

Power and Visibility: Development and the Invention and Management of the Third World

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This article presents in a succinct manner the basic argument and the major results and lines of analysis of a doctoral dissertation on the constitution of a number of nations (much of Asia, Africa, and Latin America) as “Third World” or “underdeveloped,” and their treatment as such thereafter (Escobar 1987). The study builds upon recent work in various fields on the dynamics of discourse and power in the representation of social reality, and examines (1) the conformation of a new mode of thinking about social and economic life in those countries in the early post–World War II period; (2) the anchoring of this new mode of thinking in Western economic practices; and (3) the institutional practices through which “development” functions, at the same time enacting the discourse and creating extended cultural and social relations. Some of these issues will be illustrated with the experience of one country, Colombia. Finally, some conclusions are offered in relation to anthropology.

The Invention of Development

From 11 July to 5 November of 1949, an economic mission, organized by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank), visited Colombia with the purpose of formulating a comprehensive development strategy for the country. It was the first mission of this kind sent by the International Bank to an underdeveloped country. The Mission included 14 international advisers in the following fields: foreign exchange; transportation; industry and energy; highways, railroads, and waterways; community facilities; agriculture; health and welfare; finance, banking, and national accounts; and petroleum engineering. Working closely with the Mission was a similar group of Colombian advisers and experts.

Here is how the Mission saw its task and, consequently, the character of the program proposed:

We have interpreted our terms of reference as calling for a comprehensive and internally consistent program . . . rather than merely a series of disconnected recommen-

datations. The relationships among various sectors of Colombian economy are very complex, and intensive analysis of these relationships has been necessary to develop a consistent picture. . . . We are not seeking to suggest that a radically new order be adopted by Colombia. On the contrary, we seek only to modify an existing situation, to shift the emphasis somewhat, and to suggest a multitude of improvements and reforms. . . . This, then, is the reason and justification for an overall program of development. Piecemeal and sporadic efforts are apt to make little impression on the general picture. Only through a generalized attack on the whole economy on education, health, housing, food and productivity can the vicious circle of poverty, ignorance, ill health and low productivity be decisively broken. But once the break is made, the process of economic development can become self-sustaining. [International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1950:xv]

The program called for a “multitude of improvements and reforms” covering all aspects of the economy. One of the features most emphasized in the approach was its comprehensive and integrated character. Its comprehensive nature demanded interventions in all social and economic aspects of importance; careful planning, organization and allocation of resources, on the other hand, ensured the integrated character of the program and its successful implementation. The report (supplemented with ten technical appendices “of interest to specialists”) also furnished a detailed set of prescriptions including goals and quantifiable targets, investment needs by sector, design criteria, methodologies, and so on. In short, it constituted a radically new approach to the management of the social and economic affairs of a country.

This mission to Colombia, however, was only one of the first concrete manifestations of an entirely new strategy for dealing with the perceived problems of a large number of countries that, after the war, came to be known as “underdeveloped.” The aim of all the countries that emerged with this new status in the global concert of nations was invariably the same: the creation of a society equipped with the material and organizational factors required to pave the way for rapid access to the forms of life created by industrial civilization. Articulated around a fictitious construct (“underdevelopment”), a discourse was produced that instilled in all countries the need to pursue this goal, and provided for them the necessary categories and techniques to do so. This discourse emerged and took definite shape between 1945 and 1955, in the climate of the great postwar transformations, drastically altering the character and scope of the relations between rich and poor countries and, in general, the very perception of what governments and societies were to do.

The historical roots of this new strategy (“development”) are to be found in the political rearrangement at the world level that occurred after World War II. The notions of “underdevelopment” and “Third World” emerged as working concepts in the process by which the West (and the East) redefined themselves and the global power structures.¹ We cannot analyze here the historical conditions that made possible the strategy of development; these included the breakdown of the old colonial systems, changes in the structures of population and production, the advance of communism in certain parts of the world and the concomitant fear of communism in the capitalist world; it also included the faith in science and

technology, reinvigorated by the success of the Marshall Plan, new forms of economic knowledge and the development of area studies (e.g., “Latin American Studies”), as well as an enriched experience with the management of complex social systems. The end of the war had also confronted the advanced countries, particularly the United States, with the need to find overseas investment opportunities and, at the same time, markets for their goods, a reflection of the fact that the productive capacity of the U.S. industry had nearly doubled during the war period. Economic development, trade liberalization under the aegis of the nascent giant corporations, and the establishment of multilateral financial institutions (such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, founded in 1944) were to be the main instruments to satisfy these requirements and advance the new strategy.²

Development, however, was not merely the result of these elements, or of their combination and gradual elaboration; nor was it the product of new forms of knowledge or institutions, nor the response to changes in the conditions of the dynamics of capital, or a reflection of a new sensibility to poverty internationally or of the success of the Marshall Plan. It was rather the result of the establishment of a system that brought together all of those elements, institutions, and practices creating among them a set of relations which ensured their continued existence. “Development,” as a mode of thinking and a source of practices, soon became an omnipresent reality. The poor countries became the target of an endless number of programs and interventions that seemed to be inescapable and that ensured their control. Everything that was important in the social and economic life of these countries (their population, processes of capital accumulation, natural resources, agriculture and trade, administration, cultural values, etc.) became the object of explicit calculation by experts formed in new sciences developed for that purpose, and the subject of interventions designed by a vast array of newly formed institutions. In a few years, this unprecedented strategy extended its reach to all aspects of the social body.

The Professionalization and Institutionalization of Development

The production and circulation of discourses is an integral component of the exercise of power, as contemporary scholars have amply demonstrated (see, for example, Foucault (1980, 1981); Frow (1985); Said (1979)). Development itself, as a discourse, has fulfilled this role admirably. Two major mechanisms have been essential in this regard:

1. *The professionalization of development.* The concept of professionalization refers to a set of techniques and disciplinary practices through which the generation, diffusion, and validation of knowledge are organized, managed, and controlled; in other words, the process by which a politics of truth is created and maintained. In the case of development, this was achieved by the application of existing disciplines to Third World problems, or by the creation of new subdisciplines (development economics being the most important, as we will see, but including also fields such as health, demography, urban planning, education, nu-

tritional anthropology, etc.). The resulting theories succeeded in conferring upon situations, behaviors, and so on, a visible reality amenable to specific treatments.

In Latin America, an entire reorganization of knowledge institutions and styles took place after 1950 to suit the needs of the developmentalist states. The new professionals adopted the empirical social science model of research and teaching produced primarily in the United States (Fuenzalida 1983, 1985). In this latter country, the consolidation of "development studies" in most major universities set into motion a powerful mechanism for producing truth and norms about the Third World. The training of Third World students at U.S. and European universities, international advising (such as the World Bank missions), and the socialization of professionals into the empirical social science model in Third World universities were important components of this professionalization of development.

2. *The institutionalization of development.* This mechanism refers to the establishment of an institutional field in which, and from which, discourses and techniques are produced, recorded, stabilized, modified, and put into operation. The network of development institutions responsible for this effect extends from international organizations (such as the United Nations and its "technical" agencies), bilateral institutions (e.g., the U.S. Agency for International Development) and voluntary agencies (for instance, CARE) to national, regional, and local agencies in the Third World. The knowledge of development is utilized by these institutions through applied programs, conferences, expert meetings, consultancies, and so on. By using certain forms of knowledge and producing specific forms of intervention, these institutions constitute a network that organizes visibilities and makes the exercise of power possible.

Development planning was the major technique in which processes of professionalization and institutionalization converged. *The Basis of a Development Program for Colombia*, the report of the World Bank mission of 1949, was the first of a long series of plans produced in this country during the past 40 years. A National Committee on Planning and an Economic Development Commission were already in place by 1950 and, although of modest activities, they gave place to full-fledged planning organisms in the late 1950s. Regional planning commissions were also established beginning in the mid-1950s (for example, a regional development corporation was established in the fertile Cauca River Valley in southwestern Colombia, with involvement by the World Bank and the Tennessee Valley Authority, TVA, and following the TVA model). The lack (sic) of qualified Colombian personnel was reflected in the fact that the first plan was elaborated by a foreign mission, and that national planning bodies were often advised by foreign experts during the first two decades of the "age of planning." Colombian students were sent to universities especially in the United States, where they could obtain the knowledge of the new techniques and the frame of mind required for the new enterprise.³

The planner and the economist played a special role in the new world of development. But planning was not just the application of a theoretical knowledge; it was the instrument through which economics became useful, linked in a

very direct fashion to policy and the state. The development economist was the expert *par excellence* called upon to produce the most basic truths about development. Little by little, so it was thought, underdevelopment would yield its secrets to the attentive—and, of course, unprejudiced and objective—gaze of the economist. In the next section I look briefly at this peculiar but powerful figure.

The New Science of Development Economics

Writing in 1979, John Kenneth Galbraith recalled the skepticism manifested by his colleagues when he began instruction at Harvard in “the economics of poverty and economic development” in the late 1940s. “As a different field of studies”—he concludes—“the special economics of the poor countries was held not to exist” (Galbraith 1979:27). By 1955, this situation had drastically changed, to the point that, to continue with Galbraith’s recollection, “no economic subject more quickly captured the attention of so many as the rescue of the people of the poor countries from their poverty” (1979:29). A new field, development economics, had been born and took it upon itself to give direction to the entire development process. To understand this historical event, it is important to analyze the conditions of its coming into being: how it emerged, building upon already existing economic doctrine; how development economists constructed the “underdeveloped economy,” and how their theories embodied in their discourse features of the capitalist world economy and the culture of the advanced countries; finally, what form of prewar economic discourse did the new science displace or absorb in the Third World itself.

As originally formulated, development economics was an outgrowth of classical and neoclassical economics. The crisis in the world economy that started with World War I, however, brought a new set of preoccupations to the economic theory agenda, embodied chiefly in Keynesianism and a new growth economics, this latter developed in England and the United States in the late 1930s and mid-1940s. This growth theory was the most important immediate precursor of development economics. In order to grow, according to this theory, economies must save and invest a certain proportion of their output. Given a specific level of savings and investment, the actual rate of growth would depend on how productive the new investment is. Investment, on the other hand, creates new capacity to produce that must be matched, in turn, by increases in income and new demand. In this way, economies grow and production and well-being rise accordingly. All that is needed is to establish the necessary “savings ratio” that, given certain productivity, would produce the desired rate of growth of the gross national product (GNP).

Development economists trying to apply this theory to “poor” countries soon found that the level of savings was too limited to sustain the growth process (“savings gap”). They also found a privileged arena of investment, one in which the benefits of capital accumulation would be larger than in any other realm: industrialization. That industrialization was the key to development was “clear as daylight,” as a pioneer development economist, W. A. Lewis, wrote in 1946

referring to Jamaica's industrialization program (quoted in Meier 1984:143). Industrialization would not only pave the way for growth and the modernization of the backward economies, but also for spreading among the local populations the proper rationality, that is, for "training labor and accustoming it to factory discipline," as Lewis put it (in Meier 1984:143). It would also be the best way for drawing into more productive activity the large masses of surplus population (sic), wasting themselves away in the countryside under terribly inefficient conditions, and for becoming more competitive in international trade. The actual manner in which industrialization was going to happen constituted the core of most development models formulated in the 1950s. Planning was called for since industrialization would not happen spontaneously; foreign aid, loans, and investment were necessary to fill the "savings gap" and bring in needed technologies. Some economists believed that a big initial effort was necessary to break the vicious circle of poverty, low productivity, lack of capital and so on. But all of them agreed that the task was manageable, and that the backward economies could be modernized, if sufficient capital and the right technologies could be secured.⁴

Prewar economic discourse in Latin America was of a quite different nature. Economic discourse until then was closer to the 19th-century essay, in which economic, social, and political factors were inseparable, than to empirical economics or sociology introduced there after 1950. Changes had occurred, of course, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, that prepared the ground for development economics (the remnants of positivism, and the growing industrial class, result of the first decades of "modernization" and industrialization). But even the proposals put forth by those somewhat imbued in the new scientific spirit were strikingly different from those to be known after the inception of development. In Colombia, this was true until the arrival of the first World Bank mission in 1949. What changed, after the war, was the very system of formation of economic discourse. Throughout this period, a new structure was laid down that united a theoretical corpus (development economics), a number of practices (e.g., policy and planning), and international and national organizations, making possible the articulation of a new economic discourse upon a set of political and economic events. In this way, a system came into being that transformed the way in which objects, concepts, and strategies were formed in economic discourse. Moreover, economics was called upon to lead the effort to reform underdeveloped society, bringing with it an entirely different way of conceiving economic and social life. And from this privileged place, economics was to pervade the entire practice of development.

Food and Nutrition Planning: A Paradigmatic Case in the Functioning of Development

We should now illustrate briefly how "development" embodies a regime of practices. To examine development is to examine practices about specific problems that emerge from existing theories and institutional apparatuses, not independent from them. In this section, I will exemplify the way in which a specific

corpus of rational techniques organizes both a type of knowledge and a type of power, relating one to the other, in the construction of one particular problem: the problem of hunger.

For 40 years, strategies to combat malnutrition and hunger in the Third World have succeeded one another, in spite of the persistence of the problems they are supposed to eradicate. Until 1970, malnutrition had been attributed in varying degree to inadequate food production, health care, sanitation and education, but generally these causes were treated in an isolated fashion. The failure of past efforts—including grandiose strategies such as the Green Revolution—led to the belief, in the early 1970s, that only a comprehensive and integrated strategy could deal successfully with the complex factors involved in the causation of malnutrition and hunger. According to the new theory, food and nutrition policy had to be an integral part of national development, and take into account all the major aspects related to the system regulating food and nutrition: food supply (production, prices, imports and exports, etc.), food demand (income, food habits, education, subsidies), and the biological utilization of food (health, environmental factors, age, sex, and so on). Once again, although for the first time in nutrition, planning was called for. Moreover, it was recognized explicitly that a new discipline was needed.

The discipline was christened Food and Nutrition Policy and Planning (FNPP). How this strategy arose in the early 1970s, flourished and finally was eclipsed in less than ten years, and how it originated a whole body of knowledge, endless programs and new institutions in the Third World, altering existing social relations, constitutes a prime example of how development works. A meeting held in 1971 at MIT “first served to focus international attention on the need for special attention to nutrition policy and planning activities” (Scrimshaw and Wallerstein 1982:xiii). The discipline crystallized formally with the publication of two volumes in 1973, one of which was based on the 1971 MIT conference (Berg 1973; Berg, Scrimshaw, and Call 1973), and at least six other volumes and innumerable specialized studies and journal articles were published on FNPP before the discipline’s demise in 1982.⁵ In the fall of 1972, an International Nutrition Planning Program was initiated at MIT with funds from the Rockefeller Foundation and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The program brought together for the first time natural scientists, engineers, and social scientists to discuss the problems of food and nutrition in the Third World. By 1975, governments and international organizations had already identified research and training in FNPP as a major priority; special programs were established in several universities in the United States and England, where scores of students from all over the world were trained in the new discipline.

In the same vein, the Inter-Agency Project for the Promotion of National Food and Nutrition Policies (PIA/PNAN) had been set up in 1971 in Latin America by several United Nations agencies. The PIA/PNAN was the agency responsible for disseminating the new doctrine in Latin America. Armed with a voluminous methodological guide for the formulation of national food and nutrition plans, this agency was soon active in advising groups of planners and nutritionists

in many countries on how to go about doing so. Already in 1973, a group of young Colombian planners presented at a PIA/PNAN regional meeting in Lima the basis of what was going to be the first comprehensive national food and nutrition plan in Latin America. The plan was approved by the highest authorities in government two years later, and its implementation began in 1976, paid for by the Colombian government and by loans from the World Bank, the Canadian International Development Agency, and USAID. Similar plans were soon developed in many other countries of Latin America and Asia.

The Colombian National Food and Nutrition Plan (NFNP) included a host of programs that sought to affect the major components of the "food system." All programs were carefully targeted to reach the most affected population. Socio-economic data on all municipalities of the country were gathered and systematized, with a scope and sophistication unprecedented in the country, especially to suit the demands of World Bank missions. The Plan included a strategy of integrated rural development, focused on small farmers, and a variety of applied health, nutrition, and food programs (primary health care, nutrition education, food stamps, family gardens, etc.). It would be impossible to analyze here the plan itself, but we would like to highlight several general features of attempts of this nature in our examination of development policy practices.

Often times, as in the case of nutrition, a first step is the creation of a sub-discipline that, in turn, requires a special institutional apparatus. The demarcation of fields and their assignment to experts is, of course, not new; it is a significant feature of the rise and consolidation of the modern state. What should be emphasized, however, is how institutions utilize a set of practices in the construction of their problems through which they control policy themes, enforce exclusions, and affect social relations. Problems emerge from these subdisciplines and apparatuses in ways in which they can be handled. One such practice, for instance, is the production of labels ("small farmers," "illiterate peasants," "pregnant and lactating women," etc.) which the appropriate programs would treat and reform. These labels—and, in general, the professional discourses that sustain them—inevitably structure the encounter of the organization and its "clients" (e.g., peasants) in such a way that the latter's local reality is transcended and elaborated upon by the former. In the process, peasants are organized by the development apparatus as producers, or as elements to be displaced, or modernized, or "integrated" into the national economy. In other words, they are managed and controlled, obliged to maneuver within the limits posed by the institutions.⁶

Political economists, who explain the crisis of food production in the Third World—and its concomitant manifestations, chiefly poverty and hunger—in terms of the laws of motion of capital at the world scale, argue that the total or partial proletarianization of the peasantry was a necessary consequence of the pattern of capitalist development adopted after the Second World War; they maintain that it was necessary to turn the peasantry into a source of cheap labor for capital accumulation to take place (see, for example, Barkin 1987; de Janvry 1981). It should be pointed out, however, that while capitalism in the periphery requires the continuous supply of cheap food and cheap labor, it has been development

that has brought the peasantry to a prominent role in the fulfillment of those conditions through the series of discourses and programs produced to deal with their reality. The peasants' world is largely organized by professional institutions and practices. The latter interpenetrate the former, coordinating social relations in the countryside (e.g., between peasants, commercial agriculture, agribusiness corporations), implicating other types of relations (e.g., gender), and rendering accountable the interactions among all these actors only through the set of categories originated in professional discourse. What emerges is a view of the "malnourished" or "illiterate peasant" as a problem to be eradicated through effective development (e.g., the "Green Revolution" or "Integrated Rural Development"). Needless to say, one never finds in these accounts consideration given to peasants' struggles, to culture or resistance. These items are blocked by the configuration achieved by the development apparatus.

Colombia's integrated rural development program—one of the key components of the NFN—introduced a new style of interaction between local field personnel (extension workers, health workers, planners) and various categories of small farmers. These interactions are automatically structured by the bureaucratic operations of the institutions involved that, in turn, organize their activities on the basis of the FNPP/rural development discourse produced primarily by the World Bank and a few universities in the United States and Europe. Similarly, the interaction between the national planners in Bogotá and the World Bank is conditioned by the need to obtain funding and, so, structured by World Bank routines. A very concrete result of these operations has been a significant redefinition and rearrangement of the structures of the Colombian agrarian sector. This result is of course seen as the logical and generally desirable outcome of rational practices that, in this way, go for the most part unchallenged. What I want to emphasize is that these practices are not only deeply political, having a very real effect on people, but also that they have to be rendered visible if we are to understand the functioning of development programs as techniques of power and knowledge and to pursue alternative conceptualizations and practices.

Most of the plans produced under the spell of FNPP discourse were being dismantled by the early 1980s (conveniently, two books, one written by a senior World Bank official and the other prepared for the World Bank by a group of Harvard and Stanford professors, closed the cycle and opened a new one, this time with emphasis on more pragmatic, less encompassing policy. See Berg (1981), Timmer, Falcon, and Pearson (1983)). We contend that the case of FNPP is exemplary of how development works. Subdisciplines with their respective programs abound in all fields of development. We discussed in some detail one of the dominant fields, namely, development economics, and an important subdiscipline, FNPP. Similar inquiries may be conducted in other fields as part of a broader research strategy that seeks to understand the mapping of the Third World in the post-World War II period.

Anthropologizing the West: Ethnography of Resistance, Development, and the Western Economy

To provide a more complete account of development, however, it is not enough to study this process from 1945 onward. Development is linked to other

phenomena existing prior to its invention. One must deal in particular with the formation of Western economic practices and rationality—those we have become accustomed to associate with *Homo Oeconomicus*—and their extension to the Third World, since it was these practices that provided the fabric for development economics in the first place.⁷

Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda describes an incident that took place in the Tierras de Loba of the Atlantic Coast region of Colombia, propitiated by the first U.S. companies to enter the region. Among the many practices that these companies introduced was the use of barbwire, an apparently innocuous event that nevertheless had great significance for the local population:

It is known that the foreigners were adamantly opposed to the communal use of lands, which was a substantial part of local cultural identity and the local economy. . . . Moreover, they introduced the use of barbwire (brought first to the country between 1875 and 1880), fostering its use as a rational and natural practice for agricultural production. This practice, however, was particularly upsetting to the peasants of Loba, whose rationality and survival logic was quite different; this irritation increased even more when they saw their communal lands and their customary paths crossed by fences, supposedly in defense of the sacrosanct principle of private property. [Fals Borda 1984:172B]

In another study of contemporary cultural resistance in western Colombia, anthropologist Michael Taussig provides an interpretation of certain practices through which

Peasants represent as vividly unnatural, even as evil, practices that most of us in commodity-based societies have come to accept as natural in the everyday workings of our economy, and therefore of the world in general. This representation occurs only when they are proletarianized and refers only to the way of life that is organized by capitalist relations of production. It neither occurs in nor refers to peasant ways of life. [Taussig 1980:3]

These practices, associated with certain devil beliefs, emerge, according to Taussig, as a response of the peasants' precapitalist orientation to the experience of commodification that they increasingly have to face. In a similar vein, several authors have studied resistance in other areas, for instance, the persistence of "petit-commodity" production in Guatemala as an alternative to fully capitalist production, the ways in which Andean peoples have defended their communities in the face of commercial and capitalist intrusion, and so on (Mallon 1983; C. Smith 1984).

The responses given by Third World communities to the spread of capitalism have thus become recently an important anthropological concern. A series of works concerned with the question of resistance have appeared in which investigation of historical process, social practice, and symbolic mediation are interwoven in order to account for such responses (see, besides the works by Taussig, Fals Borda, and Smith cited above, Comaroff (1985), Nash (1979), and Scott (1985). For a review of this trend in anthropology, see Marcus and Fischer (1986:chapt. 4) and Escobar (1988)). But this phenomenon should be understood

in its broadest sense, namely, as the creation, in modern culture, of a producing subject characterized by a given behavior and immersed in certain practices. This entails that we examine capitalism not only in the sense of production, as narrowly defined by political economy, but rather as a manifestation of what can perhaps be called the Western Economy, understood as the ensemble of three systems that coalesced at the end of the 18th century in northwestern Europe: a system of production (broadly, the capitalist world economy), a system of power (disciplinary and normalizing mechanisms), and a system of signification (ideology, science, and representation, including philosophical currents such as liberalism and utilitarianism, and a dominant code articulated around the notions of labor and production). Only in this way can we grasp the nature of the Western Economy and the significance of its extension to the rest of the world.

An investigation of this nature⁸ shows that it was only through a slow process that today's dominant economic practices became the common property of communities in Western societies, that they came to be seen as normal, transparent ways of behaving and acting. It is precisely these practices and rationality that are now being introduced in the Third World through development in a scale larger than ever before. Development has become the grand strategy through which the transformation of the not-yet-too-rational Latin American/Third World subjectivity is to be achieved. In this way, long-standing cultural practices and meanings—as well as the social relations in which they are embedded—are altered. The consequences of this are enormous, to the extent that the very basis of community aspirations and desires is modified. Thus the effect of the introduction of development has to be seen not only in terms of its social and economic impact, but also, and perhaps more importantly, in relation to the cultural meanings and practices they upset or modify.

In this way, an analysis of the Western Economy as an ensemble of systems of production, power, and signification can be useful in relating the critique of economics in the West to the aforementioned anthropological concerns. Certain types of social dominance may then be analyzed as the product of the interconnection between the introduction of dominant discourses about the economy, their inscription in institutions and practices (e.g., through development), and their effect on local historical situations, including the resistance to these processes. This strategy would be useful not only to “anthropologize the West”—in the sense given to it by Rabinow, that is, of revealing the historical character of those domains most taken for granted and universal in the West, such as epistemology and economics (Rabinow 1986:241)—but also for understanding better the geo-cultural distribution of identity and difference and its implications in terms of the material and cultural relations among different peoples.

After all, the anthropology of modernity, as Foucault has shown,⁹ is that of *Homo Oeconomicus*, the subject that seeks certainty is the disciplined individual, the order achieved is the order of a given rationality and laws of capital. Modernity as such thus remains primarily a European experience that has sought to become universal. Not in vain do the most hopeful current critiques of development address explicitly the questions of subjectivity, knowledge, and power. These cri-

tiques are fueling a growing number of social movements that reject the economic character of development, are deeply aware of other concerns (ecological, and those of peace and of women and indigenous peoples), and seek to use local knowledge to shift the existing architecture of power. It is in the vitality of these new movements that the dissolution of a 40-year-old development apparatus, already beginning to crumble but still in place, and the coming of a new era, more pluralistic and less oppressive, can be visualized.¹⁰

Notes

¹On the origins of the notions of “development” and “Third World,” see Arndt (1981), Binder (1986), Mintz (1976), Pletsch (1981), Wallerstein (1984), and Worsley (1984). Valuable critiques of development somewhat related to that offered here are found in Gendzier (1985) and Morandé (1983).

²The historical and political context in which development arose is well summarized in Gendzier (1985); see also Chomsky (1987), Little (1982), Meier (1984), and Seers (1982).

³The most important foreign advisers or missions to Colombian planning organisms have been: L. Currie/World Bank, 1949; A. Hirschman, early 1950s; Lebret, 1957; Watterson/World Bank, 1963–64; a Harvard mission, 1960–70; a United Nations (CEPAL) mission, 1959–62; D. Avramovic/World Bank, 1970; D. Seers/ILO, 1970. All these missions had a major role in the formulation of Colombia’s development plans. Besides these “grand” missions, innumerable missions and advisers have visited the country as experts or consultants on a short-term basis.

⁴Some of the models proposed during the 1950s were those by Nurkse (capital formation and “balanced growth” as a means to break through the “vicious circle of poverty”), W. A. Lewis (with his well-known “dual economy” model), P. Rosenstein Rodan (who emphasized a “big push” in investment to mobilize the rural underemployed for industrialization), H. Liebenstein (who postulated the existence of a “low-level equilibrium trap”), A. Hirschman (with his emphasis on “backward and forward linkages” in the industrialization process). Rostow’s famous *Stages of Economic Growth* (Rostow 1960) in many ways crowned these efforts. The best papers written in the 1950s on economic development are found in Agarwala and Singh (1958). Some of the early theories are also discussed in Meier (1984) and Seers and Meier (1984).

⁵The works on FNPP cited here do not include the copious literature on the strategy of “integrated rural development” (IRD), launched by the World Bank in 1973. The rhetoric and practice of IRD are also examined closely in my dissertation (Escobar 1987).

⁶Analyses of development policy and planning as a regime of practices are found in Clay and Shaffer (1984) and Wood (1985). Smith has developed a powerful methodology for investigating institutional practices as constitutive of social relations (see D. Smith 1974, 1984, 1986). An application of Smith’s method that also uses the critique of development in terms of discourse and practices is found in Mueller (1986, 1987). See also Escobar (1984–85).

⁷In other words, we should undertake a “genealogy of development,” in Foucault’s sense. A succinct statement on the nature of genealogy is found in Foucault (1985:3–24). The

constitution of the Western Economy and its extension to the rest of the world has to be seen, as I contend in my dissertation, as an essential part of this genealogy of development.

⁸The signposts for an investigation of the Western Economy in terms of production, power, and signification have already been developed in contemporary scholarship by a handful of authors (chiefly K. Polanyi, J. Schumpeter, F. Braudel, L. Dumont, M. Foucault, I. Wallerstein, J. Baudrillard, P. Clastres). This argument is developed fully in my dissertation, based on the works of these authors and on those of several historians of capitalism.

⁹“What is central is that at the beginning of the nineteenth century a new arrangement of knowledge was constituted, which accommodated simultaneously the historicity of economics (in relation to the forms of production), the finitude of human existence (in relation to scarcity and labour), and the fulfillment of an end to history—whether in the form of an indefinite deceleration or in that of a radical reversal. History, anthropology and the suspension of development are all linked together in accordance with a figure that defines one of the major networks of nineteenth century thought . . . nineteenth century economics will be referred to an anthropology as to a discourse on man’s natural finitude” (Foucault 1970:262, 257). This, for Foucault, defines modernity, with its analytic of finitude, and “the articulation of economics upon history” (1970:255). See also Vint (1986).

Critiques of the notions of scarcity and rationality in economics are found in Caille (1986) and Stickers (1985).

¹⁰Initial reflection on these new grass-roots social movements are found in Esteva (1987), Falk (1987), Fals Borda (1985, 1988), Kothari (1984, 1987), Nandy (1987), Rahnema (1986, 1988), Sheth (1984, 1987), Shiva (1986). These works are summarized and elaborated upon in the conclusion of my dissertation.

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