestingly, early feminist work on the relationship between capitalist growth and gender, while usually critical of development, also sometimes implied that stages in the development process were associated with particular forms of gender relations, most notably to do with changes in the division of labour (for example, Boserup, 1970; Sacks, 1975).

If one believes that life is generally better in the Northern countries than in their poorer neighbours in the South (which in terms of material standards of living cannot easily be denied), modernisation is an inherently optimistic concept, for it assumes that all countries will eventually experience economic growth. This optimism must be understood in the historical context of post-war prosperity and growth in the North, and independence for many Southern colonies in the 1950s and 1960s. The governments of many newly independent countries, like their ex-colonisers, often believed that – with a little help – development would come swiftly, and many launched ambitious five-year plans to this effect (for example, India's First Five-Year Plan in 1951, and Tanzania's First Five-Year Plan in 1964). Truman's speech embodies this initial optimism.

Another reason why modernisation can be described as optimistic is that it presents development as a relatively easy process. Enduring underdevelopment is explained in terms of 'obstacles'. These are internal to the countries concerned, ideologically neutral, and can generally be dealt with pragmatically.

Inadequate infrastructure is a good example. Factors conventionally used to explain this are lack of capital, weak or corrupt management and lack of local expertise (both of which might cause roads and bridges not to get built, or to be badly maintained) and, perhaps, difficult environmental conditions (mountainous terrain, continuous flooding). The solutions to these problems are straightforward: roads and bridges can be built with external capital and expertise in the form of aid donated by the developed North; local technicians and bureaucrats can be trained, and 'good government' supported (an explicit policy of the British Overseas Development Administration since the late 1980s). Another strategy to improve infrastructure might be the introduction of information technology to local institutions, or the training of personnel to use new technology. In both scenarios, various changes are understood as necessary for a country or region to 'take-off'. With more efficient infrastructure, economic growth is encouraged and, it is hoped barring other obstacles, the country will move on to the next stage. Development agencies and practitioners are thus cast in the role of trouble-shooters, creating a range of policies aimed at 'improvement' (Long, 1977).

By the late 1960s it was becoming obvious that despite attempts to remove obstacles to development, often involving considerable foreign capital investment, economic growth rates in developing countries were disappointing; in some cases there were even signs that poverty was increasing. The failure of several large-scale development projects, which should have prompted 'take-off', increasingly indicated that simplistic notions of modernisation were inadequate. One now notorious case is the Groundnut Scheme of southern Tanzania.[9] This latter project received £20 million in 1946–52 (the total British aid budget in 1946–56 was £120 million) and had a return of zero (Mosley, 1987: 22). Unquestioning faith in the desirability of cash crops on behalf of planners, together with inadequate research into local farmers' needs and into the appropriateness of different crops to the local environment, was central to the scheme's failure.

Modernisation, as both a theory and a set of strategies, is open to criticism on virtually every front. Its assumption that all change inevitably follows the Western model is both breathtakingly ethnocentric and empirically incorrect, a fact which anthropologists should have little difficulty in spotting. Indeed, anthropological research has continually shown that economic development comes in many shapes and forms; we cannot generalise about transitions from one 'type' of society to another. Religious revivalism is just one

example of this, and has been interpreted as a reaction to modernity (see, for example, Ahmed, 1992). Combined with this, while theories of modernisation assume that local cultures and 'peasant' traditionalism are obstacles to development, what Norman Long calls 'actor-oriented research' (1992) has consistently found that, far from being 'irrational', people in poor countries are open to change if they perceive it to be in their interest. They often know far better than development planners how to strategise to get the best from difficult circumstances, yet modernisation strategies rarely, if ever, pay heed to local knowledge. Indeed, local culture is generally either ignored by planners or treated as a 'constraint'. This is a grave failing, for anthropologists such as Mair (1984) and Hill (1986) have shown in detail how an understanding of local culture is vital for more appropriate development projects. We shall spend much of this book discussing such insights.

Modernisation also ignores the political implications of growth on the micro level. Premissed on the notion of 'trickle down', it assumes that once economic growth has been attained, the whole population will reap the rewards. Again, anthropologists and sociologists have repeatedly shown that life is not so simple. Even in regions of substantial economic growth, poverty levels often remain the same, or even deteriorate further (Mosley, 1987: 155). Evidence from areas which have experienced the so-called Green Revolution illustrates how even when many of the signs of economic development are present, localised poverty and inequality can persist (see Pearse, 1980). Disastrously (for the poorest or for some minorities), modernisation theory does not distinguish between different groups within societies, either because it assumes these to be homogeneous (the 'mass poor') or because it believes that eventually the benefits of growth are enjoyed by all. The communities which are at the receiving end of development plans are, however, composed of a mixture of people, all with different amounts of power, access to resources and interests (Hill, 1986: 16–29). Heterogeneity exists not only between households, but also within them. The marginalisation of women by development projects which treat households as equal and homogeneous units is a case in point (Whitehead, 1981; Rogers, 1980; Ostergaard, 1992).

The most fundamental criticism of theories of modernisation, however, is that they fail to understand the real causes of underdevelopment and poverty. By presenting all countries as being on the same linear path, they completely neglect historical and political factors which have made the playing field very far from level. Europe during the Industrial Revolution and Africa or South Asia in

the second half of the twentieth century are not, therefore, comparable. These points have been forcibly made by what is generally referred to as dependency, or neo-Marxist, theory. This school of thought was radically to affect development studies during the 1970s.

Dependency Theory

One of the first groups to explain development in terms of political and historical structures was the Economic Commission of Latin America (ECLA). Established in 1948 by the United Nations, by the 1950s this had become a group of radical scholars whose outlook was deeply influenced by Marxism. The work of the ECLA drew attention to the structure of underdevelopment: unequal relations between the North and South, especially in terms of trade, the protectionism of many Northern economies and the dependency on export markets of many countries within Latin America. These notions of dependency and underdevelopment (as opposed to undevelopment) gained widespread recognition with the work of A.G. Frank (1969).[10]

Drawing from Marxist concepts of capitalism as inherently exploitative, dependency theorists argue that development is an essentially unequalising process: while rich nations get richer, the rest inevitably get poorer. Like most Marxist analysis, their work is primarily historical and tends to focus upon the political structures which shape the world. Rather than being undeveloped, they argue, countries in the South have been underdeveloped by the processes of imperial and post-imperial exploitation. One model which is used to describe this process is that of the centre and periphery (Wallerstein, 1974). This presents the North as the centre, or 'core' of capitalism, and the South as its periphery. Through imperial conquest, it is argued, peripheral economies were integrated into capitalism, but on an inherently unequal basis. Supplying raw materials, which fed manufacturing industries in the core, peripheral regions became dependent upon foreign markets and failed to develop their own manufacturing bases. The infrastructure provided by colonial powers is wholly geared towards export; in many cases an economy might be dependent upon a single product. Dependency is thus

a continuing situation in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others. A relationship of interdependence between two or more economies or between such economies and the world trading system becomes a dependent relationship

when some countries can expand through self-impulsion while others, being in a dependent position, can only expand as a reflection of the expansion of the dominant countries, which may have positive or negative effects on their immediate position. (Dos Santos, 1973)

Closely related to theories of dependency are those presenting the globe as a single interrelated system in which each country is understood in terms of its relationship to the whole. Immanuel Wallerstein's 'world system' (1974) and Worsley's notion of 'one world' (1984) are central to these ideas. It is from this context that notions of 'Third World' and 'First World' have developed; these terms explicitly recognise the way in which the world is divided into different and yet interdependent parts. The Third World, it suggests, is not natural, but created through economic and political processes.

Structures of dependency, the argument goes, are also repeated internally. Just as on an international level the centre exploits the periphery, within peripheral regions metropolitan areas attract the bulk of scarce local resources and services. They are occupied by the local elite, who, through their links with the centre, spend considerable time taking profit out of the country (by investing, for example, in costly education abroad). Like international relations between centre and periphery, they also exploit surrounding rural areas, through unequal exchange, for example in terms of trade between rural farmers and urban markets. Capital accumulation in the periphery is therefore unlikely to occur, both because of processes which suck it into the metropolitan centre, and because of wider international processes which take it outside the country.

Dependency theory therefore understands underdevelopment as embedded within particular political structures. In this view the improvement policies advocated by modernisation theory can never work, for they do not tackle the root causes of the problem. Rather than development projects which ease the short-term miseries of underdevelopment, or support the status quo, dependency theory suggests that the only solution possible is radical, structural change. There are of course examples of this solution being followed. The radical internal restructuring of countries embracing socialism (China and Cuba are key examples) and the subsequent problems faced by them demonstrate that this is a route fraught with difficulty, however. Not only is state socialism often associated with extreme political repression, but by the 1990s, with the breakdown of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the new openness of China to world trade, aid and other

manifestations of capitalism, and the economic crisis facing Cuba, its long-term viability appears limited.

The international political backlash against state socialism which gathered force during the 1980s has been matched by similarly forceful revocation of neo-Marxist analysis within academia. The generalisations of Marxist analysis, its inability to deal with empirical variation and its insistence on pushing all human experience into the narrow strictures of a single theory are funda- mental problems. Analytically, it appears to be of limited help, for its explanatory framework is too simplistic. It is also attacked from within orthodox Marxism. Bill Warren has argued that dependency theory failed to understand the nature of imperialism and capitalist development in the previously colonised South. Rather than remaining stagnant and perpetually underdeveloped, the ex- colonies are moving forward in a way largely in keeping with Marx's original ideas about the progressive (though destructive and contradictory) force of captalism within his theory of historical materialism (Warren, 1980).

One of the main problems with dependency theory is that it tends to treat peripheral states and populations as passive, being blind to everything but their exploitation. While it is certainly important to analyse the structures which perpetuate underdevelopment, however, we must also recognise the ways in which individuals and societies strategise to maximise opportunities, how they resist structures which subordinate them and, in some cases, how they successfully embrace capitalist development.

Rather than offering solutions to societies in the capitalist world, dependency theory is in danger of creating despondency in its insistence that without radical structural change, underdevelop- ment is unavoidable. This does not mean that it has not had pervasive and continuing influence on developmental practice. It has contributed to the politicisation of development, which can no longer be presented as neutral. Internationally, this politicisation is expressed by the formation of alliances of Third World countries against the North, such as the Non-Aligned Movement, which since its inception following the Bandung Conference in 1955 has acted as a kind of international pressure group for Third World countries. Out of this emerged the Group of 77 countries (G77) which functions as a counterbalance to the influence of the Northern industrial nations within the UN and its associated agencies (McGrew, 1992).

Notions of dependency have also contributed to, and reflect, the increasing politicisation of 'development' in the South at both grassroots and state levels. As an intellectual movement, its

proponents were mostly situated in the South, in particular Latin America. Most fundamentally, neo-Marxist analysis raises a question largely ignored by theories of modernisation, but of crucial importance: who gets what from development? By focusing upon the ways in which profit for some is connected to loss for others, neo-Marxist analysis remains an important contribution to the understanding of development, even if as an analytical tool it is sometimes a little blunt.

While modernisation and dependency theory are politically polar opposites (one liberal and the other radical), they have a surprising amount in common. Both are essentially evolutionary, assuming that countries progress in a linear fashion and that it is capitalism which propels them from one stage to the next. Both assume that change comes 'top-down' from the state; they ignore the ways in which people negotiate these changes and, indeed, initiate their own. Both are fundamentally deterministic and are based upon the same fundamental rationalist epistimology (Hobart, 1993: 5; Long and Long, 1992: 20). Most crucially for those at the receiving end of underdevelopment, neither offers a realistic solution. Modernisation's improvement policies, which wrongly assume 'trickle down' from profit-making elites to the rest, often do little to help the poorest and most vulnerable. Meanwhile the radical change suggested by dependency theory is often impossible to achieve.

In the mid-1990s, we can discern the influence of both modernisation and dependency theory in current practice and thinking. Notions of modernisation survive in much contemporary developmental thought. As we have already mentioned, agencies such as the World Bank remain committed first and foremost to promoting economic growth. Meanwhile statements such as the following, from a Food and Agriculture Organisation report on the sociocultural aspects of a multimillion dollar aquaculture project, are still surprisingly common:

It may be that attempting to inculcate 'modern' values and practices may be easier with villagers who are already more 'modernised' … However, this principle, if carried too far, could lead to concentration of effort on the 'best prospects' and neglect of those with manifestly better need of assistance. (FAO, 1987)

The only thing which differentiates this from earlier statements of modernisation is the rather self-conscious use of inverted commas.

Dependency theory also continues to influence thought and practice. It can be located, for example, alongside notions of empowerment which reject aid as a form of neo-imperialism and argue that

postve change can only come from within Southern societies. Paolo Friere's work on functional education, which has had a huge influence on some areas of developmental practice, in particular upon non-governmental organisations (NGOs), is an example of the practical application of neo-Marxist theory; first and foremost, he suggests, people need to develop political consciousness, and the route to this is through pedagogic techniques of empowerment (Friere, 1968). Debates on gender and development have also increasingly involved awareness of the structural influences of global inequality and colonialism on gender relations, and of the need for women in the South to empower themselves rather than be recipients of Northern benevolence (Sen and Grown, 1987).

The demise of development theory

Despite these lingering influences, it was increasingly argued during the 1980s that the age of the 'grand narrative'[11] was largely over. By the 1990s, neither modernisation nor dependency theory have survived intact as a viable paradigm for understanding change and transformation, or processes of poverty and inequality. There are various interconnected reasons for this. We have already suggested that neither theory can realistically explain the problems of global inequality and poverty. The strategies they offer for redressing such problems are also flawed. But there are wider factors operating too.

  Politically, as since the late 1980s the old polarities of the Cold War have become obsolete, there is much talk of a 'New Global Order'. Although this concept is contested,[12] the global and polarised struggle between the two opposing socioeconomic systems of capitalism and communism is clearly at an end. It is no longer so easy to speak of the 'Third World', for the boundaries between the First and the Second have largely collapsed. Within the New Global Order there is also no easy division between states on the periphery and those in the centre; the economic dynamism of Eastern Asia, for example, which is overtaking traditional centres of capitalism in North America and Europe, appears wholly to disprove dependency theory. Combined with this, religious and ethnic revivalism, and the conflict with which both are often associated, have vividly indicated that understanding modernity is not nearly so simple a matter as was once assumed.

The 1990s: the age of post-modernity?

Arguably then, in the 1990s we have entered the age of post-modernism. While this term has various meanings, it is most simply

explained as a cultural and intellectual rejection of modernity. Culturally, post-modern tendencies in the North can be traced back to the 1940s and 1950s, wherein the arts have increasingly moved beyond modernism to a broader, more pluralistic range of styles and techniques; eclecticism, parody and multimedia forms are now common. Likewise, the boundaries between 'high' and 'low' culture are increasingly broken down: in some quarters the works of Madonna or television soap operas are considered to be as valid subjects for critical analysis and attention as Shakespeare or classical opera. Intellectually, post-modernism involves the end of the dominance of unitary theories of progress and belief in scientific rationality. Objective 'truth' has been replaced by emphasis on signs, images and the plurality of viewpoints: there is no single, objective account of reality, for everyone experiences things differently. Post-modernism is thus characterised by a multiplicity of voices.

Post-modernism involves both conservative and subversive political tendencies. By insisting upon diversity and cultural relativity, it disregards the possibility of common problems and thus common solutions. So revolutionary movements which advocate blanket remedies for social ills such as state socialism are not on the agenda. In its insistence upon locating particular voices and deconstructing what they say, however, it is inherently subversive. Edward Said's brilliant analysis of *Orientalism* (1978), for example, deconstructs Northern writings on the 'orient' to show how they homogenise and exoticise the 'East' and by doing this function as the ideological backbone of imperialism. Following Foucault, since the late 1970s and 1980s there has been an increasing awareness of the relationship between discourse (fields of knowledge, statements and practice, such as development) and power. From this, all categories which lump peoples or experiences together become politically suspect. One sign of the increasing acceptance of such views is that the 'Third World', 'women' or the 'poor' are more often than not accompanied by inverted commas to show our awareness of the problematic nature of such categories. These arguments have had a radical effect on the authority of 'experts', fundamentally undermining many of the earlier assumptions which came out of the colonial, and post-colonial, North.

The influence of such arguments should not of course be exaggerated. The majority of people working within development are largely unaware of post-modernism and are certainly not interested in problematising the discourses within which they work. We suggest, however, that development theory has reached a profound impasse, and that this is partly a result of post-modern tendencies.

Emphasis on diversity, the primacy of localised experience and the colonial roots of discourses of progress, or the problems of the Third World, have radically undermined any attempt at generalisation. To a degree, this is reflected in practice. Over recent decades there have been many different approaches, which rather than being based upon one single theoretical creed, promising all-encompassing solutions in a single package, attempt to deal with specific problems. It is best to discuss these as strategies rather than theories, for many draw on several theoretical sources. The new trends also relate more directly to practice and policy rather than theory.

In the abandonment of generalised and deterministic theory, there is an increasing tendency to focus upon specific groups and issues ('women', 'the landless'),[13] a more reflexive attitude towards aid and development and a new stress upon 'bottom-up', grassroots initiatives. These perspectives were already emerging in the 1970s, when stress upon 'basic needs', rather than macro level policy aimed at industrialisation, was increasingly fashionable within aid circles. Instead of being radical, these strategies are inherently populist. As part of a general trend which places people more directly on the developmental stage, they are closer to liberal ideologies of individualism, self-reliance and participation than Marxist ones of revolution or socialism. Other trends include human development,[14] the use of cost-benefit analysis and the concept of 'good government', or institution building. We shall return to some of these new directions in Chapter 5. For now, we need only note that they do not comprise a body of homogeneous thought and practice. Indeed, we suggest that development, both as theory and as practice, is increasingly polarised. While multilateral agencies such as the World Bank or United Nations agencies embrace neo-liberal agendas of structural adjustment, free trade and 'human development', others stress empowerment and the primacy of indigenous social movements. As the notion of development loses credibility, development practice is becoming increasingly eclectic. This can be both confusing and directionless, and liberating: a source of potential creativity.

Post-modernism and anthropology

Just as post-modernist approaches have problematised concepts and theories of development, they are also associated with a crisis in anthropology (Grimshaw and Hart, 1993). While the degree of this is contested, there can be little doubt that since the mid-1980s many conventional tenets of the discipline have been rigorously queried,

both within and outside the professional establishment. To a degree, anthropology has always had some post-modern tendencies. Cultural relativism, one of the discipline's central tenets, insists upon recognising the inner logic of different societies. The world is thus presented as culturally diverse and composed of many different realities. What anthropologists have not tended to question till recently, however, is the status of the knowledge that they gather. Ahistorical generalisations, based upon the observations of the 'objective' anthropologist, have been made in many 'classic' ethnographies which disguise heterogeneity within local culture. Theoretical frameworks such as functionalism and structuralism (which continued to influence some branches of anthropology up until the late 1970s)[15] tend to reduce societies to a series of commonalities, whether these be the notion of interdependent institutions which function to maintain the workings of the overall social system, as in functionalism, or the idea of common binary oppositions which underlie all social forms and to which all cultures can be reduced, as in structuralism.

In many ways then, anthropology's claim to represent and understand the diverse societies of the world is an easy target for post-modern critiques. One area in which it has been attacked is the claim of so-called objective generalisation, or what Jonathan Spencer calls 'ethnographic naturalism' (1989: 153–4). This confers authority on the anthropologist by suppressing the historical specificity of the ethnographic experience. Given post-modern emphasis on local and diverse voices, the intellectual authority of the anthropologist who is supposedly providing an 'objective' account of exotic peoples is easily criticised.

Unease about the quasi-scientific paradigms of anthropology, and textual conventions which construct anthropologist-authors as experts, was expressed by a series of publications over the 1980s, such as Clifford and Marcus's *Writing Culture* (1986), Marcus and Fischer's *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (1986) and Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture* (1988). Writing conventions are not, however, the only problem. Growing reflexivity about the colonial heritage of anthropology[16] and its contribution to imperialist discourses about the Southern 'other' have contributed to increasing introspection concerning the subject's assumptions. Objectification of other peoples, we now realise, is linked to political hierarchy (Grimshaw and Hart, 1993: 8). Anthropological representations are not neutral, but embedded in power relations between North and South. This has led to what in feminist theory has been termed the 'politics of location' (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994: 44–5) – the notion that

one has no right to 'speak' for other groups, and the ascribing of legitimacy only to 'authentic' voices.

These arguments have led to various reactions. Some anthropologists have moved away from ethnography and retreated into the analysis and deconstruction of text; others have experimented with different styles of writing. A considerable number have retained their interest in ethnography, but turned their attention to their own societies, or to others in the North. Rabinow (1986: 259) has argued that one solution to the 'crisis of representation' facing anthropology is to 'study up' and research the powerful rather than the powerless. This might involve studying colonial authorities, planners, government – and development agencies too. Connected to this is the call to 'anthropologise the West' (ibid.: 241). Anthropologists, it is suggested, need to turn their attention away from the exotic 'other' and focus instead upon the assumptions of their own societies. While suffering considerable self-doubt and anxiety, since the late 1980s anthropology has therefore moved in various new directions.

Anthropology and post-development: moving on

Arturo Escobar has attacked anthropologists working in development for failing to react to changes taking place within anthropology, for questionable methodological practices and – most damningly – for reproducing discourses of modernisation and development (1991: 677). In a later work he suggests that development makes anthropological encounters with Third World others possible – just as colonialism once did. Rather than challenging it, anthropologists 'overlook the ways in which development operates as an arena of cultural contestation and identity construction' (1995: 15). There are indeed grave problems facing anthropologists engaged with development. If we accept that it functions as a hegemonic discourse, in which the world is represented, ordered and controlled in particular ways, how can those working within it not be ethically compromised?

In the rest of this book we hope to show that while the relationship between development and anthropology is highly problematic, anthropologists should not simply retreat. Discourses are not static but can be changed, both by those working within them (who can help to challenge and unpick central assumptions and practices) and by those working outside (by revealing alternative understandings of the world and alternative processes of change). We shall suggest that these processes are already underway, and have been for some time. While it is undeniably true that anthropologists in develop-

ment are often compromised, their insights coopted and neutralised by the dominant discourse, their work practices changed and their critical faculties numbed, this need not necessarily be the case.

If both anthropology and development are facing crisis in the 1990s, both too contain the possibilities for positive engagement and change. Anthropology can contribute to more positive forms of developmental thought and practice, both by working *in* development and also by providing a critical account *of* development. As we shall argue, this distinction is often blurred: those that produce critiques of development often influence development practice, even if unintentionally. Meanwhile the study of development is a fertile area for anthropologists wishing to answer Rabinow's call to 'study up'. It is also a way in which we can move beyond the silencing of identity politics to a more politically engaged anthropology. Some feminists have argued that there must be post-modern 'stopping points' rather than endless cultural relativism (Nicholson, 1990: 8), and that one such point is gender. We suggest that another is the politics of poverty.

What, then, do we mean by development? We use the term here to refer to processes of social and economic change which have been precipitated by economic growth, and/or specific policies and plans, whether at the level of the state, donor agencies or indigenous social movements. These can have either positive or negative effects on the people who experience them. Development is a series of events and actions, as well as a particular discourse and ideological construct. We assume that these are inherently problematic; indeed, some aspects of development are actively destructive and disempowering.

Rather than promoting development per se, what we are interested in is challenging the social and political relations of poverty, through generating and applying anthropological insights. We define poverty as a state in which people are denied access to the material, social and emotional necessities of life. While there are 'basic needs' (water, sufficient calorific intake for survival and shelter), many of these necessities are culturally determined. Poverty is first and foremost a social relationship, the result of inequality, marginalisation and disempowerment. It occurs in the North as well as the South (although much of our attention in this book will be confined to the South). We suggest that while we need to move beyond the language and assumptions of development, the application of anthropology in attempting to construct a better world is as vital as ever in the post-modern, and post-development, era. Before discussing how this might be done, let us turn to the history of applied anthropology.

2 APPLYING ANTHROPOLOGY – AN HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since the earliest days of British, French and US anthropology, some anthropologists have been interested in using their knowledge for practical purposes. This branch of the discipline became known as 'applied anthropology'. From the 1930s onwards, many academic anthropologists collaborated – formally or informally – with professionals engaged in public administration, social work and agriculture. Others sought careers outside academia in sectors where their skills could be utilised on a longer-term basis, working in fields as diverse as industry, agriculture, conservation and defence.

One of the main areas in which these 'applied' anthropologists have long been active is that of development.[1] Some of the earliest applied work was carried out for the British colonial administrations in Africa, where anthropologists undertook research into areas of specific interest to administrators, provided information or advice to officials (either on request or of a less specific, unsolicited kind) or participated in the training of government servants. In the US, opportunities for applied anthropology originated through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which became a sponsoring body for research into local customs, political institutions and landholding patterns and rights.

The concerns of applied anthropologists grew more wide-ranging as opportunities were taken up for work in areas as diverse as inner-city community health-care, company management within private industry and involvement in US government counter-insurgency activities. Anthropology was seen at this time as a tool which gave administrators or business people an ability to understand, and therefore to some extent control, the behaviour of the people with whom they were dealing, whether they were 'natives', employees or

consumers in the market place. The gradual professionalisation and institutionalisation of development after the Second World War led to the creation of formal opportunities for applied anthropologists to work in development agencies or as private development consultants.

This chapter begins with a brief history of applied anthropology before moving on to a discussion of the different roles in which applied anthropologists have worked in development. We conclude by considering the various ways in which anthropologists have been deployed within development (as consultants, advisors and researchers) and we suggest the direction that applied anthropology might take in the future.

Anthropologists, social change and cultural relativism

Early anthropologists were engaged in debating two major sets of theoretical issues which bore directly on the practical application of anthropological knowledge. The first of these was the notion of change itself. Within anthropology, social change was initially debated between diffusionists (such as the German Kulturkreise school, which included Fritz Graebner and Martin Gusinde), who saw change as gradually spreading across cultures from a common point, and evolutionists (including Lewis H. Morgan and Herbert Spencer), whose ideas rested on the assumption that all societies, if left alone, would evolve through broadly similar stages. In time the diffusionist arguments, which recognised that cultures interact with each other and are thereby altered, gradually replaced those of the evolutionists. With the growth of functionalism, anthropology began to concern itself more with the means through which societies maintained themselves than with the ways in which they changed.[2]

During the 1930s, the functionalist perspective of modern British social anthropology, personified by the work of A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski, emphasised the relationships between different elements of a society and the ways in which it reproduced and maintained itself. The functionalists paid very little attention to how communities changed over time. The tendency to study societies as if they were static remained strong in the period up to the Second World War, but was challenged by anthropologists interested in what was termed 'culture contact' in the colonial territories. Gradually anthropological work began to take account of the historical context of communities and explanations of social and political change, in contrast to influential but ahistorical ethnographic monographs such as Evans-Pritchard's *The Nuer* and

Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. Although this seems obvious from the vantage point of the 1990s, Beattie's observation has not always been reflected in the work of functionalist anthropologists:

Change is taking place in all human societies all the time. Sometimes it is sudden and catastrophic, as when a system of government is destroyed by revolution and replaced by a different one; sometimes it is gradual and hardly perceptible, so that even the members of the society themselves scarcely notice it. (1964: 241)

Increasingly, change came to be seen as inseparable from society itself, and the realisation and acceptance of this by anthropologists underpin a continuing relationship between anthropology and development. Nevertheless, it remains the case even today that anthropology retains a residual reluctance to involve itself with certain aspects of change. An interesting example of this trait (and one which we discuss later, in Chapter 5) is anthropology's lateness in contributing to recent debates in the social sciences about what have been termed the 'new social movements' and particularly to questions about people's political and cultural struggles in pursuit of social and economic goals (Escobar, 1992: 397).

A second obstacle which stood in the way of developing an applied anthropology was the issue of cultural relativism, which was stronger in the US than in Britain. Relativism raised the problem of the ethics of intervention by anthropologists in the communities in which they worked, a dilemma which has never been satisfactorily resolved and which continues as a topic for discussion today. The ethical choice of making practical use of anthropology became a complex one for many anthropologists. If a culture was to be understood on its own terms, as Ruth Benedict's influential 1934 book, *Patterns of Culture*, had convincingly argued, what business did members of one culture have telling those of another what to do? Eric Wolf has pointed out that: 'Applied anthropology, by definition, represents a reaction against cultural relativism, since it does not regard the culture that is applying anthropology as the equal of the culture to which anthropology is to be applied' (1964: 24).

The implications of this debate are still being felt among many anthropologists in academic departments around the world: between those who favour a more open-ended theoretical development of the discipline through prolonged fieldwork, and those who, crudely speaking, might see anthropology as a tool for social engineering or, as we ourselves might prefer to put it, are trying to help raise living standards – not only in material terms, but with regard

to legal rights, freedom of expression, quality of life – for the poorer sections of the world's population.

The origins of applied anthropology in the UK

Colonial administrations created structures and institutions which profoundly influenced the societies, politics and cultures of the 'indigenous' peoples over which they assumed control in Africa and Asia. Many pre-war anthropologists gained opportunities for fieldwork within this framework, and there was a growing interest on both sides in the possibility that anthropology might play a role in assisting the colonial administrations with their work. The notion of an 'applied anthropology', in which anthropological skills could be deployed in order to produce a desired outcome in the encounter between communities and the state, arose from this realisation. The British anthropologist Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers had used the term 'applied anthropology' in 1881 (Howard, 1993: 369) and Sir Richard Temple had been urging the use of anthropology as a 'practical science' in the colonial context since 1914 (Grillo, 1985: 5). One of the best-known early advocates of 'applied anthropology' was Radcliffe-Brown during the 1920s, in the context of discussions under the UK colonial administrations concerning social change and contact between cultures.

The question of a practical role for anthropology provoked considerable controversy among anthropologists, activists and officials. Some colonial administrators saw anthropologists as other-worldly, non-practical types with little of value to contribute to the day-to-day administrative problems of the territories. The anthropologists, particularly those with liberal or anti-imperialist views, tended to view local, non-Western culture as something to be preserved, almost at all costs, against the ravages of colonialism. There was considerable scope for disagreement and misunderstanding on all sides. But despite these hurdles, there were anthropologists (some of whom were very influential) who decided that anthropology *did* have some practical value and could therefore be applied within an administrative context. For example, Radcliffe-Brown began courses in 'applied anthropology' after his appointment as Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Cape Town in the early 1920s and set up a School of African Studies based on the study of anthropology. One of Radcliffe-Brown's main motivations was the reduction of conflict between whites and blacks in South Africa and he emphasised a potential role for anthropology in con-

tributing to better cultural understanding between communities (Kuper, 1983).

From this period onwards, it became possible for a number of anthropologists to find fieldwork opportunities and funding within the British colonial system, usually in the African territories, where they worked on issues such as local land tenure systems and proposed reforms, succession to authority in particular tribes, labour migration and customary law. Similar processes were underway among French anthropologists in their government's colonial territories. Some anthropologists were commissioned to undertake specific research on prescribed areas of government interest, others provided information and suggestions on a regular or haphazard basis and out of a variety of motivations, ranging from critical support for colonial administrations to the attempted subversion of the 'system' from within.

The origins of applied anthropology in the US

In the US, evolutionary ideas about culture were gradually displaced after the First World War by those of the 'cultural anthropologists', whose outlook drew on the relativist ideas of their founder Franz Boas. In contrast to the evolutionists, who saw social change in terms of culture's adaptation to environment, Boas's work among the Eskimos (Inuit) had led him to adopt a view of culture as being completely independent of 'natural' circumstances, and in a sense this opened the way for anthropological intervention in societies. As Bloch (1983: 126–8) has argued, the view of culture held by these anthropologists led to the predominance of a 'cultural relativism', which held that 'it is wrong to evaluate one culture in terms of the values or knowledge of another'. Bloch goes on to point out that the dominance of cultural anthropology in the US in the period up to the 1950s squared with prevailing American political ideas. While recognising the existence of cultural differences, cultural relativism made possible the coexistence of different ethnic groups within one society, at the same time justifying non-interference by the state in people's lives.

US anthropologists did not have the same opportunities for foreign travel as did their counterparts in Britain and France. Although a few (such as Margaret Mead and Robert Redfield) did travel further afield during the 1920s and 1930s, most cultural anthropologists concerned themselves with documenting the ruined cultures of the Native Americans, whose communities provided opportunities for fieldwork 'in their own backyards'

(Wolf, 1964: 13). Much of this work was 'applied' in nature. The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act was passed by the US Congress with the aim of providing the means for the Office of Indian Affairs to gain access to local information in its attempts to reverse resource depletion on Indian lands and increase Indian participation in the management of their own economic affairs. An Applied Anthropology Unit was set up in order to look into the creation of self-governing bodies, settlement patterns on newly acquired lands, education policies, local morale and the use of existing local institutions for bringing about 'economic rehabilitation and social control'. The aim was for research to inform administrative action on these issues under the new Act (H.G. Barnett, 1956: 37).

In the late 1930s the Bureau of Indian Affairs embarked upon a large-scale natural resource survey with the Department of Agriculture in which anthropologists also played a role. The results of this intervention included recommendations which emphasised 'the necessity of taking persistent Indian attitudes into account in planning for their social and economic adjustment to dominant American values' (ibid.).

The American Society for Applied Anthropology was founded in 1941 (far earlier than any comparable body in the UK or France) and published a wide range of articles in its quarterly journal, *Human Organisation*. As well as documenting work with Native Americans, the journal covered issues such as the application of anthropology to industry, mental health, health programmes in general, and social work and social welfare. However, although it is clear that anthropologists in the US had begun to adopt a sense of responsibility towards addressing some of the issues of wider society, as an editorial pointed out some 15 years later, applied work in the early 1940s still tended towards a static perspective, with anthropologists rarely seeking to try to explain social change (*Human Organisation*, 1956: 1–3).

The relationship created between anthropologists and policy-makers in the world of 'Indian affairs' exercised a wider influence on the ideas and the institutions of US anthropology. For example, the term 'acculturation' was coined by US anthropologists to explain how 'groups of individuals having different cultures come into intensive firsthand contact, with subsequent major changes in the original culture patterns of one or both groups' (Haviland, 1975: 366). This idea led anthropologists to examine change in terms of contacts between cultures, which led to such new ideas as 'syncretism', where old features blended with the new, or 'deculturation', where aspects of culture were lost altogether.

Acculturation was a useful concept in that it provided anthropologists with a framework for analysing change, but it also contained certain crucial limitations. In presenting cultural change mainly in terms of the reorganisation of different components across cultures, emergent aspects of culture, as well as the more subtle changes in relationships between different institutions, tended to be given less consideration. The emphasis on firsthand contact also overlooked the tremendous power of the media to influence culture without the need for any direct contact.

When the US entered the Second World War in 1941 all this was set to change. During the war, the government made extensive use of professional anthropologists and as many as 90 per cent of anthropologists may have been involved in war activities (Mead, 1977). Some worked in areas occupied by US forces, such as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and were charged with facilitating the cooperation of the local population with the authorities in organised activities such as construction work. Training was given to military officers and administrators in anticipation of future roles administering territories taken from the enemy (H.G. Barnett, 1956: 12). Other anthropologists worked at home in centres for the relocation of Japanese Americans. The US war effort was, according to Eric Wolf (1964: 14), 'a lesson in cultural dominance on a scale never seen before', and this was to have a profound effect on US anthropology: a consciousness grew in which society was seen as far more powerful than individuals.

The result was that many anthropologists withdrew from an involvement in wider social issues through their work, retreating towards a more strictly delineated arena of 'academic' ethnographic and theoretical research – a position which we will consider in more detail later in this chapter.

Anthropology, colonialism and asymmetrical power

The utilisation by anthropologists of opportunities for fieldwork within colonial administrations has subsequently been subject to considerable criticism. The best-known critique is by Talal Asad and colleagues (Asad, 1973), who mounted a powerful retrospective attack on the aims and motivations of these anthropologists and indeed upon anthropology itself, based upon what Asad sees as the subject's colonial origins. It was the unequal encounter between Europe and the Third World, it was argued, which gave the West the opportunity to gain access to the types of cultural information upon which anthropology depends. Anthropology itself became

part of this act of domination, though Asad recognises that anthropology simultaneously – as part of what he terms 'bourgeois consciousness' – provided ideas and activities which did not reflect the ideology of the colonial admininistration.

While it would be wrong to judge the actions of those anthropologists who worked for colonial administrators by the criteria of another age, it is also naive to assume that anthropology's relationship with colonialism was not itself the subject of considerable debate within the discipline and soul-searching among individual anthropologists. For instance, P.H. Gulliver has subsequently reviewed his work among the Arusha people for the colonial government in what used to be Tanganyika in East Africa during the 1950s (Gulliver, 1985). Gulliver's job had been to identify issues of importance and provide relevant information to the government. While some of his recommendations were rejected or ignored, others, such as the need to make more land available for Arusha settlement to relieve pressure on heavily cultivated existing lands, and the reorganisation of Arusha local government to include an elected tribal council with legislative responsibilities, were accepted. He writes:

it has been generally acknowledged that many of us in social anthropology were critical of colonial regimes, both for what they represented – an arm of Western metropolitan exploitation and paternalism, tinged with racialism – and for their inequities and inefficiencies and the downright oppression by particular regimes in particular conflicts. With such a critical attitude, it nevertheless seemed to me in 1952, when I applied for the appointment in Tanganyika, that colonialism was the going regime and it seemed reasonable and attractive to try and work within it, to contribute towards amelioration and improvement and even, just a little, to hasten its end (ibid.: 45).

Alongside those who are critical of anthropology's role in the colonial era, and those who justify their involvement on the basis of their ability to play a role in improving conditions for colonised peoples, there is a third view which argues that in fact the whole relationship, for better or for worse, has been exaggerated. Kuper (1983) suggests that many colonial administrators were sceptical of anthropologists and hostile in general to scholarship, which was regarded as irrelevant to day-to-day issues of administration.[3] Evans-Pritchard, in an article written in 1946, bemoaned the fact that in the previous 15 years of work in the Sudan he had never once been asked his opinion about anything by the authorities there.

The British academic establishment in its allocation of research funding during the 1940s and 1950s tended to reward scholarship rather than applied or practical research. This simultaneously

served to widen the gulf between the anthropologists and colonial administrations (Kuper, 1983: 114–15). Demand from the UK Foreign Office for applied anthropology was weak, and anthropologists themselves did little to counter the views of those who saw them as 'romantic reactionaries' or unworldly, even untrustworthy, eccentrics who all too often 'went native'. Indeed, Kuper points out that: 'anthropologists failed to develop a coherent view of the structure of colonial societies, and so, with their functionalist orientation, they were easily cast into the mould of the stereotype' (ibid.).

Many anthropologists were uninterested in the role which the authorities wanted them to undertake: that of organising people in practical ways to make the task of administration more effective, which as James (1973) points out, would have made anthropology the real 'tool of imperialism'. This was a different type of anthropology from that which most practitioners were prepared to undertake.

Many of these issues continue to be debated within the field of development, with anthropologists worrying about being coopted and compromised and administrators being concerned that anthropologists cannot deliver useful outputs. Gulliver's comments, particularly towards the end of the passage quoted above, also reflect continuing tensions within the discipline between theory and practice and illustrate the dilemma which still haunts many anthropologists considering working in development today.

There have also been long-standing critiques of anthropology's asymmetrical power relations at the micro level, where anthropology has been accused of speaking *about* indigenous peoples but only rarely communicating *with* them (Sponsel, 1992). The data acquired by anthropologists (which depends on their informants' cooperation, hospitality and goodwill) is often hierarchically controlled within professional or commercial institutions, from which it can easily be manipulated, while ethnography tends to be written in languages to which informants may have little or no access. These critiques, as we shall see, have been responded to with varying degrees of success within applied anthropology.

Post-war applied anthropology

Applied anthropology emerged into the post-war era with its reputation somewhat tarnished. Many of the new nationalist leaders in newly independent countries identified anthropologists with the old order.[4] In the US, the dubious activities of many anthropologists during the Second World War undermined the legitimacy of applied work among academic anthropologists. There was therefore

a general reaction among social scientists against government and its interventionist foreign policy, though some anthropologists did contribute to counter-insurgency activities (Hoben, 1982). Project Camelot, for example, initiated in 1964, was a US army social science project focusing on issues of social conflict in the US and countries such as Chile (Belshaw, 1976). There were clear links with dubious US foreign policy objectives: Project Camelot caused furious debate in academic circles and was widely discredited. In Britain, anthropology was withdrawing from its remaining colonial links and with these changes lost a major source of applied funding. Furthermore, anthropology's official influence in the post-colonial world faded as the British Foreign Office was reorganised during the 1950s and there were no anthropologists involved when the Overseas Development Ministry was established in 1964 (Grillo, 1985: 16).

Some anthropologists were able to expand their applied roles in the post-war period in the US by taking up positions in official policy circles and by advising on the Truman government's new programme of foreign aid, which, as noted in Chapter 1, effectively launched the concept of development assistance to the South. New agencies and institutions were rapidly established for this purpose. However, the impact of these anthropologists on development theory and practice was not sustained, and the new science of development economics held more sway than anthropology. For those anthropologists who continued to work in applied fields, problems and tensions remained in their relationships with the bureaucrats and the policy-makers. Anthropologists tended to lack status within the administrative hierarchy, especially when compared with engineers and economists. H.G. Barnett (1956: 49) wrote at the time: 'No matter how tactfully it is phrased, the truth is that anthropologists and administrators do not, on the whole, get along well together.'

These difficulties had surfaced particularly in the case of anthropologists working in association with government agencies, where prejudices, preconceptions and doubts on both sides tended to make attempted collaboration a rather marginal endeavour. By the early 1970s, very few anthropologists remained among the members of the International Co-operation Administration (ICA), which was the forerunner of USAID, even though this had once been the country's main employer of anthropologists (Hoben, 1982: 354).

Applied anthropologists did not receive much respect from their more academic colleagues either. Although their status within the discipline as a whole had never been particularly high in either Britain or the US, in some academic departments the pursuit of

applied anthropology now came to be considered, in Lucy Mair's (1969: 8) oft-quoted words, as an 'occupation for the half-baked'. A continuing divergence between mainstream academic anthropology and applied anthropology promoted a feeling among many university-based staff that only the second-rate anthropologists carried out applied work, while the 'real' anthropologists worked on loftier, self-determined subject matter.

These changes did not only occur in the development-related areas of applied anthropology. Montgomery and Bennett (1979) describe a general move in the US away from practical anthropological concerns in the fields of domestic food and nutrition studies after the Second World War; areas where Mead and Redfield had made important contributions during the 1940s. Instead there was a 'return voyage to tribal ethnology and theoretical interests' away from applied concerns (Montgomery and Bennett, cited in Rhoades, 1984: 3). At the same time, many new anthropology departments were created after the war and a number of anthropologists took the opportunity in the 1950s and 1960s to enter academia and gain 'respectability'.

In India, the traditional concerns of anthropology with minority or 'tribal' communities (as they are still known locally) led to the institutionalisation of anthropology within the newly independent state. Anthropological texts formed part of the training given to Indian civil servants. Anthropology was seen as having a specialised contribution to make in the task of national social and economic development, and a government Department of Anthropology established in 1948 became a Central Advisory Board for Anthropology in 1958, charged with furthering the economic development of the 'tribal' areas. Nevertheless a distrust of anthropologists' motives continued in some quarters of Indian society, where they were (not without evidence) suspected of being more interested in keeping 'tribal' people 'in a zoo' than in helping to address their real problems (Mathur, 1989: 43). In Africa, another 15 years or so of colonial government had to be endured before anthropology began to find a place within newly independent countries.[5]

In the West at least, few anthropologists had attempted to forge links with professionals in other fields. This isolationist stance stood in stark contrast to their counterparts in economics, whose practitioners were far more prepared to put themselves at the service of wider society. In contrast, anthropology remained largely rooted within the academic establishment, and in the US was based within liberal arts colleges as opposed to science campuses, isolated from the practical concerns of economics, management and agriculture.

Anthropologists in general gained a reputation for being overconcerned with the intellectual independence of their academic agendas and unrealistically inhibited about the dangers of 'selling out'.

This tendency was particularly true in the case of agriculture. While agricultural economists had shown a readiness to place themselves within practical development situations, anthropologists had not, despite the relevance of their concerns. The discipline of agricultural economics benefited from the wider model of a 'client relationship with society' which had been pursued by the economics establishment (Thurow, 1977, cited in Rhoades, 1984: 4). However, some agricultural anthropologists in the US in the 1950s and 1960s did give serious attention to applied issues, but these tended to be individuals who were only occasionally successful in making a significant impact in practical terms. As Rhoades (1984: ix) points out, while Redfield and Warner had written as long ago as 1940 of anthropology's potential problem-solving role in agriculture through its ability to provide insights into the social and environmental aspects of farmers' lives:

Over the four decades since the article appeared, the paths of anthropologists and agricultural scientists rarely crossed, a most surprising circumstance since anthropologists have dealt more directly and intimately with farming peoples than any other group of social or biological scientists.

Of course, as we shall see in Chapter 3, there were important exceptions. Geertz explored development issues in Indonesia from a contextual, historical perspective and his work was written in a form which was accessible to non-anthropologists. For instance, *Peddlers and Princes* (1963) tells the story of the differing histories of entrepreneurship in two Indonesian towns, which he related, drawing upon Weber's ideas about religion and economics, to historical and cultural factors. *Agricultural Involution*, published by Geertz in the same year, was widely read and cited by agricultural economists and others working on Indonesia, since it engaged with agricultural production issues, ecology and agrarian change. From our vantage point in the 1990s, many of the assumptions contained within these studies now seem tainted with a modernisation perspective on development, such as the reliance on concepts such as 'take-off'. But there can be no doubt that Geertz's work played an important role in continuing to develop links between the concerns of anthropology and development, while producing work which remained at the forefront of wider academic debate.

If anthropologists in the US had by this stage lost their 'political innocence', as Hoben (1982: 356) has pointed out, a number of new doors did open for the revitalisation of applied anthropology. For example, the concept of 'action anthropology' evolved from the work of Sol Tax and his colleagues among Native American communities and attempted to move beyond the confines of both academic and applied anthropology by pursuing a responsibility to the members of a community side by side with the acquisition of knowledge (Polgar, 1979: 409). According to Tax (Blanchard, 1979: 438), the anthropologist undertaking action anthropology has two goals: 'He [sic] wants to help a group of people to solve a problem, and he [sic] wants to learn something in the process.'

As well as allowing for the explicit involvement of the anthropologist in community problem-solving, this approach emphasised the need for the anthropologist to present his or her findings to both the academic and the 'native' community. This was a new idea: whereas the Bureau of American Ethnology had been established as an arm of US Congress to generate information for policy implementation towards indigenous people, no comparable information flow had been provided for those people themselves (Sponsel, 1992).

By the 1960s, anthropologists who were belatedly adopting an anti-colonial stance found theoretical support for a more practical involvement in radical developmental activities through the emergence of 'dependency theory' (see Chapter 1). A number of anthropologists produced work which drew on the ideas of political economy to locate ethnographies within the wider international economic relationships affecting communities under capitalist transformation. Two influential examples of this type of work are Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People without History* (1982), which is discussed in Chapter 3, and Sidney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power* (1985).

Many anthropologists within the US mainstream had become more interested in the effects of economic change on social differentiation within communities, were more open to sampling and quantitative methodologies and had begun to generate bodies of work on issues such as health-care delivery, technology adoption and education, and a number of these joined USAID (Hoben, 1982: 356). Development agencies were at last reflecting long-standing applied anthropological concerns, and more attention was being paid to the social and cultural context of USAID projects.

Anthropologists from the 1970s onwards were therefore able to make some impact on the allocation of development resources to low-income groups, as official policy gradually recognised the limi-

tations of the 'trickle-down' approach; but they cannot be said to have successfully challenged the dominant development paradigm. The tradition of applied anthropology at home was continued by, among others, Cyril Belshaw, whose book *The Sorceror's Apprentice* (1976) advocated closer ties with policy-makers by elaborating a concept of 'social performance' which could evaluate the effectiveness of a social system in delivering goods, services and 'satisfactions' in the eyes of its people.

Despite a loyal commitment to applied anthropology among small numbers of anthropologists throughout the previous decades, it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s in the UK that larger numbers of anthropologists began engaging once again with policy issues and needs-based research. Activist or socially concerned anthropologists began to reject the confines of a purely academic job and sought to apply anthropological knowledge to the important domestic social issues of the day. For instance, during this period anthropologists became involved with 'race relations' (Grillo, 1985: 2). One of the earliest and most basic insights which anthropologists provided at this time was, according to Beattie (1964: 271), a set of ideas about how recognisable physical differences between different peoples can be manipulated on a symbolic level by those wishing to exploit or perpetuate social, economic and cultural differences.

Some UK anthropologists began once more to turn their attention to development issues in the South, inspired by the new dependency perspectives with their critique of neo-classical economic assumptions and their assault on modernisation theory, which many anthropologists had long regarded as being crudely generalised and ethnocentric (T. Barnett, 1977). Other anthropologists opted to work within mainstream development agencies, as occasional consultants in development projects. Robertson's (1984) work advocated more involvement and responsibility among anthropologists in the administrative issues of planned development, rather than simply working with members of small-scale rural communities. Somewhat later than in the US, the British Overseas Development Administration began to appoint full-time 'social development advisors', many of whom were anthropologists, but it was not until the 1980s that the concerns of 'social development' began to be reflected more strongly in ODA policy and practice (Rew, 1985; Grillo, 1985).

Along with a resurgence in applied anthropology in the UK during this time, and no doubt related to it, was the growing problem of academic unemployment from the early 1980s onwards. Social science research funding in particular and higher education

spending in general were cut back severely under the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher. There were few teaching jobs or research openings for trained anthropologists within the university system and opportunities outside academia for working anthropologists suddenly became a pressing issue within Britain's professional associations. The dangers of academic research agendas becoming determined wholly or in part by the demands of the market place under conditions of reduced public expenditure during the 1980s led to fears about the academic credibility of applied anthropology.[6]

The status distinction between 'academic' and 'applied' work lives on in some UK academic departments; while in Canada, applied work is taught alongside generalist courses in order to try to avoid the dangers of separating the two (Warry, 1992: 155). The American Anthropological Association, the main professional body for anthropologists in the US, lists 'applied anthropology' as a legitimate field of the discipline (this is somewhat less apparent in corresponding UK literature). Applied anthropologists have continued to undertake work and publish on a wide range of important social issues. Recent articles in *Human Organisation* have included studies on the relationship between AIDS knowledge and behavioural change (Vincke et al., 1993), the perceptions of economic realities among drug dealers (Dembo et al., 1993), and the adaptive problems of General Motors personnel and their families during overseas assignments (Briody and Chrisman, 1992). Work in 'radical anthropology' and 'action anthropology' has continued, though outside the mainstream, to explore issues of political action.[7]

As we have already noted in Chapter 1, mainstream anthropology embarked upon a period of re-evaluation during the 1980s, with discussions about representation and textuality, based mainly on the critique set in motion by the work of Clifford and Marcus (1986). This post-modern anthropology concerned itself primarily with the need for a reflexive approach to ethnographic writing. The concept of practice was to some extent relegated to the back burner again, despite its centrality to issues such as anthropology's relationship to development and the growing interest among sociologists and political scientists about the new social movements which were beginning to challenge and change social and political realities at the local level (Escobar, 1992). The realisation that much of applied anthropology had been taking place within what Escobar (1995) calls the 'dominant discourse' began to stimulate discussion about anthropology's potential to challege its hegemony and to draw

attention to other, less visible discourses. These themes are returned to in subsequent chapters.

There are signs that the insights of post-modernism could lead applied anthropology towards new approaches in keeping with radical development perspectives. A recent article by Johannsen (1992: 79) suggests the continuation of Tax's tradition of action anthropology in which anthropology provides

an infrastructure for sustained self-reflection by the people being studied, which will ultimately produce a process of self-assessment. It aims at empowering people by providing a context that better enables them to represent themselves, their culture and concerns.

Johannsen advocates steering a new path between trying to solve posed problems (applied anthropology) and representing a cultural system by one's own writing (interpretative anthropology). Both types of approach recognise that the practice of anthropology is essentially an *intervention* of some kind, either intentionally or unintentionally. By accepting this and making it explicit, a post-modern applied anthropology can provide the means by which people within a community represent themselves and identify the nature and solutions of their problems. It remains to be seen how this could work in practice, but these ideas come close to the types of action research being undertaken by some NGOs and other grass-roots organisations. We will be discussing this in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Applied development roles for anthropologists

The preceding sections have dealt briefly with the history of applied anthropology. Now we need to turn to what it is that anthropologists have to offer, and what they actually do. What follows is an exploration of the various types of activities which applied anthropologists have undertaken in the development field.

The traditional methodology of social anthropology is what is known rather vaguely as 'participant observation': that is, the principle of living within a community for a substantial period of time – 'fieldwork', which might be expected to take one or two years – and immersing oneself in the local culture, work, food and language, while remaining as unobtrusive as possible. Many of the earliest anthropologists recorded their observations in a fieldwork diary, taking copious notes on all aspects of life, to be written up later as a monograph or ethnographic text, and without necessarily having a sense of the particular research questions they wished to

address until they were well into their period of study or even until after they had returned home.

What resulted from this approach (and many of anthropology's classic texts fall into this category) tended to be highly personalised accounts voiced as objective accounts, with little explicit discussion of research methodology. This, coupled with the convention of changing names of people and places, meant there was very little opportunity for others subsequently to verify the more controversial aspects of anthropological accounts. In one of the more famous examples of anthropological revisionism, elements of Margaret Mead's work in Western Samoa were challenged in a controversial book by Derek Freeman (1983), who alleged that some of Mead's key findings on gender and sex differences were based on misleading information which had been provided by Samoan adolescents who had found it amusing to mislead an anthropologist with stories of fictional sexual exploits. As noted in the previous chapter, this questioning of 'classic' anthropology reached a more serious crisis point during the mid-1980s when post-modern critiques (e.g. Clifford and Marcus, 1986) cast severe doubts upon the authority of the anthropologist and the texts he or she produced.

The blandness of participant observation as a technical methodological term in the 1960s and 1970s was gradually addressed by the growing body of more defined data collection techniques which anthropologists began to use under the general category of participant observation: case study collection, questionnaire surveys, structured and semi-structured interviewing, even computer modelling and the supplementing of qualitative material with quantitative data. Nevertheless, participant observation has retained its centrality to the work of many anthropologists, and anthropologists have in general retained their fondness for qualitative rather than quantitative data.

Applied anthropologists have drawn upon a number of key insights from wider anthropology in order to equip themselves for their work. In terms of research methodologies, the main change is that participant obervation must normally now be undertaken within a tightly circumscribed time-frame, with a set of key questions (provided by the agency commissioning the research) replacing the more open-ended 'blank notebook' approach. Furthermore, the applied anthropologist knows that his or her findings will be appreciated far more if they can be presented concisely and made to include at least an element of quantification.

At a more theoretical level, applied anthropologists have tried to use an awareness of Western bias and ethnocentrism to provide a

counterweight to the less culturally sensitive perspectives of planners and technicians. Applied anthropologists have utilised the once-influential distinction between the 'emic' (internal cultural or linguistic cultural categories) and the 'etic' (objective or universal categories) in order to highlight to development people the importance and variety of people's own categories of thought and action.[8] In other words, what people say they are doing may not be the same as what they are actually doing, and what projects set out to do may in practice have very different outcomes.

Anthropology's 'actor-oriented' perspective (Long, 1977; Long and Long, 1992) provides a valuable entry point and a 'way of seeing' which is appropriate to specific development projects, particularly in rural areas or with specific sections of the community. Development projects can themselves be viewed as 'communities'. Combined with this, participant observation, with the direct contact with local people which it involves, might be seen as less 'top-down' than other methods, such as the survey or questionnaire. Finally, applied anthropologists have drawn upon anthropology's holistic approach to social and economic life, which stresses an interrelatedness that is often missed by other practitioners. This was seen as having the potential to make useful links between the micro and the macro perspectives, as well as revealing hidden, complex realities which have a bearing on project-based work.

Equipped with these general insights, anthropologists have set about their applied work in a considerable number of different roles. Firth (1981) has set out a general typology and his list forms a useful starting point for our discussion. Perhaps the most common role is that of mediation by the anthropologist between a community and outsiders and, following from this, the attempt to interpret a culture to outsiders. Anthropologists can sometimes contribute to the formation of public opinion on issues relating to a small-scale community, such as through journalism or participation in other media. A more active level of participation might include helping to provide direct aid during times of crisis for a society being studied. Finally, anthropologists can undertake client-oriented research either as commissioned academics or as professional consultants.

Since applied anthropology, as we have seen, began its life within the arena of public administration, many applied anthropologists have continued to concern themselves with planned development. Lucy Mair's *Anthropology and Development* (1984) provides an overview of the anthropologist's role as intermediary between 'the developers' and 'the developed': in which anthropologists should act as go-betweens between the top-down developers and the

voiceless communities. If a development intervention is to achieve its objectives, then the anthropologist has a responsibility to become involved to try to ensure that certain kinds of problems are avoided. Mair recounts hair-raising stories of planners foisting inappropriate projects on hapless rural people, which include resettlement schemes where people are moved without adequate compensation, and new technology resulting in economic benefits being captured by men within the household at the expense of women. But Mair's is essentially an optimistic view of the potential of anthropology to render development more people-centred, and she reassures us that 'if I concentrate on the disasters, it is because they are what anthropological knowledge might help to prevent on later occasions' (1984: 111).

Applied anthropologists and development projects

Anthropologists are also increasingly being employed by development agencies to help with project design, appraisal and evaluation. Since the Second World War the notion of the 'project' has become central to mainstream development activity, whether centred on large-scale infrastructural work such as the building of a dam or bridge, or 'softer' areas such as health or education provision. Projects tend to pass through a series of staged activities, often known as the 'project cycle', and this process is depicted in Figure 2.1.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the World Bank and the United Nations were promoting what they termed 'integrated rural development', in which conventional planning methods were cast aside in favour of a measure of community participation (at least at the level of intention) in setting needs and a more comprehensive approach to tackling problems on a number of sectoral fronts simultaneously – for example, agriculture, health-care provision and education components might be linked in one large project. Many of these projects unfortunately remained conservative in character as large bureaucracies proved themselves incapable (or unwilling) to involve local people in decision-making (Black, 1991).

As Pottier (1993) points out, the idea that economic and social change can be framed within projects is central to the top-down, controlling urge of development activity. When questions are asked within the conceptual framework of a project, it is all too easy to submit to the idea of 'social engineering' and to forget that most 'complications' involve real people in real-life situations around which straightforward decision-making boundaries cannot be drawn.
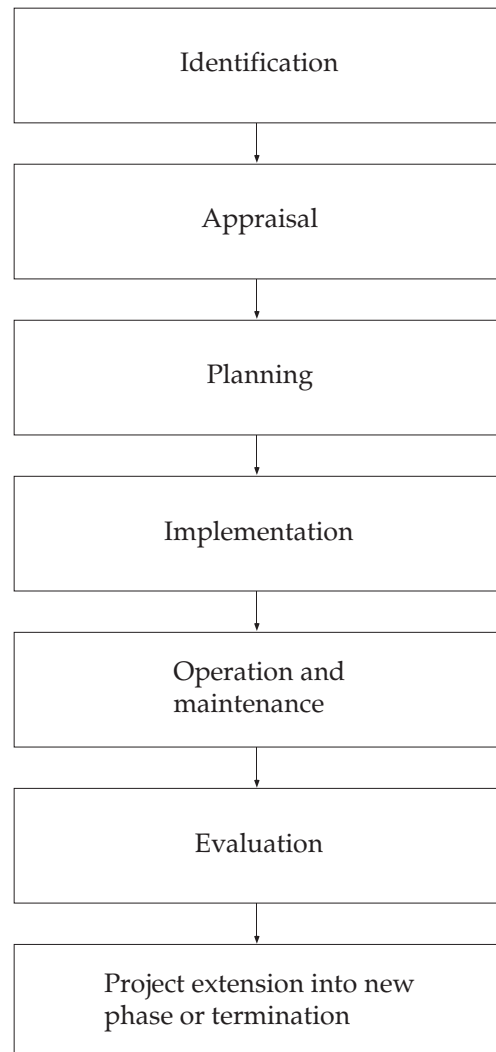
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Identification        │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               │
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│          Appraisal           │
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│          Planning            │
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│        Implementation        │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               │
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│       Operation and          │
│        maintenance           │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│          Evaluation          │
└─────────────────────────────┘
               │
               ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Project extension into new │
│     phase or termination     │
└─────────────────────────────┘
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Figure 2.1: The project cycle

But it should not be surprising to find that many applied anthropologists have ventured into the world of development projects in the sincere hope that better results can be achieved. They have been invited to carry out 'impact studies' among the local community to

assess whether or not the project's objectives have been met. Sometimes these studies can be combined with academic, longer-term research concerns in familiar cultural contexts, while others are 'one-offs' in less familar areas of the world for the anthropologist. Many anthropologists have formed part of interdisciplinary teams assembled for short periods in order to undertake time-bound consultancies which investigate these sets of issues.

Lucy Mair (1984) fully endorses the interventionist approach and argues that the applied anthropologist is in a position to warn those active in development of the 'likely resistance to be met' with regard to development projects from among the communities for which such projects are designed. He or she is also well placed to try to 'register the discontent' of people bypassed by development processes and to pass this information to those in a position to make improvements. The danger of Mair's position is that it retains a tendency to treat communities as being 'acted upon' in the development process, instead of actively determining the direction and conditions of change through a more bottom-up, participatory involvement. There are other pitfalls: anthropologists can be viewed by donors as the representatives of the local people and asked simply to provide certificates of social acceptability for projects. Another area of difficulty has been the tendency to bring in the anthropologists only when things begin to go wrong, rather than having them involved from the start. As Robertson has put it, anthropologists have often been used only as 'pathologists picking over project corpses', with little involvement in planning (1984: 294).

Applied anthropology and advocacy

These issues have led some anthropologists away from mediation and project-based work towards advocacy. Given contemporary post-modern debates surrounding 'voice', and the legitimacy of the pronouncements of outsiders about 'disadvantaged' groups which were mentioned in the last chapter, this role is not without its problems. Some of the pitfalls of advocacy are exemplified by the work of Oscar Lewis, who in research in a slum in the 1950s in Mexico saw himself as both a 'student and a spokesman' for the poor, who (it was assumed) were unable to speak for themselves. The publication in Spanish of Lewis's book about the 'culture of poverty' in a slum in Mexico (*The Children of Sanchez*) caused a political storm and he was accused by the government of having insulted the culture of the people of Mexico (Belshaw, 1976).

In spite of these problems, advocacy has a long tradition in applied anthropology. During the 1960s, in the field of resettlement issues, Thayer Scudder and others struggled to influence the authorities and agencies involved to take the needs of relocatees more seriously. Scudder was a pioneer of what became known as 'resettlement anthropology', though the advocacy role often adopted by the anthropologist in this context brings with it many risks and responsibilities (De Wet, 1991). Advocacy has now developed into a relatively well-established tradition within anthropology, at least within the US, where activities have included lobbying in state legislatures for increases in welfare rights, fighting to improve conditions in women's prisons and testifying before congressional committees to support child health-care programmes (M. Harris, 1991).

The appearance of what has been termed 'advocacy anthropology' by its practitioners (such as that practised by the Cultural Survival group – see Miller, 1995) has involved itself with the efforts of 'indigenous' people to gain more control over their lives (Escobar, 1992). For example, the right of people to retain their own cultural identities and to maintain access to their local natural resources (particularly land) is being contested in the United States, Canada, Australia, Brazil and many other countries. Anthropologists have played a role in organisations such as Survival International and the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). These concerns have also generated a broader form of what has been called 'committed anthropology', which may extend outside the formal academic career environment or the development mainstream in order to bring to public attention cases of genocide and ethnocide, taking action in campaigning about such abuses and making requests for material help for communities under threat (Polgar, 1979: 416). There have also been calls for anthropologists to pay more attention to issues of conflict resolution, which might allow a 'fusion of social commitment and critical insight' (Deshen, 1992: 184).

In the development context, the advocacy role has tended to be more associated with resistance to outside interventions rather than prima facie agenda-building; for example, supporting opposition from local communities to the building of a dam, or the preservation of local culture in the face of change and repression. The new emphasis on the idea of 'participation' within development (which we discuss further in Chapter 5), along with soul-searching within anthropology itself, has meant that anthropologists are now keener to see themselves as facilitating disadvantaged groups within a community in finding their voices, rather than speaking on behalf of

them. A shift may be underway which takes the anthropologist away from mediating between people and projects towards facilitating better communication between communities and outsiders.

To some extent these advocacy and 'social mobilisation' roles are ones which many NGOs and community groups already fulfil themselves. There has been a tremendous growth in recent years of NGO activities, with advocacy and lobbying an important part of the agenda. The case for anthropologists' involvement here may be weakened in many contexts, and this will be discussed in Chapter 7. Nevertheless, anthropologists are in a good position from which to contribute: helping to facilitate or create situations in which, say, hitherto 'voiceless' low-income farmers can put across their views to policy-makers through their own forms of local organisation, and helping to network information and lobbying policy-makers in the North, are perhaps some of the key roles which remain for the applied anthropologist in the development context.[9]

Conclusion

Various other approaches to development issues have been taken by anthropologists. For example, although anthropologists such as Lucy Mair explicitly reject the dependency school of development theory with its implication that only by revolution, not evolutionary change, can real development take place, more radical anthropologists have sought to develop explicitly just such a 'revolutionary anthropology' (Stavenhagen, 1971).

Rather than standing apart from the subjects of study, some anthropologists have therefore accepted various degrees of involvement with the people among whom they have worked. Sometimes this takes the form of helping out in various ways with local problems (such as providing medical supplies or taking a member of the community for treatment outside the locality), or trying to help the community through providing resources, such as contributing to the building of a new school. Other anthropologists have taken a more active role in community affairs, adopting the view that their research implies wider responsibilities for bringing about change, as debates about empowerment and participation within development have begun to cross-fertilise with the post-modern questioning of conventional anthropological theory and practice.

In subsequent chapters of this book we shall further explore the difficult issues faced by anthropologists working in development in the 1990s. Is anthropology hopelessly compromised by its involvement in mainstream development or can anthropologists offer an

effective challenge to the dominant paradigms of development? We will argue that anthropologists can suggest alternative ways of seeing and thus step outside the discourse, both by supporting resistance to development and by working within the discourse to challenge and unpick its assumptions. The anthropological critique of development is often a piecemeal task, resembling a constant chipping away at a giant rock, but the rock is not immovable.

3 THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT

Anthropologists, change and development

While anthropologists have long made practical contributions to planned change and policy, many have also studied development as a field of academic enquiry in itself. Although much of this work has 'applied' uses, its primary objective has been to contribute to wider theoretical debates within anthropology and development studies. In this chapter we shall explore some of this work, and attempt to show how the distinction between what Norman Long calls 'knowledge for understanding' versus 'knowledge for action' is largely false. In other words, the 'anthropology of development' cannot easily be separated from 'development anthropology' (i.e. applied anthropology). As Long points out, such a dichotomy obscures the inextricability of both types of knowledge, thus encouraging practitioners to view everything not written in report form as 'irrelevant' and researchers to ignore the practical implications of their findings (Long and Long, 1992: 3). As we shall see in this and the next chapter, the insights gleaned from knowledge produced primarily for academic purposes can have important effects upon the ways in which development is understood. This in turn can affect practical action and policy.

Rather than necessarily being trapped within the dominant discourses of development, we shall also suggest that the anthropology of development can be used to challenge its key assumptions and representations, both working within it towards constructive change, and providing alternative ways of seeing which question the very foundations of developmental thought. Research which focuses upon local resistance to development activities, or which contradicts static and dualistic notions of traditional and modern