An Agenda for Anthropology

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Chapter 1

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Today we are participants and observers of major global political and economic transformations caused, and undoubtedly exacerbated, by our growing interconnectedness (Slater, Schutz, and Dorr 1993). New hegemonic centers are emerging, the cold war is over, regional free trade associations seek to buffer themselves in an increasingly global economy (North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA), European Union (EU), South American Free Trade Market (MERCOSUL)). In the Amazon Basin we witness the destruction of vast areas of rain forest and are informed of devastating rates of mortality among native peoples operating until recently by a combination of extensive horticulture, hunting, gathering, and fishing. Overnight they have been confronted with neighbors representing the eighth largest economy in the planet (Brazil), while corporations from the other top seven economies seek to exploit the region's resources. Dozens of environmental organizations visit the region and make suggestions about how to manage it. Missionaries and food aid organizations send delegations to assess the degree of need of local populations. World-renowned artists lend their name, and concert funds, in support of native peoples' struggle for land. These resources have permitted some indigenous leaders to have the capacity to fly over their territories, in their own planes, to monitor invasion of their lands by gold prospectors, timber companies, and cattle ranchers.

Across the Atlantic we observe Asian and African populations being dislocated by oil production, war, famine, and dam construction. In so doing, previously intensive cultivators have joined the already large urban populations in cities hoping to rebuild their lives now that access to traditional lands has been lost. In Namibia populations that have long been characterized as hunter-gatherers have in a short period of time become not only sedentary horticulturalists, but they have joined either armies of liberation or counterrevolutionary ones. The

former Yugoslavia and the republics of the former Soviet Union fragment more each year into polities wherein human rights, cultural rights, and even human life is given little value by predatory neighbors.

In this vast world of flux what does anthropology have to contribute? The neat evolutionary stages so useful in looking at past changes do not adequately deal with the contemporary transformations being experienced by "traditional peoples." Warlike New Guinea clansmen of a generation ago now exhibit their paintings and carvings in Sidney, Paris, and New York. Eskimos and Amazonian Native Americans use video and other modern technologies to intensify their traditional social relations and to resist loss of their traditional values and territories. Electronic mass media play a key role in preserving ethnic and national identities in the global village—yet how many anthropologists are studying the impacts of media on human communities? Are anthropologists simply observers of an exotic world that is passing? Is anthropology merely recording the remaining traditional customs of people now transformed into our own image by "development"? Or have these transformations in the world system transformed anthropology itself?

Anthropology's engagement with the critical problems of the contemporary world (poverty, powerlessness, environmental degradation, oppression, urban growth, explosive population growth) is to be understood by examining not its institutional forms (departments, professional societies) but in *how anthropologists practice their craft*. This practice reflects the many forces to which anthropologists have responded. From a relatively small group twenty years ago, development anthropologists may now be found not only in universities but also in the World Bank, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and institutions worldwide charged with assisting people in their efforts to change or to cope with change.

For many years the idea of a value-free social science so permeated the discipline that it was judged unscientific to act in behalf of native peoples in their struggle with the state or the forces that were changing their lives (Wright 1988:365). This view is particularly surprising given that even Franz Boas, one of the figures responsible for modern anthropology, felt that it was not possible, nor desirable, to be objective about one's own culture—while preaching that such objectivity was possible in studying other cultures (Mead 1973). He felt that a responsible anthropologist, like any responsible citizen, should take sides in matters of social justice. This view has over the years given way to one in which

one's social and moral responsibility encompasses not only our own culture but also those people all over the globe who cry for freedom, justice, adequate health, and food.

Anthropology and the Problems of Transforming Societies

Before World War II, anthropology devoted itself to the study of pre-industrial societies. This focus carved an academic identity and a public image for anthropology as a discipline concerned largely with small-scale, sometimes exotic, and often rural societies. This preference for relatively pristine societies marked the discipline's early years. It was sometimes justified as necessary to have a record of these societies before they were forever changed by contact with the West. Anthropological theory and method were shaped by this focus. Anthropology's widely acknowledged greatest contribution to social science methodology, the method of participant-observation, is a product of a focus on scarcely known, small-scale societies requiring extended residence to make sense out of their languages and customs. Studies of African societies' political and social organization shaped British functionalist and structuralist theories. In the United States, studying North American Indians influenced the development of anthropological linguistics, archeology, and theories of kinship. Historical particularist and culture-and-personality approaches are associated with studies that tried to explain the character of these societies. In both cases, these were societies undergoing transformation from relatively autonomous to societies subsumed under larger states which reduced the autonomy of action of these populations. Despite this situation, many of the theories invoked to make sense out of these societies assumed them to be relatively pristine, existing in relative equilibrium, with members who shared values and interests, representing well-integrated cultures.

In retrospect, it is remarkable that these assumptions were made, given the historical context of some of these studies (e.g., recall the situation of the Nuer at the time Evans-Pritchard came to study them), in which the population had only recently lost the war against the external dominant society and was in the process of facing loss of autonomy and an uncertain future. These theories say a great deal more about the anthropologists and British and North American social order than about the fit between the theory and the experience of changed circumstances of those studied.

After World War II the process of worldwide transformation accelerated in the First, Second, and Third Worlds. Societies which had earlier been colonially ruled began to be given (or had won) their independence—while other still autonomous societies in peripheral places experienced pacification, sedentarization, and incorporation into state-level polities. Many of the newly independent states, as well as those who lost this war, found economic assistance offered by the First and Second World nations. This assistance was seen as a necessary part of the postwar reconstruction of devastated regions such as Germany and Japan, but also as necessary to strengthening the existence of Third World states as economically viable and politically stable entities. Their ability to provide economic opportunity was seen as necessary for their political legitimacy. The economic development of preindustrial economies into industrializing ones became a major thrust of international economic assistance that led to the creation of greater global interdependence. Not surprisingly, this assistance became connected in many cases to the cold war sides and political alliances to either the First or Second World. Nevertheless, the result was increased internationalization of economic systems.

Notable advances since World War II in the control of ancient infectious scourges of humankind, such as smallpox, plague, cholera, yellow fever, syphilis, and tuberculosis reduced mortality worldwide—and fueled population growth rates in economies not always prepared for them. Reduced mortality was not matched by reduced fertility, in no small part due not only to the lag in changing cultural expectations of survivability of newborns, but as an outcome of missionization and other ideologies that often promoted maximum reproductive rates rather than its control among people previously unexposed to the views of fundamentalist Christianity and other expansionist religions.

These changes in Third World societies became commonly associated with a number of processes: rural-to-urban migration, urban growth, expansion of transportation networks, import-substitution capital-intensive industrialization, greater access to national and international media, greater internal stratification, and episodic reliance on military rule to control the political process when the larger population, or elites, found it useful. The economic and political precariousness of many Third World states often resulted in gender, ethnic, religious, and racial oppression. One need only to recall the earlier ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, the episodic massacres between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi, the recent Balkan ethnic cleansings, and many other incidents of terror like the Holocaust to realize that the struggle for control of the state apparatus is tied to differential access to resources and to revindication of real and imagined oppression by ethnic, racial, and economic segments.

The anthropological response to the problems of "developing" societies was to decry the passing of traditional culture and blaming development agents and the state for the negative impacts felt by these societies. This was an important and often timely contribution that exposed the unwarranted assumptions made in the model of industrialization exported to many Third World nations. The many cases of poverty, oppression, and violation of the human rights of peoples in many countries were reported. Remarkably, efforts by international institutions, such as the United Nations, to define the universal rights of individuals were resisted by the anthropological establishment. The legacy of cultural relativism seemed to demand that the discipline speak for the relativity of those rights in different cultures and for the primacy of their cultural expression. As a result, anthropology had a lesser voice than it might have had in the definition of universal human rights and in the mechanisms by which international watchdogs monitor those rights worldwide.

Ethnohistorical studies have revealed how native peoples have actively resisted the imposition of colonial rule and the commoditization of their labor (Smith 1984; Hill 1989; Wright 1981). Ecological studies have examined systems of resource management in parts of the world whose level of sophistication has not been equaled to this day. Instances of intensification that have occurred without environmental degradation provide a sound basis today for research to develop sustainable production systems (Denevan 1970; Turner and Harrison 1981; Posey and Balée 1989). Economic studies by anthropologists have revealed tribal and peasant societies' decision making as being neither more nor less conservative than our own behavior (Cancian 1972; Barlett 1981; Cashdan 1989). Historical comparative studies have pointed out that the little community has always been connected to a larger world system (Wolf 1982), which deeply affected its internal functioning and structural relations. Studies of ethnicity (e.g., Cohen 1969) engaged in a critique of the assumptions of the past and sought to explain the politicization of native peoples in various parts of the globe (Wright 1988:367). After World War II, the many economic development schemes implemented throughout the world by multinational lending

institutions and developing countries led anthropologists to pay a great deal more attention than in the past to peasantries.

Although the study of peasantries was not new, its growing volume indicated a shift in the condition of many of the world's indigenous peoples. This attention was also expressed in important debates over the nature of preindustrial economies and whether they used the logic of classical or neoclassical economics (i.e., were based on concepts of maximization of individual utility) or were a product of a cultural logic expressing social obligation, community values, and other noneconomic criteria (compare the formalist-substantivist debate in economic anthropology, Dalton 1962, Schneider 1970). Outside of—but influential in—anthropology, dependency theory (Frank 1962) and world systems theory (Wallerstein 1976) offered explanations for the growing problems experienced by these transforming societies. These theories observed that efforts to push preindustrial economies into an industrial condition were expanding the number of urban and rural poor, as well as sinking a growing number of nations into ever deeper debt crisis to international and private commercial lending institutions. This seemed to be a result of heavy borrowing to finance large-scale, capital-intensive development projects such as roads, dams, and irrigation projects. These projects, noted critics, gave the appearance of development and legitimated governments undertaking them. But they also increased dependency of these nations on certain kinds of export-oriented production susceptible to unpredictable price fluctuations and often unfavorable balance of trade. In some cases even staple food production was neglected as prime land became devoted to cash crops for export rather than production to meet food needs of the country's population. The result was increased concentration of wealth in already industrial nations, and growing poverty and powerlessness in developing ones.

Beginning in the 1970s, the world experienced an explosion of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to meet the growing crisis of the state. For example, more than 4,000 NGOs are listed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OECD), and they have more than doubled since 1980 (Technoserve 1989:3). The state began to be seen as unable to address the endemic problems of the contemporary world: poverty, environmental degradation, population growth, debt crisis, AIDS, ethnic conflict, and urban violence. NGOs and other forms of grassroots self-help organizations in both the First and Third Worlds began to be created. Their explosive growth seems to be related to the failure of the state's top-down approach to dealing with these problems. In contrast, NGOs took a participatory, low-cost, small-scale, labor rather than capital-intensive, bottom-up approach to dealing with locally meaningful problems.

The remarkable proliferation of NGOs was not predicted by social scientists, but interest in understanding them has grown, with anthropology lagging far behind other social science disciplines in this regard (see Fisher, chapter 3). This is all the more surprising in that anthropologists could have been predicted to have the best feel for these locally produced grassroots organizations. Only in the past 5 years is there evidence of some young anthropologists starting to examine the role of NGOs, their impact on local problems, the relationship of local to external NGOs, and the long-term impact of these groups on local and state capacity to meet human needs in culturally appropriate terms. The persistent and continued growth of NGOs says a great deal about the failure of the state in addressing local needs. The sometime pharaonic capital-intensive development schemes often chosen by national governments have rarely produced enough employment or economic returns to help local people, much less pay for themselves and the debt that made them possible.

Anthropology's oversight of NGOs as a transformative kind of institution in the contemporary world has not been the only missed opportunity to date. Another major driving force of these transformations has been the ever growing impact of media on local, national, and global society. Television, radio, newspapers, audio and video, fax, cellular communications, personal computers, and other forms of transmitting information and values have had a revolutionary impact. Audio and videotapes have been used not just to expand the cultural hegemony of Euroamerican society, but they have been used to strengthen traditional rituals and kinship ties, to keep emigrants in close contact with families back home, and to provide alternative interpretation of events affecting them. Radio and television vary in their impact depending on whether the state controls programming and on whether private groups and individuals are able to find space and stations to transmit opposing views and values. Fax, cellular, and internet communications empower individuals and groups with the capacity to communicate instantly with distant allies and mobilize world opinion against acts of oppression, human

rights violations, and other acts of terror. They also serve to bond groups previously separated by distance, poor infrastructure, and bureaucratic intermediaries.

Except for a few exceptions, such as the work of Kottak (chap. 5, this volume), few anthropologists have seen the study of media as the contemporary equivalent of the discipline's earlier fascination with indigenous languages and ritual. The latter were the means of communicating cultural information in small-scale societies, now transformed in a globalized village through electronic media. A large-scale research program to understand these complex media needs to be an anthropological priority. The contemporary forms of media are powerful driving forces in people's participation in their own transformation, in how and what they will preserve of their past in a global culture.

A struggle is clearly under way over the shape of global culture. Major multinational broadcasting corporations see an opportunity to create a more homogenous global culture directed at promoting the consumption of the products that make their existence possible. On the other hand, to appeal to the largest possible audience, broadcasters often make spaces for alternative programming that appeals to a variety of ethnic, religious, and cultural groups, thereby promoting unintentionally heterogeneity in values, ideology, and consumption. The arrival of digital communications has further facilitated the proliferation of alternative stations promoting specific religious and cultural values, environmentalism, alternative economics, and critiques of global culture brokers.

This new struggle for the values and behaviors of the next century—for the *content* of global culture—is an exciting challenge for anthropology. It is a struggle that runs from small, preindustrial rural villages to the centers of power in the First World. The Cold War has been replaced by the Global Culture Wars. Like the numerous ethnic conflicts characterizing the post–Cold War period to date, it is a series of small wars playing on a global stage. It is a struggle over whether global culture will value human cultural diversity, and if so, over whether global cultural diversity can peacefully coexist with respect for human rights, health care, freedom from hunger, freedom from discrimination, and differences in cultural expression.

This is not entirely new ground for anthropology, but one that requires major transformation in how anthropology trains the next generation. To engage the problems raised above requires a set of theories different from, but grounded in, the approaches of the past. Above all,

it requires increasingly rigorous multidisciplinary skills, team-based rather than individually based research, and flexibility in conceptualizing units and levels of analysis. For example, engaging the study of media requires familiarity with a vast literature from the field of communications. This literature embodies not only findings of research but a set of well-tested methods and research designs that ensure that future findings can be grounded to this body of literature, that the instruments of data collection and analysis are state-of-the-art, and that the whole community of persons interested in communications (a very interdisciplinary lot) can judge and accept/reject the findings based upon their reliability and verifiability. It requires that anthropologists work with colleagues in this field in a joint enterprise to the mutual enrichment of the research. Likewise, serious research on environmental problems, like tropical deforestation, can lead to Anthropologists' traditional decrying of deforestation, or they can engage the issue by bringing to bear upon it tools such as remote sensing, geographic information systems, botany, soil science and tools of the social sciences to understand the complex driving forces, the impact of different kinds of deforestation and land use practices, and ways in which natural and managed restoration efforts occur or may become widely practiced. In short, to figure out ways to balance conservation and use at various scales by linking local actors, NGOs, government and private groups, and the characteristics of the environment into realistic systems of use that consider local people's needs, and global impacts like carbon emission and sequestration (Moran et al. 1994; Brondizio et al. 1994; Skole et al. 1994).

A research strategy to understand transforming societies needs to be concerned with process, with history, with the role of political and economic power as it influences social relations in time and space at a number of scales from local to global. This is a research strategy that must not become an artifact of rhetoric. It requires rigorous attention to combining qualitative and quantitative methods, to large sample sizes, to precisely defining what each sample represents at different scales (both temporal and spatial), and concerned with engaging the problems of contemporary society rather than remaining detached from them.

Anthropology cannot remain disengaged from the changes that contemporary populations are undergoing without expecting others to find the field trivial and its theory increasingly banal. How can an anthropologist, in conscience, go to study the kinship system of an Amazonian population and proceed to do so while ignoring that children and adults

are dying from epidemic disease and that their lands are being invaded? To return and write a monograph of a kinship system that is rapidly becoming but a memory, while failing to collect mortality data and to document the failure of national institutions and local representatives to deal with the lives (and deaths) of those people, is nothing short of criminal. Although ethical choices are individually made, rather than by a whole discipline, it is quite possible that cases such as this occur, at least in part, because graduate training does not prepare anthropologists to deal with processes such as increased mortality, fertility decline, epidemiology, and changes in labor composition as well as it prepares them to expound on Eskimo kinship terminology and praxis theory. Nor do anthropological academic training or typical academic accolades reward those who deal with the changing lives of people as much as those who claim to find exotic peoples, "frozen in time," in some part of the world—even when such isolation may be a result of the researcher's ignoring their history. As soon as major social transformations begin, anthropologists often join the chorus of those who decry such changes and rush to study and salvage the shreds of the past while paying little attention to how local people construct their future through new political and economic arrangements. What anthropologists sometimes decry are the painful transitions and transformations people must undertake to cope in a changing world. It is these efforts to deal with change that constitute the empirical realities for an engaged anthropology.

Among the sciences anthropology has a particularly valuable lens through which to diagnose the human condition. Archaeology brings a perspective of longtime change in which transformations result from change in one or more components of an environmental or social system. Archaeological studies have been among those that alerted us to the sophisticated systems of resource use in so-called traditional societies, some of them adopted by contemporary resource managers (Evenari et al. 1971). Through bioanthropology one gains a population-level view of how changes in society can lead to altered rates of growth and development, altered fertility and morbidity, and other biological measures of well-being. These studies have played key roles in bringing anthropology into close cooperative research with scientists in the biological and medical sciences and, jointly, addressing basic issues such as international growth standards, monitoring of health and nutritional status, and the biological impact of different kinds and magnitudes of change on populations. Cultural anthropology and linguistics have contributed to an under-

standing of the historical, social, economic, and political dimensions of human action and thought. From these areas have come contributions adopted by many other disciplines: the ethnographic method of data collecting, a recognition of folk knowledge embedded in language that has been important in fields such as ethnobotany and ethnobiology, and an appreciation of the decision-making processes of traditional peoples.

Finan, in this volume, brings to our attention the need to reform the methodological training of anthropologists. The mystification of "the year in the field" has led some to ignore the appropriate role for short- and long-term field research, respectively. In fact, research methods need to be adjusted to the scope of work and the purpose of the study and be cumulative in nature. Rapid rural assessment and other rapid assessment procedures are becoming increasingly common and ever more systematic. Practicums in field research, as part of large research teams, is one of the best ways to learn the craft of research—and its development constitutes a major transformation in the methods of cultural anthropology—long enamored with the image of the lone anthropologist among exotic peoples. The new anthropology is one of anthropologists working side by side with other scientists, local participants in the research, and NGOs seeking to improve knowledge of, say, biodiversity in a watershed, in order to draw up a sustainable development plan for an area.

Because institutions in contemporary societies play such a critical role in ameliorating or exacerbating the consequences of transformations in production systems, diet, housing, demography, religion, and marriage practices, it is all the more imperative that anthropology engage the study of both traditional and novel institutions and the conditions under which they relieve or magnify the difficulties faced by human populations. What is surprising is that anthropology has ignored the emergence of new social forms as objects of study, even in academic terms.

The financially, politically, and morally compromised state, particularly in many Third World countries, has become a contested arena. Powerful elites, often with the support of military forces, impose their will despite precarious popular support. To legitimate their rule, they promote development schemes of high visibility but often poor trickle-down benefit. High external debt has been the result of many of these development efforts—further impoverishing the poorest in society. The failure to meet local needs has prompted a virtual explosion of grassroots organizing and a favorable environment for nongovernmental organizations of

all kinds, an explosion in entrepreneurship in the informal economy, and other creative responses such as peri-urban gardens and microfarms on unoccupied or public lands along railroad tracks to meet household and urban poor's needs. It is in these settings that the transformations of Third World societies are taking place.

This is but one example of the numerous social phenomena that exist in the contemporary world that are important to the development of robust new social theories. They have been ignored by many in academic anthropology because they do not fit neatly into the objects of study that are characteristically anthropological. They are not communities bounded in space and time. Instead, they operate within other social systems, deal directly with those they "serve" rather than through existing institutions, and some may even subvert the role of local organizations and weaken the authority of the state (see Smith, chap. 2). Out of anthropological engagement with the study of these new kinds of institutions and organizations, one might expect, in due time, to derive an anthropological theory less concerned with structure and function than with process, committed to the preservation and further development of indigenous knowledge systems, committed to development through participation and empowerment of local people in their communities' fate—a transformed anthropology indeed.

Changes in the Study of Health and Disease

The study of human transformations can involve the study of ritual, religion, mythology, production and exchange, environment, politics, and institutions. Any good anthropologist, at some time, will devote his or her time to each of these dimensions in order to arrive at the comprehensive understanding of society that lies at the heart of anthropology. Less often heeded has been attention to the biological dimensions of change.

Social transformations leave "signatures," or biological marks, upon individuals in a population. This means that events such as mortality, fertility, growth, disease prevalence, and nutritional stress leave permanent marks that can be used to diagnose the extent of the change and its consequences upon members of a society (Goodman et al. 1988). These biologically felt events have consequences for "... social relations, ideological constructs and evolutionary trajectories" (ibid. 169–70). For example, nutritional stunting is a biological signature for the experience of

disease and/or chronic dietary insufficiency. It is also believed that such stunting, in turn, decreases immune response, intellectual skills, and visual perception (Martorell 1989). The use of health indices for human well-being has been a notable contribution, one that continues to advance and that has not advanced further only because of the lack of attention and funds given to local-level data collection.

An example of just such a development is the recent anthropological critique of the "small but healthy" hypothesis, which suggests that reduction in stature does not provoke any functional, psychological, or other forms of impairment (Seckler 1980). According to the hypothesis, nutritionally stunted populations are well proportioned, therefore not malnourished. As a result, they do not require food aid. What such a hypothesis suggests is that food aid should be reserved for the acutely malnourished, or wasted, and withheld from the chronically malnourished, or stunted, since the end result is simply a lesser height. Anthropological engagement in this issue, jointly with nutritionists, has led to the rejection of this hypothesis based upon its tendency to ignore the negative consequences of chronic malnutrition to human populations. Maternal size is a strong predictor of child mortality (Martorell et al. 1981). In addition, the relationship between lower birth weight and higher infant mortality is well-known (Mata 1978; Victora et al. 1987). Chronically malnourished children are not only shorter, but they may have reduced work capacity due to reduced muscle mass, which may be important in physically demanding occupations (Spurr 1983). They may have impaired immune system responses, which has been associated with increased child morbidity and mortality (James 1972; Kielman et al. 1976; and Barros et al. 1987), and both learning and perceptual difficulties (Klein et al. 1972; Pollitt and Thomson 1987). In this, as in many of the other new directions taking place in a transforming anthropology, longitudinal studies are fundamental, since they allow for the evaluation of incremental changes of growth performance that can be correlated to dietary intake, parasitism, and other variables.

Empowering local communities with the skills to monitor their health and nutritional status would be an important contribution of an engaged, transformed anthropology. A number of anthropologists have already demonstrated the feasibility of low-cost anthropometric methods and other forms of community medicine executed by local people (see Shimkin and Frate, chap. 9). This kind of engagement needs to become far more commonplace in anthropological praxis. Communities would

gain a greater awareness of their situation and have a basis for community action. The data could be used also to make a case for assistance from government and nongovernmental groups. It could also improve the quality of health data at regional and national scale over the less frequent surveys carried out from the top-down. More importantly, the engagement of the community in monitoring its own health and nutritional status could very well lead to increased community-based participation in many other activities of common concern. Health is one of the most basic and widely regarded needs of a population. It is a particularly effective way to engage a population in their own empowerment.

Anthropologists throughout the globe today work with health providers to improve the quality of the data that is generated and that will permit a more refined development of monitoring indices of human vulnerability (Hansluwka 1985; Wallace and Taha 1988). The late Demitri Shimkin, in chapter 9, discusses the positive contributions of anthropologists working in Africa to the delivery of health services and warns us of the upcoming crisis of chronic diseases in the Third World with all the high costs that any chronic condition entails. An agenda for anthropology must be engaged with their transformation and how local, regional and national economists prepare to deal with it.

Anthropology brings important insights to the study of health and the delivery of health services. Health problems and health status are often arbitrarily defined by providers, to fit into priorities other than the health of those affected. Health is an environmentally conditioned phenomenon that reflects cultural values and social order (Shimkin, chap. 9). Schizophrenia, for example, is far less disabling in Nigeria than in the United States (Hoben 1985). The severely disabled are able to survive and function in the United States at rates inconceivable in Africa (ibid.).

Donor organizations engaged in providing health assistance are often more concerned with their own priorities and ways of doing business than with adjusting their resources to the needs of a population. Cooperation between international donors is generally poor and deteriorates further among national system providers. Local-level health statistics are poor and make delivery of health services difficult.

Anthropology's engagement with health has emphasized the development of local capacity—a capacity that can be oriented not only to preventive health but also to the collection of data and the monitoring of outbreaks of various epidemic and transmissible diseases. This effort requires valuing people, but it requires the assurance that resources will

be forthcoming when needs are documented. A transformed anthropology needs to work with governmental and nongovernmental organizations to empower local communities in mobilizing to provide for their health needs. Decrying the poor state of health of the poor is necessary but not sufficient. Engagement in solving these problems needs to accompany academic analysis.

Studying Human Rights

The best of anthropological studies through time have dealt with the experience of people in comprehensive ways. The classic study of the Bemba by Audrey Richards (1939) looked at both seasonal and chronic hunger and examined the ecology of food production, the social rules for consumption and distribution, and the nutritional consequences of existing ideologies, behaviors, and productive potential. Hunger, disease, and out-migration are consequences of local-level processes, which are, in turn, embedded, in larger political and economic structures that influence local behaviors and institutions (Millman and Kates 1989).

Human societies regulate through social and cultural mechanisms access to resources, such as food (see Messer, chap. 8). When reduced access to food occurs, a range of actions may be undertaken to alleviate the predicted food deficits. Some of these actions may be short-term adjustments, while others may be long-term adaptations. Short-term adjustments may include replanting a crop, changing from drought-susceptible to drought-resistant cultivars, consuming less preferred foods, and transforming stocks of wealth into cash to guarantee access to food. Some will hoard food, before the food deficit is felt, while others may shift from food production to wage labor to ensure themselves access to the means to acquire imported food.

Long-term adaptations have been implemented as well. Most important has been the effort to locate production in ecologically favorable sites, the storage of portions of production from good years to ensure sufficiency in bad years, and the linking of distant production systems through trade to guarantee access to different resource areas (Millman and Kates 1989).

Because human communities are linked with one another in ever more inclusive systems, they may be more or less vulnerable to fluctuations in basic needs depending on their relations with those other entities. Thus, villages may be able to produce food in one region of a

country, but whether portions of that food supply reach other regions of the same country or not may be affected by internal strife between ethnic groups, how the vulnerable area relates to the central government, what price or distributional mechanisms are implemented to entitle one to food, and whether the vulnerable population has access to remittances or not.

It has become increasingly clear that famines do not occur because there is a lack of food but, rather, because the mechanisms for food distribution fail to guarantee the rights of some people to food. Those rights are influenced by political, social, cultural, and economic criteria (Sen 1989:774). Countries like postindependence India, with considerable less food per capita than many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, have been able to avoid famines because of the political inadmissibility of famine, the creation of administrative systems that provide employment in times of calamities and sufficient freedom of information to mobilize the population in support of early implementation of famine relief (775).

Other human rights, too, are under attack constantly (see Messer, chap. 6), and the collapse of hegemony in the Second World has led to genocide and levels of violence unheard of since World War II. The violation of human rights in the former Yugoslavia, the continued ethnic conflicts in Somalia and Iran, and the growing number of refugees worldwide demand anthropological engagement. Anthropology has a great deal to contribute by monitoring, reporting, and advocating the protection of basic human rights in a global village that at times seems to be returning to the chronic warfare common before the rise of states. This promise has, so far, been rarely fulfilled. Anthropology's traditional high valuation of ethnicity becomes uncomfortable when ethnic groups practice "ethnic cleansing." The horror at such practices has not led to vigorous engagement that could lead to its end; a theoretical reassessment of ethnicity, moral norms, and civil standards in different cultural contexts need to be examined, particularly to clarify how human rights are protected or not below the state level. The extension of human rights not only to political rights (as is currently the case) but to socioeconomic and indigenous cultural rights will require complex negotiations. Despite its difficulties, it is important for anthropology to work toward making congruent the rights and duties of distinct cultures with those specified as universal rights and duties. For example, Islamic law and the United Nations' Declaration agree on the importance of protecting people from hunger, but the way each would protect people may vary. How might NGOs assist in finding a middle path between the top-down approach of the UN and the bottom-up approach of Islamic law? How might food aid be provided by outsiders without thereby weakening the existing institutions that respond to food shortages?

A growing number of anthropologists are engaged in the study of "people on the move," the large flows of peoples across international boundaries as both laborers and refugees. Development processes promoted by national and international economic development organizations are often predicated on changes in land use, urban renewal, and the construction of infrastructural projects such as dams, highways, and ports. These changes, in turn, entail the displacement of people from areas affected by these changes. Such displacement is stressful and brings about major changes in the modes of subsistence, political and social organization, and cultural identity of those populations. It can cause impoverishment, increased morbidity and mortality, and anomie (Cernea 1989:2).

Anthropologists have over many years engaged in longitudinal in-depth research on these processes and are at a stage in which they can illuminate the basic commonalities in people's responses to exogenously imposed displacement (Cernea 1989:3; Scudder and Colson, 1982; Hansen and Oliver-Smith 1982). It has also sprouted activist groups that not only study the processes responsible for these flows but that lobby with international organizations such as the World Bank to ameliorate the lives of dislocated populations (Cernea 1988; Colson 1989).

Carol Smith, in this volume, reminds us that institutional and cultural analysis of the modern state is what anthropologists *must* do. It is no longer viable to try to understand local communities without understanding the institutional constraints posed by the presence of the state—that is, the national and international political context of local communities. Such study need not be purely negative but should, rather, focus on studying the conditions under which positive change occurs. Smith argues that we can learn more from successful cases than from failures, especially in documenting how social and political institutions were strengthened by given interventions. Other important questions for anthropology are to study the role of culture in shaping the power of the Third World state, the study of nationalistic forms that do not lead to terror, to examine the political impact of projects (rather than only its economics), and to elucidate what processes empower local people and

strengthen civil society. Disentangling who invested in what, when, where, and why—and the impact of that investment on the state—is no less important than attention to whether local actors responded to development or not. The iconoclastic Cassandra reputation of anthropologists needs to transform itself into more positive words and action to change the very conditions we are in the habit of decrying.

Development and its Transformations

Broader and more appropriate measures of success in transforming societies are needed. For years Gross National Product (GNP) per capita was *the* measure of economic development. Moran, in chapter 7, evaluates the inadequacy of this measure and proposes a number of other measures. These alternative measures focus on the need to use per capita improvement in well-being, through important indicators such as declining infant mortality and educational attainment that measure a well-distributed GNP—in contrast to GNP per capita, which merely divides an aggregate measure by the total number of people, thereby hiding the distribution of economic benefits. In this regard anthropology has steadily spoken up and has been listened to at the highest levels, at least in some cases. An engaged anthropology has contributed to transforming the evaluation of success in development projects (see Horowitz, chap. 11).

The complex interrelations between ecology, productivity, and political economy require that, to understand the global transformations of traditional societies, anthropologists move away from the study of single communities at one point in time, away from relativism and away from moral neutrality (see Horowitz, chap. 11). Instead, an anthropology concerned with understanding the contemporary world needs to be multilevel, multisite, comparative and longitudinal in scope (see Colson and Kottak, chapter 4). It must set aside moral neutrality and assume a posture of engagement and a commitment to just social change. This is no easy task. It requires reassessing the conceptual foundations of the discipline and the methods that are brought to bear upon the subjects studied. Colson and Kottak provide an agenda for a transformed anthropology—one concerned with linking levels of analysis across time and space. In addition, the final chapter by Horowitz reviews the transformation of anthropology toward practical concern for the dire problems facing human beings.

In this view the local community is no longer a typical representative of other communities but has a distinct history of social and cultural relations that must be teased out. In turn, to overcome the theoretical sterility of this brand of historical particularism it becomes necessary to sample a number of communities within a region in order to determine the range of variation that is present within those societies over time. Thus, local communities are studied as nested sites within a regional system whose relations to more inclusive systems must be investigated. To achieve this, Finan, in chapter 10, proposes a stepwise research design and the participation of local communities in the research process.

The danger of excessive particularism is overcome through comparisons of the situations endemic in the contemporary world and the shared experiences of peoples throughout the world. Many peoples throughout the Third World have been incorporated in the past three hundred years into colonial systems, have experienced dislocation to distant labor markets, have been subjected to alien political rule, have seen their institutions ignored, have seen their reproductive behavior and their religious beliefs changed through missionization, and, more recently, have been incorporated into commercial production for international markets. Their land, water, and air has grown increasingly polluted, and they are experiencing, simultaneously, the old epidemic diseases as well as some of the chronic diseases associated with developed economies.

Out of attention to these shared experiences of our species comes an anthropology with a view of human society that shows how some local communities' leaders were able to resist the efforts of external forces to destroy local social formations, while others failed, and the reasons for this failure (see Smith, chap. 2); how respect for political leaders was preserved in one case and the conditions under which it may have been lost; and how a population achieved excellent health and access to food, while another declined in well-being (see Messer, chap. 8; and Shimkin and Frate, chap. 9).

The fact is that local populations studied at a single point in time are ephemeral in nature, human behavior is contingent, and their transformations are often dramatic in nature. These dynamic transformations cannot be understood in a local community at one point in time. Instead, understanding the changing nature of human sociality requires comparison of variable communities through time as they are nested at different

levels of analysis. This is a very different kind of anthropology. It is an anthropology concerned less with the exotic than with the richly varied lives of people everywhere, with their biological makeup, their transformations through time, and increasingly with the human rights to life, food, and health.

Anthropology has passed from an era of cultural relativism, in which it avoided making universal claims about the rights of people, to a situation at present in which some anthropologists are engaged in protecting those rights throughout the globe. Some have renewed their ancient dedication to the preservation of cultural diversity, which in turn is but one dimension of the struggle of our species for survival on an increasingly endangered planet. This concern with cultural diversity must also seek ways to nest that diversity in a global culture that respects that diversity and makes space for diverse groups to construct their lives through information exchange and social order. As they engage these crises, anthropologists join other scientists and local people in search of ways to strengthen elements of civil society through making them participants in data collection not just for academic discourse but for local needs and political mobilization. Doing so is not a denial of science but, rather, the most sound basis for the ultimate value of anthropology as a science of humanity. This would be, indeed, a transformed anthropology.

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Chapter 2

Development and the State: Issues for Anthropologists

Carol A. Smith

Anthropologists who do applied work probably know that the most significant factor influencing the success of their projects is the nature of the existing state in which they work. This is true whether they work in the First or Third World, whether they work for a governmental or nongovernmental institution (NGO). Yet little theoretical work has been done on the nature of the modern state by anthropologists, applied or theoretical. Nor do many anthropologists pay attention to the now extensive literature on the modern state developed by nonanthropologists (e.g., Skocpol 1979; Carnoy 1984; Corrigan and Sayer 1985; Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985; Mann 1986; Migdal 1988). One senses that most anthropologists have conceded the large-scale institutional terrain to history, sociology, or political science, concentrating instead on what they know best, national culture or local communities.[1] Yet, as I will elaborate, institutional *and* cultural analysis of the modern state is what anthropologists who treat the problem of development in the Third World must do.

Anthropology does have a venerable tradition of theoretical work on state evolution and on premodern state institutions, but the knowledge produced by this tradition does not take us into the capitalist era. Apparently, most anthropological theorists of the state thought that institutional evolution stopped with early secondary state formation some three thousand years ago (e.g., Fried 1959). Those few anthropologists who have treated the rise of capitalism as a new social form (e.g., Wolf 1982; Mintz 1985) do little to analyze the particular nature of the capitalist state. Those anthropologists who treat the state in the modern world as an extension of traditional evolutionary theory in anthropology

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