2 Development anthropology

The first school of thought within the social sciences to assess the validity of economics and engineering in development aid was development anthropology in the USA. Understanding the past experience of social science research in development aid points to the particular interest of this book. There is no scientific agenda in this analysis of Appui Technique and Autogeneración, but research is also a social practice (engaged in by those who pursue it) and it ought to be questioned with respect to its context. Several recent publications arrive at conclusions partially reflecting the latent processes.[1] Despite the focus on practice within this book, the results emphasize the limits of economics and engineering.

The following sections point to the conclusions drawn by development anthropologists about their relationships with development agencies and highlight some of the results that they achieved in the bilateral aid programmes of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in the 1970s and 1980s. Their comments point to important conditions regarding their work, however the appropriate scholarly account is beyond the present scope. Thus, my remarks are not well substantiated, but, taken together, an appreciation of the issues will emerge. Introducing the debate between development anthropology and an anthropology of development prepares the context for the case studies to be examined. We emphasize the following aspects of development anthropology specifically:

- high-technology and low-technology in industrial contexts;
- development practice as the source of the objects of study, the quality of the fieldwork as central rather than the reconstruction of the observed;
- actors, foreigners and the locals considered as active and passive mediators, and the researcher is only a passive mediator;
- while implementation is only a part of the 'project cycle', the cycle should not orient the analysis and, most importantly, the actors themselves need to be understood as transcending the project cycle;
- the project is a microsocial space of communication with its own logic.

2.1 Phases in development anthropology

Social scientists have been working in development assistance since the independence of developing countries. Throughout the first two development decades, these experiences were isolated and few general conclusions were drawn.[2] One of the first attempts to remedy this was made by Allan Hoben, who reviewed and consolidated what had been documented before 1982. He found that, because of the differences among the pioneers, the potential roles and the involvement of anthropologists were diverse. They were alternatively mediators, agenda clarifiers, advocates, cultural brokers, trouble-shooters, interpreters, go-betweens, etc. Hoben concluded that 'no coherent or distinctive body of theory, concepts and methods' existed (Hoben 1982: 349). This situation continues today. However, what appears clear is that there are four important conditions for every involvement:

Condition 1	the development agency or donor.
Condition 2	the particular field addressed.
Condition 3	the social context.
Condition 4	the anthropologist as an individual.

Development anthropology has accumulated a considerable amount of empirical data documents of development practice – but no clear trends towards 'conceptual closure' appear. Taking Roger Bastide (1971) and Glyn Cochrane (1971) as the pioneers, the subdiscipline has been emerging for 30 years now, which raises doubts about its feasibility, considering its lack of advancement.

The bulk of development anthropology was produced for one development agency,[3] the USAID (condition 1). The focus continues to concern agriculture and health (condition 2) and predominantly rural areas in the least-developed countries (condition 3). Understanding these three conditions permits a defining of the scientific objects and the potential of development anthropology. It has also been pointed out repeatedly that the social context, rural populations and the fields addressed – agriculture and health – reflect the historical conditions in which anthropological research appeared.

Nevertheless, there seems to be no reason why these conditions remain primary. The powerful results from anthropological research in industrialized countries indicate that the colonial context had little influence on the anthropological methods and tools (heuristic and epistemological). The 1990s have indeed seen an explosion of anthropological research, particularly in the USA, the UK and France. What keeps anthropologists from addressing in the South the same fields in which they invest in the North? Can these lacunae be traced to the colonial heritage of the discipline? What

administrators and other decision-makers in the development agencies understand by development anthropology represents the greatest obstacle for this scientific subdiscipline to emerge. Their prejudices haunt anthropologically inspired qualitative social science and continue to give primacy to the above-identified conditions 1, 2 and 3. Sometimes, very specific contributions from anthropology are sought; shortly afterwards, these are out of interest. Possibly, the succession of policies in development agencies is too fast for development anthropology to keep up with, to pass through different phases of consolidation required of an academic discipline.

Today, the need to consolidate singular applications remains an urgent task. Many publications continue Hoben's work,[4] and most still reflect the three conditions identified above. In development practice, anthropological research is possible in rural areas, certain fields and certain development agencies. The critical mass of research results required to go beyond these conditions and most importantly beyond the prejudices established has probably not been reached. According to those authors who continue Hoben's work, the innovative role of USAID is primarily the result of the 'New Directions' period (following legislation of the 1973 United States Foreign Assistance Act).[5] The results of this period have been Country Development Strategy Statements (CDSS) and Social Soundness Analysis (SSA), which contain bits and pieces of social analysis on co-operatives, irrigation, crops, farming systems, livestock, dams, resettlement and migration, and health, especially health care and family planning. In these cases, however, social science was simply added on to the current practices of project identification, planning and evaluation.

The most comprehensive source book is John van Willigen's (1991) compilation of the 530 major applications of anthropology. Among the 530 applications, twenty-nine concern agriculture in developing countries and only four in industrialized countries, whereas one concerns the law in developing countries and seven in industrialized ones.[6] It should be noted at this phase of an emerging subdiscipline that, if particularly successful applications were to be gathered, it would certainly leave blank spots in the spectrum of applications. The exploratory spirit, which defers the tasks of synthesizing, is reflected in the anticipation of obstacles to come. The results of development anthropology need to be explained before they became unfashionable:

> Despite the need for the kind of advice provided by social analysts with extensive country knowledge, the concepts and terminology of social analysis developed in the late 1970s in AID are currently fading from the development vocabulary, and they are not likely to reappear in the same form. … In time, perhaps the label 'rural investment advisor' will come to mean social analyst.
>
> (E. Greeley in Green 1986: 245)

By 1986, the 'accelerated development' policies in the IBRD and USAID moved development practice away from 'basic needs-oriented' programmes (central to 'New Directions') towards policy dialogue, private sector involvement, institutional development and (being constantly rediscovered) transfer of technology. The social science lessons learned during 'New Directions' were not assimilated. It appeared that the objects of research could not be authenticated independent of institutional interests. Much experience has been lost because of these problems, and especially the contribution of development anthropology to the implementation of projects in urban contexts (Mason in Green 1986: 141–59).

The New Directions period was, despite its limitations, an expansionist phase. This phase has ended; however, those researchers who published their results at this time pursue their engagements in development aid today. During the expansion, these researchers gained professional credibility. The credibility attained during this period remains attached to their names, rather than to the results as such (condition 4).[7] How do development anthropologists describe their entry conditions to an development agency? William Partridge identified early on that 'the challenge of being an effective anthropologist is met only by studying up[8] the organizational hierarchy in which the project is created, shaped and maintained or abandoned' (Partridge 1984: 3). Erve Chambers observed in his introduction to the volume edited by Wulff that the most exciting aspect of 'final analysis' was the fact that the case studies were prepared by enthusiastic people just entering the productive stages of their careers (Chambers in Wulff 1987: viii). All this suggests that, during this phase, the opportunity to study up opened and closed again. Those few who succeeded in studying up, i.e. who first gaining insight into the organizing principles of their employers, and then also succeeded in applying this knowledge to their work on subsequent projects are currently able to continue applying their results. Other anthropologists cannot do likewise because they did not begin during the 'New Directions' era, nor do all facets of their professional background match those who can continue to apply their results.[9] Interestingly, many anthropologists who undertake development work today use different labels (Little 1992; Partridge 1994; Curry 1996). What was called 'development anthropology' becomes 'irrigation studies' or 'livestock research', while applying the same methods of analysis.[10] Without exploring this phenomenon in depth, one can translate this conclusion into a broader hypothesis about the relationship between applied research and development agencies.

Possibly other fields and other social contexts hold more and different results for development anthropology. However, it is impossible to demonstrate this because the opportunities for research are not there, owing to the lack of funding, and because of questions of access to the development practice. Access is key because participant observation is the primary methodological tool used. Social scientists must justify to the agencies why they want to observe the implementation of development projects.[11] Without

potential results to propose, there is little opportunity to find out what is going on in development practice, in projects, in the administrations or during negotiations. Thus, the inroads gained by anthropologists during the expansionist phase have not led to an expansion of the initial experiences.

2.2 Specificity of the phases

To verify this conclusion, the specificity of the 'New Directions' phase must be explored with regard to the development agencies, the field and the social context (the first three conditions mentioned above). Thus considered, the results obtained during 'New Directions' can:

- represent a singular experiment, subsequently abandoned;
- remain isolated without lessons applicable to other donors, other fields or other social contexts;
- constitute a basis for new approaches to the same objects.

Frequently, development anthropologists have identified some aspects of their engagement with respect to the development agency. 'The inclusion of anthropologists on project teams currently is compatible with the rhetoric of donor agencies' (Robins in Green 1986: 17). 'The skilful manipulation of conflicting, or at minimum, different interests is difficult … the short-term assignment asks of the anthropologist this mediation, but does not afford him/her the time needed to make the role credible' (ibid.: 68). If Partridge is right to identify studying up as the key to an effective engagement, it is logically coherent that these writers point to the agency's conditions for their work. If they could not do so, they would not be employed. However, are there specific conditions for working in USAID activities that can be identified? There are no such suggestions in the literature. Furthermore, some development agencies seek to learn from USAID, and as they have not been able to achieve much[12] this suggests that agency conditions are not the dominant ones.

The other two conditions identified concerning the field and the social context are rarely scrutinized in the literature. In agriculture, 'local level research will naturally lead to a critical examination of the appropriateness of technologies (and policies) offered by development agencies' (Fujisaka in Green 1986: 180).[13] In the fourth development decade, 'participation' has become the mantra[14] of development agencies (together with sustainability). But when providing advice on participation, no 'natural' phenomena surface, and with a less defined role advice is correspondingly weaker. Researchers have become increasingly tied to the specificity of the field of application. In health and in agriculture, anthropologists tend to work on understanding local knowledge systems. But contrary to agriculture, the anthropologist has less chance of defending the differences between local and Western practices in health projects. In health projects, anthropologists tend to concentrate on

health-care administration:[15] 'Anthropology is conceived of as a discipline which helps raise "compliance" to a predetermined treatment regimen. Critics would argue that the anthropologist is used, not anthropology' (Kendall in van Willigen 1989: 300). Medical knowledge seems more autarchic than the agronomist's knowledge. Only in nutrition-related interventions can more behavioural factors become better acceptable.

Both in health and in agriculture, local knowledge systems are centuries old and this gives the relativist[16] explanatory contribution of development anthropology a clear niche. Similarly, sustainable development, the other mantra in development agencies in the 1990s, is also favourable in that respect. Local knowledge about the biosphere is well encoded in society, and subjects such as indigenous resource management find an increasing audience (Chambers 1997: 26–9). Where local knowledge is less culturally and socially encoded, such a niche is more difficult to establish. This does not preclude an anthropological contribution regarding local knowledge in other fields because, a priori, any bit of social reality can be studied, but it gives a partial explanation of why such contributions have been less available. With respect to the field of developmental interventions, development anthropology seems constrained through changing vogues. Since anthropological results are at least partly specific to a field, the relative attention that development agencies provide to a given field can reduce or increase the contribution of development anthropology. The field is thus an indirect condition for development anthropology. It appears that this indirect condition, imposed via the field of intervention in vogue, is a more important determinant than a particular policy of the development agency (in this case, USAID) towards development anthropology as such.

This leaves condition 3, the social context of the developmental efforts, to be examined. The greater the power differential between the developer and the developee, the more effective development anthropology appears. Particularly in Wulff (1987), the most salient case studies with respect to the anthropological contribution[17] involve rural labourers and federal governments, tribal people and the US army, etc. Where powerful developers are radically foreign to the developees, an anthropologist is in control by virtue of his/her comprehension of the differences. The mediating role is enhanced by, for example, the coding of cultural differences in sophisticated questionnaires. 'Parker, based on her daily interaction with the people of the villages, made sure that King understood their needs with precision. King, understanding the workings of the government and accepted (marginally) as an insider, tried to cast these concerns in terms the government could understand and to negotiate about them on behalf of the villagers' (Parker and King, in Wulff 1987: 164). The responsibility and the potential impact of development anthropology appear essential for such research. Consider, for instance, Edward Green's reflection on his engagement:

> I suspect that critics of 'establishment-approach' aid are fundamentally

> correct. However in the short term, my lifetime for example, I'm not so sure exactly how or even if power relationships can be fundamentally restructured. Yet even with all these uncertainties I feel anthropologists can and should participate in projects directly concerned with life-protecting and life-enhancing measures, while at the same time seeking ways to improve the condition of the poor in ways that are more structurally fundamental. For me, the Rural Water-Borne Disease Control Project has served as a vehicle for the realisation of some personally held humanitarian aims, while at the same time providing opportunity for professional growth.
>
> (Green 1986: 120)

An anthropologist's normative stance is here at the very core of the engagement.[18] More than in other disciplines, the researcher chooses the objects of analysis with respect to a professional deontology. While this reflects the power differential in the social context concerned, it is certainly not causal, as the development anthropologists' choice of an object of research will not create control of the power differential between, say, a minister and the villagers. But insofar as the power differential is also expressed and encoded in social and cultural differences, development anthropologists gain influence to the extent that they understand how these social and cultural expressions of power function.

Therefore, the professional deontology will create insurmountable obstacles in contexts where an anthropologist represents a formerly hegemonic country. France is such a country, having a strong anthropological research tradition. Thus, in French research, early warnings in the 1970s have contributed to deflecting the inroads made by the USA. The following three prominent French authors have been influential by pointing to the political conditions of development assistance as well as by exploring research opportunities themselves.

> The relations between developed nations and developing nations are called 'development assistance', in the best case. A whole population of 'experts' appears. Nobody has yet undertaken the essential task of a sociology of that assistance or of the expert. But, are we able to understand the conditions under which our [French] assistance is organized? We learn only by accident, due to the international scandals.
>
> (Berque 1965: 433)

> The only possible sociological object of analysis from a 'development project' is the project itself, its modalities, the complex formed by the developer and the developee, … how it is planned and implemented, how it is perceived by those who are the intended beneficiaries and its objects (in the sense that their habits, their techniques, their mentalities

> are changed). No serious sociological analysis can predate [in the sense of existing independent of] such a development project.
>
> (Augé 1972: 208)

> In development the populist ideology is institutionalised. This populism has succeeded in selling a number of products in the development market. Schumacher and Freire are the pioneers and emblematic figures. This populism is continuously reinvented … the conjuncture populism/anthropology/development is already in place in Cernea, Pitt and Hoben.
>
> (Olivier de Sardan 1990: 479)[19]

At least at the level of publication, such warnings have been heeded in France more than in the USA. There is a tacit consensus among anthropologists in France not to engage in research for the development agencies (Amselle 1991).[20] The historic context of French *coopération* (official development assistance) imposes particular conditions that explain the reluctance of French social scientists. French colonialism was more assimilatory than the British version (Amselle 1990), and French *coopération* is less open to anthropological insight than the British DFID (Department for International Development). However, the reluctance among anthropologists is the decisive factor.[21] The assimilatory character of the colonization complicates the articulation of a professional deontology. Jean-Loup Amselle does not propose a further analysis of this tacit consensus concerning *coopération*, which relates to the general mould of the French *chercheur* in connection with the French state or rather with society. Professional deontology could therefore be one reason why development anthropology has not been thriving in Europe.

Unfortunately, such a comparison of development anthropology between different countries is difficult to operate. To understand whether it is the professional reluctance or the difficult operationalization of anthropological contributions which is limiting research, one has to know, for example, how many requests for proposals from development agencies created less than state-of-the-art offers.[22] There is limited anecdotal evidence of anthropologists refusing to respond and I cannot judge how typical that evidence is. Nonetheless, and without exaggeration, one can state that an anthropologist's approach to the power differential between development agencies and the developees is the core question behind development anthropology's fate.

In sum, there are two specificities to be stressed: the fields of intervention and the power differential between development agencies and the developees. When an expanding scientific practice ignores the founding principles, its advances can be limited. I am not aware of a publication addressing these two specificities. The lack of analysis of the driving forces of development anthropology contributes to the vivid reactions once these are challenged. The pioneers' reflections on their individual experience (see Green's quote above) should become part and parcel of the subdiscipline. The difficulty of

establishing for whom anthropologists speak takes precedence over the choice of the object. Hoben's (1982: 20) verdict that there is no coherent body of theory is still valid and, returning to the initial question, although development anthropology has not yet been abandoned the results appear isolated and the debate about the definition of new approaches rages throughout anthropology.[23] Some pioneer development anthropologists, such as Michael Horowitz, maintain that they have not failed in the substance of their work but in the effectiveness of their communication. Others refute this by pointing to deficiencies of the results.

Before opposing these two positions with examples from Senegal and Haiti, an introduction of a potential alternative to development anthropology of the 'New Directions' phase will clarify the debate.

2.3 Actor-oriented turn in applied research

It took 10 years to digest and publish the inroads made during 'New Directions', roughly the 1980s. While the development practice has simply moved on to new modes, fads and paradigms, reducing the involvement of anthropologists, anthropological research increasingly studies itself, reducing the attention to its reception and application. There is no connection between these two phenomena,[24] between the changes in the political climate within development agencies and donors and the scientific changes in anthropology as a discipline.[25] However, those anthropologists who had already integrated their epistemological efforts on fieldwork situations into studying development practice automatically moved to the forefront in development anthropology.[26] This shift has been called for, and announced repeatedly, in indicating a move from development anthropology to an anthropology of development (among others, by Augé in the above-cited article[27] and by Bastide). During the 1990s, this shift was slowly consolidated in different fields and contexts of development practice.

Arguably, the beginning of a viable anthropology of development was found in *Encounters at the Interface: A Perspective on Social Discontinuities in Rural Development*, the culmination of 25 years of fieldwork in Latin America and Africa by Norman Long and his team (Long 1989). Among its many merits, Long's interface analysis ended 'the grand divide' in development anthropology, the epistemological charity towards 'less-developed societies'. Hitherto, it was not possible to say 'yes we'll study *also* the development agency (probably later on and with less attention than the intended beneficiaries)'. Long showed that to understand development practices requires examining both the developer and the developee in one and the same analysis.

An actor-oriented approach uncovers the interlocking intentionalities existing among those concerned in the development intervention.[28] Concepts such as life-world, agency, epistemic communities and multiple realities are core for Long. The fieldwork situation itself is part and parcel of the conceptual apparatus; the observer–observed interaction is part of the overall

'arena' of interests and stakes in development practice. Discerning micro–macro linkages is another key capacity of actor-oriented perspectives. Long's understanding of the interdependency of various social groups and their capacity to exchange and negotiate resources enables us to seize the inside perspective of development practice. His demonstration of that conceptual apparatus seems to me to be fundamental (see section 5.3 for the theoretical references used by Long).

Long provides a clear research methodology, but does not define how it relates to development practice in general.[29] To do this, the methodology should be applied to fields other than agriculture in rural areas. Other development anthropologists in Wageningen, at the School of Oriental and Asian Studies (SOAS) in London and at the universities of Amsterdam, Berlin and Bielefeld apply sociology of knowledge approaches to the interdependence of developers and developees that uncover the dynamics of development practice. Notably, Richards (in Hobart 1993: 61–78) stresses the difficulty of describing 'local knowledge' and uses the metaphor of performance to increase the power of individual actors in his description of agriculture. However, applying sociology of knowledge concepts to developers wields less coherent portraits than applying them to developees.[30] Identifying interface situations (Long 1989; Long and Long 1992) between developers and developees can achieve a stronger power focus than the performance accounts of the latter. This should also be the case in fields other than agriculture.

The strength of interpretative sociology combined with ethnographic fieldwork is versatility, and the weakness is cutting across disciplines which hamper the establishment of a school of research. While actor-oriented approaches are becoming more influential in sociology, following Anthony Giddens and Alain Tourraine,[31] they remain difficult in studying development practice. Understanding social processes within the UK or France in the age of so-called late-modernity, post-modernity or *Spätkapitalismus* succeeds, and the actor orientation proves its worth. In development practice, that worth is not at all new. In power-ridden contexts, such as development practice, they are particularly pertinent. Planned development interventions have modified and accelerated social processes less than colonial domination; nonetheless, development agencies voluntarily and involuntarily create and foster social agency.

A possible explanation for the slow progress of actor-oriented research is suggested by Marc Poncelet, who analysed the attempts to take culture into account in development planning. He shows that development can become a 'culturophage' (Poncelet 1994: 210–31). Klitgaard (in Serageldin 1994: 78),[32] writing for the IBRD, could be used as evidence: 'In the 1990s I believe the issue of *how* to take culture into account will take center stage'. Klitgaard wants foreign experts to act as therapists to their counterparts. Long's methodology takes culture into account, but it does not totalize[33] local culture; development practice appears in its hybrid form with cultural traits from the developer and the developee. Therefore, an actor-oriented methodology

cannot satisfy the purpose for which it is put to work in a development agency, i.e. explain the developee. The actor orientation forces research to take the developer's culture into account as well.

While the US researchers were innovative throughout the second and third development decades, anthropologists in Europe cast new light on the inherent problem. In the middle of the 1980s, European development agencies such as NORAD, SIDA and GTZ (Norwegian, Swedish and German governmental aid agencies) began to look at their use of social science input,[34] attempting to draw lessons from the USAID experience. These efforts have advanced rather slowly, possibly because of the inertia of development agencies staffed by civil servants. However, it is important to note that European and US development agencies often compete for opportunities for development interventions and copy each other's latest gadgets.

Despite the debate taking place, development anthropology has not been accepted in Europe. The Atlantic is wide and erudition is scarce. Furthermore, academic resistance to development anthropology in Europe is widespread and has made it more difficult for European agencies to learn from USAID. The question of whether academia's inertia is higher than that of the development agencies is not pertinent. Certainly, the academic institutions in Europe are less dynamic than the entrepreneurial universities in the USA, competing for funds from USAID. Also, foreign policy to contain communism in the Third World would have met strong reactions in European universities, where students have some influence on university policy. In fact, successful consulting work can harm an academic career, as Claude Arditi or Dominique Desjeux in France and Frank Bliss in Germany have experienced. This points to the resistance of academic schools of thought to engaging with development practice.

The conditions for anthropological research in development practice have changed through the interest in actor-oriented research. The case studies published in the 1980s consolidated the anthropological contribution on certain types of projects. They were intended to build up original contributions to a particular type of project.[35] These would be called upon for similar projects with respect to the field addressed and the social context. Nothing prevents a continuation of the 'New Directions' applications, but the actor-oriented research proposals are subject to different conditions. Can (and should) the two approaches co-exist?

The pursuit of sustainable development recycles the 'New Directions' results. Development anthropology continues to grow, if only because the donors continue to provide funds, whereas anthropology of development relies more on the ambition of researchers. While sustainable development has decisively turned into the central paradigm of development agencies, it is still not free of contradictions and blank conceptual spots. Anthropologists could be very helpful in addressing these.[36] Compared with the potential that anthropology has via the basic needs orientation of 'New Directions', its potential via sustainable development is considerable greater. Perhaps

anthropologists will make better use of the opportunities of sustainable development than they did of 'New Directions'. One should look at development anthropology's limits, the fields addressed and the power differential between development agencies and beneficiaries (conditions 2 and 3) to see where actor-oriented approaches might expand, especially in order to reduce the influence of development anthropology's colonial heritage.

2.4 The debate about the object of development anthropology

Development anthropologists fell short of providing accounts of the failure of development aid. The change from development anthropology to anthropology of development is more driven by the overall failure of aid than by analytical progress. However, anthropologists should not be blamed for failing to decipher development practice. To do so, they need access to the practice. Without first-hand access, an historical account of practice, compiled from project reports, enabled Jean-Pierre Chauveau[37] and Raymond Apthorpe to assess development practice. Chauveau demonstrated that rural development projects continuously reproduce the same type of failure over several decades. But such possibilities are limited. In the end, it remains necessary to observe the interaction of developers and developees during the implementation of programmes and projects to comprehend development practice. The scarcity of research on development practice reflects the difficulty of accessing this field.

The inroads made during the 'New Directions' phase might be regarded with hindsight as a contribution to the calls for an anthropology of development, despite insufficient attention being given to the question of development practice.[38] The outspoken '*realpolitik*'[39] of some development anthropologists has enabled others to improve their critical understanding. To provide a caricature, imagine the happy social engineers as they pursue development anthropology while the avant-garde build an anthropology of development. Clearly, the two represent a rather inefficient combination. Rather like two sides of a coin, both sharing the same empirical accounts.[40] Often, the chosen objects of development anthropology were seen as 'applied', and thus inferior to pure research. However, this interpretation is increasingly appearing to be a smoke screen.

Besides the choice between development aid content and discourse (or ideology), the debate between development anthropology and anthropology of development can be situated at the level of the researcher's role in development practice. On one hand, there is the call for equal treatment of the development agency and the target population.

> Allan Hoben, convinced that bureaucratic behavior was probably as rational as peasant behavior, undertook an analysis of the organizational rationale in USAID. He was able to do so only as a practitioner working

> in the bureaucracy, for only in this fashion would he have been exposed to that which 'goes without saying'. Anthropologists have been working for USAID for several decades, but almost consistently as outsiders, and none attempted to make systematic sense of the often contradictory, usually confusing and too frequently counterproductive series of USAID actions and explanations for them. … I mention Allan Hoben in particular only because of the absurdity of the example: a host of anthropologists, many of whom have been ethically and politically effective, have dealt with USAID for decades yet not shared with the profession the basic research results upon which, our theory of practice tells us, efficacy depends.
>
> (Partridge in Eddy and Partridge 1987: 230)

From Partridge's perspective, development anthropologists have failed because they have not addressed the core object, development practice.

The pendant of this position is Arturo Escobar's critique of development discourse as cultural domination. His critique begins in a way similar to Partridge's, but he draws different conclusions, arguing that the anthropologist ought to assist the oppressed, the intended beneficiaries. Development anthropologists are in all circumstances in conflict with development agencies. Thus, he denies that there are viable objects of research in development practice. The advances of development anthropology in the USA have contributed to this critique, inspired by the post-modernist anthropology of Clifford Geertz's disciples (J. Clifford, G. Marcus, M. Fisher and others). Their call for a critical anthropology is prolonged into development anthropology by Escobar.[41] The impact of this criticism is not yet clear. Assessing the scientific foundation of 'culture as text',[42] one can expect the post-modernist paradigm to lose influence when the attention to political correctness is refocused. In the areas where anthropology has made most contributions, i.e. in agriculture and in health, the institutional interest can ignore Escobar, and the development agencies will continue to use the results. In Europe, hesitation towards the 'culture as text' school in anthropology limits the reception of Escobar's critique. While Escobar does not propose an alternative development practice, he falls into the same trap as many development anthropologists because he speaks for the oppressed when he judges development anthropology. His arguments are also used by those who pursue development anthropology:

> Missing from most of the literature and consultants' reports on rural development are the voices of those most directly affected by development interventions – the local people … To a certain extent anthropologists have played the role of surrogate and have taken it upon themselves to speak on behalf of the 'Other', a role that is increasingly questioned …
>
> (Gow 1993: 392)

David Gow, a development anthropologist like Partridge, has demonstrated that research on development practice can build upon practitioners' overcoming the power of development discourse, a possibility that Escobar excludes (Gow 1997; Grillo and Stirrat 1997).

The renewed discussion of development anthropology itself has not used actual development events as examples, with one exception, the most salient case of development anthropology during the 'New Directions': the Agroforestry Outreach Project (AOP) in Haiti.[43] The AOP was conceived by development anthropologists who possessed an intimate knowledge of Haitian agriculture. Originally having a target of 4 million trees to be planted as wood fuel, it planted 50 million trees between 1982 and 1989. The developmental success of the AOP is incontestable. Nonetheless, this example is used to dismiss the contribution of development anthropology as non-existent (by Klitgaard)[44] as well as to dismiss it as manipulative (by Escobar). That alone shows that Partridge's critique is correct; if development anthropology had substantiated its object of analysis, such contradictory interpretations would not be possible.

Perhaps another unique opportunity to study development anthropology versus anthropology of development would be to use Long's actor-oriented methodology on the Vicos Programme in Peru. Vicos has been developed by Cornell University, with funding from the Carnegie Corporation. The assessment of this development anthropology intervention is not clear according to Doughty (Doughty in Eddy 1987: 433–59). An actor-oriented research approach would certainly help to clarify how development anthropology's objects fared in the Peruvian society.

Ironically, the post-modernist critique could be positive for development anthropology if the discredit of the applied nature of research is diminished. Post-modernism correctly points to the civilization tenets in Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Mead and Dumont's oeuvres. If all anthropology contains an implicit application, overtly applied work becomes more acceptable. Applied research would thus distinguish itself from classic fieldwork mainly by the anthropologist explicitly defining the application. Classic anthropologists thought that they could control the application by concealing the inherent orientation of the application of the research.[45] However, the post-modernist critique cannot approve the results of applied research because it has had to dismiss the notion of scientific truth in the first place. Indeed, anthropologists speaking for 'the rural poor' take the risk of being blinded by their power position. Post-modernist critiques of classic anthropologists' habits of Othering do apply to development anthropology particularly because of its ruralist bias. Working in urban areas helps a great deal when working on the habits of Othering of the subjects of study. As already observed on p. xxx, the colonial heritage of anthropology is problematic because the social context of research is not sufficiently analysed.

The debate can also be situated at a more profound level. The relationships among anthropological research, the developers and developees can be less

important than the intrinsic qualities of the results. Development anthropologists such as Horowitz, Little and Painter appear to be little disturbed by the post-modernist critique. Their results on irrigation and forced replacement (through watershed projects or dams) work in the interest of the developees, even in the most awesome political contexts. Nevertheless, they have to explain under what conditions one can be certain of the intrinsic quality of the results – or risk more post-modernist criticism. While this criticism might not have much impact on the development agencies, this can have an impact on the general reception of development anthropology, labelling it as instrumental in the power of development agencies. In turn, the general reception can reduce the possibilities for innovative fieldwork. In this case, Greeley's prediction (in Green 1986) can prove to be quite valid, not because of the reduced 'basic needs' attention after the 'New Directions' period but because of the vulnerability of the niches that development anthropologists have chosen for themselves. Furthermore, the development anthropologists' defence, insisting on their results in a particular project, is not viable because of its localism. Yes, improving a particular project is positive, but one cannot ignore the big picture, especially in a discipline that has holistic ambitions.[46]

Anthropology of development can reconstruct various types of developers and can understand development agencies, their planning modes and their project lineages. This could change the role and identity of those involved in development practice. Kathy Gardner and David Lewis (1996: 76) have pointed to this potential and conclude that 'development anthropology is at an exciting juncture'.

> Now that interpretive and hermeneutic approaches have demonstrated their capacity to persuade producers and consumers of anthropology of viable alternatives to positivism, we face the task of a 'critical anthropology' on a new level. History should have taught us that no power is more pervasive and insidious than that of the hermeneut, the authoritative interpreter of texts. And that there is no exercise of that power more dangerous than that which colonizes the texts of other cultures, especially in a world in which control over information is said to become more important than control over resources, manpower and technology.
>
> (Fabian 1989: xiii)

The near future will tell whether a critical anthropology is politically feasible within development agencies. The challenge that Fabian sees for anthropology in general is certainly valid for an anthropology of development, and there is still time to build on the insights gained during 'New Directions'.

When new research opportunities exist (as described by Klitgaard) and new methods and objects are available (such as actor orientation), then it is time to explore new ground. Urban and industrial contexts are an obvious

field for an anthropology of development to verify viable objects of study. Although the case studies in Chapter 3 cannot serve as indicators because they were prepared without the development agency's consent, such case studies help to suggest objects of study that should be 'declarable' to development agencies in the future. The latent processes described are innovative because they arise from an unexplored area of technical assistance, combined with an unprecedented application of theory. In the best case, another conjuncture such as 'New Directions' might appear. My 'covert access' as a technically competent expert did not require me to declare any previous research. I did not have to write a research proposal to participate in the project implementation.[47] However, the latent processes discovered might in the future enable others to gain access to industrial projects. Understanding the past inroads by development anthropologists cannot lead to the latent processes, but, keeping that past in mind, one can explore them in the most effective manner. Besides the practice-related objectives of this book, there are a number of research objectives:

- to explore industrial projects for social processes concerning technical assistance;
- to experiment with an actor-oriented approach, looking for the observer's transformation into an actor of project implementation;
- to elaborate methodological specificities, disregarding the objects of development anthropology;
- to identify conditions required for the observations which explain the rejection of applied research;
- to assess the interpretative horizon of the participants in order to establish what can be understood by looking at an individual project;
- to assess the specific role of technology as the developmental content of industrial projects.