

## CHAPTER 6

# Development

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“Development” is a slippery concept. Is it an ideal, an imagined future toward which institutions and individuals strive? Or is it a destructive myth, anthropology’s “evil twin” (Ferguson 1997), an insidious, failed chapter in the history of Western modernity (Escobar 1995)? Conventionally, “development” may connote improvements in well-being, living standards, and opportunities. It may also refer to processes of commodification, industrialization, modernization, or globalization, and it can be a legitimizing strategy for states. A vision of development as improved well-being, especially in post-colonies, has gradually replaced the one-dimensional economic measures such as GDP growth, typically favored by neoclassical economists. Influenced by scholars such as Amartya Sen, the United Nations Development Program created a Human Development Index that combines indicators of health, life expectancy, literacy, formal education, political participation, and access to resources. During roughly the same period, a growing coterie of scholars and grass-roots activists, some of them influenced by Michel Foucault’s understandings of power, has rejected outright the desirability of “development,” which they see as a destructive and self-serving discourse propagated by bureaucrats and aid professionals that permanently entraps the poor in a vicious circle of passivity and misery.

Some scholars and activists in the latter category imagine a “post-development” era in which community and “indigenous” knowledge become a reservoir of creative alternatives to development (as argued by A. Escobar, M. Rahnema, V. Bawtree, and W. Sachs, among others). Others focus on alternatives *in* rather than *to* development and favor reforms within the existing apparatus. An inclination to celebrate the “local” and the “indigenous” figures in larger pendulum shifts during the past 50 years, notably in the differing views of community and “traditional” culture, with these alternately romanticized or demonized in development thought. Nearly all analysts agree that most development projects fail. Nonetheless, a faith in progress (an assumed capacity to improve the conditions of existence) continues among supporters of all three positions – “development,” “development alternatives,” and “post-development” alike.

In short, as “development” has become an increasingly contentious concept, it has attracted attention from an astonishing array of scholars. Mostly gone are musty oppositions between “applied” and “mainstream” or “academic” anthropology. The formation of anthropology as the “science of ‘less developed’ peoples” remains relevant to anthropology’s place in the academic division of labor, even though the social evolutionist underpinnings of this conception have been eroded during the twentieth century (Ferguson 1997:152). Anthropological discomfort with development, Ferguson argues, does not signal the discipline’s critical distance from it but rather an ambivalent intimacy. This essay explores the diverse ways anthropologists and other social scientists have intervened in and been influenced by debates about development.

We begin with the roots of anthropological debates in the works of Smith, Malthus, Marx, and Weber. Next we outline the clash of radical and mainstream paradigms: twentieth-century theories of imperialism, modernization, and dependency, as well as orthodox Marxist and poststructuralist critiques of dependency theory. Critics of modernization theory often ignored its statist dimensions, much as opponents of today’s neoliberalism tend to view it as a simple precursor to the free-market “Washington consensus” of the 1980s. Neoliberalism is the focus of the chapter’s second half, where we suggest that anthropology has culturalized and dehistoricized globalization, downplaying its political-economic and legal dimensions. Here we review briefly anthropological approaches to NGOs, civil society, gender, the relationship between culture and development, consumption, and environmentalism. Today’s fierce debates about globalization confirm that development is still contested on normative as well as instrumental grounds, and that it is still a vital issue for both scholars and those they study. In a world where one half of the population subsists on 2 dollars a day or less, it would seem misleading to speak of “post-development.” Yet the search for alternatives to the exhausted paradigms of the recent past and the grim realities of the present is clearly more timely than ever.

## EARLY FOUNDATIONS AND DEBATES

Key theorists from the Enlightenment to the twentieth century have shaped later development debates in powerful ways. It is important to examine such work on its own terms, but also to recognize that ideologically motivated appropriations and simplifications of ideas rooted in other ages and places often reflect contemporary struggles over development doctrine and policies. Smith, Malthus, Marx and Engels, and Weber are worth revisiting, partly to move beyond the association of canonical thinkers with their “one big idea” (Smith and the “invisible hand,” for example), and to understand better the ideologically motivated representations of their thought that infuse contemporary development debates.

Adam Smith, almost universally portrayed as an unambivalent and prescient apostle of the free market, never elaborated a coherent theory of development, but he did have strong opinions about the causes of the differences between rich and poor countries. Smith, rather than a timeless prophet, was very much a creature of his epoch. In the eighteenth century, market relations expanded rapidly alongside vestiges of feudal or manorial societies. Smith’s ideas about the wealth and poverty of nations mirrored his

opinions about capitalists and aristocrats, and rested on his distinction between productive and unproductive labor. The latter did not result in a concrete, vendible commodity, while the former increased the value of raw materials and generated a product that could replace capital stock and materials, pay workers' wages, and provide a profit to the owner and, possibly, the landlord. The difference between rich and poor countries was, for Smith, that in rich countries a large proportion of the total social product was reinvested in production, while in poor countries most of it was consumed in maintaining "unproductive hands" (Smith 1976, Book II:356).

Smith's claim that "great nations" are sometimes impoverished by "public prodigality" could be read as foreshadowing today's neoliberal attacks on "big government" or "unproductive spending" (Smith 1976, Book II:363). One must be cautious, however, in treating Smith's late eighteenth-century work (first published in 1776) as sacred writ, laden with solutions to twentieth- or twenty-first-century dilemmas. Indeed, Smith's famous "invisible hand" of Providence only became the "invisible hand" of the market in later writings of his liberal epigones.

Rather than being a totally convinced champion of market liberalism, Smith questioned development processes observable at the time. In *The Wealth of Nations* he railed against the greed of elites, declaring "All for ourselves, and nothing for other people, seems, in every age of the world, to have been the vile maxim of the masters of mankind." He was not averse, in some circumstances, to maintaining wages above market levels, noting that merchants and master-manufacturers complained that high wages necessitated price increases but said nothing about "the bad effects of high profits" or the "pernicious effects of their own gains." He also cautioned against the "disorder" that could result from premature removal of protectionist tariffs (Smith 1976, Book III:437, Book I:110, Book IV:491). Given Adam Smith's iconic stature today, his works deserve to be reread with an eye for their complexity and contradictions and for how they are situated in the broader sweep of Enlightenment thought.

Population dynamics have long been central to debates about development and under-development. Examples are numerous: how population pressure on resources contributes to the formation of ancient states or the destabilization of contemporary ones, the perennial argument between those who consider population growth a leading cause of poverty and theorists of demand for labor or human capital who emphasize inequality and the incentives that poor people have to reproduce, the role of the demographic transition in improving the status of women, the contentious struggle for safe forms of contraception and abortion, and the ethics of other kinds of natality control (including coerced sterilization, infanticide, sex-selective abortion, and China's one-child policy). The ideas of Thomas Malthus are almost always explicitly invoked or implicitly present in these discussions, even two centuries after their initial formulation.

Malthus is best known for a simple idea in his "first essay," which was published anonymously in 1798, just after one of the earliest arguably capitalist crises. Demographic growth, he argued, will always outstrip increases in food production unless slowed by "preventative" or "positive" checks. Malthus explained poverty in relation to this "law," rather than as an outcome of capitalist development, and he prescribed measures to ameliorate it like those that economic elites still favor today, such as preserving private property and abolishing laws protecting the poor. He had a

puritanical and pessimistic outlook on humanity's prospects, which was part of a broader, reactionary political vision. Malthus inveighed against the French Revolution ("one of the most enlightened nations of the world . . . debased by . . . a fermentation of disgusting passions"). He argued that progressive taxation, as proposed by Anglo-American revolutionary Thomas Paine, was "evil," and that man does *not* possess "a right to subsistence when his labour will not fairly purchase it."

Given Malthus's enduring celebrity, it is perhaps surprising that his best-known idea – that population grows geometrically and agricultural production arithmetically – is not widely accepted. Malthus failed to foresee that improved technologies would boost food output and reduce "positive checks" on population growth. Nor did he anticipate the demographic transition from high fertility and high mortality to low fertility and low mortality, which has been observed in country after country.

The pessimism Malthus expressed in the "first essay" diminished during his later lifetime and, in his treatment of public debt and business cycles, he is sometimes said to have anticipated Keynesian thinking. This lesser-known, mature Malthus (see *Principles of Political Economy*, 1820) also argued for at least some state intervention in the economy and lamented how abstract economic doctrine at times bore little relation to reality.

In the nineteenth century, the work that most contributed to gaining Karl Marx's ideas a mass audience is Marx and Engels's *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). The *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* may better describe their view of human agency, and Marx's *Capital* may contain more detailed analyses of commodity fetishism and the capitalist mode of production, but the *Manifesto* contains one of the most succinct outlines of Marx's theory of development, important not just on its own terms but for how it later influenced the political programs of Marxist movements in Russia and the "Third World." It includes attention to key themes such as the ubiquity of class struggle, the social contradictions and historical specificity of each mode of production, the dynamism of capitalism as a force for dissolving tradition and generating technological advances, and the capitalist imperative of seeking new markets.

Marx and Engels's picture of a succession of modes of production has often been read as an evolutionary, Enlightenment-style "master narrative" or as an inexorable, teleological Hegelian process in which history advances toward a predetermined outcome. This is not entirely wrong; Marx's thought was characterized by a tension between the positing of epochal, evolutionary processes and the recognition of contingent, historically specific forces. Marx's dual role as scholar and militant suggests that he gave greater weight to the role of ideas and political struggle in history than is usually acknowledged by commentators who paint him as a crude economic determinist. Nonetheless, Marx and Engels' scheme of a universal succession of modes of production was simplified, first by Stalin, then by pro-Soviet communist parties throughout the world, and eventually by French "structural" Marxists, notably Louis Althusser and his followers, including several prominent cultural anthropologists.

Ironically, Marx increasingly questioned the certainty that slavery, feudalism, capitalism, socialism, and communism would succeed one another in lock-step fashion. For example, unlike later Russian Marxists, Marx in later life tended to support the position that the rural peasant commune (or *mir*) in nineteenth-century Russia could

serve as a springboard for a direct transition to socialism, rather than the notion that the proletarianization of the peasantry and the dissolution of the *mir* were part of a necessary capitalist stage that would precede socialism.

The *Manifesto's* analysis of why the bourgeoisie needs a “constantly expanding market” has recently been linked to the notions that either many features of today’s globalization are actually rather old or that Marx and Engels were extraordinarily prescient. The destruction of national industries, the increasingly cosmopolitan character of consumption, the creation of “new wants,” and the use of cheap commodities to force “barbarian nations” into “civilization” are – shorn of their mid-nineteenth-century Eurocentric language – central themes in later discussions of development. Fascination with the contemporaneity of the *Manifesto's* words, however, too easily obscures two crucial elements: first, Marx and Engels saw expanding markets as a means of competition between firms and nations and of resolving inevitable, periodic crises in the capitalist mode of production; and second, their apparent prescience with respect to some dimensions of change existed alongside a certain blindness to the persistence of others, especially nationalism, ethnic intolerance, and religious zealotry.

Max Weber was – like Smith and Marx – concerned with the conditions that gave rise to capitalism in “the modern Occident.” Weber posited a variety of capitalisms – commercial, speculative, colonial, financial, and even “political” – characterized by a common profit-making orientation. But his theory of capitalist development is nonetheless frequently represented as limited to “the West” and as giving almost exclusive emphasis to religious factors. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904), his first major work, he posed “traditionalism” as an obstacle to the spread of market relations. Contemporary scholarship – and punditry – that privileges “cultural” or “ideological” factors in development, as well as neoclassical laments about the intractability of the backward-bending supply curve of labor, may be read as echoing Weber’s concern with “rationalizing” institutions in order to transcend the heavy weight of “tradition.”

The same could be said of discussions today that try to explain capitalism’s development in the West, and its apparent failure almost everywhere else, as a result of cultural predispositions or the entrepreneurial capacities unleashed in societies with legal systems that applied uniform yet minimal bureaucratic standards to the registration and mortgaging of property, the signing and enforcement of contracts, and the accountability of officials. In *The Protestant Ethic*, Weber suggested that Martin Luther’s notion of the “calling” – a “life-task” set by God – provided, for the first time in history, a positive ethical framework for justifying individual accumulation through rational self-discipline, the severing of obligations to larger kin groups, and the abandonment of traditional notions about just price and wage levels. This “social ethic of capitalistic culture,” which Weber characterized as “the earning of more and more money, combined with the strict avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of life,” was both cause and effect of the extension of market relations to more and more areas of economic and social life (Weber 1958:53–54). Success on earth, in Calvinist-Protestant doctrine, was evidence of an individual’s membership in the predestined “elect,” who were bound for heaven. Weber’s critics and admirers sometimes interpreted his argument about the spirit of capitalism in causal terms and as an idealist alternative to a competing philosophical materialism derived from Marxism. Yet

Weber's claims about Protestantism were considerably more complex and linked to several of his other central concerns, notably bureaucracy, rationalization, and the nature of the state.

Weber believed that what energized modern capitalism was not religious doctrine per se, but rational social actors, operating within a rationalized legal system that permitted individuals to weigh utility and costs and to feel confident about the security of their capital. The modern state and the enterprise or firm were similar inasmuch as both operated according to formal, bureaucratic criteria rather than the personalistic or familial considerations that governed economic life in traditional societies. The frequently cited (and variously attributed) adage that Weber was arguing with "the ghost of Karl Marx" is only partly accurate. Diverse scholars sympathetic to Marxist approaches – from Georg Lukács to C. Wright Mills, Eric Wolf, and Anthony Giddens – acknowledge major intellectual debts to Weber, especially his analyses of political power and legitimacy. Other Marxists, including literary theorist Raymond Williams and anthropologist William Roseberry, echo key aspects of Weber's thought (though without explicit recognition) in their analyses of how ideas and meanings are themselves material products and forces.

Classical theorists like Smith, Malthus, and Marx, are sometimes relegated to the "prehistory" of development thought, primarily because they concentrated on the economics of Western Europe and North America rather than on the poorer countries. However, their influence, along with that of Weber, on the development debates of the twentieth century, was immediate and profound. Nor was their interest limited to the developed countries of the North. All had significant interests in other parts of the world, especially Asia, as well as comparative sensibilities that are part of what makes their works of continuing relevance even today.

## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: FROM IMPERIALISM TO DEPENDENCY AND THE WORLD-SYSTEM

Weber's concern with "traditionalism" as an impediment to development, first articulated at the dawn of the twentieth century, combined an Enlightenment notion of progress with a modern understanding of the history of capitalism. Yet Weber accorded little attention to capitalist crises, an issue that had engaged Marx and one that animated development debates in the first half of the twentieth century. The frequent booms and busts that affected Europe and North America, as well as the imperial expansion of the major European states after 1870 and of the United States following the 1898 Spanish-American War, led scholars to scrutinize more closely the functioning of a system that increasingly appeared to contain both extraordinary dynamism and immense destructive powers.

The approach that had the most impact in the West, particularly during the 1930s depression in the United States, was John Maynard Keynes's "pump-priming" policy, which sought to temper the business cycle through government measures to stimulate demand and increase employment. But while demand-side policies might alleviate the worst effects of a major slump, they did little to explain phenomena such as imperialism or uneven development.

Early twentieth-century theories of imperialism converged with the radical analyses of dependency and under-development that came to exercise an outsize influence in anthropology in the 1970s. These radical understandings of dependency engaged mainstream paradigms, especially “modernization” approaches, and dependency in turn became a target for the critiques of orthodox Marxist and poststructuralist theorists.

In 1902, an English liberal and advocate of free trade, John Hobson, noting that the word was “on everybody’s lips,” published a work which single-handedly reshaped in economic terms popular and academic understandings of imperialism. Arguing that the “taproot of Imperialism” was the tendency to produce more goods than could be sold at a profit and to accumulate more capital than could be profitably invested, he suggested that “manufacturers, merchants, and financiers . . . are tempted more and more to use their Governments in order to secure for their particular use some distant undeveloped country by annexation and protection” (Hobson 1965:80–81). While Hobson influenced radical foes of capitalism, notably V. I. Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, he nonetheless believed that measures to increase workers’ purchasing power and to tax excess capital could obviate the “need to fight for foreign markets or foreign areas of investment” (Hobson 1965:86).

Various Marxist theories shared the view that imperialism grew out of crises in the capitalist system, even though they differed in the emphasis each accorded to the importance of under-developed regions as sources of cheap or strategic raw materials, markets for manufactured goods, outlets for excess capital, and places where super-profits could be derived from super-exploitation of poorly paid workers. In Latin America, heated polemics during the 1920s and 1930s between Marxist revolutionaries and anti-imperialist reformist populists set the stage for debates in the 1960s between proponents of radical and “structuralist” versions of dependency theory. Both strands of theory – in the 1920s and in the 1960s – viewed under-development and development as products of a single, worldwide process of accumulation that continually reproduced both outcomes. Engagement with the work of Lenin, Luxemburg, and others was key for neo-Marxists who, in the 1950s and 1960s, sought to explain continuing under-development in the poorer countries. The central innovation of these theorists derived from the observation that – contrary to the predictions of Hobson and Lenin – capital flows from under-developed to developed areas generally exceeded developed-country exports of surplus capital (Baran and Sweezy 1966:107–108).

This inversion of the classical theories of imperialism became the germ of the circulationist or market-based approaches to dependency, under-development, and the world system that exercised so much influence in anthropology and sociology in the 1960s and 1970s. But while the intellectual genealogy of dependency theory can be traced back to a radical lineage in and around the independent US socialist magazine *Monthly Review* (which published an influential Spanish-language edition), it also originated in the work of individuals and institutions in the mainstream of economic policy-making in Latin America.

Founded in 1948, and directed after 1950 by Argentine economist Raúl Prebisch, the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin America initiated an intellectual revolution that had a profound impact on development policy in the hemisphere and beyond, as well as on a generation of social scientists. ECLA doctrine held that Latin

American countries that relied on primary product exports were negatively affected by the secular decline in terms of trade; in other words, over time a larger quantity of exports (say, bags of coffee or tons of bauxite) was required to purchase the same volume of imports (for example, jeeps or machine tools). This shift occurred primarily because of the monopoly and monopsony powers in what Prebisch called the “center” of the world economy that facilitated the extraction through trade of surplus from the “periphery.” Export-led development thus entailed anemic growth, foreign exchange shortages, and vulnerability to market fluctuations – many Latin American countries in the mid-twentieth century earned half or more of their export earnings from one or a handful of commodities. ECLA promoted a “structuralist” approach to economics and a model of inward-looking development based on import substitution industrialization (ISI) and dynamizing domestic markets. While ECLA economists eventually admitted to having misgivings about ISI, industrialization continued to be a *sine qua non* of “development” for them, as well as for most neoclassical theorists.

In addition to Prebisch, several of Latin America’s most influential social scientists were associated with ECLA during the 1960s and early 1970s, including economist Celso Furtado and sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who in 1994 would be elected president of Brazil on a neoliberal platform and who, together with Enzo Faletto, authored one of the most widely read treatises on dependency and development (Cardoso and Faletto 1979). Cardoso and Faletto’s “historical structuralist” study of dependency noted that the larger Latin American countries, initially reliant on primary product exports, had begun to industrialize during the 1930s, when developed-country demand for these commodities contracted. This incipient industrialization brought to the fore a new national, urban-industrial bourgeoisie which, in a “developmentalist alliance” with the expanding working class, wrested power from traditional oligarchies and established a range of populist political experiments and a style of “associated dependent development” ever more reliant on foreign, as opposed to national, capital. Populist class pacts were typically fragile, however, and their rupture tended to produce authoritarian political outcomes, a conclusion Cardoso and Faletto based on the Brazilian experience after 1964, but which would soon be confirmed by the military coups in Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina in the 1970s.

A second influential strain of dependency analysis arose among radical theorists enthused by the 1959 Cuban revolution. The best-known in the English-speaking world was the prolific and peripatetic German-American economist Andre Gunder Frank, although he was but one figure in a large, trans-disciplinary intellectual-political nexus that spanned Latin America. Frank (and others in this group) sought to demolish the “dual society” thesis, the widely held belief – rooted in Weberian and Parsonian sociology and in the work of economist W. A. Lewis – that Latin America (and by extension other poor regions) included a dynamic capitalist sector and a stagnant “traditional” or “feudal” one, which could only be modernized through incorporation into the “advanced” sector. Instead of “dualism,” Frank, Mexican anthropologist Rodolfo Stavenhagen, and others proposed a model of “internal colonialism” that saw urban zones as beneficiaries of surpluses extracted from rural – and particularly indigenous – areas. This mirrored the “metropolis-satellite” (or what Prebisch had termed “center-periphery”) relations that linked developed and

under-developed regions as outcomes of a single historical process and which Frank, at least, defined as “capitalist” since the sixteenth century.

The claim that development and under-development resulted from the same “capitalist” historical process had important implications for development policy and for those seeking radical change. Marxists – particularly the pro-Soviet communist parties – had long argued that Latin American societies were significantly “feudal,” a characterization based on the existence in the countryside of coerced, non-waged labor relations and vast, extensively exploited properties owned by traditional elites whose aspirations and sumptuary practices were said to resemble those of medieval European nobles. Progress, according to this analysis, based on Stalin’s simplification of Marx, could only occur if “feudalism” were overthrown and replaced by capitalism, as had occurred in Europe; the Left and working class ought, therefore, to align with the “progressive bourgeoisie” to break the back of the landed oligarchy.

If, however, as Frank maintained, Latin America had been “capitalist” since the sixteenth century, and if contemporary under-developed regions, such as northeastern Brazil, were actually erstwhile boom areas now drained of their wealth, it followed that there was not really a “progressive bourgeoisie” opposed to a “feudal” oligarchy and that the political task for radicals was to topple the entire capitalist class through revolutionary struggle. In the context of Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s, the dependency approach’s radical variants, which generally asserted the revolutionary potential of the peasantry and **denied that elements of the bourgeoisie could be progressive,** came to be a theoretical justification for guerrilla movements, most of which were defeated at an immense cost in lives.

Although Frank was trained in the orthodox neoclassical economics department at the University of Chicago, he had early sympathies for Keynesianism and the heterodox, visionary economics of Kenneth Boulding. Even at Chicago, as he later reported in a retrospective intellectual autobiography, he “spent more and more . . . time studying and associating with the anthropologists,” largely because they – like him – assumed “that the determinant factors in economic development were really *social*” (Frank 1991:17). As early as 1959, he participated with Margaret Mead in a session at the American Anthropological Association meetings and, in the early 1960s, Darcy Ribeiro invited him to teach anthropology at the new University of Brasilia (a position followed by a prolonged sojourn in Chile, Mexico, and Germany). In 1968, he issued a passionate call for “liberation anthropology” in *Current Anthropology* and, in another paper, lambasted both “formalist” and “substantivist” economic anthropologists for ignoring the effects of colonialism and imperialism on under-development. **Later he wrote appreciatively of Kathleen Gough, Eric Wolf, and June Nash, as well as of Clifford Geertz, whose *Agricultural Involution* he considered an incisive refutation of the “dualism” thesis (Frank 1991).**

While Frank (1991:36) remarked that dependency theory “succumbed to the [1973] coup in Chile,” the approach took on a second life in 1974 with the appearance of US sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein’s *The Modern World-System*, the first part of a multi-volume work on the history of the world economy. Wallerstein drew inspiration from Fernand Braudel’s 1972 magnum opus on the sixteenth-century Mediterranean, European debates about the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and an extraordinarily wide and insightful reading of the history of diverse world regions and of development-related theory, ranging from Eric Wolf and

Barrington Moore to Pierre Chaunu and R. H. Tawney. Wallerstein analyzed the emergence in “the long sixteenth century” of a single world economy, larger than any empire, and its functional division into what he called – in an unacknowledged reworking and expansion of Prebisch’s categories – “core,” “semiperipheral,” and “peripheral” regions, characterized respectively by the prevalence of wage labor, tenant farming and sharecropping, and coerced labor.

Despite its deployment of an erudite apparatus of commentary on a vast literature of secondary sources, Wallerstein’s work, like that of the dependency group, was not fundamentally historical in the sense of understanding uneven development, labor arrangements, stratification patterns, or political systems as outcomes of struggles between contending social groups located in concrete social formations. Some critics took him to task for not distinguishing sufficiently between relations of production and relations of exchange, and for according the latter explanatory priority in accounting for the shape of the world-system. Others maintained that even the history of the world-system had to be understood from the bottom up, not just as an expanding sphere of exchange but as an outcome of diverse local initiatives and local responses, themselves the outcomes of social struggles, that sought distinct kinds of relations to international and other markets.

This critique of world-system theory contributed, particularly in the works of Eric Wolf and Sidney Mintz, to solidifying the position of historically oriented political economy within US anthropology. More broadly, it affected agrarian studies, and eventually, those strains of postcolonial studies that sought to root changing identities in historical processes of nation-state formation and transitions to new kinds of global spaces and governmentality. Thus by the 1970s, a new critical anthropology emerged as the discipline was profoundly reshaped by outside influences, including dependency theory, world-system theory, and neo-Marxist critiques of both modernization and traditional functionalist anthropology. “[H]istory, political economy, and colonialism began to gain new legitimacy as bona-fide anthropological topics” that were central to disciplinary theory, rather than consigned to the “applied” slot. Now the notion of development itself was critiqued, particularly its presumed equation with moral and economic progress (Ferguson, 1997:162–163), and its understanding of the world as a set of individual societies moving independently through history (a conception famously undone by Eric Wolf in *Europe and the Peoples Without History*). In a parallel change, the 1970s move beyond economistic indicators of development created new employment opportunities for anthropologists in development agencies, and contributed to the emergence of a new subfield of development anthropology. Many development anthropologists straddled (sometimes uneasily) the worlds of academe and development agencies. They brought new critical perspectives to the very institutions charged with implementing the policies that the discipline increasingly questioned.

### **THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: FROM MODERNIZATION TO NEOLIBERALISM**

The modernization paradigm that the dependency theorists attacked had antecedents in Weber and attracted followers in sociology, psychology, and anthropology. The quintessential statement of the modernization paradigm, however, is W. W. Rostow’s

1960 book, *The Stages of Economic Growth*. Subtitled “A Non-Communist Manifesto,” Rostow saw his work as “an alternative to Karl Marx’s theory of human history” and to Soviet hubris about the superiority of socialism. Rostow played major roles in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, including service as one of the main architects of US policy in Vietnam.

The most frequently cited of Rostow’s claims is that all countries eventually pass through the same stages: (1) “traditional society,” characterized by “pre-Newtonian” technology, little or no social mobility, a fatalistic ethos, and strong kin-based ties that limit investment and circumscribe economically rational decision-making; (2) a pre-take-off period in which consolidated nation-states emerge and traditional institutions and values begin to break down and coexist alongside ideas of progress and new types of enterprises; (3) “take-off,” when traditional impediments to economic growth are overcome, agriculture modernizes, industry expands, and investment rates rise; (4) “the drive to maturity,” marked by ongoing technological innovation and specialization of the industrial base; and (5) “the age of high mass consumption,” a period of widespread affluence, growing urbanization, service-sector expansion, and ubiquitous consumer durables, such as automobiles and refrigerators.

Modernization theory – and Rostow in particular – was much criticized for emphasizing economic measures of progress, such as GNP growth, as well as for a “culturalist” preoccupation with “traditional” values and institutions and a corresponding neglect of structures of exploitation, and for assuming that all societies traveled the same historical trajectory, albeit at different paces. While such objections are largely valid, critics rarely acknowledge that one of the main criteria of development for most modernization theorists was not so much growth per se, but rather increasing structural complexity in the economy. Moreover, from the vantage point of the early twenty-first century, several other dimensions of Rostow’s work – and of the modernization paradigm in general – stand out as the antithesis of today’s neoliberal version of free-market fundamentalism. First, Rostow stressed the central role of the state in economic development, as a provider of the “social overhead capital” (ports, railways, roads, and so on) necessary for growth and, in the stage of “mass consumption,” the state as a guarantor of social welfare and security. Second, he not only considered the state a key agent of development, but saw the nation as the geographical and political space in which progress along the five-stage trajectory would be made or arrested. This focus on individual countries was entirely consonant with how the world economy was then organized and how the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) envisioned the development of *national* economies, each with its particular resource endowments and forms of protectionism. Finally, Rostow considered that one feature of the “drive to maturity” would be the production at home of goods formerly acquired abroad, an affirmation consistent with those of protectionist advocates of import substitution industrialization, such as his “structuralist” critics in ECLA.

It should hardly be surprising that modernization theory, derided by its critics as a legitimating ideology for capitalism, had a statist dimension. From the end of World War II until the collapse of the Bretton Woods system of capital controls and fixed exchange rates in the early 1970s, the intimate links between state and market were part of the prevailing common sense of the economics profession and policy-makers.

In the post-World War II era in the developed world (and in many “semiperipheral” countries as well), this view underlay the rise of welfare state institutions. The 1944 Bretton Woods Agreement that established the International Monetary Fund created a liberalized trade regime but, influenced by Keynes and his disciples, was distinctly non-liberal in the financial arena, endorsing national controls on capital movements. By the early 1970s, a combination of market pressures (expanding demand for international financial services, “stagflation,” OPEC states’ accumulation of petrodollars), technological changes (telecommunications and computer revolutions), and calculated actions by key states (deregulation of US financial markets) contributed to scuttling the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates and controls on capital and to encouraging speculative financial movements that complicated any national defense of the welfare state. Neoliberal economists such as Friedrich von Hayek, whose *Road to Serfdom* appeared in 1944, had been widely viewed as outlandish zealots. But in the recession, stagflation and fiscal crises of the mid-1970s, their ideas began to gain support, part of an epochal shift that helped lay the groundwork for the globalization era. The elections on neoliberal platforms of Margaret Thatcher in Britain in 1979 and Ronald Reagan in the United States in 1980 initiated the ascendance of a new free-market regime that made rapid inroads there and in much of the rest of the world. How did anthropology absorb this seismic change? Partly by culturalizing globalization, and downplaying its political-economic and legal dimensions.

### ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE GLOBALIZATION ERA

Globalization, even more so than development, is a protean term, a moving target that is not the same from one day to the next or in different locations or social situations. David Harvey points out that the term globalization was “entirely unknown before the mid-1970s” and that it then “spread like wildfire” when American Express used it to advertise the global reach of its credit card (Harvey 2000:12–13). Globalization, Tsing (2000:332) observes, is “part corporate hype and capitalist regulatory agenda, part cultural excitement, part social commentary and protest.” For many anthropologists, globalization signifies accelerated flows or intensified connections – across national and other boundaries – of commodities, people, symbols, technology, images, information, and capital, as well as disconnections, exclusion, marginalization, and dispossession.

A growing literature on anthropology and globalization exhibits three striking limitations: tendencies (a) to dehistoricize globalization and to favor a “giddy presentism” (Graeber’s term), (b) to bypass or downplay the nation-state, and (c) to naturalize contemporary neoliberalism by, for example, treating global phenomena as impersonal “flows” (Graeber 2002:1224–1225) or as an inexorable or overly coherent set of forces (Cooper 2001; Tsing 2000) and then focusing on how they are culturalized. The most comfortable niche for anthropologists discussing globalization has been to show how non-elites “creatively resist, appropriat(e), or reinterpret some apparently homogenizing influence imposed from above (e.g., advertising, soap operas, forms of labor discipline, political ideologies, etc.)” (Graeber 2002:1223). It

is worth considering what this genre excludes and with what effects. For example, Inda and Rosaldo (2002:27) acknowledge as “important gaps” in their excellent anthology on *The Anthropology of Globalization* “transnational social movements, global religious communities, global cities, and transnational pollution,” as well as the work of “precursor theorists” writing about the “political economy of culture” such as Eric Wolf, Sidney Mintz, June Nash, and Michael Taussig. The World Trade Organization (WTO) is not even mentioned in the index of any of the three recent volumes on globalization that Graeber (2002:1226) reviews – or, as he notes, “for that matter, some recent volumes that actually have pictures of the Seattle protests on their cover!”

The WTO, viewed by its detractors as part of an evil troika whose other two members are the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, inspires social movements and imaginings that are central to understanding globalization, development, social change, and modernity. Anthropology should have much to contribute to the fiery debates about the Bretton Woods institutions and about the WTO’s power, secrecy, lack of public accountability, and capacity to override laws passed democratically by sovereign nations. A few scholars (such as Michael Goldman and Richard Harper) have begun to make these institutions objects of ethnographic research, but the linkages between their findings and those of scholars operating at higher levels of abstraction are tenuous. Neither the ethnographers of the economic governance institutions nor the niche grand theorists of transnationalism and hybridity appear to have dwelled on how their respective methodological approaches may limit understanding of globalization. The role of anthropologists – many of whom work within the international financial institutions, particularly the World Bank – has similarly received only cursory attention.

Whether globalization is new or not is the subject of much debate. Deregulated global financial markets linked in real time, declining transport and communications costs, and increasingly significant multilateral institutions and agreements are clearly major changes in the last two decades. Some scholars nonetheless argue that globalization – particularly of commodities markets – has been around at least since 1492, if not longer (Harvey 2000:21). Others see the period from 1870 to 1914 as a prior age of globalization – a time of laissez-faire policies well suited to an era of imperialism. In any case, labor is less mobile today than it was in the 1800s, when passports were unnecessary, and international labor migration peaked during the century after 1815 (Cooper 2001:194). The foreign-born proportion of the US population was 14 percent in 1900 and only 11 percent 100 years later, even after a period of sustained immigration. Whether new or newly recognized, globalization and transnationalism have captivated scholarly imaginations. Yet this infatuation recalls a similar glorification in the 1950s and 1960s of modernization – now widely seen as a failed development paradigm (Cooper 2001; Tsing 2000).

What is historically remarkable is today’s celebration of a particular form of globalization – economic neoliberalism – and the increasingly common tendency for tests of market viability to be taken for granted or naturalized in domains as disparate as academia, journalism, and art. An earlier generation of scholars (among them Karl Polanyi and E. P. Thompson) saw the question of how market relations are extended to new domains and then naturalized as a defining feature of major historical transitions. Today again anthropologists can help explain how ideological

expressions of the “free market” are naturalized and how they come to seem inevitable (if not necessarily legitimate). Yet anthropologists’ attention often turns elsewhere. One might ask if anthropologists’ celebrations of the end of the era of totalizing narratives “draw attention away from the current attempt to impose the largest and most totalizing framework in world history – the world market – on just about everything” (Graeber 2002:1224).

Whether one views today’s historical moment as market tyranny or market triumph, there is little doubt about the force of one economic model, one conception of economy. Often forgotten is that the reproduction of this model occurs through institutions, processes, and politics. There is nothing inevitable, ethically neutral, or natural about world markets in their current form.

Ours is an era of flexible production, footloose capital and factories, and corporations that demand flexibility of their workers even as they offer those workers fewer guarantees of job security or retirement or health benefits. Underpaid, disposable, perpetually temporary “McWork” jobs proliferate in the service sectors of affluent countries, while corporations engage in two “races” – the “race to the bottom,” where labor is cheap and regulations weak or unenforced, and the “race toward weightlessness,” to outsource production, keep the fewest employees on the payroll, and produce the most powerful brand images (Klein 2000:4). Neoliberalism has brought declining corporate taxes and a continuing erosion of public-sector health, education, and other services. It has brought expanding informal economies, contract farming, ecotourism, and struggles over environmental protections and access to land and other resources. It has also generated the sharpest economic inequalities the world has ever seen. Do anthropologists who write about globalization, transnationalism, development, and modernity treat too much of this larger economic picture as given?

Economic globalization issues – development issues – fuel highly energized social movements in many parts of the world (more so in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Canada than in the United States). As globalization hype wears thin and the harm done by garment, coffee, and other industries is publicized, consumers in wealthier nations begin to feel complicit in corporate misdeeds, and consumer boycotts and anti-corporate activism spread. On US college campuses, an earlier political focus on issues of race, gender, sexuality, and identity politics now includes corporate power, labor rights, and environmental justice. Anti-sweatshop campaigns against producers of apparel bearing university logos have evolved into campaigns for living wages for campus workers such as janitors and cooks. The Gap, Shell, Disney, McDonald’s, and many other corporations have been targets as well. And protesters at demonstrations against the World Bank and International Monetary Fund demand debt relief for poor nations and shout slogans about controversial economic policies such as water privatization and other structural adjustment programs. Yet anthropology has been slower than other disciplines, such as political science and sociology, to embrace research agendas centered on economic globalization, activist networks, and social movements.

## NGOs, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND GENDER

During the 1980s, non-governmental organizations came to play a growing role in mainstream and alternative development projects, large and small. The reduction of

the neoliberal state's social welfare programs, the dismissal of intellectuals from downsized public universities and government agencies, and the crucial participation of civil society organizations in the democratization of African countries, Latin American military regimes, and formerly socialist countries, all fueled the NGO boom. As the importance of supra-national governance institutions grew in the late 1980s and 1990s, NGOs and other civil society organizations became a constant presence at "parallel summits" held outside meetings of the World Bank and IMF, the WTO, and the G7/G8 heads of state. US and European cooperation policies shifted toward an emphasis on funding citizens' groups that were often held up as scrupulous and efficient alternatives to the corrupt, bloated, and ineffective public sectors that had previously absorbed most foreign aid. NGOs increasingly assumed responsibilities for delivery of services ranging from health care to agricultural extension, and they also became conduits for political demands initially articulated by social movements and other pressure groups.

Contrasting theoretical conceptions of how to bound "civil society" are often tied to distinct development agendas and views of democratization. Many concur that "civil society" is the associational realm between the household and the state, while others emphasize the emergence of a global civil society and transnational advocacy networks. Beyond that, however, two polar positions exist, separated by opposing views on whether to include economic actors – specifically, markets and firms – within "civil society." Those who argue for considering markets and corporations as part of the category typically favor a neoliberal development agenda (an irony, given this position's roots in Hegel and Marx) which sees "civil society" as a domain outside of and morally superior to the state. They posit choice and freedom of association as fundamental characteristics of both the market and "civil society," making support for economic liberalization and "civil society" institutions not only entirely compatible, but complementary strategies for checking state power. In contrast, theorists who exclude the market and firms from "civil society" usually consider it a domain of associational life that attempts to defend autonomous collective institutions from the encroachments of *both* the market and the state. In comparison with neoliberal theorists, they tend to accord much greater analytical importance to how social inequality structures or limits political representation.

During the past two decades, the struggle between these divergent conceptions has played out in academia, bilateral and non-governmental funding agencies, supra-national governance institutions, and the countries of the South. Typically, proponents of neoliberal development strategies have favored strengthening legal institutions and elite lobbying groups as a way of facilitating market-driven approaches to growth and to resolving social problems. Supporters of alternative strategies, on the other hand, characteristically have backed organizations with a dual focus on income-generating projects for historically disadvantaged sectors of the population and pressure-group tactics intended to create more profound structural change. The latter line of attack, favored by many European donor NGOs and bilateral cooperation agencies, has given grass-roots organizations a significant impact in reshaping all manner of development-related debates and policies.

Recent shifts in understanding the gendered dimensions of development are emblematic of civil society's growing influence on policy-makers' debates. The "Women in Development" approach that accompanied the United Nations Decade for

Women (1975–1985) sought to address “male bias” by increasing female access to, and participation in, development programs (much as rural development programs had tried to compensate for “urban bias”). By the mid-1990s, however, at the insistence of an increasingly vocal international women’s movement, mainstream development institutions recognized that the WID paradigm did little to address key concerns, such as unequal inheritance and property rights for men and women, domestic violence, men’s abandonment of their children, or family planning and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Addressing these issues not only required male participation within a new “Gender and Development” framework (that largely superseded WID), but also presupposed fundamental modifications of existing practices of masculinity and femininity. Scholars such as Sylvia Chant and Matthew Gutmann, however, note that recent Gender and Development policies have not fundamentally altered WID’s emphasis on programs designed by and for women. Thus Chant and Gutmann argue that development programs should incorporate “men as a gendered category in a feminist sense,” with attention to unequal relations between men as well as between men and women.

## CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

Is under-development a state of mind, an artifact of culture or values? Few anthropologists would agree, though many writings about development now reduce the spirit of capitalism to ahistorical cultural essences – a move that divorces culture from politics and economy in ways Weber and other classical theorists did not. Devotees of modernization theory still view “traditional” culture as an obstacle to change, while others have attributed the pre-1997 economic dynamism of the “Asian tigers,” for example, to either Confucian values or long-established Asian forms of household organization.

Contemporary anthropology’s emphasis on culture as contested, flexible, fragmentary, and contingent is hard to reconcile with mainstream “culturalist” explanations of under-development or Confucian capitalism, which tend to assume that people mechanically enact norms. Thus anthropologists often clash with their development agency employers, as well as with some political scientists and economists, when analyzing cultural aspects of development. Without denying that norms influence behavior, many anthropologists focus on what norms or symbols individuals invoke in particular situations to justify or explain their actions – exploring the rich possibilities of contradictory or contested cultural imperatives, and their situational contingency. Development practitioners, on the other hand, demand simplifying models that travel well across national boundaries.

Supposed cultural conservatism or cultural difference maps onto ethnic identities and hierarchies, and these too figure in representations, whether official or social scientific, of putative differences in receptivity to development. Ethnic or cultural difference becomes an easy alibi for histories of regional economic and social inequalities and deprivation, as in the well-documented case of the San peoples of southern Africa, or among Chinese minorities. Indigenous and minority rights movements complicate earlier assumptions about culture and development, individual and group rights, and what rights accompany indigenous or minority status. Successful claims to

local authenticity or indigenous identity in international arenas may confer significant material advantages, and thus encourage people to strategically deploy or reinvent cultural, ethnic, indigenous, or local identities. Cultural symbols are invoked as well by right-wing and conservative movements (such as anti-immigrant movements in Europe or Islamic fundamentalism), though anthropologists have been less likely to theorize movements that promote exclusivity, racism, or intolerance. Ethnographic studies of identity or cultural politics, what it means to be “indigenous,” and when essentialism is strategic or romantic, place anthropologists at the center of development politics and practice – whether they claim “development” as their focus or not.

## CONSUMPTION

Anthropology originally drew students to societies marked by the absence of modern consumer goods that signal development. Today, however, expanding ethnographic study of consumption reflects profound changes in the discipline, including a recognition of commodities’ embeddedness in social relations in any economy, and a move beyond the gift/commodity dichotomy and its attendant evolutionary assumptions (as scholars such as James Carrier and Daniel Miller have shown). Studies of consumption illuminate new material aspirations and imaginings, and some probe connections between the conditions of production of commodities such as sugar or grapes in poorer nations and changing consumption preferences in wealthier industrialized nations.

What are the implications of such studies for development? Here one finds a split between those who see emancipatory versus destructive forces in commodification and mass consumption, though anthropologists studying these phenomena in the 1990s were moving beyond such oppositions and instead exploring how processes of commodification differ from the assumptions of modernization models. Much critical analysis focused on a different aspect of commodification – namely the effects of neoliberalism and structural adjustment programs, a conventional domain of development. Although scholars have rejected many elements of 1960s modernization theory, that paradigm’s traditional/modern binaries are very much alive in everyday language and culture, especially in consumption practices, which can signal newly imagined futures, conformity, creativity, rebellion, subversion, or strategic image-making, among other possibilities. Consumer appearances, for example, are so important that one finds impostors who talk on toy cellular telephones, parade in supermarkets with luxury-filled carts they later abandon as they sneak out the door without buying anything, and people who suffer extreme heat in their cars rather than roll down the windows and reveal that they have no air conditioning (examples Eduardo Galeano discusses in *Upside Down*). Neoliberalism denies to many the consumer paradise it promises.

## ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The “ecological anthropology” and “cultural ecology” of the 1970s, which frequently rested on functionalist and exaggeratedly localistic assumptions, have ceded

ground to “historical ecological” or “political ecology” approaches, the concerns of which often paralleled those of new environmentalist movements and non-governmental organizations working for “sustainable development.” Political ecology links environment, development, and social movements, often drawing on poststructuralist theory as well as political-economy critiques of development (as in the 2001 volume edited by Peluso and Watts). The new approaches vary in method and focus, but usually eschew adaptation as a starting premise. Indeed, maladaptive processes have become a key concern, while other analyses contain implicit adaptationist assumptions discussed in an idiom of “sustainable development.” Would environmental catastrophe result, for example, if 5 billion people in poor nations were to consume at the level enjoyed by the 1 billion who live in the wealthiest societies? Is “sustainability” possible on a small or large scale, and what role does it imply for market forces, whether local or global? How have differing interpretations of “sustainability” shaped struggles over development policy?

Today’s free-market enthusiasts challenge the notion of environmental crisis, sometimes questioning the scientific reality of global warming and ozone depletion, or simply suggesting that market forces can resolve environmental problems. Less orthodox economists, such as Herman Daly, emphasize that the economy cannot expand forever precisely because it is part of a finite and non-growing ecosystem. They propose an unorthodox form of “getting the prices right”: counting “externalities” as costs and rejecting the practice of including consumption of natural capital as income. “Sustainable development” was initially defined in Gro Harlem Brundtland’s UN-sponsored report *Our Common Future* as practices that satisfy the needs of our generation, without jeopardizing the possibilities for future generations to satisfy their needs. Yet “needs” – left undefined – proved to be one of several contentious aspects of the new paradigm, which the World Bank, multinational corporations, and radical environmental movements all claim as their own.

Anthropological studies of the environment and resource conservation focus less on economic policies or new forms of multilateral governance than on indigenous rights, social constructions of nature, and debates between radical and mainstream environmentalists. Environmental stresses and resource conflicts have become a pressing post-Cold War security issue, sometimes expressed as identity politics. Yet political ecology until recently has been surprisingly silent about geopolitical questions such as regional integration, transnational governance and environmental security, and decentralized politics.

## POST-DEVELOPMENT?

Some scholars urge us to look beyond “development” as the answer to poverty, hunger, and oppression. They employ Foucauldian notions of power, analyzing, for example, how “empowerment” becomes subjection, and why it is that the more “participatory” rural development appraisals are, the more they conceal community power structures. Among the dangers of conventional participatory development approaches is the capacity of the language of “empowerment” to conceal both large-scale inequalities and naïve assumptions about local authenticity and participants’ sincerity.

Advocates of “post-development” exalt familiar images of the “local,” but often they tend to romanticize or essentialize it. In a reversal of modernization theory’s assumption that “traditional” communities pose obstacles to change, some scholars and activists now celebrate community as a valuable source of local or indigenous knowledge and critique. **Post-development approaches tend to view states as simply the agents of brutal or failed modernization rather than as possible vehicles of democratization and beneficial access to markets.** Such approaches raise questions about when “local” people might prefer a state that works for them rather than state withdrawal. As Michael Watts has noted (in a 1998 volume edited by Doreen Massey and John Allen), there is a danger in uncritically privileging “the local,” “place,” “culture,” “the people,” or “popular discourse from below” without acknowledging **“the potentially deeply conservative, and occasionally reactionary, aspects of such local particularisms.”**

## CONCLUSION

Two contradictory claims about the origins of “development” and “under-development” are encountered in the anthropological literature. One locates development squarely in the Enlightenment and the transition from feudalism to capitalism, the first period in history when it became possible to imagine spectacular advances in the productive forces that made progress possible. **Another claim, prominent in poststructuralist scholarship, sees “development” as a post-World War II discourse intended to justify the remaking of the “Third World,”** and suggests that “under-development” – also primarily a discourse – originated in a 1949 speech by Harry Truman. Advocates of the first position see the second as ignoring both intellectual and economic history, overly focused on discourse, and insufficiently attentive to long-standing processes of exploitation. Proponents of the second tendency criticize supporters of the first approach for accepting an old “master narrative” about progress and for not acknowledging the utter failure of most twentieth-century development efforts, whether carried out by states, multilateral institutions, or small NGOs. Some maintain that disillusion with development is so widespread that we have moved into a “post-development era.”

Such a claim can only seem far-fetched to citizens of countries where unaccountable World Bank and International Monetary Fund bureaucrats have largely defined economic policies and where levels of poverty and inequality show no signs of diminishing. If not development, then what? Alternatives imagined by post-development enthusiasts often remain just that – imaginary. Proponents of development alternatives or “another development” have put forward a range of proposals, including “localization,” “delinking” from the market, “fair trade,” participatory budgeting, taxes on volatile capital movements, and a startling number of populist, nationalist, and regional integration efforts to re-embed the economy in society. They generally differ from post-development theorists in their continuing search for practical experiences that prove effective in raising living standards and that have potential for “scaling up.” Often development alternatives are part of the practice of social movements and other civil society organizations. As yet, however, apart from some tepid attempts to theorize a “third way” between capitalism and socialism, remark-

ably few in the development alternatives camp have tried to challenge the macroeconomic premises of neoliberalism or assert a role for a reinvigorated state as a vehicle for democratization, social justice, or even simply improved access to markets.

Meanwhile, modernization theory and its assumptions about supposed cultural obstacles to change remain alive and well among many development practitioners. And assumptions about “development,” whether explicit or not, feature in the torrent of contemporary academic studies of “modernity.” Yet contemporary anthropology tends to dehistoricize globalization, naturalize neoliberalism, and bypass the state in favor of the “local” or the transnational. Today’s debates over globalization confirm that development is still hotly contested. As Graeber (2002:1223) suggests, globalization “has made the political role of anthropology itself problematic, in a way perhaps even more profound than the ‘reflexive moment’ of the eighties ever did.” Development institutions that employ anthropologists typically assign them micro-interventions and culture-broker roles, yet a genuine anthropology of development must analyze larger institutional practices and orientations that are more easily critiqued from afar. Writing openly about the international financial and governance institutions while preserving access to small-scale foreign field sites is as much a challenge today as it has ever been.

In short, development continues to perplex anthropologists and others. Though master narratives are in decline, and most development projects fail, dreams of alleviating poverty and suffering endure.

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