Anthropology and development : the uneasy relationship

David Lewis

ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT: THE UNEASY RELATIONSHIP

DAVID LEWIS

The relationship between anthropology and development has long been one fraught with difficulty, ever since Bronislaw Malinowski advocated a role for anthropologists as policy advisers to African colonial administrators and Evans-Pritchard urged them instead to do precisely the opposite and distance themselves from the tainted worlds of policy and 'applied' involvement (Grillo 2002). This chapter briefly introduces the concept of development and summarises the history of the relationship between development and anthropologists. Along the way, it considers three main positions which anthropologists have taken and may still take in relation to development. The first, that of antagonistic observer, is one characterised by critical distance and a basic hostility towards both the ideas of development and the motives of those who seek to promote it. The second is one of reluctant participation where institutional financial pressures and livelihood opportunities have led some anthropologists, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, to offer their professional services to policy makers and development organisations. The third is the long-standing tradition in which anthropologists have attempted to combine their community or agency-level interactions with people at the level of research with involvement with or on behalf of marginalised or poor people in the developing world.

Since the emergence of the term in its current usage after the Second World War, the concept of development went on to become one of the dominant ideas of the twentieth century, embodying a set of aspirations and techniques aimed at bringing about positive change or progress in Africa, Asia, Latin America and other areas of the world. Development brings with it a set of confusing, shifting terminologies and has been prone to rapidly changing fashions. The popular demarcation of 'First World' (Western capitalist), 'Second World' (Soviet, Eastern Bloc and other socialist areas) and 'Third World' (the rest) became common during the Cold War. More recently, the still common distinction between a wealthy developed 'North' and a poor, less developed 'South' has its origins in the UN sponsored Brandt Commission report of 1980. The policy language of 'basic needs' in the 1970s has shifted to new paradigms of 'sustainable development' in the 1990s, alongside more recent attention to 'building civil society' and 'good governance'. The language of development, as well as its practices, has changed over time as the global context has also shifted, indicating a growing sophistication in its understanding of problems of poverty as well as perhaps

a lack of confidence in some of the basic assumptions of the 'developers'.

Whatever the terminology that is in vogue (the field is characterised by an ever-shifting landscape of labels, concepts and fashions), the 'development industry' remains a powerful and complex constellation of public and private agencies channelling large amounts of international development assistance, including inter-governmental organisations of the United Nations, multilateral and bilateral donors such as the World Bank or the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and a vast array of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) ranging from small specialised, grassroots concerns to large transnational organisations such as Oxfam or the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC).[1] Relations between anthropologists and the world of development ideas and practices date from the early days of the discipline during the colonial period and have continued, in various forms, up to the present. Such relationships have encompassed the spheres of research and action, from positions of sympathetic involvement as well as the stances of disengaged critique or even outright hostility. Whatever point of view anthropologists may take about development, the concept of development, itself a diverse and highly contested term, remains one of the central organising and defining systems of our age and will therefore continue to demand anthropological attention.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

'Development' in its modern sense first came to official prominence when it was used by United States President Truman in 1949 as part of the rationale for post-War reconstruction in 'underdeveloped' areas of the world, based on provision of international financial assistance and modern technology transfer. Development has subsequently been strongly associated primarily with economic growth. However, there has also been a growing recognition that while the well-being of an economy may form a precondition for development it is not a sufficient one, and that attention too has to be paid to issues such as income and asset redistribution to reduce inequality, support for human rights and social welfare, and the sustainable stewardship of environmental resources. The Human Development Index developed by the United Nations Development Programme at the start of the 1990s has attempted to address such concerns, at least in part, by combining gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, life expectancy and a measure of educational attainment (see Blim infra).

---

[1] The overall scale of international development aid is difficult to quantify. Recent figures quoted by Little (2003) indicate that the World Bank provided over $6.8 billion in 2000 to poor countries for economic development, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) gave $54 billion in development aid. NGOs in 1998 distributed around $10 billion, half of which consisted of official funds from the donors above.

However, few words offer as many definitional difficulties as ‘development’, and it remains a highly contested term. While dictionary definitions focus on the idea of ‘a stage of growth or advancement’, development remains a complex and ambiguous term which carries with it several layers of meaning. As a verb, ‘development’ refers to activities required to bring about change or progress, and is often linked strongly to economic growth. As an adjective, ‘development’ implies a standard against which different rates of progress may be compared, and it therefore takes on a subjective, judgmental element in which societies or communities are sometimes compared and then positioned at different ‘stages’ of an evolutionary development schema. Indeed, development is often understood in Darwinian terms as a biological metaphor for organic growth and evolution, while in a Durkheimian sense it can be associated with ideas about the increasing social, economic and political complexity in transitions from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ societies. At the same time, ‘development’ has also come to be associated with ‘planned social change’ and the idea of an external intervention by one group in the affairs of another. Often this is in the form of a project, as part of conscious efforts by outsiders to intervene in a less developed community or country in order to produce positive change. Finally, within radical critiques, development is viewed in terms of an organised system of power and practice which has formed part of the colonial and neo-colonial domination of poorer countries by the West.

The belief in the promotion of progress arose during the period of the Enlightenment, in the eighteenth century in Northern Europe. During this period, the rise of competitive capitalism undermined prevailing relations of feudalism and ushered in a period in Western thought which emphasised rational knowledge, the rise of technology and science and the dichotomies of ‘backward’ and ‘advanced’ societies. By the colonial era, it was common for the colonisers to construct themselves as rational agents of progress, while local people were portrayed as child-like or backward. The introduction of European-style religion, education and administrative systems went hand in hand with the quest for economic gain. By the early twentieth century, the relationship between colonial administration and ideas of planned change had become more explicit, and responsibility for economic development came to be complemented by the incorporation of welfare objectives and responsibility for minimum levels of health, education and nutrition for colonial subjects.

After 1945, in Europe and North America, development was increasingly presented in terms of economic growth and modernity. The benefits of economic growth would ‘trickle down’ to the poor, while the transfer of new technology would bring material benefits. Modernisation theory, under which these ideas came to be loosely grouped, was exemplified by the approach of US economist W. W. Rostow. He argued that there were a series of stages of development through which traditional, low-income societies moved,

ultimately reaching a point of ‘take off’, based on financial investment, improved governance and modern technologies, which would eventually set them on a course of self-sustaining growth. Part of this tradition continues today (though without the central position previously envisaged for the state) in the priorities of international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which favour ‘structural adjustment’ polices to ‘free’ markets and reduce the role of government, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which locates development within the reform of international trade regulations and the freer movement of capital between North and South. Although state-led technology transfer has become a less favoured development strategy since the 1980s, the technological paradigm of development remains stronger than ever in the bio-technology movement, which still promises technological solutions to development problems in agriculture, such as the nutritionally-enhanced ‘golden rice’ currently being developed by international agribusiness.

A stronger emphasis on historical and political factors was found in the ‘dependency’ school of development theorists, which brought together radical scholars many from the United Nations Economic Commission of Latin America (ECLA) (see Eades, ‘Anthropology, political economy and world-system theory’ infra). The dependency theorists rejected the modernisation paradigm and focused instead on the unequal relationship between North and South in relation to terms of trade, arguing that an active process of ‘underdevelopment’ had taken place as peripheral economies were integrated into the capitalist system on unequal terms, primarily as providers of cheap raw materials for export to rich industrialised countries. The dependency approach was popularised by the work of A. G. Frank during the 1970s, but became less influential during the 1980s as it came under attack from a number of different directions. It was criticised for oversimplifying Marx’s ideas about the simultaneously destructive and progressive force of capitalism in relation to feudalism, for downplaying the range of strategies deployed by peripheral individuals and groups in resisting and renegotiating their structural position within the global system, and for remaining silent on solutions to problems of poverty and underdevelopment short of outright revolution. Nevertheless, the legacy of dependency theory remains, and elements of its central ideas continue within current critiques of international trade rules, subsidy regimes and supply chains, which are increasingly being taken up by mainstream movements and radical activists alike.

Frustration with the scale of global poverty, exploitation and inequality led some academics and activists to usher in an era of ‘post-development’ thinking in the 1990s, which advocated a radical rethinking of the assumptions and the goals of development, characterised in this critique as a Western cultural mind-set which imposed homogenising materialist values, idealised rational-scientific power and created unprecedented levels of environmental destruction. Much of this critique was not entirely new, but

instead continued Marxist and dependency theorists' concerns with new forms of colonial domination and the damage to diversity caused by cruder versions of modernisation.

ANTAGONISTIC OBSERVERS

Some anthropologists select the ideas, processes and institutions of development as their field of study, but such work has tended to be highly suspicious, if not frankly critical, in its approach. At one level, anthropological work on development has flowed seamlessly from many anthropologists' long-standing concerns with the social and cultural effects of economic change in the less developed areas of the world. Such work has shown how the incorporation of local communities into wider capitalist relations of production and exchange has profound implications for both. For example, Wilson's (1942) work in Zambia in the late 1930s showed the ways in which industrialisation and urbanisation processes were structured by colonial policies that discouraged permanent settlement and led to social instability, as massive levels of male migration took place back and forth between rural and urban areas. Long's (1977) 'actor-oriented' work in Peru explored local, small-scale processes of growth, entrepreneurialism and diversification in an area for which the dependency theorists might have argued that there would only be stagnation, challenging macro-level structural analyses by focusing on the complexity and dynamism of people's own strategies and struggles. Updating such approaches to understanding social and economic change, Arce and Long (2000) make the case for the role of the anthropologist as furthering understanding of the 'localised modernities' through ethnographic study of the ways in which dominant development processes are fragmented, reinterpreted and embedded.

A more explicit area of anthropological analysis in relation to development has been research on the performance of development projects, by studying the ways in which such projects operate within and act upon local populations. Here the dominant emphasis has been to understand the reasons why they 'fail', with few studies bothering to examine why some projects 'succeed'.[2] A classic study of this kind was Barnett's (1977) analysis of the Gezira land-leasing scheme in Sudan introduced by the British in the 1920s, which aimed to control local labour and secure cotton exports. The study found that the paternalistic structure of the intervention led to stagnation and dependency, since there were no incentives for farmers to innovate. Another key theme within anthropological work has been the gendered character of outsiders' understandings of productive relations and intra-household processes. For example, Rogers (1980) set out the patriarchal assumptions brought by development planners to the design and implementation of

[2] Recent work by Mosse (2003) challenges this instrumentalist view of projects and development policy by analysing the ways in which a wide range of interests and coalitions in practice negotiate the labelling of 'success' or 'failure' along political lines.

development interventions, such as the skewed emphasis on the nuclear family structures in contexts where extended families are the norm, or an engagement only with male farmers or household heads to the exclusion of women's roles in production and decision making. Finally, in another influential study, Mamdani (1972) laid bare the gulf which existed between the outsiders' assumptions and local peoples' priorities, when he analysed the failure of a family planning project in India. This failure was believed by planners to be the result of people's ignorance of the advantages of smaller families and of family planning techniques, but Mamdani showed that in reality it was the outcome of strong incentives among the poor to maintain high fertility levels, since large families were given high cultural and economic value.

The focus within these kinds of anthropological studies has mainly been on the so-called 'beneficiaries' of development assistance, and in general there has been rather less anthropological work undertaken on the internal organisation and workings of the aid industry itself. Research on the so-called 'developers' who seek to bring change to local populations, though less plentiful, has nevertheless proved a fertile and instructive field of study when it has been carried out. A recurring theme has been the ways in which encounters between outside officials and local communities are structured by 'top down' hierarchies of power and authority. For instance, Robertson (1984) examined the relations between local people and bureaucrats and focused particularly on the state, providing an anthropological critique of the theory and practice of planning. The well-known work of Chambers (1983), though not himself an anthropologist by training, on power and participation in development has also been concerned with relations between people and professionals, and Chambers has gone on to develop this theme and challenge conventional development policy and training assumptions at the levels of both theory and practice.

More recently, a highly influential study by Ferguson (1990), based on field work in Lesotho, drew on Foucault's work on power and discourse to extend and develop the anthropological tradition of the development-project ethnography into new terrain. Ferguson showed how a World Bank project in Lesotho functioned primarily as a system that extends state and development agency power. He argued that the project served as an instrument to depoliticise development issues, transforming social and economic relations into 'technical' problems that could then to be 'solved' through bureaucratic intervention. Moving away from the arenas of state and multilateral donors into the non-governmental sector (which has grown to become a major player within development work), Harrison and Crewe (1998) undertook ethnographic work within two international NGOs working in Africa, exploring the ways in which they interpreted problems of poverty and the manner in which they constructed themselves as organisations. Studies such as these provided detailed insights into the workings of development

organisations, but made no claim to offer answers or solutions to the still disappointing results being obtained by those in search of development.

Answers of a kind were offered by another influential, but completely hostile, study of the workings of development. Escobar's (1995) study traces the ways in which development as an idea has constructed and framed the concept of the 'Third World' as a location which is defined and acted upon by the West, and he documents and advocates resistance to its onslaught. This book reflected increasing attention among anthropologists to the fact that development exists beyond the configuration of agencies and individuals attempting to implement change, and has become one of the dominant ideas of the post-War era. As such, it constitutes a social phenomenon that affects not just livelihoods and living standards, but also the ways in which we see the world. Escobar's conclusion, in line with the post-development view, is that the idea of development is itself degraded and outmoded and that only the rise of new local, identity-based social movements that directly challenge the orthodoxies of development offer hope for a new paradigm within a 'post-development' future.

RELUCTANT PARTICIPANTS?

In the 1960s and 1970s, the tradition within anthropology that engaged with development and modernisation continued, and some of this work began to influence development work more widely. For example, Geertz's (1963) research on Indonesian agricultural change began to link anthropological research to practical concerns about technological change and land use. It showed the ways in which adaptation of an increasingly complex and 'involuted' system of wetland agricultural production reflected both cultural priorities and material pressures, and was widely read by agricultural economists and policy makers (Gardner and Lewis 1996). But the study of development, in the sense of traditional societies undergoing social and economic transformation, was seen by many other academic anthropologists as only of 'practical' or 'policy' relevance and therefore peripheral to the main theoretical core of the discipline, which many thought should concern itself with the description and analysis of 'societies and cultures as little contaminated by "development" as possible' (Ferguson 1996: 157).

As a result, there have been many anthropologists who have avoided any formal engagement with the topic of development at all. But there have been pressures which have led other anthropologists to participate in development at some level, sometimes due as much to pragmatism as wholehearted commitment. The long tradition of under-funding of higher education institutions in the UK, which began to become serious during the 1980s, hit anthropology departments particularly hard, especially since there were relatively few options available for academic anthropologists to generate additional funding through consultancy. The relevance of anthropology to the

modern world was also increasingly called into question by government and funders. The growth of the multi-disciplinary field of development studies as an academic discipline and its subsequent expansion, particularly in the UK, also contributed to a sense of insecurity in some university anthropology departments. Limited opportunities for anthropologists in the business world led, perhaps inevitably, to a growth of anthropological engagement with consultancy assignments for organisations such as the Department for International Development (DFID) and the United Nations. These were sometimes in the form of short-term inputs as consultants or commissioned researchers; other times these were longer assignments or full professional employment as anthropologists working within the expanding fields of 'social development' and project evaluation which opened up within the World Bank, DFID and many NGOs.

This trend was also associated with the rise of radical development theory and the growing politicisation of anthropology itself as a discipline in the 1970s. The shift away from modernisation theory, which many anthropologists had considered crude and ethnocentric, towards critical dependency theory within development studies also attracted the attention of anthropologists, who began to locate their detailed studies of specific, small groups within wider political-economy contexts. Wolf's (1982) *Europe and the people without history* set out a global, historical political economy which showed how the capitalist world order linked even the most remote communities into its system through processes of economic, technical and cultural incorporation. The trend towards a more critical, politicised anthropology also opened up scope for engagement with development because it made the subject more intellectually interesting and because it gave the academic discipline of anthropology, especially at a time when university based scholarship was under pressure to demonstrate its relevance, an opportunity to show that it had something to say about the wider world, rather than just about its more conventional 'tribal' concerns (Ferguson 1996: 158).

The period of post-modern reflection which overtook anthropology later in the 1980s also served to refocus anthropological attention on, among other things, the idea of development. In particular, Marcus and Fischer (1986) questioned the tendency of anthropologists to focus on an ahistorical or exotic 'other' and instead argued for a new focus which would integrate the ideas and institutions of the anthropologists' own societies and contexts, emphasising the need to show the ways in which power is acquired and exercised across the dimensions of the local, national and global. Elements of this post-modern anthropological agenda also led back to the study of development, because the development landscape formed an ideal space for the study of a wide range of familiar and less familiar institutions and relationships that linked ideas, individuals and groups at transnational, national and local levels. It also simultaneously opened up fertile ground for

anthropologists to re-consider their own roles as actors within the production of knowledge about and practice within development. In doing so, it also began to challenge the validity of any simple distinction between those anthropologists working 'on' and those working 'in' development. While anthropological post-modernism was primarily concerned with debating a more reflexive approach to ethnographic writing, it also contributed new ideas to 'applied anthropology' (see below), by suggesting ways in which anthropological work could create structures for community-level problem analysis and empowerment.

Work such as Escobar's had drawn useful attention to issues of power and inequality and the ways in which 'development' has acted as a system of ideas and policies which have sought to define and control whole areas of the world. But it was also heavily criticised for its tendency to construct a homogenous vision of the 'development gaze' that is insensitive to the broad range of ideas constituting development thinking and approaches, and to the ways in which people's own ideas of what constitutes 'progress' overlaps and engages in subtle ways with those of the developers. For example, perhaps in the spirit of involved scepticism, Gardner and Lewis (2000) attempted to show the ways in which the policy discourse within the UK bilateral aid programme changed in relation to the production of a new White Paper in 1997 as the former Overseas Development Administration (ODA) evolved into the DFID, with new emphasises and priorities based on changing political agendas and understandings. Not enough research has yet been done by anthropologists on seeking to understand the institutional and organisational field that makes up the world of development ideas and practices, nor on the ways in which people outside the formal boundaries of the development industry share and are shaped by its ideas.

ENGAGED ACTIVISTS

There have long been anthropologists interested in using their knowledge for practical purposes. The field of applied anthropology, defined as the use of anthropological methods and ideas in practical or policy contexts, has seen anthropologists collaborate with activists, policy makers and professionals within a range of fields, including that of development. From the British colonial administration in Africa to the Office of Indian Affairs in the United States, anthropologists have involved themselves in applied work and contributed research findings to policy makers on issues such as local customs, dispute settlement and land rights. The gradual professionalisation of the development industry from the 1970s onwards led to a growth of opportunities for anthropologists to work within development agencies as staff or consultants, just as anthropologists also took up jobs within fields as diverse as community work and corporate personnel departments. In this role, anthropologists often acted as cultural translators, interpreting local realities for administrators and planners. At the same time, anthropology

came to be seen as a tool which potentially provided the means to understand, and therefore to some extent control, people's behaviour, either as beneficiaries, employees or customers.

Applied anthropologists have drawn on different aspects of anthropological thinking in the ways they have tried to contribute to development work. First, by stressing an approach which gives equal emphasis to both social and economic aspects of societal change, anthropologists have helped to counter the dominant privileging of the economic in development thinking. They have contributed to a critique of modernism and its predominantly economistic view of the world, showing for example that markets are socially embedded institutions and that the economically rational behaviour of neo-classical paradigms is tempered by pragmatism. At the methodological level, applied anthropologists have taken the open-ended, long-term participant observation tradition and tried to relate field work more tightly and in a time-bound way to a set of focused research questions. An example of this is research in rural north-western Bangladesh by Lewis, Wood and Gregory (1996), concerning an ODA aquaculture project. Through their extensive participant observation, the researchers were able to identify a complex range of hidden (to the planners) intermediaries within local fish production and marketing networks, and their findings contributed to the rethinking of objectives, away from a concern solely with production and towards a greater emphasis on rural poverty reduction. The growth of participatory paradigms in development practices has also drawn extensively on anthropological methodology (cf. Chambers 1983), albeit with more of an emphasis on 'quick and dirty' field work than many anthropologists would wish for.

Applied anthropologists have also drawn attention to issues of Western bias in the assumptions that inform development initiatives, uncovering areas of cultural difference and highlighting the value of local or 'indigenous' knowledge. The growth of interest in indigenous knowledge has now been a long-standing area of engagement between anthropologists and development practitioners, with its recognition that development interventions should be informed by the systems of knowledge recognised by local people. For example, the rise of 'farming systems research' in the 1970s was informed by field-based anthropological insights into farmers' own complex understandings of their agricultural practices (Collinson 1987). More recently, Loomis (2002) has made an eloquent case, based on his research within Maori communities in New Zealand, that local ideas about resource conservation could form a sounder basis for 'sustainable development' than many of the paradigms and approaches advocated by development agencies, and so should be incorporated more fully into policy. The distinction between indigenous knowledge and Western scientific knowledge has been subsequently criticised within anthropology, since it can set up a somewhat bland and unhelpful dualism between Western-scientific and other systems of knowledge, and may also overlook the fact that Western formal knowledge

systems are themselves as embedded culturally as other knowledge systems (Sillitoe 2002).

Applied anthropologists have played several different types of roles, including mediation between communities and outsiders, helping to influence public opinion through journalism or advocacy work, helping to provide assistance directly during a crisis, or working as consultants to development organisations. Consultancy work by applied anthropologists within the NGO and donor communities has expanded considerably in the community development field and covers a variety of sectors and projects, including micro-finance, social forestry, slum improvement, monitoring and evaluation and training on participatory techniques (Panayiotopolous 2002).

Closely related to the discussion of applied anthropology is the involvement of some anthropologists in more explicitly activist concerns. The emergence of what Tax (1968) termed 'action anthropology', practised within marginalised Native American communities in the United States, attempted to combine applied work and responsibility to members of the community with the search for knowledge. Tax began developing this form of work in the 1940s, and the approach went on to became influential in the US and in parts of Europe as well. The proponents of this branch of applied anthropology became concerned with explicitly political goals informed by moral commitment, as in a situation in which members of a community are subject to an immediate threat such as the construction of a dam. Related to this type of work is the involvement of anthropologists in organisations, such as Cultural Survival, which seek to protect vulnerable communities whose way of life is under threat from developers. As a form of applied anthropology, such efforts may often be informed by a desire to frustrate the efforts of development agencies, in line with the views of many in the post-development school.

The sub-discipline of 'applied' anthropology has, since its emergence in the colonial period, always been controversial within the discipline. After the Second World War there was a reaction in the US against the widespread involvement of anthropologists in the occupation and subsequent administration of overseas territories, and in Britain the process of decolonisation went hand in hand with a critique of the colonial origins of the discipline of anthropology itself. There were also many who saw the application of anthropological knowledge in other societies as a betrayal of the principle of cultural relativism, in which it was seen as unethical for representatives of one culture to try to change relations within another. The status of applied anthropologists within the wider discipline was also a source of tension, with applied departments and academics frequently considered second rate, leading to its marginalisation during the 1960s and 1970s.

There still remain three broad sets of arguments against applied anthropology, as Schonhuth (2002) has shown from within the German academic context. Within his schema, the 'purists' argue that scholarly endeavour should always be separated from its application. An engineer should be considered an 'applied physicist', and therefore an applied anthropologist is best regarded as a social worker or a politician, with no place in the formal discipline of anthropology. Schonhuth's second group, the 'innocents', are concerned that development will destroy traditional, fragile cultures before they can be studied, and therefore want nothing to do with it. Finally, the 'ethically correct' adherents to a third position argue against any kind of collusion with the practitioners of development because they simply regard development policy and practice as inherently immoral.

CONCLUSION

The picture presented in this chapter, of three anthropological positions in relation to development, doubtless involves an element of caricature. However, it does illuminate different aspects of anthropology's complex relationship with development. The three strands rarely exist separately, but are intertwined in complex ways. Individual anthropologists are unlikely to inhabit just one of these positions, but instead may juggle various combinations of them at one time or another. The difficulty of unpacking these relationships, and their overall sensitivity even today, is perhaps best explained by Ferguson (1996: 160), who argues that development can in one sense be understood as anthropology's 'evil twin'. Development is concerned with many of the same geographical areas and communities that have attracted anthropologists, but threatens and challenges many of the assumptions which anthropologists have traditionally held dear, about the value of the traditional, the local and the autonomous. For anthropologists, Ferguson goes on, development therefore carries with it 'a disturbing, inverted resemblance' to their discipline and 'haunts the house of anthropology' like an 'uninvited relative'. To be critical of the very idea of development, he argues, is to invite a complete re-evaluation of the very idea of anthropology itself.

Within the literature, it has become common to make a distinction between 'development anthropologists', working broadly within the agendas of development institutions doing research or advocating for particular polices, and 'anthropologists of development', who work on the subject of development itself, often taking a critical stance which questions its ideas, values and purposes (Grillo and Rew 1985). The inter-mingling of the three positions outlined here, and the illusory nature of the belief that one can separate anthropological work 'on' and 'in' development, requires us to move beyond such dualism. As Harrison and Crewe (1998) argue, the boundary between development anthropologists and anthropologists of development has come under increasing criticism for its artificiality, since it obscures the

positioning of all anthropologists within the dominant organising idea of development.

Long (1992) highlighted the ways in which anthropological work could also take as its field of study the 'communities' of development projects and institutions. As Long himself acknowledges, it is necessary to go further than this and show how anthropologists working on development issues, whether in an applied or theoretical level, all do work which necessarily takes place within what Ferguson (1990) terms the dominant 'interpretive grid' of development discourse. After a revival of interest in development by anthropologists during the 1990s, we are perhaps moving into a new period of engagement which goes beyond the applied-theoretical distinction and which seeks to reveal more of the ethnographic detail of the organisational apparatus of development, as well as a deeper analysis of the ways in which the concept of development has come to play a central role in our lives.

These days there are calls for anthropologists to engage more fully in both the practices of development and in new thinking about development. As anthropologists we can be critical observers, but we are also necessarily participants. For example, Sillitoe (2002: 1) writes:

> The time has come for anthropology to consolidate its place in development practice, not merely as frustrated post-project critic but as implementing partner. There are growing demands for its skills and insights to further understanding of agricultural, health, community and other issues.

An example of new anthropological thinking on development can be seen in recent work by Quarles Van Ufford and Giri (2003) and by Mosse (2003), who argue that anthropological perspectives can illuminate a set of important disjunctures in the constellation of ideas and practices that constitute development. Development, they argue, has been variously characterised as 'hope', in that it carries with it ideas about shaping a better future; as 'administration', in that since the 1950s it has amassed a constellation of agencies and technologies designed to produce it; and finally as 'critical understanding', in the sense that it forms a site of knowledge about the world. Disjunctures are also present in the ways in which development ideas and practices are variously located within governmental, non-governmental and market-institutional forms, as they are in the tension between modes of action and of reflection, and in the senses of past and present that pervade development debates. In an era in which development agencies have replaced the goals and aspirations of development with the focus on results and 'manageability', which are characteristic of high modernism, the authors make the plea for a new, morally-informed development as 'global responsibility'.

Anthropology has managed to influence development practice in many ways, from the recruitment of anthropologist 'social development advisers' within

DFID to the growth of participatory practices among non-governmental organisations and others. The merit or otherwise of such influence will continue to be debated, but anthropological contributions increasingly take the form not just of what anthropologists do within development agencies and processes but also what they say about development. In order to help build this new vision, more anthropological work is needed, to provide insights into the 'black box' of development intervention, to challenge the growing managerialism which obscures development histories and to offset tendencies towards social engineering implied by recent World Development Reports and the new 'bottom line' of the Millennium Development Goals.

REFERENCES

Arce, A. and N. Long 2000. *Anthropology, development and modernities*. London: Routledge.

Barnett, T. 1977. *The Gezira scheme: an illusion of development*. London: Frank Cass.

Chambers, R. 1983. *Rural development: putting the first last*. London: Longman.

Collinson, M. 1987. Farming systems research: procedures for technology development. *Experimental Agriculture* 23: 365-86.

Escobar, A. 1995. *Encountering development: the making and unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ferguson, J. 1990. *The anti-politics machine: 'development', depoliticisation and bureaucratic power in Lesotho*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

——— 1996. Development. In *Encyclopaedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (eds) A. Barnard and J. Spencer. London: Routledge.

Gardner, K. and D. Lewis 1996. *Anthropology, development and the post-modern challenge*. London: Pluto Press.

——— and ——— 2000. Development paradigms overturned or business as usual? Development discourse and the UK White Paper on International Development. *Critique of Anthropology* 20 (1): 15-29.

Geertz, C. 1963. *Agricultural involution: the processes of change in Indonesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Grillo, R. 2002. Anthropologists and development. In *The companion to development studies* (eds) V. Desai and R. B. Potter. London: Edward Arnold.

Grillo, R. and A. Rew (eds) 1985. *Social anthropology and development policy*. London: Tavistock.

Harrison, E. and E. Crewe 1998. *Whose development? An ethnography of aid*. London: Zed Books.

Lewis, D., G. D. Wood and R. Gregory 1996. *Trading the silver seed: local knowledge and market moralities in aquacultural development*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications

Little, D. 2003. *The paradox of wealth and poverty: mapping the dilemmas of global development*. Boulder, Col.: Westview Press.

Long, N. 1977. *An introduction to the sociology of developing societies*. London: Tavistock.

Loomis, T. 2002. Indigenous populations and sustainable development: building on indigenous approaches to holistic, self-determined development. *World Development* 28: 893-910.

Mamdani, M. 1972. *The myth of population control: family, caste and class in an Indian village*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Marcus, G. and M. Fischer 1986. *Anthropology as cultural critique*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mosse, D. 2003. Linking policy to livelihood changes through projects. Presentation to DFID, London, 5 July.

Panayiotopolous, P. 2002. Anthropology consultancy in the UK and community development in the Third World: a difficult dialogue. *Development in Practice* 12: 45-58.

Quarles Van Ufford, P. and A. K. Giri 2003. *A moral critique of development: in search of global responsibilities*. London: Routledge.

Robertson, A. F. 1984. *People and the state: an anthropology of planned development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rogers, B. 1980. *The domestication of women: discrimination in developing societies*. London: Kogan Page.

Schonhuth, M. 2002. Negotiating with knowledge at development interfaces: anthropology and the quest for participation. In *Participating in development: approaches to indigenous knowledge* (eds) P. Sillitoe, A. Bicker and J. Pottier. London: Routledge.

Sillitoe, P. 2002. Participant observation to participatory development: making anthropology work. In *Participating in development: approaches to indigenous knowledge* (eds) P. Sillitoe, A. Bicker and J. Pottier. London: Routledge.

Tax, S. (ed.) 1968. *The people vs. the system*. Chicago: Acme Press.

Wilson, G. 1942. *An essay on the economics of detribalisation in Northern Rhodesia. Part II*. Livingston, Northern Rhodesia: Rhodes-Livingstone Institute.

Wolf, E. 1982. *Europe and the people without history*. Berkeley: University of California Press.