Development practice: Is there a need for detailed analysis?

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Abstract

This article attempts to analyse the encounters between anthropology and development by specifically looking at the peculiarities of both anthropology as a discipline and development practice through project work in the Third World. It intends to highlight the changes that have taken place within both disciplines and in the attitudes of each towards the other. It analyses how and why anthropology has gradually overcome its ethical relativism and its reluctance to participate in practical development work and how and why development practice has come to need anthropological data and methodology in order to achieve its goals.

1. Introduction

Until the last two decades the relationship between anthropology/sociology and development practice has been one of mutual mistrust and disregard. After a long series of failures of development projects, the development field has realised the value of detailed accounts of local structures and cultures produced by anthropologists and sociologists. However, historically the encounter between anthropology and development has been very limited and both sides are equally at fault in this. Interestingly enough, anthropologists have largely distanced themselves from practical work in the development field and, in turn, anthropology has largely been ignored by development economics (Hill, 1986). The article argues that the two major reasons behind recent close encounters are: i) the shift of emphasis in development theory from economic growth to meeting the basic needs of the poor. Prior to this shift, the position and goals of project funders, planners and government agents

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made it almost impossible for anthropologists to be involved in development work; and ii) anthropology's coming to terms with its own fear of not being accepted within academic circles if it became involved in applied development, which was viewed as colonialist in nature. Having resolved the ethical question of whether anybody has the right to interfere in Third World development, anthropology has realised that it has a lot to offer for the poor through involvement in development work.

The article will start with the dilemma within anthropology in the 1950s and 1970s: whether it was ethical to be involved in applied development, whether such involvement meant a compromise for anthropology, which had remained theoretical so far, and whether existing development practice was conducive to the involvement of anthropologists. The first part will examine some of the problems of anthropology and the anthropological method: why it has taken anthropologists so long to become involved and the special characteristics of anthropology that make it of value in applied development; early anthropology and colonialism, which gave anthropology an enduring character; and the influence of development theory on academic anthropology that has caused a shift toward more practical involvement. Lastly, the article will discuss the role of a newly emerging approach to project evaluation and the significance of anthropology in the emergence of the 'participatory approach' to development and the evaluation of development projects.

2. Anthropology versus development practice

Until the last decade development practice was dominated by economics. Anthropologists obviously have a different academic background from economists, which affects their perceptions of development and enables them to contribute alternative interpretations. By referring in the main to anthropological literature, and by examining the interaction between anthropology and development, I intend to identify some of the problems with development strategies and illustrate the value of the anthropological approach in both the theory and the practice of development.

2.1. Early anthropology and colonialism

A significant reason for contemporary anthropologists' reluctance to become involved in applied development work is the close relationship between early anthropology and colonialism. Willingly or unwillingly early anthropologists served well the colonial administrations in their

exploitation of the colonies. It is the stigma that anthropology was in the service of colonialism which prevented later anthropologists from participating in development work. Let me briefly look at the relationship between early anthropology and colonialism.

Modern social anthropology began to emerge only after the First World War when Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown both published the results of their first major field studies. Their competing theoretical functionalist and structuralist models gave British anthropology its distinctive character for a generation (Kuper, 1973)[1]. It was Malinowski's work on the Trobriand Islands that shaped the British School of Anthropology. After the first exponential fieldwork he developed his evolutionist thesis. According to Malinowski the collection of cultural facts was crucial in discovering evolutionary laws. During the 1910s and 1920s British anthropologists concentrated on the accumulation of data with the ultimate goal of reconstructing culture or improving on the model of social evolution, rather than a more radical programme leading to its overthrow as a guiding paradigm.

There began to be, however, a drift away from the comfortable moral certitude of the nineteenth century. The ideas of social evolution and other intellectual concepts were coming under attack as reports started to return from Africa of 'primitive' cultures with evidence of contemporary 'civilised' life. This transitional period spanned biology, psychology and the social sciences and ushered in a new era of more rigorous and scientific venture: "evidence was no longer sought for the exemplification of a thesis but for the construction of one" (Mack, 1991). The new 'scientists' were more interested in social and historical processes and in detailed accurate descriptions, than in the philosophical method and theoretical ideas. The colonial impulse involved anthropologists in the practical application of their knowledge.

In these very early days, British anthropology presented itself as a science, which could be useful in colonial administration. The motivation inherent in colonialism was not development, however, but the need to extend the "global sway of capitalism" (Mabogunje, 1980). It is unlikely that most anthropologists perceived colonialism in that sense; the issue was generally to provide knowledge of indigenous custom in order to promote better administration. The fact that a number of studies were designed and supported by the British government is a testimony to the fact that colonialism needed anthropological knowledge to function better. For instance, the research by Godfrey Wilson and Max Gluckman in British Africa and that by Edward Evans-Pritchard amongst the Nuer and

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1   The present article concentrates on early British anthropology due to their involvement with colonial administrations. This does not mean that American anthropologists have not been influential in the development of anthropology as a discipline.

Azande in Sudan were carried out under the auspices of the British Government (Kuper, 1973; Asad, 1972; and Evans-Pritchard, 1937).

It was during the colonial era that British anthropology produced some of its most famous monographs in anthropological history. People like Evans-Pritchard seriously believed that indigenous people, whose lives they were studying, would benefit from their findings, thus justifying their being there and collaborating with colonial powers. A few did, however acknowledge the serious disruption being caused to indigenous populations and some, such as Emile Torday were "consistent apologists for the indigenous cause" (Mack, 1991).

However, not only the stigma of the early involvement of anthropologists with colonialism, but also the distrust for the motives of the major agents of development (i.e., aid organisations and corrupt national governments in developing countries) have been a major deterrent for later anthropologists working in applied development.

2.2. Academic anthropology's indifference to development practice

In its efforts to understand the culture in human societies, social anthropology has emphasised the study of the 'other'. In this way social anthropology aims to avoid ethnocentrism. Ethnography is the research process whereby the anthropologist lives within a society, closely observing, recording and engaging in their daily lives (fieldwork), employing a method known as participant observation, then writing a detailed account of this culture emphasising descriptive detail (what Geertz calls 'thick description'), attempting to represent their particular way of life as fully as possible from the indigenous point of view. The methodology includes the collaboration of 'key informants', individuals selected for their ability to translate the meaning of socio-cultural practices and to help verify the information gleaned, and the use of open-ended questions rather than questionnaires. Leach (1976) describes the work of social anthropologist as consisting in the analysis and interpretation of ethnographic fact, customary behaviour as directly observed. Every detail of custom is seen as part of a complex whole and cannot be considered in isolation.

The development anthropologist is obviously not required to carry out this type of investigation for each project and can adapt it to the specific circumstances in question. The methodology itself points to two main problems encountered by anthropologists working within a short project time-scale: it requires time to carry out the type of research deemed necessary by the anthropologist, even if it is not the fifteen months or so traditionally spent in the field, and it produces a mass of frequently abstract data which can be difficult to translate into policy recommendations of relevance to planners. Neither of these problems,

however, is insurmountable.

The main point about academic anthropology is that it usually contributes to theory rather than to solutions to practical problems. Current trends in academic anthropology (ethnography as a form of cultural critique, the writing of culture, for instance) particularly mark it apart from applied anthropology. Until very recently, anthropology as taught in British universities did not include much applied work and a large proportion of scholars are openly contemptuous and sceptical of any sort of applied anthropology. Some are convinced that the proper emphasis in anthropology is on ethnography, history, structuralism, Marxism or symbolism, and often imply that this excludes an interest in the practical and contemporary world (Brokensha, 1986).

In summary, the very nature of anthropological investigation from its inception has acted as a difficult hurdle in the interaction between itself and development practice. However, anthropology is not to be blamed alone in this failure of dialogue between the two disciplines. The attitude of development economics, the dominant discipline in the development field between 1950 and 1970, towards anthropological investigation has prevented a happy marriage between the two fields of knowledge. The attitude of development economics towards anthropological work is largely determined by the prevalent theory and ideology of the time. Therefore a short survey of the dominant paradigms seems to be necessary in order to explain the recent interaction between development and anthropology.

2.3. Development theory's indifference to anthropology

Both the meaning of 'development' and its theoretical underpinning have been shifting through the time. There is little common agreement as to what constitutes development, as the term is highly emotive and elusive. It signifies different meanings and evokes powerful images of progress, ideals, hopes and aspirations, promises or plans for social, political and economic improvement. The conventional meanings and perceptions have been constantly redefined over the past few decades by both theorists and agents of change alike. The sequence of shifting definitions can be traced as moving through: 'development as economic growth', 'development as modernisation', 'development as a distributive justice' and 'development as socio-economic transformation'. Essentially, during the 1950s and 1960s, development was centrally planned, top-down or trickle-down economic development, the emphasis moving during the 1970s and 1980s toward a more beneficiary-centred, grass roots, community participation approach, committed to meeting basic needs and observing the rights and autonomy of all participants (Burkey, 1993; Mabogunje, 1980; Oakley, 1984).

Despite the shifts in the focus of attention, development almost always is concerned with the notion of progress, and material and non-material benefits. In the 1950s and 1960s development was seen as a unilinear process towards a desired type of society epitomised by the West. The underdevelopment of the Third World was explained in terms of internal structures and obstacles. The move towards a desired Western type of developed society meant the adoption of the institutions and the experiences of the West. The arrogance of early development theory about the backwardness of the Third World was to a limited extent, shared by early anthropological theory as well.

Early ethnologists and development theorists categorised those societies furthest from the centres of civilisation as belonging to more primitive / earlier stages of culture, mentality and social organisation (Fabian, 1983). The early ideas stemmed from strictly theoretical evolutionary science, dealing not with isolated groups but having a sense of global connectedness, categorising cultural form, religious beliefs and physical type in an evolutionary progression towards contemporary European practices, which European ethnocentrism placed at the most advanced level (Wolf, 1982). These ideas reflected earlier 18th century speculations, either Rousseau's romantic view of the 'noble savage', life in a sort of Eden before Adam's fall, or the idea of savage life as 'solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short' (Cheater, 1985). These poor primitive people were seen by 19th century Europeans and Americans as objects of curiosity or of pity: ripe for improvement, mental, physical and spiritual. The Western nations' perceptions of their own superiority, however, enabled them to justify the economic exploitation and the appropriation of land, labour and natural resources.

Economists have been primarily responsible for the conventional theories of development and the formulation of policy that governs most development activity. The economic literature on development is unambiguous: Walman (1977) defines development from the economist's viewpoint as a "perhaps inevitable but certainly unilinial movement towards a condition of maximum industrialisation, modern technology, high GNP and high material standards of living—the last two being popularly assumed to go together". Development is assessed quantitatively in that growth is seen as progress, and each underdeveloped area is rated in terms of its shortfall from some implicit notion of a goal of 'development' met by our objectives in the west. This continues to be the most prevalent conventional notion of development.

In the past the West was counterpoised to the quintessential East, and later, as people in previously colonised countries began to gain political and economic independence, they became assigned to a residual category, the Third World, bound up in tradition and struggling to modernise. Thus we have a notion of development as the poor Third World nations trying to

catch up with the rich (Wallman, 1977).

Different economic strategies were considered to be appropriate in this process of catching up. However, the suggested policies are not based on a thorough understanding of the structures of the Third World whose peoples' lives they intended to improve, but carry the elements of "old fashioned, stereotyped Western-biased, over generalised crudity and conceptual falsity" (Hill, 1986). Thus the detailed insight of anthropological endeavour is considered to be irrelevant and trivial.

For instance, in the 1950-1960 period development was equated with economic growth and developing countries were encouraged to speed up their economic growth at all costs. Despite a real increase in per capita gross national income in many developing countries, such growth did not necessarily 'trickle down' to the poorest. There is increasing evidence that indicates a large number of people were below an absolute poverty line. The failure of the strategy based on 'economic growth' led to the adoption of a new strategy, 'growth with distribution', in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although economic growth was still the main objective of this strategy the main emphasis shifted to distribution that would improve the standard of living of the poorest income groups. Agriculture and export-led growth were given priority in development, with emphasis being placed on labour-intensive manufacturing. Here again macroeconomic performance was the main concern. It was soon realised that this strategy was unable to eliminate poverty in the Third World. Therefore, a radical shift in the development perspective occurred in the late 1970s, with a view that growth itself does not guarantee that basic needs will be met. In order to reduce absolute poverty, the essential needs of the poor have to be met and this may entail some sacrifices in savings, productive investment and overall growth. Emphasising basic needs meant that local needs had to be specified, and this could best be done by detailed socio-economic analysis of the target groups and/or areas.

2.3.1. The failure of development projects as vehicles of change

Specific projects developed and implemented in the Third World reflected these general strategies, which have been informed by neo-classical economics and modernisation theory. For governments and international assistance organisations, projects are important channels through which they can invest their resources. As such, they have had a central role in the political economy of most developing countries.

There has been a major shift from growth-oriented large scale development projects in the 1960s and 1970s to small-scale community development projects. In this period, governments and international assistance organisations preferred large scale projects because they were considered to be important channels through which they could invest their

resources and thus play a central role in the political economy of aid recipient countries. Often such large scale projects failed to meet their stated aims of eliminating poverty or meeting basic needs by providing health, education, family planning and social services. They frequently became arenas for power struggles between local elites and other sectors of society. The failure of projects was a major source of disappointment for the governments of developing countries who had pinned high hopes on them. Newly independent African countries had allocated large segments of their budgets to these projects, which supposedly had well-defined objectives and were in accord with an overall development plan. Projects were to meet common objectives concerning employment, health, agriculture, water and infrastructure. However, as mentioned earlier, project results were often disappointing. A report prepared by the Pan-African Institute for Development showed that two major reasons for project failure in the 1960s and 1970s were the absence of detailed analysis of initial conditions and the poor understanding of local views on needs and priorities (PAID, 1981: 14).

Many projects, especially those in rural development programmes, have had seriously damaging effects, such as the de-intensification of ecologically self-sustaining cultivation systems; the imposition of ecologically unsound farming practices; the imposition of uneconomical animal transaction and cash crop production systems; the decoupling of complementary systems of production (agro-pastoral); the loss of whole systems of production, especially artisanal; the creation of dependencies on bureaucratic co-ordinating systems and foreign input suppliers; land concentration; the accelerated process of social stratification in farm communities as the share of manufactured inputs in variable capital applied by wealthier farmers to agricultural production increases, and widespread famine (Arnold, 1988). Many of these deleterious effects could have been prevented by appropriate anthropological / sociological research data being used in project planning and implementation.

Development policymakers' 'synoptic approach' to decision-making was partly to be blamed for the ill effects of development projects. The synoptic approach, which was prevalent in the 1970s, assumed a direct relationship between government action and the solution of social and economic problems where planners and policymakers determined the correct courses of action for others to follow and established rules and procedures that ensured adherence to them. Paradoxically, as development strategies changed during the 1970s to address more complicated and less controllable problems of human development, the procedures for planning and managing the projects became more rigid and routinised. The World Bank and UN agencies insisted that development projects be identified, prepared, appraised and selected through comprehensive and systematic analysis, and the methods and procedures used were adopted largely from

the practices of private corporations engaged in physical construction projects and of government agencies in Western countries concerned with defence systems or space exploration. These methods included cost-benefit analysis, linear programming models, network scheduling, planning, programming and budgeting systems (Rondinelli, 1976: 79; 1983: 16-19). The planning and management techniques of projects have been used to control development activities rather than facilitating and encouraging flexibility, experimentation and social learning, all of which are essential to implementing development projects successfully. Furthermore, most development projects induced by international agencies were co-opted and diverted by local elites and politicians for their own agendas.

The rigid hierarchical structures of authority imposed rules and regulations, and deviations from their preconceived plans were considered detrimental to achieving what were perceived as commonly held objectives, and thus, political conflict was to be avoided. Within this rigid and politically charged development context, anthropologists were consulted frequently at an advanced stage of planning when commitments had already been made, and their knowledge was often viewed as "at best a nuisance which may slow down an otherwise speedy execution of projects, regardless of social impact, or at worst, as a subversive and politically embarrassing threat to relations with client governments" (Hall, 1987; Grillo, 1985). This lead to a reluctance to include anthropologists in policy analysis or feasibility study exercises where their knowledge may be acceptable or perceived as anarchic. Where anthropologists were frequently brought in to analyse failed or failing projects they were always seen as critical of policy and thus, in the eyes of the planners, destructive rather than constructive.

The refusal to take account of such factors as social structures, local organisations, value systems and behavioural patterns in project design and implementation has led to the direct failure of many projects and has resulted in hardship among affected populations as well as in a great deal of money being wasted (Hall, 1987).

To summarise, one of the reasons cited for the general failure of projects in the 1960s and 1970s was that they were top down and did not take into consideration the local cultures and structures. It has been suggested that a detailed analysis of pre-project conditions by social scientists would have greatly improved project organisation and performance (PAID, 1981: 14). The use of ethnographic research would have revealed much needed clues as to what the indigenous people deemed necessary for their improvements (Kottak, 1985).

2.3.2. Dependency theory as a challenge

Of course the above account refers to development strategies informed by the modernisation approach and neoclassical economic theory. However, dependency theory, which emerged as a reaction to the western-biased modernisation approach in the social sciences, sees the relationship between development and underdevelopment from a different perspective. Briefly, dependency theory blames the development of capitalism in the West and its imperialist and exploitative attitude towards the Third World as the main culprit for the current state of underdevelopment in the Third World. Unlike the evolutionist conventional development theorists, who blame inappropriate resources, traditional socio-economic structures and cultural systems in the Third World, dependency theorists have placed responsibility for underdevelopment on continuous exploitation through various colonialistic and imperialistic means (Foster-Carter, 1974; Frank, 1971).

The emergence of dependency theory, which emphasises the nature and contradictions of the global economy, has been very influential in the shift in anthropological writings (Marcus and Fischer, 1985).

3. Changes in anthropological thinking

Traditionally, anthropologists have tended to set their ethnographic accounts of the units they studied, the tribe, the village, the neighbourhood, the family, even the individual, in a timeless present "bracketing the flow of time and the influence of events... facilitating the structural analysis of systems of symbols and social relations" (Marcus and Fischer, 1986: 95).

Several American anthropologists, in opposition to this tendency, developed a Marxist-based trend: scholars such as Eric Wolf, Sidney Mintz, June Nash and Eleanor Leacock formed a core of work that distanced itself from traditional cultural anthropology, which it saw as idealist. Marxism maintained the interest in political economy, but the world-system theory of Immanuel Wallerstein in the early 1970s had an important impact on the social sciences, particularly in America. One of the effects was that anthropologists could no longer deny the fact that "most local cultures worldwide are products of a history of appropriations, resistance and accommodations" (Marcus and Fischer, 1986: 78). Its simple and theoretical foundations formed a lasting framework for debate, surviving to today as a general orientation for localised studies. It has been important for anthropologists because it emphasised that the significance of any particular project of research in history or ethnography has its location within the larger world-historical framework of political economy.

Anthropologists thus began to research subjects within this macro-view of society and history, and ethnography became a way in which one could gain an understanding of human subjects who would otherwise only exist buried as abstractions in the language of systems analysis.

Obeyesekere's work (1981) on Sri Lankan society and Crapanzo's study (1980) of the Moroccan Tuhami are good examples of bridging academic interpretative anthropology and wider issues of development. The wider concern among theorists, with political economy and the integration of peripheral units into the world system, coincided with widespread disillusionment with the effects of the development policies of the 1950-70s, their stress on infrastructure, urbanisation, and industrialisation, and undue emphasis on large projects, the introduction of high technology, central planning, and disregard for local knowledge (Brokensha, 1986; Derman and Whiteford, 1985; Richards, 1985; Chambers, 1983, 1986, 1997). However, growing poverty and inequality in the newly independent sates of the Third World reached such dimensions that USAID and similar agencies, as well as UN agencies such as UNDP, FAO, UNICEF and ILO, became concerned with the social tensions which may have led to social revolutions and threatened the *status quo*. The belief that poverty-stricken areas might be vulnerable to

socialist ideologies was confirmed by the example of Vietnam. Therefore, international agencies and developed countries were seriously concerned with the eradication of poverty in the Third World in order to minimise the danger of communism. This resulted in increasing concern with the human face of development, particularly with the social implications of external development assistance (Gow, 1988). This was particularly clear in the 1973 Nairobi speech of McNamara, the director of the World Bank. McNamara's concern was paralleled by the US Congress which changed the Foreign Assistance Act in 1973, bringing in a New Direction Mandate which focused development assistance on the poorest 40 per cent of the population of the Third World, especially the rural poor (Horowitz, 1988), and introduced 'social soundness analysis' to 'project designs and evaluations'.

This new development paradigm created a niche for anthropologists (and some rural sociologists) who were the only professionals with much firsthand experience of the rural poor in the Third World, or the tribal and peasant populations of Africa, Latin America, Asia and Oceania among whom anthropologists had lived and studied for fifty or more years.

The objective of development became not merely growth, as in the 1960s, but growth with equity, appropriate technology, non-formal education, medical programmes concentrating on public health that utilised village level paramedics or barefoot doctors. Planned interventions were assessed in terms of their 'cultural fit' and for their likely effects on women, children, the elderly, and ethnic and racial minorities. These strategies encouraged the entry of anthropologists into the preserves of economists, political scientists and lawyers and also into technical areas such as those of agronomists, engineers, vets, and soil scientists (Horowitz, 1988).

Despite the much greater awareness among many development planners of anthropology's potential contribution, and the fact that there are now many more projects and programmes where anthropologists have been brought in early enough and with sufficient authority to be effective, many policymakers still neglect to apply their findings in policy formulation and implementation.

In the next section, we consider recent developments in anthropology and discuss the usefulness and limitations of anthropological knowledge in development practice.

4. Anthropological constraints and contributions

Development anthropology is a profession that has only recently evolved through changes which have occurred in both fields: changes in the perceptions of development itself, and changes in the attitudes and methods of anthropology. One of the first and most critical decisions an

anthropologist must make is whether to get involved in development work at all. Hoben (1982) suggests that "individuals who are strongly committed to Marxist or dependency perspectives, who are philosophically opposed to externally planned development efforts, who find political process personally distasteful, or who expect to have all their advice followed are not likely to feel comfortable working in project design". There has been more recently, however, a rejection by many anthropologists of 'non-involvement': where once they felt that they ought not to play an active role it has been accepted that they have an important contribution to make in development. This is generally perceived, however, to be in the realm of practice and implementation of development plans, rather than in the conceptualisation of theory and policy.

Although many anthropologists are overcoming their reservations and adapting their traditional ethnographic method to the practical requirements of development work, there have been several constraints on their full participation, mostly concerning the anthropological method and ethical and theoretical considerations, but also regarding integration of their research findings into policy formation. This latter consideration reflects not only development bureaucracy's perception of anthropology and anthropological knowledge, but also the structure of policy formation itself. The next section will, therefore, explore some of the reasons why anthropologists have found it difficult to be incorporated into practical development work.

4.1. The problem with anthropology: Constraints in development

The subject matter and mode of presentation of mid-20th century anthropology limited its role by reinforcing the development paradigm's stereotype of rural society as being bound in traditional values and traditional unscientific practices, and based on traditional institutions such as the extended family, kinship-based organisations and communal control of natural resources. All of these factors have been seen as a constraint on the process of development. The focus of anthropology on tribal 'isolates' not only served to confirm the development planners 'ethnocentric perceptions of traditional society', it also alienated it from the newly independent African nation-state who wished to repress and overcome tribalism (Paine, 1985) and saw anthropologists as overly concerned with traditional culture and patterns of behaviour.

Apart from the negative perceptions of anthropology amongst development administrators and governments in developing countries, there are other reasons why it has been so difficult in the past for anthropology to make significant theoretical and practical contributions to development. Project planners expect anthropology to make sound

predictions about success of projects and this in turn requires an ability "to transcend the particularities of any data in specific social settings" (Pottier, 1993: 19). A major difficulty usually is present as a result of anthropologists' 'aggressively empirical' approach (Kuper, 1970) and the need for establishing structural regularities that will be used for predicting success and failures of similar projects. Meticulously detailed anthropological data does not easily fit in with the need for generalisation that carries over easily from one study to another (Pottier, 1993: 19).

The time limitations of the fieldwork method and the information produced by this type of research have often been cited as major constraints to anthropologists working on development projects. Traditional fieldwork has a long perspective, requiring about fifteen months in the field, and at least the same amount of time upon return, to produce the ethnographic account (Cochrane, 1980); the anthropologist quite often returns to the fieldwork site and sees the research data as providing material for future studies and publications. There is thus a basic incompatibility with the rapid appraisal usually required for project planning in order to meet both financial and temporal constraints, and which requires social studies to be carried out and reported on often in a matter of a few weeks (Chambers, 1983: 47; Conlin, 1985: 84).

Weaver (1985a, 1985b) and Rew (1985) raise the same concern about fellow anthropologists who present their data in such a manner that it becomes difficult to be used by other disciplines and policymakers. They suggest that instead of producing abstract, highly detailed and complex field reports they should produce clear, unequivocal statements that will influence and inform policymakers and designers of projects and programmes. To be involved in applied research is not compromising academic anthropology but being concerned with different issues, in that applied work is directed towards decision-making and must include the assessment of needs and conditions; it must be able to make predictions of social change. Anthropologists cannot afford to be reluctant to make critical evaluations and predictions if they want to convince decision-makers of the evident value of their findings.

The anthropological method is not the most difficult problem to overcome, anthropologists can, of course, carry out research for projects in a much shorter time than that normally required for the production of an academic monograph. The traditional fieldwork methods such as participant observation, open-ended questions, kinship and power-network analysis can be adapted to a shorter time-scale. Although in the past anthropologists have been criticised for orienting themselves to theoretical rather than practical issues and for their lack of sophistication in statistical skills, more problematic concerns regarding practical anthropologists working within the mainly structured orthodox environment of development agencies, have been their subjective attitudes - their poor

understanding of policy formation and implementation, and their failure to distinguish between their standards of enquiry and their values (Chambers, 1997). While the former came about due to the lack of involvement in bureaucratic procedures and a general disinterest in administrative matters, the latter most likely stems from an inability of practical anthropologists to distance themselves from the people they are studying. This is a natural corollary of fieldwork, where the close interaction between ethnographer and subject people often engenders an identification with world-view, thus influencing any statements from the anthropologist.

Paine (1985) points to a tendency for some anthropologists to react over-defensively to development agencies (e.g. "my people were perfectly happy before you came to spoil their lives"), thus reinforcing the belief that anthropology has little role to play in development work.

4.2. Anthropological contributions

Many of the problems described above are now being overcome: anthropologists are now successfully combining academic research with involvement in policy formation, as well as programme and project planning and evaluation. American anthropological institutions in particular, with a much longer history of involvement in development work, are making greater contributions to the direction and co-ordination of a large number of topics researched by anthropologists but which could easily be studied by other types of experts working in development: sociologists, agronomists, economists, and agricultural economists. However, the anthropological approach is different, and its special characteristics determine the nature of the research and findings. Several strands of the anthropological perspective in combination distinguish it from other disciplines. Anthropologists always take the context into account as a fundamental aspect of inquiry and analysis: they recognise that symbolic values are as important in any situation as material ones; they explain systematic connections between culture, structure and organisation, studying connections between different levels of organisation, between meaning systems and exchange systems, between priorities in a system; they attach fundamental importance to the discovery and explanation of the native perspectives in whatever way (semantics, ritual etc.) this may be expressed (Ryan, 1985).

In short, from its inception anthropology has remained holistic in its approach as it does not concentrate on any single aspect of a society. This has contributed to the interdisciplinary qualities of the discipline, and allowed anthropologists to undertake studies in many different fields, such as economics, agriculture, employment or resettlement. In addition, their previous (and in academic anthropology their present) concern for conveying the importance of researching societies as totalities has enabled

them to make contributions in all areas concerning cultural adaptation in development, such as production systems, interpersonal relations and belief systems. This fluidity and adaptability of anthropology and the importance it places on the interrelationships of different aspects of society, give it its special interdisciplinary characteristics (Epstein, 1980; Belshaw, 1976a).

Contemporary applied anthropologists are now using interdisciplinary methods from other fields such as social impact analysis, farming systems research and ethno-epidemology, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques (Weaver, 1985a, 1985b). Anthropology goes much further than other disciplines in its concern with values in the context of cultural and symbolic systems. Anthropology does not take these values for granted, nor does it treat them simply as data, but examines them as cultural phenomena with their own history, logic, interconnectedness and dynamics (Belshaw, 1976b). There is now much more participation in teams with other technicians, which has contributed to anthropology's credibility in the eyes of development administrators (Arnold, 1989).

Perhaps one of the reasons that anthropologists have not been able to communicate their work easily outside the profession itself is that it frequently deals with abstractions, ideas, symbols, and meaning in culture, all of which the anthropologist takes into account in development research, but which are sometimes difficult to translate into policy recommendations. This, and the criticism of the fieldwork method of anthropology particularly the length of time required, have probably been justified, but since this is one of the aspects of anthropology that makes it different from other types of sociological research it is essential that it is not neglected. Ryan feels it necessary for anthropologists working in development to narrow down their studies rather than trying to study a whole 'culture', but suggests that one aspect of a culture could be researched in all contexts, or an alleged 'problem' in a culture could be examined in this way. Thus the anthropologist can bring his/her holistic approach but adapt it to the limitations of the development time-scale. However the debate about whether anthropologists compromise their skills and interests by being involved in short time research still continues (c.f. Redclift, 1985).Those in favour of academic anthropology insist that for anthropology to retain its integrity as a discipline it must beware of making too great a compromise in the effort to integrate itself into a wider sphere.

Anthropologists help development policymakers to understand value systems through the construction of models explaining the formation, interconnectedness and dynamics of value systems. Anthropologists also analyse social relations and social transactions that have relevance for development, since the diffusion of any idea or practice and its acceptance

depend on a wide range of factors, including the network of transactional relationships and the body of obligations, power and self-interest. Any development programme, which is based on a false analysis of the network, will be ineffective because it will not take into proper account these important relationships. When development strategies are linked to socio-cultural systems, programmes are better received and more successful (Green, 1986; Kottak, 1985).

One of the basic tenets of anthropology, that of elucidating the *emic* or native perspective, is now widely accepted as being important in both the planning and implementation of development projects. Many projects, especially agricultural projects, have failed because indigenous models were not taken into account. Anthropologists have been instrumental in showing that indigenous models may already include knowledge that technicians and scientists may eventually 'discover' during research.

Anthropologists have managed to persuade, cajole and convince technical colleagues to take the peoples of the Third World seriously in terms of their ideas, their behaviour and their technology. There is still a long way to go before their views are automatically taken into account (Gow, 1988). The most significant contribution of anthropology to the field of development has been the way in which anthropological perspectives have confronted key assumptions both in earlier, anti-rational, 'tradition-bound' and 'irrational peasant' variants of the dominant development paradigm, and in their consequent assumption that economic development and its benefits requires Westernisation of institutional forms of cultural beliefs (Hoben, 1982). One of the main tasks of anthropologists has been to analyse and understand how people try to live in worlds that they largely *do not create themselves* (Sorbo, 1988; Marcus and Fischer, 1986).

In brief, anthropology can be considered to be flexible and adaptive to various methods and disciplines within development. Its holistic perspective leads anthropologists working on a particular project to look for cause and effect in many interconnecting areas of society; its quest for the *emic* perspective includes indigenous knowledge and belief systems that more technical approaches may leave out; its belief in the importance of the underlying structures of society, network systems, communication through symbolic behaviour, kinship and production relations, illustrate the importance of micro-research methods; all of which combine to form anthropology's particular approach to development research. It appears that anthropologists interested in development issues are overcoming difficulties with what was seen as an individualistic discipline and are fully participating with other specialists from different fields in a truly interdisciplinary profession.

Anthropology has gained much from these other fields of study, drawing on the techniques of agronomy, medicine, engineering and

economics, and has also contributed to raising the awareness of those working in these specialised areas of human social issues. Anthropologists are now accepted as development practitioners, with their own established institutions and academic departments in universities. They help to bolster the work of other social scientists and can now be seen to bring some of their own insights to bear on project planning and implementation.

It would be naive to imagine that developmental goals such as poverty alleviation and the empowerment of the poor will be achieved without rather far-reaching changes to existing political and world economic systems. But unless people who are really concerned confront these issues and continue within the established conventional structures, trying to increase their understanding of the systems in operation, the cycle will never be broken.

5. Conclusion: shift of emphasis in development practice - participatory approach

Increasing social tension in the Third World as a result of ascending poverty and severe criticism of development strategies that emphasised economic growth and the trickle down effect, made major development lending institutions change their strategies from supporting large scale infrastructural projects to providing support for small scale projects emphasising poverty alleviation through the strategy of growth with distribution. This made anthropological knowledge imperative in the implementation of projects concerning agriculture, health and education.

In parallel with the international institutions' attitude towards poverty elimination, a new approach in development theory emerged in the late 1970s: the participatory approach. Buzzwords like sustainability, grassroots development, and participatory research emerged in the 1980s as a reaction to the development paradigms that dominated the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The emphasis in the new concepts is helping the poor, which was largely absent in the previously dominant development paradigm. The 'poverty-oriented' projects paid attention to critical social factors such as 'socio-economic differentiation, long term survival strategies, cultural construction of ideas and practices, gender, division of labour and patterns of responsibilities' (Pottier, 1993: 14).

The new development paradigm emphasises the fact that people should come first (Chambers, 1986; 1991; 1994). The idea of people-centred participation has arisen from the fundamental misconception of post-war development. It refutes the primacy of economic growth and considers human development to be the mobilising force to sustainably improve the position of the poor. Key concepts in the new paradigm include decentralisation, empowerment of the poor, giving priority to people's felt needs and learning from proposed beneficiaries rather than

always teaching them. The empowerment of the people should be the focus of both development projects and research on the impact of projects on local communities. Research should move away from extractive methods that start a process of empowerment. Chambers argues that "both the traditional questionnaire survey and the classical social anthropological investigation are extractive even though their means of extraction differ" (Chambers, 1992).

This may be achieved via a data gathering methodology and analysis that may be called Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in which the initiative is passed to the people. The PRA consists of methods and techniques "intended to enable local people to conduct their own analysis, and often to plan to take action" (Chambers, 1994). The participatory approach is predicated upon the view that social skills and capacities of project beneficiaries can contribute substantially to the overall process of development. Thus in recent years not only new techniques such as 'stakeholder analysis', 'participatory appraisal' and 'teamup logical framework analysis' have emerged but also the number of social scientists working in development aid agencies has expanded rapidly (Rew, 1992; 1994; 1996; de Konning and Martin, 1996).

Ethnographic research has been a vital element in the development of a new approach to community-based development programmes. What is called the participatory approach to development and research emerged as a reaction to approaches which were founded upon the belief that Western models of technology and management can be transferred wholesale to the Third World. The contention of the participatory approach is that if vulnerable groups are enabled to have access to and control over resources they are perfectly capable of managing their own development (de Konning and Martin, 1996).

The aim of the participatory approach has been firstly to carry out qualitative, contextual research to analyse the success or otherwise of existing or finished development projects, and secondly to conduct research in order to design and manage future development efforts. The roots of this approach lie in 'activist participatory research', 'applied anthropology' farming systems research, agrosystem analysis and 'rapid rural appraisal'. The popularity of PRA as a method of information collection is owed to its objective of treating the outsider as a convenor and catalyst rather than being an extractor of information.

The PRA is a fairly new approach to project appraisal; thus, it is too early to assess its value. Time will show whether or not such a methodology in development projects will achieve what it claims to. However, the PRA has meant more involvement of anthropologists and sociologists in all aspects of project work, including feasibility studies and policymaking decisions. Previously, the contribution of anthropologists to a project was restricted to firstly carrying out 'appraisal' in the narrow

sense prior to project implementation, and secondly conducting *ex post facto* evaluations after the completion of projects.

Belief in the virtues of anthropological investigation led organisations like the CGIAR group, IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) and International donor agencies to employ anthropologists for the entire duration of projects rather than for just a short period after project completion, as was the case before.

The most significant task performed by anthropologists has been the investigation of the dynamics of technology choice and the impact at household and village levels (Ruttan, 1982). Development administrators have at long last accepted the fact that the methodological approach of anthropologists is different but complementary to those of agronomists and economists. Once the idea of involving project beneficiaries in every aspect of project work gained acceptance, the role of training these people as 'local evaluators' or participant evaluators was assigned to anthropologists. The involvement of anthropologists in applied development increased in parallel with the ascendancy of the buzz word 'participatory development'. As Pottier (1993) argues, the challenge for anthropologists has become "not just to predict at an early stage and come up with answers; it is also... a matter of broadening and scrutinising the participatory process itself, while searching for questions that are useful to those involved in management" (Pottier, 1993: 24).

In the 1960s and 1970s, development was considered to be a unilinear progression which unfolded itself through time. Therefore its planning, implementation and results were considered to be separate processes that could be controlled and observed. However by the 1980s it was realised that such a neat separation of policy design, implementation and results did not fit in with the complex nature of the development process. The 1980s witnessed the endeavours of development anthropologists to deconstruct the existing development paradigm and its conception of a neat, linear and oversimplifying approach to development practice. The new approach stressed the need for reinterpretation and transformation of policy during the implementation phase. In the words of Potter "anthropological research suggested a new perspective on the relationship between policy, implementation and outcomes; a model which portrayed development as a negotiated, socially constructed, never ending interaction between many social actors." (Pottier, 1993: 27).

The belief that the 'development community' is not a homogeneous group, underlined the contention that development intervention had to be dynamic, taking into consideration the viewpoints of all involved including 'beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries, the development institutions themselves, a range of interest groups, and the state'. Development anthropology popularised the actor-oriented perspective which is founded upon the idea that development intervention is a learning process that

takes place in a particular political arena "made up of differing cultural perceptions and social institutions, and constituted by the ongoing social and political struggles that take place between the social actors involved" (Long and Van Der Plog, 1989: 227).

Recent literature on development directs our attention to two issues; firstly, that development professionals should reverse their priorities and take into account the views of local people and communities; secondly, they should adopt a new professionalism that does not impose from above but which values learning from the potential project partners (Chambers, 1986).

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Zülküf AYDIN

Özet

Kalkınma pratiğinde detaylı çözümlemeler gerekli mi?

Bu makale antropoloji ile kalkınma arasındaki ilişkiyi bir disiplin olarak antropolojinin özgün nitelikleri ve azgelişmiş ülkelerde kalkınma amaçlı projeler biçiminde ortaya çıkan kalkınma pratiklerine bakarak irdelemektedir. Bu bağlamda her iki disiplinin geçirdiği değişimleri ve birbirlerine karşı aldıkları tavırları ele alıp incelemektedir. Zaman içersinde antropolojinin yavaş yavaş kendi kültürel rölativizminden nasıl ve neden vazgeçerek pratik kalkınma projelerine katıldığını ve de kalkınma pratiğinin benzeri bir dönüşümle kendi amaçlarına ulşabilmek için antropolojik verilere nasıl ve neden gereksinme duyduğunu sergilemek makalenin iki temel amacını oluşturmaktadır.