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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Applied development roles for anthropologists

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Applied anthropologists and development projects

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

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

As Pottier (1993) points out, the idea that economic and social change can be framed within projects is central to the top-down, controlling urge of development activity. When questions are asked within the conceptual framework of a project, it is all too easy to submit to the idea of 'social engineering' and to forget that most 'complications' involve real people in real-life situations around which straightforward decision-making boundaries cannot be drawn.

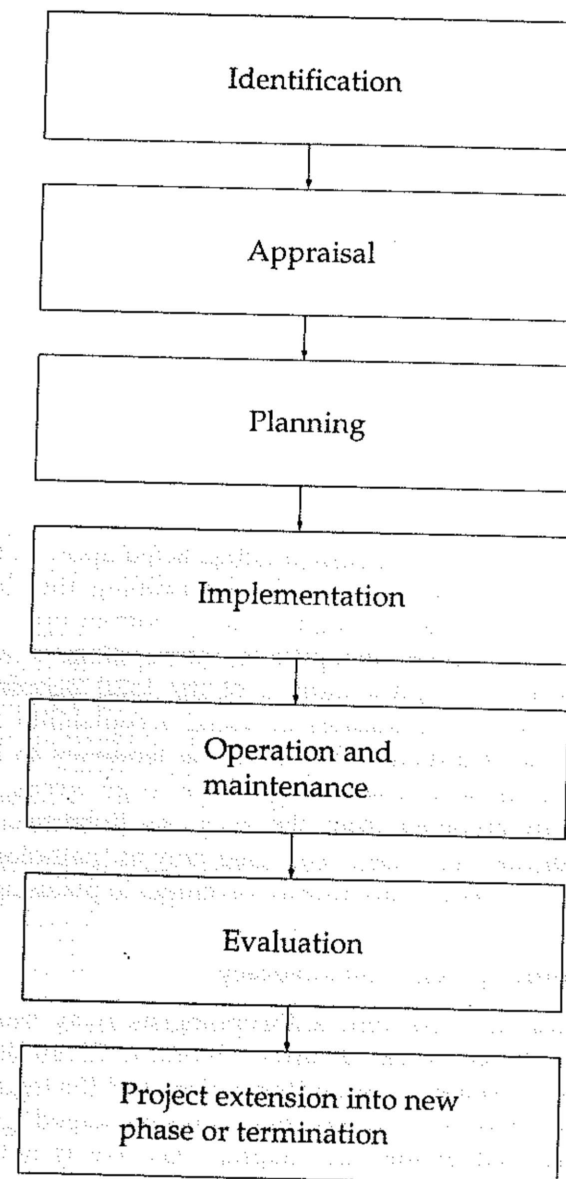

Figure 2.1: The project cycle

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

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

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

Applied anthropology and advocacy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

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

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

3 THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF DEVELOPMENT

Anthropologists, change and development

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

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

domains, are just two examples. As we hope to show too, the relationship between anthropology and development is not necessarily one-way: the study of development has proved to be fertile ground for anthropology, influenced by and feeding into wider debates within the discipline.

Since no society is static, change should be inherent in all anthropological analysis. However, this has not always been the case. While in its earliest phases the discipline was based upon models of evolutionary change, from the 1920s until the 1950s British social anthropology was dominated by the functionalist paradigms of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown (Grimshaw and Hart, 1993: 14–29). These presented the 'exotic' peoples studied as isolated and self-sufficient; social institutions were functionally integrated and each contributed in different ways to social reproduction. Rather than continually changing according to wider political or economic circumstances, such societies were therefore presented in ahistorical terms, functionally bound together by the sum of their customs and social institutions.

By the 1960s and early 1970s, structural-functionalism was increasingly superseded by the structuralism of Levi-Strauss.[1] While based on quite different theoretical premisses from those of structural-functionalism, this too was largely uninterested in change, seeking out the binary oppositions which, the structuralists argued, underlie all human culture. Although structural-functionalism and structuralism were not the only paradigms in anthropology over these periods, and writers such as Leach challenged the static nature of structuralist accounts,[2] in general history and economic change were not given much consideration by the mainstream. This tendency continues today in the work of some anthropologists. Indeed, cultural units are often portrayed in ethnography as isolates; if the forces of market or state are mentioned, they are presented as autonomous forces, impinging from the outside (Marcus and Fischer, 1986: 77).

In spite of these trends, individual anthropologists have long been studying the effects of economic change, development projects and global capitalism. Within some branches of anthropology, such work has always been closely connected to theory: French Marxist anthropology is just one example.[3] Meanwhile, recognition of the historical embeddedness of ethnography has been growing in recent decades. This is associated with anthropology's recent bout of self-criticism and reflexivity, and with wider critiques of the way in which Western scholarship has presented timeless, ahistorical 'others' (ibid.: 78). Today, understanding cultural and social

organisation as dynamic, rather than fixed or determined by 'set' essentials, is central to contemporary anthropology. It is widely appreciated that culture does not exist in a vacuum, but is determined by, and in turn determines, historically specific political and economic contexts.

In this short chapter we cannot begin to discuss the vast range of anthropological work which places change at the centre of the analysis. Even if we only included research which focuses directly on situations where capitalist forms of production, exchange or labour relations have recently been introduced, the potential range of material is huge. It is not our intention to produce a comprehensive survey of such work, nor do we intend to discuss the many non-anthropological studies of development. Instead, in what follows we provide a quick 'taste' of the ways in which anthropologists have tackled economic change and growth, whether this was deliberately planned or more spontaneous. As we shall see, while not all of this work explicitly questions or challenges the dominant development discourse, some of it does so implicitly.

In general, the anthropology of development (and by this we mean planned and unplanned social and economic change) can be loosely arranged around the following themes:

1. The social and cultural effects of economic change.
2. The social and cultural effects of development projects (and why they fail).
3. The internal workings and discourses of the 'aid industry'.

Some work covers all these themes; the first two, in particular, are closely interrelated. Clearly too, the potential applicability of the different analyses varies. Work which addresses the second issue, for example, often aims to affect policy as well as add to academic debate. It is generally sympathetic rather than completely condemnatory of development practice, assuming that the understandings which it provides are crucial tools in the struggle to improve development from within. In this sense it tends to blur the boundaries between academic and applied anthropology. In contrast, anthropologists interested in the last question are usually less interested in aiding development practitioners; while their insights may have policy implications, such work rarely ends with practical recommendations. Instead they hope to problematise the very nature of development. As we shall see, the three themes can also be linked, albeit very loosely, to historical changes within both development and anthropology.

The social and cultural effects of economic change

Although the study of economic change has not always been academically fashionable, individual anthropologists have long been grappling with it. As we saw in the last chapter, the relationship between anthropology, its practical application and questions of change were originally (in British social anthropology at least) entangled with colonial rule, especially in Africa. Malinowski was the first anthropologist to propose a new branch of the subject: 'the anthropology of the changing native' (1929: 36, and cited in Grillo, 1985: 9), sending students such as Lucy Mair to Africa to study social change, rather than more abstract theoretical principals. Even Evans-Pritchard – accused today of having remained silent in his famous ethnographic writings on the Nuer about the frequent aerial bombings of their herds as part of the colonial government's 'pacification' programme in the 1930s during his fieldwork – argued in earlier work that the Nuer were in a state of transition, their clans and lineages broken up by endless wars (discussed by Kuper, 1983: 94). Let us start, then, with some of the early work of British anthropologists working in colonial Africa.

Rural to urban migration and 'detribalisation'

One of the earliest collective efforts to make sense of economic and political change in Africa was embodied by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in 1937. While it was originally assumed that the Institute's research would concentrate upon 'traditional' African rural life, the director, Godfrey Wilson, made it clear that he was most interested in urbanisation and its influence on rural life (Hannerz, 1980 : 123). In the books which resulted from Wilson's research in Broken Hill (now Zambia) (Wilson, 1941; 1942), he argued that while Central African society was normally in a state of equilibrium, destabilising changes had been introduced which had led to disequilibrium. These changes were mostly the result of the increasing influence of capitalist production within the region: industrialisation, and growing rural-to-urban migration. As in Zambia's Copperbelt, Broken Hill was dominated by the European mining industry, which largely determined African migration to and settlement within it. Because colonial policy discouraged permanent settlement, most of the male migrants working for the mines moved between their villages and the town. Wilson suggested that destabilisation might be offset if this policy were reversed and

proposed that eventually the changes would be incorporated by the social system, leading once more to equilibrium.

Urban migration in Rhodesia, as in other parts of Africa, had a dramatic effect on rural areas. Many villages lost a large proportion of their male labour force, and most migrants could not afford to send back enough remittances to compensate. The work of other anthropologists confirmed this gloomy view of labour migration, linking it with decreasing agricultural output (A. Richards, 1939) and cultural decay (Schapera, 1947). While this perspective was to change in later studies which suggested that rural-to-urban migration in Africa might be a force of modernisation (for a review, see Eades, 1987: 3), other, more contemporary work has taken up similar themes. Colin Murray's analysis of labour migration in Lesotho, for example, shows how rural life has been deeply structured by its dependence on the export of labour to South Africa. Oscillating male migration has generated economic insecurity, marital disharmony and the destruction of traditional kinship relations. In other words, capital accumulated at the urban core takes place at the expense of the rural periphery (Murray, 1981).

While this body of work raises questions about the relationship of societies on the 'periphery' to the global political economy, research based in the Copperbelt towns has greatly contributed to anthropological understanding of ethnicity. The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, and the continuation of its work under Max Gluckman at the University of Manchester, focused largely upon social and cultural forms within the mining towns. Central to much of this was the issue of 'detribalisation', the argument that once individuals moved to the towns their tribal bonds became less important, being superseded by class or workplace affiliations. Research showed that this was not necessarily the case. Rather, tribal identities and obligations changed, and were used in different ways in the urban setting. Mitchell's seminal analysis of the Kalela Dance (1956), Epstein's *Politics in an Urban African Community* (1958) and Cohen's slightly later analysis of Yoruba traders and the use of ethnicity for political and economic interests (1969) raised questions of identity, ethnic conflict and cultural diversity, which are of central interest to anthropologists today.

Agricultural change: polarisation

While the anthropology of urbanisation in Africa was rooted in pre-war colonial policy, studies of rural change in South and South East Asia were largely influenced by post-colonial states' efforts to

modernise in the 1950s and 1960s. Much of this work indicated that the transition to cash-cropping, mechanisation and the growing importance of wage labour had a range of social effects, not least of which was increasing polarisation and the proletarianisation of the rural poor. It seemed that the 'Green Revolution' and other modernisation strategies were unlikely, at least in the forseeable future, to diminish poverty. These critiques contributed to growing scepticism about the 'trickle-down' effects of economic growth, and added to calls for a shift in policy towards 'basic needs' and the targeting of particularly vulnerable groups.

Let us start with Clifford Geertz's account of Indonesian agricultural change, *Agricultural Involution* (1963a). By providing an historical account of Indonesian agriculture, Geertz showed how colonial policies encouraged the development of a partial cash economy in which peasant farmers were forced to pay taxes to support plantation production for export. This, alongside the policies of the post-independence elite, contributed to growing dualism. The majority of farmers formed a labour-intensive sector in which they were unable to accumulate capital and produced mainly for subsistence, while another sector grew capital-intensive and technologically advanced under colonial management. Economic stagnation in Indonesia has therefore been deeply structured not only by history and ecology, but also by social and cultural factors (Geertz, 1963a: 154).

In contrast to Geertz's adventurous multidisciplinary approach, other anthropologists, in a more traditional mode, have focused upon the effects of economic change at the micro level. In South Asia, two of the most famous of these are Bailey's *Caste and the Economic Frontier* (1958) and Scarlett Epstein's *Economic Development and Social Change in South India* (1962). In a later work, *South India: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (1973), Epstein discusses the effects of the introduction of new irrigation techniques and the growing importance of cash-cropping to two villages in south India. In the village of Wangala, where farmers were increasingly producing for and profiting from a local sugar refinery, the changes had not led to major social readjustment. The village continued to have few links with the external economy and the social structure remained largely unaltered, due to both the flexibility of the local political system and the fact that the economy was still wholly based upon agriculture. In contrast, in the second village, Dalena, which had remained a dry land enclave in the midst of an irrigated belt, male farmers were encouraged to move away from their relatively unprofitable agricultural pursuits and participate in other ways in the burgeoning

economy which surrounded them. Some became traders, or worked in white-collar jobs in the local town. These multiple economic changes led to the breakdown of the hereditary political, social and ritual obligations, the changing status of local caste groups and the rise of new forms of hierarchy.

The different changes in each community indicate that processes of capitalist transformation are far from homogeneous, even within the same region. Instead, economic and technological changes inter-relate with pre-existing social and cultural forms in a variety of ways, and have diverse consequences. Epstein's work also shows that in both villages social differentiation was increasing. In Wangala, despite the government's abolition of 'untouchability' in 1949, those lowest in the caste hierachy remained in the same position. The gap between the poorest and the richest was, however, growing. Likewise, traditional bonds between employers and labourers were largely intact. In Dalena there had been some compromises over 'untouchability', but at the same time the security of labourers had diminished; the poorest were becoming increasingly temporary and wholly dependent upon their small wages rather than the traditional patronage of their employers.

A wide literature supports Epstein's view that the modernisation of agriculture (the introduction of new technologies, cash-cropping, wage labour) in South Asia has contributed to growing rural polarisation. Much of this constitutes a critique of the Green Revolution, correcting initial claims that the 'package' of agricultural innovations would cure all hunger. Again, the effects of the innovations depend partly upon pre-existing social relations. Harriss' study of social changes in North Arcot, south India, for example, shows that while farmers are increasingly linked to external markets and government institutions, traditional patron clientage is reinforced (J. Harriss, 1977). Meanwhile, the poorest are worse off, for alongside the new technology has come increasing competition over scarce resources, together in some cases with displacement of labour by the new technology (Farmer, 1977). These effects, added to the non-adoption of many parts of the package, have been noted across the world (Pearse, 1980).

Modernisation is thus not nearly so simple as many theorists during the 1950s and 1960s had assumed. While writers such as Epstein were not engaged in the critical deconstruction of 'development' which was to emerge several decades later in the work of post-modernist anthropologists, their ethnography vividly demonstrated the flaws in the conventional developmental thinking of the time. They also contributed to wider debates within anthropology; for example, Bailey and Epstein were just two of many anthropologists working in South Asia on the changing nature of caste and kinship institutions during this period.[4]

Capitalism and the 'world system'

As notions of modernisation and the 'trickle-down' effects of economic growth were being increasingly questioned by both anthropological findings and the evident failure of many development policies, other researchers were turning their attention to the relationship of local communities and cultures to the global political economy. This can be linked to the growing dominance during the 1970s of theories of dependency, and especially to Wallerstein's world system theory (Wallerstein, 1974), as well as the use of Marxism in the 1970s and 1980s by some anthropologists (for example, Bloch, 1983). Rather than analysing development in terms of the transformation of otherwise untouched or 'traditional' communities by economic or technological innovations, the emphasis here was more upon the ways in which societies on the 'periphery' had long been integrated into capitalism, and on the cultural expressions of economic and political dependency and/or resistance. Such work places indigenous experiences and expressions of history at the centre of the analysis; colonialism and neo-colonialism are often key to this.[5] It is worth noting that much of this research was carried out in Latin America, where dependency theory originated. Like dependency theory, the questions raised by this approach are less easily translated into national or regional policy. It critiques the basis of development discourse, rather than attempting to work within it.

A classic attempt to fuse neo-Marxist political economy with anthropological perspectives is Eric Wolf's *Europe and the People without History* (1982). This is an ambitious attempt to place the history of the world's peoples within the context of global capitalism, showing how the history of capitalism has tied even the most apparently remote areas and social groups into the system. In it, Wolf argues that concepts such as the mode of production involve social and cultural, as well as technical, aspects. Since he concentrates on the macro-level his analysis of culture is rather limited, however (Marcus and Fisher, 1986: 85). As others have pointed out too, the spread of European capitalism is far from being the only history to be told of the 'people without history' (Asad, 1987). Similar themes are taken up in Worsley's *The Three Worlds: Culture and World Development* (1984), which provides further analysis of the

relationship between local cultural expressions and the exploitative workings of global capitalism.

The integration of political economy and history into ethnographic analysis opened important doors in anthropology during the 1980s, contributing to some of the most exciting work to be produced in recent decades. In this, the mediation between structure and experienced practice is central, indicating the diverse ways in which people struggle to construct meaning and act upon the forces which often subjugate and engulf them. Comaroff's *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance* (1985), an analysis of the interrelationship between history and culture among the Baralong boo Ratshidi, a people on the margins of the South African state, is a classic example of such an approach. David Lan's *Guns and Rain* (1985), an ethnography of rural revolution in Zimbabwe, is another example.

Drawing more directly from neo-Marxist theories of dependency, two important studies by anthropologists working in Latin America indicate both the extent to which groups are linked into global capitalism, and the ways in which this is interpreted and culturally resisted. Michael Taussig's *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (1980) is an account of the cultural as well as economic integration of Columbian peasants and of Bolivian tin miners into the money economy and proletarian wage labour. The Columbian peasants who seasonally sell their labour to plantations present the plantation economy and profits made from it as tied to the capitalist system, and thus to the devil. Plantations are conceptualised as quite separate from the peasants' own land; in the former, profit-making requires deals to be made with the devil, whereas in the latter it does not. In the Bolivian tin mines, workers worship Tio (the devil), who Taussig argues is a spiritual embodiment of capitalism and a way of mediating pre-capitalist beliefs with the introduction of wage labour and industrialisation. Similar themes are explored in June Nash's *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us* (1979). Again drawing on Latin American dependency theory and on Marxist analysis of ideology and class consciousness, Nash explores the cultural and social meanings given to capitalist exploitation at the periphery.

Taussig's and Nash's work concentrates largely upon local ideologies of capitalist integration, without directly questioning models of dependency and global exploitation. Other anthropologists, however, have added to the growing critique of dependency theory and its eventual fall from grace during the 1980s. In Norman Long's research in the Mantaro Valley of central Peru, for example, he found that neo-Marxism only offered limited insights (Long, 1977). Instead, his findings challenged dependency theorists'

assumptions that integration into global capitalism could only lead to stagnation on the periphery. In his research he found both growth and diversification in the Mantaro Valley. Indeed, some groups had been highly entrepreneurial, generating considerable small-scale capital accumulation. Local producers had also developed a complex system of economic linkages, which was far from simply determined by the 'centre'. Contrary to the assumptions made by dependency theory, there were no obvious chains of hierarchy linking them to the metropolis, or to the mining corporation. Through anthropological methods (interviews, situational analysis, life history studies, social network methods and so on), Long's research therefore allowed him to indicate the different responses to change of the actors themselves, revealing a far more complex and dynamic situation than structuralist analysis of the macro level could ever allow.

Most important, perhaps, is Long's use of the notion of human agency; the recognition that people actively engage in shaping their own worlds, rather than their actions being wholly pre-ordained by capital or the intervention of the state (Long and Long, 1992: 33). Similar conclusions had been made by researchers working in squatter settlements in Latin America. Prompted in part by the findings of Mangin, a sociologist, and Turner,[6] an architect, various writers argued during the 1960s and 1970s that rather than being 'slums of despair' the settlements were in fact 'slums of hope' (Lloyd, 1979). Invasions of land were carefully planned and people worked together to obtain water, electricity and roads for their settlements, forming committees and gaining a voice through electing local politicians to state and metropolitan bodies. Rather than being passive 'victims' of international and national structures of exploitation, the squatters were active agents, working hard to transform their economic and social standing. Whether or not they were always successful depended to a large degree upon state policies towards squatting. They were not, however, 'marginal'; instead, they were marginalised by wider contexts, even while striving to improve themselves (Perlman, 1976).

While stress on the perspectives of actors, rather than the 'systems' of which they are a part, has always been central to anthropology, such ideas have been widely taken up within development studies in recent decades, partly perhaps both because it points to constructive changes which can be made into policy, and because its 'developmental' message is essentially optimistic: people are not wholly constrained by exploitative superstructures or the 'world system'; they are active agents and, if there is to be intervention,

merely need to be 'helped to help themselves' (the motto of the British Overseas Development Administration). During the 1980s growing emphasis was put upon the subjects of development projects as 'actors', adding to ideas about participatory development, the 'farmer first' movement and the importance of 'indigenous knowledge', all of which will be discussed in later chapters. For now, however, let us turn to another major contribution of anthropology to the understanding of social and economic change: the analysis of gender relations.

The gendered effects of economic change

Alongside the first stirrings of feminist anthropology in the early 1970s came the growing recognition that economic development has differing effects on men and women. Increasing interest in the relationship between gender and development was precipated largely by the publication of Ester Boserup's ground-breaking *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (1970). In this, Boserup pointed out that the sexual division of labour varies throughout the world and that, contrary to Western stereotypes, women often play a central role in economic production. Nowhere is this more true than in Africa, which Boserup contrasts with 'plough economies' where, she asserts, women are secluded and play a diminished role in production (an assumption which in fact is largely unfounded). Women's varied productive roles, she argues, are due to population pressure, land tenure and technology. As economies become more technologically developed, women are increasingly withdrawn from production or forced into the subsistence sector, while men take centre stage in the production of cash crops. These changes are not automatic, but have been influenced by ethnocentric colonial policies which assumed that women were not involved in agricultural production and thus bypassed female farmers in favour of men.

Boserup's work was an important catalyst for an enormous literature on the effects of development on gender relations. Much of this focuses on particular projects and policies, which we shall discuss in the next section of this chapter. Other researchers looked at the wider relationship between capitalist change and gender. This was not a new debate: as early as 1884 Engels had discussed the relationship between the subordination of women and the development of class relations alongside the privatisation of property, in *The Origin of the Family: Private Property and the State*. While lying largely dormant in anthropology up until the 1960s, such concepts were eagerly taken up and reworked by a new generation of feminist

anthropologists during the 1970s (for example, Leacock, 1972; Sachs, 1975). While not all academics working on what became known as 'GAD' (gender and development) were anthropologists, much of their work drew heavily on the field of feminist anthropology, which during the 1970s was growing in intellectual credibility and theoretical rigour.[7] Not all of this work was directly concerned with economic 'development'; some feminist anthropology, for example, involved the restudy of the subjects of ethnographic classics from a feminist perspective,[8] while other work focused on women's supposed universal subordination and its cultural expressions.[9]

The capitalist transformation of subsistence economies is generally acknowledged as having a negative effect on women.[10] Change in land tenure, labour migration and a growing market in land and labour have all contributed to the marginalisation of women from processes of change, relegating them to subsistence production. The 'feminisation of subsistence' thesis is explained in two ways (Moore, 1988: 75). First, since women have reproductive as well as productive duties (they must feed, clothe, shelter and emotionally support their families), they are less free to spend time producing cash crops. Thus while men may be able to experiment with new technologies and production for exchange, women must first and foremost produce the subsistence foods on which their households depend. Second, male labour migration leaves women behind to carry the burden of supporting the subsistence sector.

While the 'feminisation of subsistence thesis' is in many ways problematic (for example, in many parts of Asia men still play a dominant role in subsistence agriculture), it raises similar issues to that of research on the Green Revolution: economic change has differential social effects. But rather than these differential effects being experienced *between* households, feminist anthropology indicates that they exist *within* them. Equality cannot be taken for granted at any level of social organisation (Folbre, 1986).

Ann Whitehead's research on the Kusasi in Ghana is an excellent example of these points, demonstrating that we need to deconstruct concepts of both the household and the sexual division of labour, which involves not just different tasks but also different access to resources (Whitehead, 1981). Among the Kusai there are two types of farm, private and household, and men and women have different access to resources, which they do not pool. The main constraint on productivity is access to labour rather than to land. Productivity depends to a large extent on the degree to which social networks – and thus labour – can be mobilised. Men are better able to do this than women: while they can call upon the labour of their wives,

... Meanwhile men are often able to ... by paying for it with community-wide work parties. As this and other research clearly indicates, projects aimed at increasing productivity thus often have to negotiate complex economic and social relations which are embedded in the local cultural context. Assumptions cannot be made about the nature of households, the distribution of resources within them, or the social relations of production.

The work of feminist anthropologists in analysing the gendered effects of economic change has made a substantial contribution both to development studies and to anthropology. We shall discuss the former in the next section. Within academic anthropology, during the 1970s and 1980s feminists pushed a whole new domain of study onto the anthropological agenda: the cultural, political and economic construction of relations between men and women. This involved radically unpicking various anthropological concepts which had formerly been treated as unproblematic: the household, the 'domestic mode of production' and the division of labour were all deconstructed and reconstituted in far more incisive terms (see, for example, O. Harris, 1981). Feminist anthropology also sounded the final death knell for structural-functionalism: given what it told us about power, resistance and the cultural hegemony of patriarchy, the notion that societies are functionally integrated and in equilibrium was clearly no longer credible. The pressure from feminist anthropology to deconstruct androcentric categories and assumptions can also be seen as the precursor to the increasingly reflexive nature of anthroplogy in the 1980s and into the 1990s.

The social and cultural effects of development projects (and why they fail)

Clearly, many of the texts discussed above have been concerned with the issue of social and cultural impacts. Here, however, we shall consider work which focuses specifically upon development projects. Rather than treating them as external forces which affect the social group or community being studied, this may involve studying the internal workings of the projects themselves, an issue we shall return to in the next section. Much (but not all) of this work is largely sympathetic to the developmental effort (Ferguson, 1990: 9), presenting it as a collective effort to fight poverty, rather than a form of imperialism or dependency. The research agenda thus tends to be dominated by pragmatic assessments of what goes wrong with development projects, and how they could be improved. Within the

anthropology of development, this body of work is thus the mo... easy to apply practically, and texts often end with lists of concre... recommendations. As we shall see, anthropologists tend to call fo... the same solutions: local participation, awareness of social an... cultural complexities, and the use of ethnographic knowledge at th... planning stage.

One of the most common criticisms made by anthropologists o... development planning is that it is done in a 'top-down' manner: plans are made by distant officials who have little idea what the conditions, capabilities or needs are in the area or community which has been earmarked for developmental interventions. By imposing such plans on people, rather than allowing them to participate in the decision-making process, it is argued, interventions are doomed to failure, for development can only ever be sustainable if it is from the 'grassroots'. Criticisms are thus aimed not at development per se, but at the way in which it is carried out. Changes in policy and practice, it is optimistically assumed, will mean that development projects are increasingly successful in helping the poor.

Robert Chambers's *Rural Development: Putting the Last First* is a seminal statement of this position and draws heavily upon the insights of anthropology (Chambers, 1983). In this and subsequent publications, Chambers attacks the biased preconceptions of development planners, most of whom have only a very shaky understanding of rural life in so-called developing societies (Chambers, 1983; 1993). Their urban bias, the use of misinformed research and statistics, and their neglect of local solutions and knowledge means that development policies and projects can never succeed, for they do not understand the hidden nature of rural poverty. The only solution, Chambers argues, is to 'put the poor first' and, most importantly, enable them to participate in projects of their own design and appraisal.

Tony Barnett's *The Gezira Scheme: An Illusion of Development* is a classic critique of 'top-down' development (T. Barnett, 1977). The Gezira Scheme was a colonial economic development project begun during the 1920s which was intended to introduce intensive irrigated cotton production in Sudan. Despite the apparent well-being of the Gezira peasants, Barnett suggests that the project led to stagnation and dependency. The scheme was huge, involving 12 per cent of the total cultivated area in Sudan and the leasing of government land to over 80,000 tenants. These cultivated cotton for export, and were allowed neither to have more land than they could cultivate, nor to sell it. Barnett argues that the relationship between

the cultivators and the Sudan Gezira board was paternalistic and authoritarian, based on British efforts to control 'black' labour. This meant that cultivators had few incentives to be innovative, and Sudan remained largely dependent upon foreign markets for its cotton. In such a context, aid is more to do with 'neo-colonialism' than even attempting to help the poor. To this extent Barnett's work has theoretically more in common with neo-Marxist analyses of the role of aid in reproducing the dependency of the periphery than with the more positive approach of writers such as Chambers.

Most anthropological critiques of development projects criticise planning which is insensitive to the cultural and social complexity of local conditions and thus to the diverse effects of externally induced change. Let us turn to work which examines the effects of this on gender relations within development projects.

As we have seen, anthropological research has had a major impact on understandings of the effect of economic change on gender relations. Not only have feminist anthropologists provided ethnographic accounts of this, they have also developed various analytic tools (the division of labour, production and reproduction, the household) to illuminate why development tends to have such different effects on men and women. Much of this work focuses on the effects of specific development projects. There is a vast literature on this; here, we intend only to give a brief introduction to some of the main issues and texts.

By misunderstanding the sexual division of labour, access to resources in the household and women's double burden of productive and reproductive work, development planning and projects frequently lead to the marginalisation of women. This is because of both pre-existing gender relations (which mean that men are better placed to appropriate new economic opportunities) and the patriarchal assumptions of planners. This process began with colonial adminstrators, who imported ethnocentric notions of 'the place of women', and continues today through the work of Western development planners. In *The Domestication of Women* Barbara Rogers argues that Western development planners make a range of Western, and thus patriarchal, assumptions about gender relations in developing countries (Rogers, 1980). It is often assumed, for example, that farmers are male, that women do not do heavy productive work and that nuclear families are the norm. Through androcentric and biased research, such as the use of national accounting procedures and surveys which assume that men are household heads, women become invisible. Women are thus systematically discriminated against, not least because there is discrimination within the development agencies themselves. Again, this process began with the 'men's club' (ibid.: 48) of colonial administration, but is continued today in organisations such as the FAO and World Bank.

The answer, Rogers argues, is not simply more projects for women, for these often produce a 'new segregation' in which women are simply trained in domestic science or given sewing machines for income generation. Instead, gender awareness must be built into planning procedures, a process which will necessarily involve reform of the development institutions involved. Similar conclusions are made by other, policy-oriented writers, such as Staudt (Staudt, 1990; 1991) and the contributors to Ostergaard's *Gender and Development: A Practical Guide* (Ostergaard, 1992).

While Rogers takes a more general view of the discriminatory effects of planned development, other writers concentrate on particular projects. Dey's account of irrigation projects in the Gambia shows that by assuming that men controlled land, labour and income, the projects failed to increase national rice production and increased women's dependency on men (Dey, 1981). Within the farming system of the Mandinka, crop production is traditionally dominated by collective production for household consumption (*maruo*), but also involves separate cultivation by men and women on land they are allocated by the household head in return for their *maruo* labour (*kamanyango*). Crops from this land are the property of the male or female cultivators. However, under rice irrigation projects sponsored by Taiwan (1966–74), the World Bank (1973–76) and China (1975–79), only men were given *kamanyango* rights to irrigated land; in other irrigated plots designated as *maruo*, men increasingly used women's skilled collective labour, but were able to pay them low wages because of the lack of other income-generating opportunities available to women. Women's traditional economic rights were thus systematically undermined by the projects, a process which had started during the colonial period, when once more the reciprocal rights and duties of farming were undermined by policies which encouraged male farmers to produce cash crops and failed to recognise the central role of female producers. By ignoring the complexities of the farming system and concentrating on male farmers, the projects thus not only disadvantaged women, but lost out on their valuable expertise.

Because gender relations are culturally specific, development projects have different effects according to where they are carried out and the ways in which they are implemented. Data from Asia,

led to
abour in rice-farming villages in the Philippines, in Japan female participation has remained relatively high (Ng, 1991: 188). In her case study of the introduction of advanced mechanisation in a rice-growing village in West Malaysia, Ng shows how women's participation in the labour force has declined (Ng, 1991). The Northwest Selangor Integrated Agricultural Development Project, launched in 1978, aimed to increase yields, maximise income and thus alleviate rural poverty by the introduction of Green Revolution-type technologies. While this has indeed led to higher yields, the division of labour by gender has been transformed, significantly reducing women's contribution to farming and thus leading to a reduction in their productive skills. With their displacement from rice production, their domestic role is increasingly important to women, due to the prevailing gender ideology which places priority on women's reproductive work; this is encouraged by both the state and rural patriarchy. Class is an important factor too. While women from rich and middle-income households have increasingly (and apparently happily) retreated to the domestic arena, women from poor households need to work to raise the cash for the new inputs necessary for increased productivity. There are thus two broad trends: patriarchal households among the rich and middle-income households, and female-headed households among the poor.

The analyses of development projects by feminist anthropologists have had important implications for policy-makers.[11] There is not space here for a comprehensive review of the effects of women in development (WID) and gender and development (GAD) on development policy.[12] Suffice it to say that since 1975, with the start of the first UN Development Decade for Women, gender has been increasingly acknowledged as an important issue within development circles. Many agencies now have explicit policies on gender, employing 'experts' to ensure that their projects give sufficient consideration to the interests of women. The World Bank, for example, has a WID unit, while UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) has been a United Nations agency since 1985 (Madeley, 1991: 29). Gender training has also taken off since the 1980s, with agencies funding the training of both their own staff and that of local governments and other institutions in recipient countries.[13] Whether or not these efforts have had any real impact on improving the detrimental effects of development on women is, however, debatable. Indeed, some argue that WID policies and training reproduce ethnocentric assumptions about the nature of gender and

women's subordination; that they coopt radical feminist critiques into the development discourse, thus neutralising them. We shall return to these issues later.

Closely related to anthropological critiques of 'top-down' planning is the criticism that planners fail to acknowledge adequately the importance, and potential, of local knowledge. Instead, projects often involve the assumption that Western or urban knowledge is superior to the knowledge of the people 'to be developed'; they are regarded as ignorant although, as anthropologists have repeatedly shown, they have their own areas of appropriate expertise. This is tied to the 'farmer first' movement (Chambers et al., 1989). It also raises interesting questions about the interrelationship of different forms of knowledge, which we shall return to in the next section. For now, however, let us consider cases where 'top-down' planning means that not enough is known about the culture or conditions of an area or target group before a project is embarked upon.

Development projects often fail because of the ignorance of planners rather than the ignorance of the beneficiaries. This might involve a range of factors, such as local ecological conditions, the availability of particular resources, physical and climatic conditions and so on. The result is inappropriate intervention, which may end in disaster. (An example is the infamous Groundnut Scheme in Tanzania; see Wood, 1950.) The success of all projects depends upon whether or not they are socially and culturally appropriate, yet it is ironically these factors which tend to be least considered. Much literature therefore focuses upon the need for ethnographic knowledge at the planning stage of project design (for example, Mair, 1984; Hill, 1986; Pottier, 1993). Again, this perspective is ultimately optimistic: with better planning (and the use of ethnography), it is assumed, development projects will succeed in helping the poor.

Mamdani's classic analysis of the failure of the Khanna study, an attempt to introduce birth control to the Indian village of Manupur, is a fascinating account of developmental top-downism and ignorance (Mamdani, 1972). Because of the cultural and economic value of having as many children as possible, Mamdani argues that population programmes are unlikely to have much success in rural India. Programme planners in the Khanna study, however, assumed that villagers' rejection of contraception was due to 'ignorance', thus completely ignoring the social and economic realities of the village. Once again, anthropological methods and questions, rather than bureaucratic planning, reveal the true constraints on 'successful'

development. While Mamdani is to be congratulated for powerfully illustrating the cultural and economic influences on family planning uptake, he can also be criticised for assuming that local attitudes to family planning are homogeneous. Other work questions this, indicating that men and women often have very different views and that it is men who usually control eventual fertility decisions. This is an area where feminist researchers clearly have much to contribute (for further discussion, see Kabeer, 1994: 187–222).

Pottier's edited collection, *Practising Development*, takes these issues substantially further. It also clearly reflects changes within developmental practice, wherein notions of participation and 'farmer first' have gained increasing currency in recent years (Pottier, 1993). While all contributions take for granted the need for anthropological insights at the planning stage and show how this is already a common practice for some organisations – for example, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) (Seddon, 1993) and Band Aid (Garber and Jenden, 1993) – most examine how social science perspectives can be effectively incorporated into development programmes. This is not simply a matter of becoming literate in the local culture, as if it were composed of essential and accessible elements. A critical perspective here is that 'the social worlds within which development efforts take shape are essentially fluid' (Pottier, 1993: 7). Gatter's Zambian case study, for example, demonstrates how farming practices tend to be systematised by development workers, who thus misunderstand their complexity and fluidity (Gatter, 1993). To avoid such misrepresentations, and make ethnographic knowledge meaningful, there must therefore be a continual collection of ethnographic data. This research need not necessarily be carried out by expatriate consultants but can be done by trained field staff, especially those in NGOs. Crucially, Pottier's collection adopts an approach increasingly emerging in the anthropology of development: that of studying development bureaucracies and institutions in themselves, as well as the discourses which they produce. Let us turn to our third theme.

The internal workings and discourses of the 'aid industry'

Rather than simply viewing development as an external force, which acts upon the 'real' subjects of anthropological enquiry (the 'people'), anthropological accounts of development are increasingly treating its institutions, political processes and ideologies as valid sites of ethnographic enquiry in themselves. While this approach is

not solely confined to the late 1980s and 1990s, its increasing dominance reflects contemporary trends in anthropology. Before turning to this, let us start with the anthropology of development planning.

Development anthropologists have been aware of the need to study the internal working of development institutions for some time, although studies of administration are usually focused far more on the recipients of planned change than on the 'developers'. Early work in the applied anthropology tradition such as H.G. Barnett's *Anthropology in Administration* (1956) deal mainly with the practical uses to which anthropological knowledge could be put by administrators, using examples drawn from the author's experience of working in the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and only occasionally turns its gaze upon the system itself. Cochrane's *Development Anthropology* (1971) emphasises the need for administrators, under the guidance of anthropologists, to recognise the cultural issues surrounding development in addition to the more familiar economic and technological aspects in which they are trained. Belshaw's *The Sorceror's Apprentice* (1976) seeks to draw anthropological concerns away from the 'exotic' towards real policy issues in the dominant culture and to counter the tendencies of administrators only to 'know and control'.

More recently, and more ambitiously, Robertson's *People and the State* (1984) attempts to analyse planned development as a political encounter between the people and the state. Development agencies, he argues, are premissed on the need to turn an unreliable citizenry into a structured public; development interventions are thus the site of contest between the people and bureaucracy (1984: 4). Much of the book recounts the history of planning, from post-revolutionary Russia and colonial planning to the economic planning of contemporary Third World states. Robertson also makes a plea for anthropology to become more centrally involved in development. Although historically anthropology has been weak on state theory, he suggests that it can potentially offer an overview of the whole planning process, thus making a vital contribution to wider understandings of development. Like Cochrane, Robertson is interested in the practical uses of anthropology and appears to be optimistic about the potential of planned change. As he concludes: 'anthropology may ultimately prove its worth by helping to explain a confused and lethally divided world to itself, and to indicate humane and realistic prospects for progress' (Robertson, 1984: 306).

Project and planning ethnography is linked to shifting paradigms within development studies. Here too, there is increasing recogni-

to actor-oriented world views of individual actors (rather than passive target groups or beneficiaries), and the interfaces between them and bureaucratic institutions, are the focus of study (Long and Long, 1992). Notions of 'farmer first' development, and participation, are influential here. On a slightly different level, recognition of the need to understand (and then change) the workings of bureaucracy (in, for example, recent writings on gender and development: Staudt, 1990; 1991) is also important.

The authors discussed above present planning as a relevant and important area of anthropological research. All share – in different degrees – a practical agenda: to improve the planning process, usually with help from anthropological inputs. In contrast to this, more recent work deconstructs and problematises the very notion of development by analysing it as a form of discourse. This work is not intended to be instrumental for policy-makers, as it critiques the epistemological assumptions within which they work. Instead, it has far-reaching implications for the way in which 'development' is conceptualised, pointing to a radical reappraisal of the ways in which global poverty and inequality are conceptualised and tackled. As we shall see, such work has been strongly influenced by post-modern understanding of culture as negotiated, contested and processual. Social realities in these accounts are multiple, and change according to context. To this extent writers do not search for objective 'truths' about development or its effects, but seek to understand the ways in which it is socially constructed and in turn constructs its subjects. Much of this has been influenced by Foucault's work on discourse, knowledge and power, which we discuss below.

The new foci in the anthropology of development on discourse are linked to the recent debates within anthropology which we discussed in Chapter 1. These question the discipline's portrayal of an ahistorical, exotic 'other' which exists in opposition to the Western self. In contrast, within 'post-modern' anthropology all domains are seen as valid subjects for research; institutions and discourses from the anthropologist's own society become relevant areas of study (Marcus and Fischer, 1986: 111–13). To redress the balance of previous orientalism, it is suggested, anthropologists should deconstruct cultural assumptions of the North as well as the South, or what Rabinow terms 'anthropologising the West' (1986: 241). Such work can also indicate how power is gained, and reproduced, at local, national and global levels. While there are many potential fieldwork sites for this, 'development' is an obvious

candidate. This might involve studying aid agencies, the categories, knowledges and culture of development, or conducting fieldwork among expatriate groups.

The study of development institutions and ideologies also contributes to recent debates on 'globalisation'. This refers to the increasingly interconnected nature of the world through international travel, labour migration and technology such as telephones, computer networks and TVs which have spread across the world and created global links. Elements of globalisation, it is suggested, link previously isolated cultures and produce new transnational cultures, which transcend national boundaries (Featherstone, 1990: 6). By researching international agencies, the ideas which they produce and how these are disseminated and made meaningful at different levels, the lives and culture of development consultants, or social movements such as NGOs or environmental pressure groups which cross-cut geographical boundaries, anthropologists are ideally placed to study the processes of 'globalisation' which are supposedly becoming so important as we approach the twenty-first century.

To understand what is meant by 'development discourse', we should start with the work of Foucault, arguably the most important thinker of the late twentieth century. In *The Order of Things* (1970), Foucault focuses upon 'fields' of knowledge, such as economics or natural history, and the conventions according to which they were classified and represented in particular periods. While represented as objective and politically neutral, he thus shows how areas of knowledge are socially, historically and politically constructed. Discourses of power, while presented as objective and 'natural', actually construct their subjects in particular ways and exercise power over them. Malinowski's 'scientific ethnography', for example, claimed to generate objective and scientific accounts of native 'others', which presented them in a particular light and so justified their subordination. Knowledge is thus inherently political. As Foucault put it: 'the criteria of what constitutes knowledge, what is to be excluded, and who is qualified to know involves acts of power' (1971; cited in Scoones and Thompson, 1993: 12). Discourses thus subsume practices and structures, with very real effects.

From this, areas of developmental knowledge or expertise can be deconstructed as historically and politically specific constructions of reality, which are more to do with the exercise of power in particular historical contexts than presenting 'objective' realities. The notion of discourse 'gives us the possibility of singling out "development" as an encompassing social space and at the same time of separating

ourselves from it by perceiving it in a totally new form' (Escobar, 1995: 6). How such discourses interrelate with other structures, the ways in which they are contested and the interface between developmental and other forms of knowledge are just a few important questions generated by this approach. This is an area where the study of development has a major role to play in wider theoretical debates in anthropology, for development projects provide an opportunity for examining the dynamic interplay of different discourses and forms of knowledge (Worby, 1984).

Arturo Escobar, whom we have already cited several times, is a key figure in the growing trend of deconstructing developmental discourse. In a paper published in 1988, for example, he examines the history of development studies and its production and circulation of certain discourses, seeing these as integral to the exercise of power; what he calls the 'politics of truth' (Escobar, 1988: 431). Development practice, he argues, uses a specific corpus of techniques which organise a type of knowledge and a type of power. The expertise of development specialists transcends the social realities of the 'clients' of development, who are labelled and thus structured in particular ways ('women-headed households'/ 'small farmers,' etc.). Clients are thus controlled by development and can only manoeuvre within the limits set by it. As he puts it in *Encountering Development*, 'Development had achieved the status of a certainty in the social imaginary' (Escobar, 1995: 5).

In *The Anti-Politics Machine* (1990) James Ferguson takes a similar approach by analysing the Thaba-Tseka project in Lesotho. The resulting text demonstrates exciting possibilities for project ethnography. Rather than being concerned with whether development is 'good' or 'bad', or how it could be improved, Ferguson argues that we should analyse the relationship between development projects, social control and the reproduction of relations of inequality. This cannot be simply explained by models of dependency; structures do not directly answer the 'needs' of capitalism, but reproduce themselves through a variety of processes and struggles (ibid.: 13). By analysing the conceptual apparatus of planned development in Lesotho and juxtaposing this with ethnographic material from a project's 'target area', he shows how while development projects usually fail in their explicit objectives, they have another often unrealised function: that of furthering the state's power.

The Anti-Politics Machine opens with the deconstruction of a World Bank report on Lesotho. Ferguson shows how its amazing inaccuracies and mistakes are not the result of bad scholarship, but of the need to present the country in a particular way. Lesotho is

frequently referred to in the report as 'traditional' and isolated, with aboriginal agriculture and a stagnant economy. In reality this is far from the truth, for the country has long been economically and politically intertwined with South Africa. In addition, the report only considers Lesotho at a national level. The implications are thus, first, that development interventions will transform and modernise the country; and, second, that change is entirely a function of the action or inaction of the government.

Ferguson argues that discourses are attached to and support particular institutions (ibid.: 68). Only statements which are useful to the development institutions concerned are therefore included in their reports; radical or pessimistic analyses are banished. The discourse is thus dynamically interrelated with development practice, affecting the actual design and implementation of projects. In its definition of all problems as 'technical' the discourse ignores social conditions, a central reason why the project fails. Crucially too, development is presented as politically neutral. Instrumentally, however, the project unintentionally enables the state to further its power over the mountain areas which it targeted. Rather than this being a hidden aim of developmental practice, and the discourse a form of mystification, Ferguson argues that development planning is a small cog in a larger machine; discourse and practice are articulated in this, but they do not determine it. Plans fail, but while their objectives are not met, they still have instrumental effects, for they are part of a larger machinery of power and control.

Considering development as discourse raises important questions about the nature of developmental knowledge and its interface with other representations of reality. Anthropology can have an important role here, first in demonstrating that there are many other ways of knowing (thus undermining development's hegemonic status), and second in showing what happens when different knowledges meet. In another contribution to the growing 'post-modern' anthropology of development, for example, the relationship between scientific and local knowledge within development practice is explored. As the articles in *An Anthropological Critique of Development* (Hobart, 1993) indicate, claims to knowledge and the attribution of ignorance are central themes in development discourse. The scientific and 'rational' knowledge favoured by development constructs foreign 'experts' as agents, and local people as passive and ignorant.

Rather than presenting local knowledge as homogeneous and systematic, these accounts show that it is diverse and fluid. These multiple epistemologies are produced in particular social, political

and economic contexts; instead of being bodies of facts, what is important is how, rather than what, things are known. This is a different approach from much of mainstream development discourse, where knowledge is only mentioned as an abstract noun, and those that know are thus stripped of their agency (Hobart, 1993: 21). It is also tied to a growing critique of the 'farmer first' movement, which while providing a necessary corrective to modernisation theory's assumption that traditional beliefs and practice are an obstacle to progress, tends to simplify and essentialise local knowledge, or assume that, like scientific knowledge, it can be understood as a 'system' (Gatter, 1993; Scoones and Thompson, 1993; 1994).

Within these accounts people appear as agents, whose knowledge interacts in a variety of ways with that of development agencies. Richards, for example, shows how rather than being free-standing, indigenous knowledge can be understood as improvised performance. West African cultivators possess performance skills as well as technical and ecological knowledge, mixing their crops in a certain way, providing food and drumming for their labourers, and so forth. This has been missed by most agricultural research and its ensuing 'scientific' expertise, which carries out agricultural experiments in 'set' conditions, ignoring the vital fact that farmers use their creativity and performance skills in cultivation (P. Richards, 1993).

In other words, people do not passively receive knowledge or directions from the outside, but dynamically interact with it. Another example of this is provided by Burghart (1993), who set out to study local knowledge of health and hygiene in a Hindu cobblers' village in Nepal. Although Burghart assumed that there would be a symmetrical exchange of knowlege (his technical knowledge versus their views on hygiene) and that he could construct an objective model of their knowledge, this was not to be the case. Instead, the cobblers refused to accept his role, constructing him instead as a Hindu lord, who was seen as benevolent when the well-cleaning he had initiated went well, and then as malevolent when the water became bitter.

As this body of work indicates, anthropologists need to examine the ways in which people and the discourses which they produce interact according to their different cultural, economic and historical contexts. Research must be actor-oriented, not only through studying those to 'be developed', but in terms of how individual and group agencies cross-cut, reproduce or resist the power relations of state and international development interventions. Through these and similar insights, the anthropology of develop-

ment opens up and becomes something infinitely more interesting than simply the study of the 'problems' of development.

Conclusion

If development is to be understood as a hegemonic discourse in which Third World peoples are objectified, ordered and controlled, how can anthropological involvement in it be justified? Surely the only ethical response is to vehemently reject it and walk away? While accepting that development is indeed politically highly problematic, we do not believe that non-involvement is the only possible response. Instead, there are various important ways in which anthropologists, the methods they use and the insights they have can help subvert and reorient development, contributing to its eventual demise and transformation into post-development discourse.

Throughout this chapter we have indicated various ways in which this might be done. By analysing the social effects of development, anthropological accounts undermine its central assumptions. Clearly, local societies do not necessarily strive towards scientific 'progress'; they also have multiple responses to global capitalism and economic growth, which have very definitely not had the positive effects which developers assumed. As anthropologists have shown again and again, the world is not divisible into neat categories which can be targeted and acted upon, nor can universalising laws be applied or predictions made; human life is far too complicated and diverse for that. By deconstructing development, its subjective and culturally produced nature is revealed. Development is no more 'true' than any other way of understanding and acting upon the world. It is just that as an organising discourse it is often more powerful.

Anthropologists can therefore critique and undermine development through ethnography and analysis. But this is not all. Rather than accepting that development discourse is unchangeable, we suggest that anthropologists can also help change development discourse from within. Rather than being monolithic and static, development discourse is more fluid and liable to change than many analyses allow. This is acknowledged in part by Escobar, who accepts that the discourse can be modified by the introduction of new objects and variables, but who at the same time insists that ultimately the system of relations which holds its different elements together remains the same (1995: 42). Need this necessarily be the case? In the following chapters we shall suggest that the discourse

can be changed: new practices and knowledges can be and are introduced, reorienting some aspects of development away from its earlier positions. The discourse is also far more diverse and contested than many accounts suggest. There are development agencies other than the World Bank,[14] for example, and report writing is often a highly contested business, having as much to do with internal power relations (which, again, are as yet barely touched upon by discourse analysts) as a hegemonic representation of the Third World 'other'.

In the next chapters we shall indicate ways in which the discourse might be challenged from within through the application of anthropological insights by applied anthropologists and development workers alike. As we shall see, anthropologists are increasingly picking away at development agencies, infiltrating their decision-making bodies, lobbying them from the inside and contributing to their reports. The World Bank report analysed by Ferguson (1990) is not necessarily representative; many reports now include sections written by anthropologists which use different images and realities.

As Ferguson implies, however, the extent to which these are allowed to diverge from the institutional line is often limited – an important issue for applied anthropologists, which we shall return to in Chapter 6. There are very real dangers of the dominant discourse coopting anthropological concepts by translating them into simplified and homogenising categories: 'women-headed households', 'indigenous knowledge' and 'community development' are all examples of how important insights have been incorporated into development discourse, made 'policy-friendly' and in some cases distorted. 'Women in development' is another.[15] This is an important insight, which we discuss further later in the book.

Combined with the important task of deconstruction, anthropologists 'in' and 'of' development can therefore also help change the representations that development institutions produce. Development anthropology is at an exciting juncture. While post-modernism has caused a degree of crisis for both development studies and anthropology, we suggest that by combining the two domains, important steps forward can be taken. We are not suggesting that anthropologists should become developers, nor that we should necessarily strive to mould our concepts around the rigid jargon of donors. Instead, anthropological perspectives can be adopted by various actors, including local community organisations and NGOs. They can also help shift discussions away from 'development' and towards a focus upon social relations of poverty and inequality.

4 SUBVERTING THE DISCOURSE – KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

As we suggested in the last chapter, one of the most important functions of the anthropology of development is its ability to deconstruct the assumptions and power relations of development, a task which has been gathering in momentum over the last decade or so. While these debates have been mostly carried out within academic domains, other anthropologists have been working hard with and within developmental institutions to alter policy. Such anthropologists may perform a variety of roles: they may be employed as independent consultants, or as salaried staff; others may be involved with pressure groups which lobby agencies or produce alternative visions of change. Anthropological perspectives and methods which help subvert and transform the dominant discourses of development may also be used by a range of non-specialists.

Such work is not easy. Indeed, Escobar (1991) has argued that anthropological involvement in development is inherently compromising: applied anthropologists 'buy in' to the discourse, reproducing and benefiting from its power relations. The path they tread is indeed fraught with difficulty. Since donors and development agencies work within a particular discourse, anthropological insights may easily become distorted and 'hardened' into policies which are then applied unilaterally to recipient societies. Once again, the world is packaged and controlled in a particular way.[1] Anthropologists may also face dire contradictions, for their premisses are in many ways inherently different from those of developers. While anthropologists are trained to be cultural relativists, development agencies are usually committed to universal principles of progress. This often involves ethnocentric assumptions about what constitutes desirable social change. Strategies of 'social development' and 'women in development', for example, all

involve changing society in ways which may not be 'culturally appropriate'.

We shall continue to discuss these contradictions throughout this book. This chapter, however, outlines the main ways in which anthropological insights can be applied to planned change and policy in order to change the dominant discourse from within. Rather than being wholly monolithic, static and encompassing, we suggest that development work actually comprises a variety of countervailing perspectives and practices, as well as a multiplicity of voices. Developmental decision-making and policy are therefore less simple or homogeneous than one might assume. Anthropologists, along with others, can help to unpick oppressive representations and practices, put different questions on the agenda and form new, alternative discourses.

Most of the insights which anthropologists provide are rooted first and foremost in common sense. We are not claiming that they have 'exclusive' expertise which others cannot gain access to. One possibility which we will be exploring later in this book is that local development workers might collect their own ethnography and develop their own anthropological intuitions. What we do suggest, however, is that the anthropological eye, trained as it is to focus on particular issues, is invaluable in the planning, execution and assessment of positive, non-oppressive developmental interventions. This is not so much because anthropologists have access to a body of objective 'facts' about any given society, but more that they know what questions to ask and how to ask them. While, in retrospect at least, such questions may appear to be obvious, time and time again, as the failure of so many development interventions testifies, they are forgotten.

Below are some of the main issues addressed by applied anthropologists. As we shall see, these are deeply informed by the findings of non-applied anthropology, some of which were reviewed in the last chapter. Again, knowledge for understanding and knowledge for action are inseparable. While these questions are often first raised by anthropologists, we suggest that, ideally at least, development anthropologists should not be in the business of predicting what is 'best' for the poor (although, as some of the case studies in Chapter 6 indicate, bureaucratic and political factors mean that this is often precisely what they end up doing). In contrast, anthropologists working in development can help facilitate ways for the 'victims' or 'recipients' (depending on one's perspective) to have a voice in the development process, so that ultimately it is they who dictate their interests and the most appropriate form of developmental interventions. The rest of the chapter will be organised around the following themes:

1. Access.
2. Effects.
3. Control.

Access

As anthropological research indicates, economic growth can exacerbate rather than eradicate poverty and exploitation. Colonialism and neo-colonialism have meant that the rewards of capitalist growth are spread very unevenly between different parts of the world. This means that policies which promote economic growth, or are presupposed on the notion of 'trickle-down', are unlikely to benefit everyone equally, for by definition capitalism promotes accumulation for some at the expense of others. This inequality exists at international and national levels, both of which anthropologists may wish to analyse and comment upon. Access may depend on inequality both within communities, between local groups and the state, or at an international level. It should, however, be noted that although some anthropologists have attempted to analyse the relationship between world capitalism and global exploitation,[2] the majority are more accustomed to investigating social relations at the micro level.

Although unequal distribution may appear to be an obvious and crucial issue, planners often forget that in the communities where they are working people's access to resources and decision-making power is rarely equal. This may be due to political naivety, but is also because those who plan from the outside tend to assume that 'the poor' are all the same and thus have the same interests. As all anthropologists are aware, however, most communities are highly heterogeneous. There are also many different forms of inequality: those depending upon constructions of race, gender, class and age are just some of the most basic. Each of these in turn is structured and experienced according to the particular cultural, economic and political context. We cannot therefore declare that particular groups are always more disadvantaged than others and must thus be the 'targets' of aid. 'Women-headed households', for example, are indeed often disadvantaged. But they are also not all the same, even within the same cultural context, let alone in different societies (Lewis, 1993).

Inequality, and differential access to and control over resources, also exists at many levels within communities. This may involve inequality between different households, whether structured through caste, ethnicity, social status or economic class. All of these factors may also cross-cut, or coincide with each other. Inequality may exist between different kinship groups, thus transcending the boundaries of individual households, or it may exist within households, whether this is in terms of gender, age or particular kinship relations. Combined with this, the exercise of power involves various types of relationship, interaction and social action. If power is defined, after Weber, as the ability to influence events, then clearly it may come through a variety of sources. It may be legitimate ('authority') or unofficial (the ability to influence events informally, perhaps through personal relationships, covert strategising and so on).

In considering who gets what, we must therefore be aware of several key issues. First, while inequality exists in all societies, it is structured in particular ways according to its cultural and historical context. Second, power over resources and decision-making is not always explicit. Even while officially there are equal rights for all citizens, in reality this may be far from the case. It is thus hardly surprising that development interventions so often benefit only particular groups, or end up disadvantaging those it was assumed they would help. To illustrate this, let us consider some case studies which illustrate various levels and forms of inequality, and the ways in which this affects people's access to the 'benefits' of developmental resources.

Case 1. Albania: differential access to rural resources in the post-communist era[3]

We begin with a short case study of Albania, the poorest country in Europe, in which a strictly isolationist and totalitarian communist regime did its best to eliminate economic inequalities in the countryside in the 40 years before 1990 through the imposition of a system of collective farming.

The Stalinist government of Enver Hoxha was repressive and inefficient, but it did meet people's basic material needs and included a comprehensive welfare system which provided reasonable health-care and education facilities for the majority of the population. In agriculture, despite low levels of production and a serious disregard for long-term environmental issues, farming

inputs such as tractor ploughing services and fertilisers were available and agronomists were on hand to advise the cooperatives.

In 1990, after the upheavals in the rest of Eastern Europe, the government was finally brought down through largely peaceful protest. The political system collapsed, ushering in a new era of social democracy and tentative capitalist development. During the downfall of the government there was a spontaneous and violent uprising by the people, not against the communists themselves but against all the physical trappings of the old regime. Village schools, health centres and other elements of infrastructure were destroyed by angry villagers.

A long period of structural adjustment began, managed by the World Bank and including a privatisation drive, a land reform process and the opening of the country for the first time to foreign investment. But during this period of transition, which like in most of the former communist countries of Eastern Europe remains in its infancy, most of the services of the former state were in rapid decline or collapsed completely. Today, the country is dependent on food aid. The social safety net, which had included a system of old age pensions, sickness benefits and food subsidies, barely exists. Completely unprepared for these new realities, most farmers have been thrown back on to their own resources and many have retreated into subsistence agriculture. Many villagers are returning to pre-communist traditional systems of village government through elders. Local mosques and churches, which had been closed or destroyed under communism, have become the community focus for survival and welfare.

A small number of rural people have, however, benefited from the collapse of communism, by holding on to important cooperative assets at the moment of their dissolution. In one village, the goatherd was able to sell most of the community's cooperative's herd for private gain. In another, a farmer ended up with a tractor which he was able to rent out in a private ploughing service, making enough profit to buy another tractor a year later. Almost overnight, new layers of rural inequality have been created; the survival strategies of different households now depend on their level of access to a range of material, social and cultural resources.

Case 2. Mali Sud Rural Development Project: inequality between communities[4]

The Mali Sud Project was launched in 1977 to develop the southern region of Mali – a landlocked country in the Western Sahel. It was