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### 3 | From colonial administration to development studies: a post-colonial critique of the history of development studies<sup>1</sup>

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In this chapter I foreground and explore a different history of development studies to that which is conventionally rehearsed. Here I examine the colonial genealogy of development studies through the lives and experiences of individuals whose careers stretch across different historical moments, encompassing the administration of colonies and the establishment and emergence of development studies in institutes of higher education in the UK. The post-colonial analysis of the history of development studies that is presented here challenges orthodox versions of its history and questions the conventional start date of 1945 as marking the beginning of development. The aim is to identify the traces of colonialism that pervade the workings of the post-independence international development aid industry and highlight the extent and form of the relationship between colonialism and contemporary development studies. Furthermore, through the narratives that are presented in this chapter, former colonial officers offer their own historical perspective and critique of development. This analysis of relationships and trajectories of ideas, institutions and people is important because it deepens our understanding of why and how development studies has evolved.

The following section, which analyses the recent and varied approaches to understanding the colonial legacy of development, is followed by discussions as to why development studies rarely acknowledges these colonial roots. I argue here that there is a perceived imperative for many of those within contemporary development studies to distance themselves from the negativity that surrounds this genealogy and instead present a rather truncated version of its history. The third section is based on research with former colonial officers who, following the formal independence of former colonies, subsequently worked in the field of development studies. Here, through their stories and recollections, I demonstrate the relationship between colonialism and development, focusing particularly on the experiences and skills that they took into development studies and how, if we are not to deny historical continuities, these have shaped the culture and direction of post-independence development. The chapter concludes by attempting to draw out what this particular

historical reading highlights in terms of the continuities and divergences between colonialism and development.

#### *Understanding the colonial legacy of development studies*

Post-colonial analyses examine the historical effects of colonialism and the persistence of colonial forms of power and knowledge into the present. In exposing colonial discourses and practices, post-colonialists attempt to reveal how contemporary global inequalities between rich and poor countries have been, and continue to be, shaped by colonial power relations. Through problematizing, deconstructing and decentring the supposed universality of Western knowledge, post-colonial perspectives critically engage with and resist the variety of ways in which the West produces knowledge about other people in other places and interrogate hegemonic histories that often obscure the continuing effects of colonialism (see Kothari 2005a). Much of this type of interrogation, however, has taken place outside of development studies.

A discursive analysis of development began in the 1980s with the emergence, and increasing prominence, of so-called 'alternative' approaches to development, such as gender and development, environmental and sustainable development and participation and empowerment, as well as alternatives to development advocated by post-development theorists such as Escobar (1995). Investigations of the links between colonialism and contemporary international development have, however, emerged only recently (see Sylvester 1999). Influenced by the types of analyses that underpinned dependency and world systems theories in the 1970s, much critical literature from the 1980s that emerged out of post-colonial and post-development critiques focused on how the development project creates and perpetuates uneven and unequal development between First and Third World countries. These approaches centre on an analysis of development discourse and how it shapes and defines different realities. Post-development theorists attempt to deconstruct the idea of post-war development and some call for a total abandonment of the project. They argue that development discourse is ahistorical and obscures the political realities of the development industry. Further, they suggest that it is hegemonic in its construction and regulation of Third World identities and limits the adoption of alternative ways of organizing and achieving social progress. Some of these critics have argued that development is a 'neo-colonial' project that reproduces global inequalities and maintains the dominance of the South, through global capitalist expansion, by the North. In questioning the history, objectives and means of development, some of these critics have argued for the recognition that the current economic, social and political situation in de-

veloping countries, and the continuing interest of the West in the Third World, cannot be properly understood without an adequate understanding of their historical, and particularly colonial, background (Chandra 1992; Crush 1995; Cowen and Shenton 1996). Others have specifically traced the origins of the field of development studies in order to explore how development mediates, extends, entrenches or counters colonial legacies (Pieterse and Parekh 1995; Rahnama and Bawtree 1997).

There is ample evidence that colonialism survives the post-independence period in the form of economic and political relations and social and cultural representations. There are, however, a number of different perspectives and emphases that have emerged to account for these ongoing relationships and their contemporary articulations and consequences. Said (1989), for example, is clear that 'to have been colonised was a fate with lasting, indeed grotesquely unfair results' (207; see also Miege 1980). Goldsmith (1997) develops this idea when he claims that development reproduces a form of unequal trade that is reminiscent of colonial forms of economic control and exploitation. Others such as Mamdani (1996) have located continuities and divergences in institutional and administrative structures while Cooke (2003) provides evidence for the continuities between contemporary development management and colonial administration, arguing that these reveal colonialist power relations. The colonial legacy of other fields of contemporary development practice has also been explored through, for example, genealogies of participatory approaches (Cooke and Kothari 2001), gender and development (Radcliffe 1994; Parpart 1995; McEwan 2001), community development, and conservation and development (Adams and Mulligan 2003).

The historical continuum can also be understood in terms of how colonialism and international development articulate similar notions of modernity and progress. For example, Dirks (1992) suggests that colonialism can be seen as a cultural, not just an economic, project which created and maintained classifications and hierarchies between groups of people. Consequently, dichotomies of, for example, the 'modern' and the 'traditional' and the 'West' and the 'rest' are embedded within development discourse, and this reassertion of colonial classifications of difference is often invoked to justify development interventions. The representation of peoples in and of the 'Third World' as 'backward', 'traditional' and incapable of self-government further embeds global distinctions developed during the colonial period.

Despite this evidence of colonial continuities into the present day, it would be a mistake to suggest that present-day development discourse is simply a reworking of a (neo-)colonial one since development is not always and inevitably

an extension of colonialism. Brigg (2002) has suggested that critiques of development need to take into account issues such as moral responsibility and humanitarianism and not focus solely on the perpetuation of colonial forms of authority and rule. While this is valid, it assumes that colonialism was not concerned with these issues but more problematically, by implication, that development necessarily is. An apt quote from Cecil Rhodes interestingly put these sorts of assumptions in perspective: 'imperialism was philanthropy plus a 5 per cent dividend on investment' (Rhodes, quoted in Lawlor 2000: 63). As I argue below, however, we need to be wary of histories of development that deny this colonial genealogy and attempt to create distinct and artificial boundaries between the exploitation of empire and the humanitarianism of development.

### *Obscuring a colonial genealogy*

The discussion above highlights the recent recognition by some critical analysts of a historical trajectory that links colonialism to contemporary processes of globalization generally, and development more specifically. Attempting to understand and analyse this interconnectedness, however, is not a mainstream preoccupation within development studies. Indeed, much of the post-colonial debate has been located within, for example, sociology, anthropology, literary criticism and geography, and rarely in the development studies literature. Said, however, reminds us of the need to locate our field of study historically and contextually when he writes, '... there is no discipline, no structure of knowledge, no institution or epistemology that can or has ever stood free of the various socio-cultural, historical, and political formations that give epochs their peculiar individuality' (Said 1989: 211).

Moreover, an ahistorical approach to development studies, or one that presents an epochal historicization, obscures both the colonial genealogies of development and the historical continuities in the theory and practice of development. More generally, Chambers (1993) reminds us that with the accelerated rate of obsolescence of development ideas and the constant renewal of technical fashions in development practice, the need to revisit the past and be cognizant of the history of development appears increasingly important.

Although there are ongoing critiques of development, as shown above (see, for example, Escobar 1995; Slater 1995), much research and teaching in development studies still tends to embed 1945 as the key year in which development was initiated with the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions. This limited historical analysis in much orthodox/mainstream development studies reveals the largely unreflexive nature of the discipline,

partly engendered through the imperative to achieve development goals and targets. With a few notable exceptions (Crush 1995; Grillo and Stirrat 1997), most historical reviews of development rehearsed in development research and teaching have tended towards a compartmentalization of clearly bounded, successive periods characterized by specific theoretical hegemonies that begin with economic growth and modernization theories, moving through theories of underdevelopment and culminating in neo-liberalism and the Washington Consensus (see Hettne 1995; Preston 1996). An alternative version is one that is mapped on to particular events and processes; a political economy trajectory that traces by decade the history of development from the golden years of the 1950s through import substitution industrialization in the 1960s to the debt crisis in the 1970s, structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s and subsequently alternative development and the Millennium Development Goals in the 1990s and after.

Another critical factor that shapes the continuing rehearsal of this rather shortened version of history that dominates the discipline has been the perceived need to effectively distance development thought and practice from the contemporary negativity surrounding Britain's imperial history. This concealment of a colonial past thus becomes, perhaps unwittingly, part of a project that creates and maintains a dichotomy between a colonialism that is 'bad', exploitative, extractive and oppressive and a development that is 'good', moralistic, philanthropic and humanitarian. This separation from colonialism absolves those in development studies of the responsibility of addressing how our work is related to the various forms of rule, authority and inequality that characterized so much of the colonial period. And, as the narratives from former officers presented below demonstrate, the extent to which engagement with the colonial encounter may also question our homogenizing assumptions about those involved in colonial administration towards the end of empire. As one interviewee challenges, 'You know, someone who sort of brands me as a sort of colonial, imperial exploiter, I'd say - OK, I can see that in the bigger picture you can see me in that role but that isn't what I was actually doing.'

Overall, then, there has been a political imperative to distance the international aid industry from the colonial encounter so as to avoid tarnishing what is presented as a humanitarian project far removed from the supposed exploitation of the colonial era. This chapter suggests that not only is there a need to question the comparison made whereby development can only be 'good' as it is set against a colonialism that is wholly 'bad', but that in presenting a different history of development we can see how development works in and against its colonial past.

A further reason for the dearth of critical analysis and extended historical view is perhaps related to the policy and practice focus of much work within development studies. Many of those engaged with these aspects of development see themselves primarily as practitioners, and therefore presume to have little use for theory. This division between the relative importance of theory and practice is an ongoing debate within development studies.

The relatively few studies that have engaged with the continuities and divergences from colonialism to development have tended to focus on institutional histories, analyses of the origins of the 'doctrines' of development and the colonial genealogy of ideas and practices of development (see Cowen and Shenton 1996; Havinden and Meredith 1993; Munck and O'Hearn 1999). In this chapter I want to introduce an additional focus of analysis in the form of personal narratives that I argue can provide a further resource for understanding histories of development generally and interrogating comparisons between colonialism and development specifically. Below I show how the experiences and recollections of individuals involved in both colonial administration and subsequently in the field of development studies as teachers, researchers and expatriate consultants can inform our understanding of development studies and in so doing provide another history of the discipline, its discourse and practice. I begin in the next section with a note on memory and history, arguing that the process of collecting narratives, and not simply the content of the stories, provides us with evidence with which to interrogate alternative histories of development studies

### *Memory, narratives and history*

Changes brought about by political independence in former colonies led many of those employed in the British Colonial Office to leave Africa and Asia and find employment back in the UK. Among those embarking on second careers were a group of individuals who found employment in the newly emerging and rapidly expanding international development industry in the UK, where they are (or were until retirement) involved in teaching development studies in institutes of higher education, devising policies to address issues of Third World development and carrying out research and consultancy work for multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental organizations. The research on which much of this chapter is based traced the genealogy of post-war international development through the personal testimonies of those individuals whose experiences and skills as expatriates in the colonial service were thought to be particularly suited to the work of international development. Between 2001 and 2002 I interviewed fifteen people who had previously worked for the

UK Colonial Office and subsequently became engaged in development studies. The interviewees, whose stories are reflected upon here, had been posted to sub-Saharan Africa during their time in the colonial service. Most have now formally retired although many continue to be active as development consultants, research associates in academic institutions, or in charitable foundations.

The taped interviews, only a greatly reduced version of which are presented here,<sup>2</sup> focused on their motives and aspirations for joining the colonial service and their subsequent decision to become involved in post-independence development work, and explored changes in their roles and responsibilities as they continued their careers in development studies. These life histories and narratives articulate continuities through the telling of events and experiences over time and highlight how subjective and collective understandings of past and present are imbricated. For example, individual stories about the period of Britain's colonial rule are unavoidably informed by an awareness of contemporary critiques of colonialism along with a more complex and varied Western attitude towards the outside world. Crucially, their accounts draw upon collective visions and themes, since life stories are inevitably located in the social contexts of meanings, languages and institutional and national cultures. As Jameson notes, the narrativization of an individual story and experience inevitably invokes the history of the collectivity itself (1986). Furthermore, as bearers of culture, the narrators are unavoidably influenced by historical and contemporary understandings of social relations, norms and customs that have become internalized. In this case, the negativity, or at least awkwardness, surrounding Britain's imperial history significantly shaped how stories were told, the language used and the form of self-criticism.

The lasting effects of colonialism are also manifest in the Overseas Pensioners Association, to which some of the interviewees belong. Colonial officers who felt abandoned by the UK government at the time of independence established the Association, whose main objective is to support those without adequate pensions. Interestingly, the Association also welcomes and supports activities that it feels will rescue the colonial project and its servants from the perceived negativity that surrounds that part of British history. There is a desire to 'set the record straight about the good work done under colonialism', to proffer a more nuanced testimony which foregrounds the positive impacts individuals could make in colonized spaces.

This contemporary context clearly informs their stories and the ways in which they recall and interpret the past and their role within it. The narratives provide evidence of how certain aspects of the past are invoked and others concealed in order to justify an individual's role and actions. Hobsbawm and

Ranger (1983) and Anderson (1991) have shown how the 'invention of tradition' and the construction of an imaginary past enable this legitimization. As Ranger writes, 'Some traditions in colonial Africa really were invented, by a single colonial officer for a single occasion. But customary law and ethnicity and religion and language were imagined, by many different people and over a long time' (Ranger 1993). The 'imagined community' of 'home' and 'away', invoked by the colonial officer, was also significant in shaping their experiences, the decisions they took and the framing of their recollections. While Gowan's (2002) study of imperial elites returning to Britain from India demonstrates the construction of imagined geographies of 'home', in the narratives of former colonial administrators, there is also an imagined geography of 'away'. For many, their lives were never as good as during the colonial period, partly because of the privileges of 'race' and gender but also because of what and whom they represented overseas. Therefore, as agents of colonialism they 'often display nostalgia for the colonized culture' (Rosaldo 1993: 69) evident in the romanticized vision they continue to hold of, for example, Nigeria, Tanzania or Kenya. These representations and imaginings of home and away, imperialist notions of dominance and the civilizing mission in much colonial discourse were transferred and translated into the sphere and context of post-independence development studies.

Importantly, through oral history, individuals can inscribe their experiences on the historical record and offer their own interpretations of the processes that connect their individual narratives with understandings of wider contexts and processes of change. Accordingly, these living memories can complement official and dominant sources and explanations of change, contest and challenge conventional discourses and interpretations, and attribute alternative versions of processes of change. Oral history not only allows evidence from a new direction but it also opens up new or under-researched areas of enquiry. In doing so, the diverse complexities of reality are illuminated while simultaneously this more nuanced understanding of different realities reveals common themes and trends. Thus personal testimonies of colonial officers can challenge established accounts, and provide significant justifications as well as critiques of colonial and development policy and practice. Furthermore, these personalized narratives can explain trajectories and processes that have led to more recent events and provide information that alludes to future aspirations and strategies (see Kothari and Hulme 2003). Finally, remembering is also about forgetting. Some former colonial officers feel that they have been forgotten in official versions of the history of colonialism and in contemporary understandings of colonialism, and that their testimonies correct this mar-

ginalization while at the same time there are also 'absent' memories in their own accounts.

These narratives demonstrate how colonial administrators and development professionals transfer ideas about other people and places over time and space but also rework these dominant discourses once 'in the field' since their experiences and approaches are inevitably subjective and contextual. I do not wish to suggest that the effects of colonialism were benign; however, while we can, at one level, generalize about colonialism and development, on another we must accept that there are multiple stories challenging the notion of a singular trajectory. Thus, historiographies of development studies may simultaneously reveal patterns and continuities but also identify what Crush (1995: 8) refers to as the 'conflicting intellectual currents flowing through the contemporary domain of development'.

I have argued above that the process of constructing a narrative and not only its content provides evidence of the continuing effects of colonialism. This was further reflected in how my own subjectivity as interviewer, grounded in a particular ethnicity, gender and familial history, inevitably influenced the interviewees and their responses in a variety of covert and overt ways, ranging from use of language to describe other people and other places to articulations of the benefits or otherwise of colonialism. Since individual recollections reflect collective and contemporary attitudes and perceptions, interpreting people's stories then became a process of analysing interpretations of the past and how memory is shaped by these influences, as much as about 'real' events and experiences. The individuals whose stories are reflected upon here, who worked in development studies and were in the past part of the colonial administrative service, reveal the embodiment of historical continuities and reflect particular historiographies.

#### *From colonial administration to development studies*

This section focuses on the relationship between colonial administration and development studies by identifying the sorts of skills and experiences that former colonial officers brought to post-independence development, their experiences of the transition from colonial administration to development studies, and their thoughts on what development has come to mean. The section argues that these personal and collective historiographies provide evidence for the institutionalized links between colonialism and development and how they became embodied in the individual. Furthermore, they have wider implications in terms of understanding the origins of contemporary development discourse and practice.

Said emphasizes historical continuities. He writes, 'Imperialism, the control of overseas territories and peoples, develops in a continuum with variously envisaged histories, current practices and policies, and with differently plotted cultural trajectories' (Said 1989: 219). Similarly, the era of colonialism, like the historical evolution of development and its ongoing formation, never embodied unchanging and homogeneous objectives and practices.

The practical implications for some colonial officers during the late colonial period were that their responsibilities were directed towards the preparation of colonies for indirect rule and self-government rather than the expansion of colonial territories. This no doubt created some ambivalence for those officers who were aware that their jobs were increasingly concerned with preparing nations for independence, an objective that could ironically result in the loss of their own employment and status. While the administrative workings of colonial rule appeared to be changing, so did the motives of many who joined the service in the late colonial era. Many felt that independence was imminent and therefore this was a very exciting period of global change (Kirk-Greene 2000), but at the same time feared for their future security of employment.

Although the narratives reflected upon here are those of a small number of former administrators and their accounts are inevitably subjective, interestingly they all saw themselves as development practitioners prior to the formal end of colonial rule. They did not view their activities in the context of the expansion or even of the maintenance of empire, but in latter-day colonialism they felt that they were already 'doing' development. Thus, they were not only colonial officers but were simultaneously development practitioners, and therefore are able to reflect on a very specific transitional moment.

A quote from one of the interviewees referring to the moment when he was required to leave the colonial service reveals the perceived link between the work carried out in the late colonial period and the work of post-war development.

And I thought, right, if I can no longer do this job and work out here the next best thing is to be working for the development of Kenya in the development field – after all, it is the same thing. Yes, I was fed up in that it was clear that the winds of change meant you couldn't stay on for ever. But what's the point of chasing a dwindling colonial empire around – let's get back and get our teeth into something that will be important – helping Third World countries.

Clearly, then, towards the end of the colonial period there were some administrators who felt that their jobs in the colonial service were more closely related to development work. Indeed some of them had originally been posted to the

colonies as teachers under the auspices of the Colonial Education Department, or as forestry and agricultural officers addressing issues of 'community development'.

At the time of independence those employed in the colonial service had to make decisions about their future, and although some stayed on after independence they realized that this was always going to be a short-term strategy as 'it was obvious the Africans were going to go for the administrative jobs and maybe also the top jobs in the police'. Others chased a dwindling empire around, but they were just delaying coming back to the UK and 'in the end even they were washed away by the tide of independence'.

Finding a job on their return to Britain was not always easy, partly because 'in this country there was this attitude that "Oh God, he's been in Africa for twelve years; he won't be much use to us!"' Some ex-colonial officers, however, did find jobs in the legal profession or as teachers in schools, while others joined the newly emerging and rapidly expanding international development industry. Those who were based in academic departments taught courses in public administration primarily to overseas students from newly independent states (see Clarke 1999; Minogue 1977) and periodically returned overseas as consultants on development projects (see Chambers, this volume; Cameron, this volume). Others worked for multilateral agencies such as the UN and the World Bank, bilateral institutions and international non-governmental organizations.

It is not the intention here to homogenize the institutions or the individuals operating within them, as clearly they do not have fixed and singular identities but are spatially and temporally varied. Decolonization, processes of globalization, the workings of the Bretton Woods institutions and the nature of international finance and trade have altered the environment within which development takes place. Moreover, within the development process, changing discourses of foreign aid and theories and policies of international development successively shaped practices, as did the evolving relations between Britain and its former colonies. Thus, while there are continuities, the workings of the Colonial Office and the role and mission of a colonial officer within it changed significantly from the early colonial period to the lead-up to independence. Similarly development organizations are distinguished in their objectives and global reach, which vary from place to place and over time, as the individuals within them are differentiated by their specific roles, responsibilities and location.

What this transition meant for former administrators is revealed in their narratives, which reflect on their induction into the development industry,

process and a perceived contrast between the forms of expertise and practice they mobilized in colonial and immediately post-colonial contexts and the very different skills and procedures of contemporary development professionals. They also assess apparent disjunctures and continuities between colonial and development praxis, further questioning the overwhelmingly negative perception of colonialism as a totality irrespective of specific and individual endeavours. These recollections deepen our understanding of how their experiences and skills came to shape the direction and form of post-independence development studies. That is, the experiences of former colonial administrators moving into development studies can tell us something about the ideologies and practices upon which post-independence development was formulated.

Some of the interviewees recalled that to work in development studies departments in UK institutes of higher education in the early days: 'The argument was that you must do development if you are going to teach it. So you must have done development in some way or another.' Many former colonials felt, however, that this was 'later watered down and we had people who were really only theorists'.

Thus, many of those who worked overseas as part of the aid mission were often not viewed by former colonial officers as 'experts'. As one interviewee notes: 'the conditions where lots of people could live for a decade or two in Africa and Asia are gone ... As the cynic would say, they don't want too much expertise on a single country.'

This reduction of in-depth knowledge of other places and people was expressed as a considerable problem within development studies: 'We want to be able to teach courses here where we can say this is going to be the best approach for this sector in Africa, but the point I'm trying to make is we should not continue to generalize about Africa. Each country is unique.' This was compounded by the antagonism between those in development who had a background in the colonial service and younger development 'experts' who did not.

Importantly, former colonial officers were unimpressed with the policies and strategies being devised in post-independent development: 'I shouldn't say this but I will. When I meet young chaps who now work as development advisers or listen to people talking about development aid, and they say "We're doing X, Y and Z", I think "Oh my God, we were doing that twenty years ago and we failed as well!" I am astonished sometimes that we go on inventing the wheel and the wheel goes round, and I don't think that this is just a silly old man talking.'

In order to contextualize these tensions between those who began their careers in development studies and those who had a background in the colonial service and whose working environments now overlapped it is necessary to understand their histories. Specifically, the practical skills, knowledge and accumulated experience that they felt they had acquired from living for long periods in former colonies they believed were subsequently being mistakenly devalued.

During the late colonial period, the skills required to become a colonial administrator included the practical skills and capabilities of living for extended periods in often geographically isolated areas, including speaking the local language (Kirk-Greene 2000). More often than not these administrators came through public and grammar schools, and many graduated from Oxford and Cambridge. All new recruits were required to attend a twelve-month course known as the Devonshire A course in which they were educated on, among other subjects, imperial history, language skills, the judiciary and ethnology (see *ibid.*). For colonial officers language skills were thought to be particularly important, alongside training in developing a disposition that encouraged a practical engagement and cultural and social immersion in the place of work. In development studies, on the contrary, language, while not unimportant, is often considered secondary to specific forms of theoretical or technical expertise. Indeed, these are conceived as far more relevant than regional experience and geographic specialism.

Some colonial officers felt that they had much greater geographic knowledge than younger development 'experts'. They were trained in the local language before being posted overseas, and although they were moved from one posting to another, the scale of movement was limited and most stayed within the same country. Thus, whereas specialisms of the colonial era tended to be based upon a knowledge of particular geographical areas, the Africanist or Asianist has largely been replaced by those with thematic and/or technical expertise in, for example, translocal foci such as gender analysis, rural development, impact assessment or participatory rural appraisal. They seemingly move unproblematically between and within countries, taking with them their particular expertise, but often with limited knowledge of the different historical, social and cultural contexts in which they are required to apply it. Thus, the interviewees feel that while they had experienced enduring and profound engagements with the places to which they were posted, the contemporary development 'expert' tends to move within a world of fleeting consultancies.

Academic background was not as significant a criterion in the recruitment process of colonial officers, although many did come through Oxford and

Cambridge. It was more the ethos and discipline nurtured in the culture of these establishments than the academic status which was valued. As one interviewee recalls, 'the Colonial Office didn't want people who are too clever, on the other hand they don't want people who are too thick'. Indeed, reliability, honesty and 'good character' were valued much more highly than academic knowledge and technical skills. This 'good character' and ability to deal fairly with people, albeit within the context of an unquestioned superiority, were valued in the colonial service, and one way of measuring these qualities was through an individual's extra-curricular activities, of which sport was the most significant. Sporting capabilities were seen to reflect qualities of leadership and fairness as well as fitness (see Furse 1962). The significance of sport goes beyond reflecting individual character, however; it was also something particularly British. This focus on character, personal qualities and sport also reveals the importance of class and it was the background in grammar and public schools followed by Oxford or Cambridge which generally ensured this. Although there were also those from more working-class backgrounds, they had often been awarded educational scholarships and hence had been educated in primarily middle- and upper-class institutions.

So the colonial officer was typically someone with a good second-class degree from Oxford or Cambridge, a sportsman with an ability to live and work in 'difficult' environments. When they moved into the field of development after independence, these qualities and behaviours were initially valued or at least accepted; as younger development professionals joined the industry, however, these mores were perceived to be not only less important but more crucially old-fashioned and unprofessional. Other criteria for recruitment were valorized which placed greater importance on technical skills and expertise than on personal character. The cultural capital and the specific relevance of class background in assigning an individual's status in the colonial hierarchy were being eroded and replaced by divisions based on other criteria. Indeed, in development the status ascribed to an individual consultant often relates to that of the institution they represent in terms of the extent of its financial resources, and political and global sphere of influence, whether they are from a multilateral agency such as the World Bank, a donor agency, an NGO or an academic institution.

The end of empire also brought with it a social distancing from colonialism. One British high commissioner said that he had to demonstrate that he was very different to previous colonial expatriates. Some former colonial servants feel, however, that this negativity towards all things colonial was misplaced since, given their extended stay overseas, they have greater knowledge

and experience of other countries than those who rely on short-term overseas assignments.

In part, this discord reflects the changing boundaries of what development studies involved in the early days of the establishment of UK academic development institutes and what it later evolved into. At the time of the establishment of development studies institutes in Britain, former colonial officers' jobs in these centres included a range of activities that were less 'academic' and more related to the provision of professional training courses, with individuals associated with them being involved in short- and long-term consultancies overseas and secondments to bilateral and multilateral development agencies. Therefore, many people could be associated with a development studies institute but still spend long periods of time, sometimes two or three years, working overseas. Thus, many of the former colonial officers' comments about post-independence development refer to a period when it was more difficult to distinguish between development studies and the broader field of the development aid industry. Their references primarily draw out comparisons with post-independence professional 'experts' and technical assistance rather than relating more generally to the teaching and research carried out within what has become development studies. Indeed, the divisions between researchers and consultants, and policy-makers and academics, became more distinct as these institutes started to provide more academic training in the form of masters courses and PhD programmes. Importantly, the modifications necessary post-independence, and the profound resentment between the 'old' and 'new', were compounded by the adjustments former colonial officers inevitably had to make in terms of the loss of power and control, cultural capital and status that had been their privilege while overseas.

In this section I have presented colonial officers' personalized accounts of the implications of the end of empire and their perceptions about the changing nature of the relationship between Britain and overseas as articulated by what development studies, broadly understood, has become.

### *Continuities and divergences*

That the experiences and attitudes of former colonial administrators who moved into development studies should not be carried over after formal independence denies historical continuities and the perpetuation of certain kinds of discourse over time and space. Certain regularities and consistencies, as well as distinct and contrasting practices, stand out from these interviews and other recent critical literature on colonialism and development.

At a fundamental level, both colonial administration and development



studies involve an engagement with institutions and ideas that originate in the West and have a global reach. Most obviously, continuities are borne in the experiences of colonial officers and many of those involved in development studies through their travel to places outside Europe and so involve an encounter, at the level of the individual in the 'field', with other places and other people. Thus, colonialism and development articulate relationships between Britain and overseas, and the British and others. Even for those who do not travel, teaching development studies in UK institutes of higher education can invoke past relations, since a large proportion of students come from former colonies. These missions are inevitably embedded in relations of power, control and knowledge that intersect and are expressed and mobilized by the colonial administrator and the Western development 'expert' who become embodied sites of power, exercising forms of control and imparting knowledge in and among people from other parts of the world. In order to understand how this relationship is played out it is suggested here that the shift from colonialism to development represents a process involving a redistribution of ideas, institutions and people.

While there are continuities in terms of individuals, there are also divergences between the projects of colonialism and development in that the relationships between colonial officer and colonized, development practitioner and aid recipient and teacher and student are articulated variously and take different forms. The changing importance of particular types of experience, skill and expertise, particularly the shift from regional, geographic knowledge towards a valorization of technical or thematic specialisms, highlights significant divergences between colonialism and development. Furthermore, the decolonizing process heralded a more equitable and varied social mix, opening up possibilities that diverged from the conventional segregations of colonialism.

To say that development represents a continuation of colonialism is for some axiomatic and for others an unfair generalization. But what I have tried to suggest in this chapter is that through individual experiences we can see how the development industry works in and against its colonial past. Personal narratives simultaneously complement and critique official accounts not only of colonialism, but more importantly of mainstream and orthodox versions of the history of development. The characterization of colonialism as 'bad', however, or indeed the denial of a colonial genealogy, has allowed many of those in the aid industry to work unquestioningly and unproblematically in, and on, Third World countries. This ahistoricism is continually legitimized by the pervasive representation of development as Western philanthropy, as

a humanitarian mission that bears no resemblance to the perceived inequalities and exploitations of empire. Thus, development can only be 'good' when set against a colonialism that was 'bad'. This dichotomy absolves those of us teaching, researching and advising in the field of development studies of the responsibility of examining the ways in which we may be perpetuating and entrenching notions of Western superiority, difference and inequality.

This dichotomy problematically ignores the experiences of those 'demonized' former colonials in at least two ways. First, it neglects to identify the perpetuation of inequities from the colonial era which entrenched notions of Western superiority and difference. A form of Eurocentrism continues to articulate First World-Third World relations in the post-independence period of development aid. It would, however, be disingenuous to construct development studies solely as a neo-colonial discipline. Clearly, individuals in development studies today are far more diverse in terms of gender, class and ethnicity than were the colonial officers, and this has necessarily meant an opening up of the field and the emergence of multiple strands of thought and practice. It is also evident that 'development professionals' are immersed in broader ideas and possibilities, reflected perhaps in the move from nation-state-led Eurocentrism to globalized values. Second, the separation between development and colonialism neglects to study those numerous examples of individual colonial practice which, although embedded within unequal relations, provided instances of processes grounded in local cultural context. Many former low-ranking colonial officers feel, therefore, that the broader knowledge acquired by development professionals has come at a cost: in contrast to the colonial specialist, deeply familiar, yet superior within, his geographic environment, the universalizing of thematic, theoretical and technical expertise within development studies is less able to be mobilized in the local cultural field. Additionally, theoretically and empirically separating the moment of colonialism from the time of development limits the extent to which contemporary processes of global change can be understood and evaluated, rooted as they are in (unequal) relations over time and space.

To produce a post-colonial development that critically re-evaluates development theory and practice and disconnects it from what has variously been termed its neo-colonial, re-colonial and imperial context and articulations requires, as a starting point, a historical analysis that identifies the particularities, and varied expressions, of the continuities between colonialism and development. It is hoped that this chapter has contributed to this analysis, to enable development studies to move beyond its complicity with Western knowledge and power, understand why it has evolved in the ways in which it

has and, importantly, provide an alternative historical context with which to evaluate its future potential.

### Notes

1 I am grateful to the former colonial administrators whose narratives are anonymously referred to here.

2 For a more detailed description and analysis of the narratives of former colonial officers, see 'From colonialism to development: reflections of former colonial officers' (forthcoming), *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, and 'Authority and expertise: the professionalization of international development and the ordering of dissent' (2005), *Antipode* 37(3): 425-46.

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## 4 | Critical reflections of a development nomad<sup>1</sup>

ROBERT CHAMBERS

*Nomad* ... n 1 a member of a people or tribe who move from place to place to find pasture and food 2 a person who continually moves from place to place; wanderer (*Collins English Dictionary*, Millennium Edition)

The Egocentric Reminiscence Ratio (ERR) (the proportion of a person's speech devoted to their past – 'when I was ...' and 'I remember when ...' etc.) is supposedly higher among men than women, rises with age, on retirement leaps to a new high level, is higher in the evening than the morning, and rises sharply with the consumption of alcohol. Since in what follows my ERR is close to 100 per cent, let me assure readers that I am sober and that I rarely work after seven in the evening. I am writing this less because of the compulsions of age, gender and ego (though of course they are there) and more (or so I would like to flatter myself by believing) because I have been asked to. All the same, writing about your experience is an indulgence. The only justification is if it makes a difference – whether through others' pleasure, insight or action, or through your own personal change.

Most of my working life I have been based at the Institute for Development Studies (IDS), Sussex, but much of this time has been spent abroad. I have experienced and lived through the changes which others in this book describe, but not in any mainstream. As an undisciplined non-economist, I have been on the fringes. In consequence, my view of development studies is idiosyncratic. Writing this has helped me to understand myself a little better. Others will judge whether it is of interest or use to them.

What have reflections on personal experience to do with development studies, and what might be radical about this? Answers to these questions vary according to how broad development studies is taken to be, and what is taken to be radical.

The scope of development studies can be broad in two respects. First, empirically, it can refer to what people in centres, departments or institutes do, or for, development studies actually do and have done. In the UK, development studies has also to embrace whatever the Development Studies Association considers, names or explores. What people do or have done includes not just research and teaching, but consultancy, advisory work, dissemination, advocacy, convening,

networking and partnerships. Some in development studies have also spent time as volunteers, or in governments, aid agencies, NGOs and foundations.

Second, normatively, if development is defined as good change, development studies are again broad. Values have always been there in the discourses of development, even if often half hidden by pretences of objectivity. Introducing values expands the boundaries beyond, for example, what one may find in a book on development economics or social development, and includes ethics, individual choice and responsibility. What is *good* is then for individual and collective definition and debate, as is what sorts of change are significant.

The reader can judge whether it is radical or not to take these two broad meanings together and reflect critically on what someone in development studies does in a lifetime.<sup>2</sup> To help and warn, the least I can do in my case is describe the more significant predispositions (aka biases, prejudices and blind spots) of which I am aware.<sup>3</sup> I am an optimistic nomad. My spectacles are rose coloured. Pessimists may be justified in claiming more realism. For whatever reasons, cups to me are more often half full than half empty.<sup>4</sup> Life is more enjoyable this way, and I have a fond and possibly delusional belief that naive optimism has a wonderful way of being self-fulfilling. Enthusiasm is another weakness, bringing with it the dangers of selective perception, and of doing harm when combined with power.

As for being a nomad, it would be flattering to explain this in terms of a drive to *explore*; and when writing I like to use that word. But I have been running away more than running to. I have run away from whatever was dull, difficult or conflictual. This has meant avoiding the challenges in the heartland of any discipline or profession and instead seeking life and livelihood in other, emptier spaces. Being nomadic and marginal like this has been exhilarating, fulfilling and fun, a mix of solitary wandering and collegial solidarity with others in a small tribe. But when the tribe grows, it is time to move on.

Two themes – reflexivity and choosing what to do – thread through this account. They are hidden in Section 2, ‘Nomad and journey’, which the reader may wish to skip, come into the open in Section 3, ‘Reflections’, and finally inform Section 4, ‘A radical agenda for future development studies’. This last draws on the preceding critical reflection to ask what are some of the things we – development professionals with one or more feet in development studies – should try to do in the future.

#### *Nomad and journey*

The five phases that follow are separated for purposes of description but were experienced as a flow.

*Uprooting and running away* I was born and brought up in a small English provincial town (Cirencester). My parents were middle class, both thwarted in their education. My mother had fought for more years in school, but still got fewer than her brothers. My father’s schooling was downgraded and shortened when his father lost his cattle and farm to foot-and-mouth. I think they passed their frustrations on to me. I do not regret it. I was sent to prep school and to boarding public school. These were followed by National Service and university. My script was to come top in school, to be a good little boy basking in approval, and go on and on to become Prime Minister or Director-General of the BBC. In the jargon of an earlier social science, I had a high N-ach or need for achievement.

From early on, though, I wandered, pulling up roots and moving on. After School Certificate (O-levels) I did a year of mathematics, then switched to botany, chemistry and zoology for A-levels, then to history at university, and then public administration, becoming, as I have happily remained, undisciplined. Ever since university I have been running, and running away, never staying for long in one place or with one subject. I ran away from a safe family firm of estate agents in provincial England. I went on a scientific expedition with friends to Gough Island in the south Atlantic (Holdgate 1958). Then there was a year in the USA on an English Speaking Union scholarship studying for an aborted PhD on changes in the American ideal of success. I ran on then to my first regular job, in Kenya as a district officer in what was known by then (1958) as Her Majesty’s Overseas Civil Service. I made it clear that I was only interested if I could be spared another year at Cambridge on what was known as a Devonshire Course. This was a sort of proto-development studies for those going into colonial administration, including history, social anthropology and other subjects considered relevant.

And that was how I got into ‘development’.

*Decolonizing* It is difficult to convey to others the exhilaration of the decolonizing experience in Kenya. As a district officer I would have been seen by some as a wicked colonialist. I am not here defending or glossing any of the outrages of colonialism. But the task then was to prepare for independence and one could not have wished for a better job.

Whether for my supposed left-wing political views or because of my love of mountains,<sup>5</sup> I shall never know, but I was posted for two and a half years to the ‘remote’ Samburu district in northern Kenya where I was told there was ‘no politics’. There was work as a third-class magistrate, administering the Tribal Police, and a great deal of walking and riding horses. The most constructive

part was finding dam sites, building dams and managing grazing control to save the Samburu pastoralists from destroying their environment. Or so I believed. This was followed by North Tetu Division in Nyeri district, where people were exploding with energy, and work included negotiating sites for new primary schools when existing ones exceeded their size limit, encouraging coffee planting, and getting tree seedlings to people who insatiably seized them to plant on their land.

There were then two big challenges in Kenya: training for the takeover of government with independence; and settlement of Africans on the former White Highlands. I wanted to get involved in one or the other. Because I was a mountaineer, and had accompanied a training course on Mount Kenya, the door opened to be a trainer. I was recruited to the new Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA) and was responsible for three back-to-back six-month courses for Kenyan administrators who were taking over. This was an extraordinarily intense experience, innovating and improvising on the run, and beginning to learn how to avoid having to lecture: this was anyway essential as I did not know enough about anything to be able to talk about it for any length of time. The last course of twenty-four graduates straight from university, mainly Makerere in Uganda, challenged ('Why do we need to climb Kilimanjaro in order to be able to run our country?') but did not subvert the somewhat muscular approach of the training, which stressed character and self-confidence. The subjects covered included law, accounting, government procedures, natural resources, making district plans in real districts, and aspects of public administration covering all major ministries and departments (see Fuller 2002: 240–43). We put together practical case studies using real government files with the names unchanged. Through these, trainees dealt with real problems and could compare their solutions and the memos they wrote with those of known senior colonial officers (Chambers 1964). Another exercise was dealing with an overloaded in-tray which we trainers had much fun composing. One of my subjects was politics, for which I concentrated on European pathologies as sources of lessons.<sup>6</sup> For better or worse these were probably the most influential six months of my life (several on the courses were permanent secretaries in under two years). Then suddenly there was no one left to train. De-Europeanization had been so fast that Kenyans could no longer be spared for training. Kenya was independent and I was put in charge of the KIA library. It was time to move on.

*Retreading and research* After rejecting the idea of a career in politics in the UK (the Liberal Party, which I supported, was in deep, possibly terminal,

decline), I opted, as did a few others, to retread as an academic, registered for a part-time PhD at Manchester under W. J. M. (Bill) Mackenzie, and joined Guy Hunter, who was launching the East African Staff College.<sup>7</sup> We ran three-week courses in Nairobi, Kampala and Dar es Salaam in rotation, for senior civil servants and business managers. We began asking participants to make population projections to 1980, and debated disbelief at the dramatic rise in rural as well as urban populations. Government and business case studies played a part, as did talks and discussions with political leaders. My 'research' narrowed to the administration of settlement schemes, and especially the well-documented and much-visited Mwea Irrigation Settlement north of Nairobi, a honey pot which attracted other researcher bees, or flies, besides myself.<sup>8</sup> Mwea, with its strong disciplinary management, and its agricultural and economic success, was regarded as a model for development and much visited and referred to in policy discussions. The seminal, much-cited and misquoted research of Jane Hanger and Jon Moris (1973), however, showed that women were much worse off on the scheme. Settlement schemes were a great subject at the time: they had high political priority, they were much researched, there was a burgeoning grey literature, and comparative analysis and practical lessons were in demand.

Camouflaged by a PhD, I then became a 'lecturer' in the Department of Politics and Sociology in Glasgow for three years. Development studies was not yet a subject at Glasgow. My mentor, Bill Mackenzie, was a wonderfully humane polymath, deeply committed to development in Africa, and gave me freedom to continue research and to write. I never had to give a lecture and did little teaching. I met and married Jenny, who did lecture, in psychology. I got into writing and editing, and then moved in 1969 to an honorary fellowship at IDS, Sussex, then three years old, and an appointment to IDS Nairobi to coordinate evaluation for the Kenya government's Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP). After that and a spell in Botswana, while still based at (a very tolerant) IDS, I had two years mainly in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu with Barbara and John Harriss and Indian and Sri Lankan colleagues, as assistant director to Benny Farmer, doing fieldwork on agrarian change and the lack of a green revolution in rice (Farmer 1977).

*UNHCR and the Ford Foundation* Much of the time when I was physically at IDS is a blur. The periods abroad from IDS stand out more, two in particular. For a year and a half (1975–76), I was the first evaluation officer with UNHCR, based in Geneva. This was an organization largely staffed and dominated by

lawyers recruited to deal with refugees from eastern Europe. Their professional training and inclinations were to deal with legal issues. In terms of the breadth of concerns in development, and so also in development studies, UNHCR was a sort of coelacanth, a survivor from an earlier, less evolved age. It had no in-house competence in health, education, resettlement or agriculture. At the same time there were millions of rural refugees in Africa. I concentrated on them and tried to bring them to light as people not just statistics, and to counteract convenient myths that they could be taken care of by African hospitality. Colleagues could not believe that I would leave UNHCR after only eighteen months, but by then I had fulfilled the main task. And someone had warned me that I was beginning to become like a UN civil servant, which I took as a health warning, since many were such political animals.<sup>9</sup>

Later (1981–84), based in Delhi, I was the last Ford Foundation staff member to be a project specialist (meaning someone who works substantively on a subject). As a programme officer I was responsible for making and managing grants for irrigation management and social forestry. In this I was singularly unsuccessful, but had tremendous access and opportunities for learning and taking part in professional discussions and debates. These led on to thinking and writing about irrigation management, livelihoods, trees, common property resources, rights and access.

*Methodology and participation* From the early 1970s methodology became more and more central to what I found myself doing. Questionnaire surveys had proved ponderous, slow and inefficient, even when as well carried out as they were with the SRDP in Kenya and the rice-related research in South Asia. RRA (rapid rural appraisal) was evolved by practitioners in many places who were seeking more cost-effective alternatives. In the late 1970s there was a workshop and then an international conference on RRA at IDS. In 1985 the international conference on RRA at Khon Kaen in Thailand (KKU 1987) was a landmark. RRA training and field visits in Ethiopia, Kenya and West Bengal pointed to the potential of group-visual methods. I was then privileged to have two years (1989–91) based in Hyderabad with the Administrative Staff College of India at the time when Indian innovators were evolving PRA (participatory rural appraisal) approaches and methods, and the PRA explosion began. 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive', or so it seemed. It is difficult to express the amazement and exhilaration of those days when we discovered that 'they can do it', that poor people, without education, women, children and men, had capacities to map, diagram and analyse of which we had not dreamt. After that I spent most of the 1990s back in IDS, collaborating with the International

Institute for Environment and Development (IRED), networking and trying to support the spread of PRA and of good practices, latterly with colleagues in the Participation Group at IDS, who were working across a wider range of subjects, including participation in governance, human rights, citizenship, poverty and policy.

### Reflections

Reflections on these experiences relate to what we do and how we do it in development studies. We all have different endowments, opportunities and trajectories. As other chapters describe, development studies themselves, radical or not, undergo radical changes. They are, and should be, in constant flux and evolution. They are, and should be, influenced by and influencing the ever changing external environment of development policy, power, relationships and practice. But development studies are not an external given. They are also populated, animated, influenced and evolved by us individuals who are engaged in them. Our pathways and life experiences are both moulded by and mould development experience and development studies. We are many sorts of people. Some readers will identify themselves also as actual or would-be development nomads. There are still a number of us but we may be an endangered species.

Reflecting on my wanderings, and rationalizing after the fact, I can see four aspects that illuminate and in part explain what happened, and which may point to more general insights and lessons for those of us in development studies: comparative advantage and luck; making mistakes; reversals – standing on one's head (or, more prosaically, seeing things differently); and issues of development nomadism and ecosystem change. This last concludes that most of us in development studies options are more constrained by funders than we were.

*Comparative advantage and luck* Before drawing lessons, we have to recognize luck. I have been lucky, and luck and coincidence have provided a sort of personal comparative advantage which few others will have. Here is some of my luck, in roughly chronological sequence.

The first example was studying the Italian Risorgimento (the unification of Italy) at university. This entailed critical analysis of primary documents, with all their contradictions and even forgeries. It embedded a scepticism about evidence which has lasted well, and about sources and methods in research, and how knowledge is, as we now say, constructed, and fallible and always open to questioning and doubt.

Then I was fortunate in patrons and colleagues. A sequence of patrons were inspiring and enabling, giving me confidence and opportunities, and launching me out. These include Bill Mackenzie at Manchester and Glasgow, Guy Hunter at the East African Staff College, and Benny Farmer at the Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge. I can think of no other contemporary who was so privileged. The same goes for my colleagues in fieldwork in Kenya, Sri Lanka and India, who were friends then and have become friends for life. Throughout, my colleagues at IDS blessed me with a benign tolerance. And there were others in other institutions such as the IIED, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and Wye College, who were congenial co-conspirators with the solidarity of heretics who are a minority.

Another debt is to those who taught me that I did not know how to write. At school I was told, 'Chambers, your sentences are too angular.' Charles Chenevix Trench, my first district commissioner in Kenya, passed on to me his love of strange and funny events, of whimsical anecdote and of stories told against oneself, which he constantly wrote up for the entertainment of others (e.g. Chenevix Trench 1964). A big learning here was to relish unusual experience, to enjoy writing about it, and above all to laugh at oneself and not to take oneself too seriously. Charles wrote in my final confidential report, 'He is incurably verbose on paper.' Alan Simmance, at the KIA, went through one of my texts crossing out about one word in five. Harry Hanson, who examined my thesis, hammered me for a pretentious quotation from Talcott Parsons. After over a year with UNHCR in Geneva I was told, 'You are beginning to write like a UN civil servant.' I vividly remember these shocks. They startled me into trying to write more clearly and enjoying playing with words and their patterns.

A less obvious piece of luck was not having to lecture. To lecture, you have to read and remember what others have written, reinforcing it then through public repetition. I did not know enough of any relevant subject to be able to give a formal lecture during my three years at Glasgow, and am amazed to realize that I have only ever given one lecture in thirty-five years at the University of Sussex. Instead I have taken the easier option of participatory workshops, trying, but not always succeeding, to do something new each time. Optimal unpreparedness and trying to facilitate more open-ended participatory learning in place of more closed didactic teaching have helped. But lack of time and energy, laziness and having found exercises and sequences that seem to 'work' have lured me into repetition. In consequence I have deceived myself, constructing through speech and public performance false beliefs, progressively discarding caveats and fitting what I say to the needs of the occasion. I

do not think many lecturers realize that giving a lecture again and again is, like a catechism, disabling and conservative because each time we say something we embed it, remember it better and believe it more, diminishing our doubts, finding it easier to repeat, and to a degree closing our minds.

Yet another comparative advantage came from an interstitial existence between disciplines. This meant that I did not need to master or meddle in dominant development studies debates. Once I asked John Harriss whether I should make the effort to understand the mode of production controversies which were raging not least in the pages of the *Economic and Political Weekly*. I have since applied his advice, that it would not be worth my while, to other transient turbulences in the academic mainstream, complacently assuring myself that I was adhering to the principle of optimal ignorance. There was, after all, plenty else to do that was more exciting and less demanding.

The most significant and decisive lessons have come from failure and humiliation. When it became clear with the SRDP evaluation in Kenya that I was a hopeless manager, I ran away to consultancies, research and writing, and remained free from having to manage anything substantial for the rest of my life.<sup>10</sup> Later, being turned down for a chair by the IDS appointments board was a brilliant reinforcement and confirmation: it liberated me from posing as an academic, and the humiliation and hurt became a driving force of anger and energy.

The most important condition of all was security and freedom: a fellowship at the IDS provided a stable base and an organization and colleagues who tolerated and even encouraged my physical and intellectual nomadism. In development studies, the like of this no longer exists. The IDS was a good place to be at and go away from, and then to return to. It was more than just a dry-season reserve pasture. It had a reputation, convening power and, through its core funding, flexibility. Much of this was in the days when reappointment was reasonably safe if you wrote a book every five years or so and contributed something to courses when you were around. It was a busy and challenging place, and work was hard. But I was free to go on secondment to other jobs, and also to explore. There was a precious, glorious freedom to spend time in other countries, and to move from topic to topic (see also below).

So it was that much of my comparative advantage came from not having to lecture, not having administrative responsibility, not being promoted, not having research projects to manage, and not having to invest time as many do now in the often demoralizing business of preparing competitive bids.

*On being wrong* I have often been wrong and have made many mistakes. Four

stand out and are common enough to deserve description, as warnings and learning for myself and perhaps for others.

**COMBINING COMMITMENT, ENTHUSIASM, EDUCATED IGNORANCE AND POWER** These compounded each other with grazing schemes in Samburu district in Kenya. It was arrogant and wrong to try to induce the Samburu pastoralists to accept an alien system. The water introduced probably did more harm than good by allowing heavy grazing of areas earlier protected by lack of water. Like other missionaries blinded by their belief in themselves, I was wrong to think that meaning well was enough. Subsequently, I have come to understand how as a district officer I was doubly disabled: by 'education' and by power. The education – a 'good' degree in history at a 'good' university – led me to think I knew when I did not know; power as an administrator (executive and judiciary in the same person) reinforced this disability by reducing the need to compromise or adapt to others. I am astonished by the arbitrary decisiveness of some of the things I did. The collapse of grazing schemes in Samburu was a salutary slap in the face. It symbolized the failure of a mindset, behaviours and attitudes and demanded critical examination both of the system (which was transforming anyway with independence) and of myself. There are questions here for those development professionals with power in aid agencies, governments, NGOs, university departments, research institutes and consultancy agencies.

**ACCEPTING CONVENTIONAL METHODOLOGY AS A GIVEN** I was slow to question questionnaires. In Kenya I passionately advocated repeating a survey with a control area to identify the impacts of the Zaina Gravity Reticulated Water Scheme. But any results would have been useless. In the South Asia work I was slow to realize how much better we would have done if we had used local categories, for example of soil types, instead of composing a questionnaire in Cambridge. It took me too long to see the need to challenge methodology and to have the courage to do so. The lesson (see below) is to strive for self-critical epistemological awareness and to seek new ways of doing things.

**IMPOSING A MANAGERIAL MINDSET** This manifested itself in studying Mwea and writing it up. Jon Moris pointed out to me that on every point of contention between the management and the settlers – and there were many – I took the management's point of view. It took me years to recognize and offset this hang-over from my days as an administrator and decolonize my mind. Even when later studying canal irrigation management in South Asia, this same top-down orientation still predisposed me to managerial solutions to bad distribution

of water in canal systems: discipline was to be tightened among the staff who controlled and distributed water. Mick Moore disagreed. Subsequent experience showed that the solution was not the top-down discipline that I advocated but bottom-up participation with the empowerment of groups of irrigators. The lesson is introspection to understand and offset the way life experiences predispose us to interpretations, conclusions and recommendations.

**BEING OUT OF DATE** After my time with the Ford Foundation in India (1981–83) I sat down to write about canal irrigation management. The material and mindset that I had were mainly from the 1970s. But irrigation was moving on. In the mid-1980s, while I was writing the book (published only in 1988!), two new topics were coming to the top of the agenda: financing irrigation, previously heavily subsidized; and farmer participation. But the book was already too long, I was no longer able to update it in the field, and I badly wanted to get it out of the way and move on. This was a cost of nomadism. It is also a warning of the costs of long gestation for books based on empirical data – the danger of being out of touch, late and out of date by the time they are published. The lesson is to strive to write, publish and share with little delay, fortunately now with the Web much easier than it was; and to be ruthless with oneself in rewriting and updating rapidly before publication.<sup>11</sup>

In sum, the lessons are personal: to be critically self-reflective, alert and aware, and ever willing to question and to change.

*Reversals: standing on one's head* 'Reversals' was the word that summed up changes that were taking place in the 1980s and 1990s both in development orientations and in my own life. Polarizations and dichotomies, paired lists of contrasts, comparing normal professionalism and a new professionalism that expressed the reversals, coming to see the contrasts as between a paradigm of things and a paradigm of people – unsubtle and stark though these oppositions were, they served to summarize the paradigmatic contrasts and tensions that many were perceiving and experiencing. As the verses celebrating Hans Singer's seventy-fifth birthday had it (the first is from *Alice in Wonderland*):

'You are old, Father William,' the young man said,  
'And your hair has become very white;  
And yet you incessantly stand on your head –  
Do you think, at your age, it is right?'

and

Normal professionals face the core



New ones by standing on their head  
Face the periphery instead.

(Clay and Shaw 1987: 229, 253)

As more and more development professionals 'stood on their heads', things came to be seen differently. In many fields, reversals and professional transformations began or continued and gathered momentum and even respectability.

Transforming reversals occurred, for example, in agricultural science and knowledge. Robert Rhoades' *The Art of the Informal Agricultural Survey* (1982) stressed changes in behaviour of researchers with farmers, and Paul Richards' *Indigenous Agricultural Revolution* (1985) demonstrated in detail the value and validities of indigenous technical knowledge. Both were landmarks, widely influential and revolutionary in their implications. Not just the knowledge but the experimental abilities of farmers were increasingly recognized. Jacqui Ashby's International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) video *The IPRA Method*, and Michel Pimbert and P. V. Satheesh's International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT, 1991) video *Participatory Research with Women Farmers*, had a huge impact in the 1990s. In the mid-2000s we have moved so far that in the International Agricultural Research Institutes it is now common for farmers to be involved not just in evaluating varieties, but in the whole breeding processes, including selecting the original crosses, a degree of participation unthinkable in the 1980s. Beyond this, in the 2000s there is a new critical awareness of research process and relationships with the emergence in the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) system of the theme of Institutional Learning and Change (Watts et al. 2003),<sup>12</sup> reflecting back critically on the system itself.

Reversals of behaviours and relationships, and transformations of mind-sets, went together. With much that changed, practice came first, and theory later. One part of this was the explosion of innovation with PRA (originally participatory rural appraisal, now sometimes participation, reflection and action, or simply PRA), with outsiders changing their behaviour and becoming facilitators and local people the analysts, expressing their own realities. The epicentres of innovation were in countries of the South, especially in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In the 1990s many university faculty members in the South and North were left standing, while students asked to be taught and to use the new visual and group approaches and methods, and the behaviours and attitudes that they demanded. Development studies courses and

university departments lagged behind field practice, and when they did begin to adopt the new approaches and methods their understanding and teaching were often flawed, suffering from the inexperience of university faculty. Practitioners from the South were at times appalled by the ignorance of teachers in the North. Abuses have now diminished and practice has improved as the significance of behaviour, attitudes and relationships has gradually sunk in. More generally, more participatory approaches to teaching and learning in development courses have also been evolved<sup>13</sup> and are spreading (Taylor and Fransman 2003).

*Nomadism and ecosystem change* To be geographically, institutionally and intellectually nomadic seems to require two conditions: emerging gaps or patches to graze or cultivate; and funding and freedom.

It was good fortune that gaps were there to be found and explored: methods for rapid appraisal, canal irrigation management, tropical seasonality, trees as savings, water and poor people, micro-environments unobserved, farmer-first approaches in agricultural research and extension, vulnerability as a dimension of deprivation, sustainable livelihoods, and so on. Today, change in many dimensions seems to be accelerating, which should mean that new issues and gaps, and the opportunities and needs they present, will continue to open up for us all.

But funding and freedom are more the problem now. Organizations need funds to create posts and people need security and opportunities to move around. The IDS was privileged, and the envy of others, with its core funding in the 1970s and 1980s. It allowed freedom not only for longer-term work but also for rapid opportunism and leaping on serendipitous leads. Here is an example. In the late 1970s someone remarked in a seminar that they had found births peaking during the monsoon in Bangladesh. Richard Longhurst, just back from fieldwork, said he had found the same during the rains in northern Nigeria. So we asked – why? And at once we were into the rich and wonderfully complex subject of seasonality. Richard and I wrote a two-page note and were allocated £10,000 from the IDS budget for a conference on tropical seasonality and poverty, a subject as enthralling as it was neglected and important, and a book resulted. Today, we are so projectized and log framed that we would lack the flexibility to open up a subject like that. It does not fit in any box. We would face negotiation, hassle, delay, uncertainty and worry, wondering how we were going to earn our way while we took the risks of making a proposal that had not been asked for. Seasonality remains a Cinderella in development, vital, pervasive, enormously significant for many poor people, cross-cutting

disciplines, and still systemically under-perceived by professionals at huge cost in stress, suffering and impoverishment to hundreds of millions of poor people.<sup>14</sup> Yet it is hard to imagine funding now to support work on tropical seasonality as a general subject.

Research agendas in the 2000s appear to be determined more by funders than they were. Core funds are scarcer and scarcer. There is less trust, more targets, less flexibility, more 'accountability' upwards to where the money comes from. I am vulnerable to the fantasy of a past golden age. Yet even allowing for that, it seems to me that development studies now suffers from too much centralized decision-making linked to funding, with a loss of nimble opportunism. Do we not need more nomadism and more nomads? And if so, what are the implications for those who fund development studies?

*A radical agenda for future development studies: qualifications, caveats and context*

In some circles, to be radical, or to label oneself as radical, is approved and politically correct. There can then be a danger of posturing as radical for radicalism's sake. In development studies, I believe there is a case for persisting with and continuing to evolve many of the good things that are already being done, some of them bequeathed by yesterday's radicalism, no longer very new, but with far still to go: concerns, for example, with gender relations, participation and sustainability. There is a case, too, for continuity of in-depth research. What is radical can also rotate; some cutting edges move in circles. This can mean, for example, reviving and reinforcing the orientations and concerns with redistribution and equity from the 1970s.

It is also important to recognize that over the past two decades, in the UK at least, much has changed for the better. First, dissemination used to be a blind spot: on ESCOR in the 1970s it was again and again necessary to argue to raise the budgets of research projects to include provision for workshops, publications and other forms of dissemination. That has now been corrected. Second, international collaboration and South-South and South-North links are more common, and relationships more collegial. Long past are the days when the South came to the North mainly to be trained: learning now is reciprocal, and flows of innovation and learning are increasingly from South to North. Third, in the UK priority subjects are more systematically opened up jointly with institutions in the South through the Development Research Centres, for example Chronic Poverty at Manchester and Citizenship, Participation and Accountability at IDS. Finally, the agenda does move, and quite rapidly. Recent examples on the social side alone are human rights, violence, conflict,

disability, chronic poverty, poor people's concepts of ill-being and well-being, and dimensions of power and relationships (e.g. Groves and Hinton 2004). And each discipline and sector has its own evolving agenda.

A case can also be made for a historical view and learning from the past. Re-discovering wheels has its value in learning for oneself. Unfortunately, though, much learning is expensive and unnecessary because old lessons have been lost. Community-driven development driven by the World Bank and participatory natural resource management driven by national bureaucracies are relearning the costly but forgotten lessons of community development in the 1950s and 1960s. Here as elsewhere one can ask whether the experience of the past has been studied enough and the lessons presented to those who make policy today.

All that said, immobility, inertia and conservatism give grounds for concern. I sense that there is less inclination and opportunity for development professionals to change types of jobs and organizations and that fewer people do it. I have no supporting statistics, and I hope I am wrong. To be sure, there are still people who move in and out of NGOs, aid agencies and research and academic institutions, but they appear a minority. In the UK in the 1960s and 1970s, development studies was a growth industry: new institutes and centres were being founded. But now in the 2000s the security of an expanding job market has passed, and I think more people hang on in their posts rather than risk a transition. In IDS in the 1970s and into the 1980s, fellows were *expected* on average to spend a third of their time on spells abroad, funded from other sources. So it was that I could work on evaluation in the IDS Nairobi, on rice-related field research in South Asia, on rural refugees with UNHCR in Geneva and Africa, on irrigation and social forestry with the Ford Foundation in Delhi, and on PRA with the Administrative Staff College of India. Today there seems less latitude for such spells abroad, which for me were so challenging, energizing and formative; and that is a loss.

There is, of course, a case for specialization, by subject, by country or by region. There is a case for spending time in one organization or place. But specialization and isolation have been responsible for many of the worst errors in development policy and practice. To offset these requires that development studies be polymath, grounded in and continually keeping up to date with micro and macro realities, and theoretically informed but open to an eclectic pluralism. Loss of mobility, with careers limited to one organization and one place, whatever their benefits, has costs in the range of experiences and learning forgone.

There will be many views about what might be a radical agenda for future development studies. The reader may wish to make a personal list before reading mine. What follows draws on current ideas and insights from colleagues, and is where my journey as a nomad has brought me. There is much, much else besides what follows here.

Radicalism often refers to analysis, advocacy and action for major social change. What follows in no way negates such activities. But there is a complementary critical radicalism which introduces and explores new dimensions and activities that cross-cut subjects and contexts. These dimensions and activities are little recognized, attract few funds and are not represented by any one discipline or profession – or if they are, not by one that is prominent in development studies. These dimensions and activities overlap and interact. Those I shall outline are: methodologies, critical reflexivity, agency and the personal, power and relationships, and pedagogy for the powerful, all combining to become a critical reconfiguration.

Methodology refers to the ways we do things and their patterns. Methodology is implicit in every development studies activity – research, teaching, learning, convening, networking, writing, conferences and so on. There is also a meta subject of how methodologies can be developed. This is even more neglected. In participatory research, however, experience has been that each topic and context needs invention, piloting and refining of its own tailor-made methodology.<sup>15</sup> Despite this experience, though, methodology is still a relatively neglected subject in development studies. Habits persist: in fieldwork, bad questionnaire surveys survive. There are brilliant examples of RRA and PRA, but quality and ethics are often problematic. Significant innovations are overlooked; for example, little interest in the mainstream has been shown in participatory approaches and methods for generating statistics. How things are done and can or could be done is an issue across subjects and topics, not just those well established in disciplinary mainstreams, but also in others such as bureaucratic procedures, participatory poverty assessments, accountabilities upwards and downwards, natural resource management, advocacy, training for new concerns such as human rights, work on HIV/Aids, chronic poverty, and many more. One methodology we need is to know better how to analyse the links between our choices, and acts of commission and omission, and those who are meant to benefit, and so to learn to make better decisions about what to do.

Critical reflexivity refers to reflecting critically on oneself. The academic debates of development studies have been weak on transparent reflexivity.

Willingness to examine and present personal predispositions seems inversely related to the conviction, passion and rigidity with which views are held and taught. This is independent of right or left, and largely independent of discipline. It was there as much with some of the old-style Marxists of the 1960s and 1970s as with some of the neo-liberal marketeers of the 1990s and 2000s. It is a matter not just of the inherent validity of an ideology or world view but also of personality and personal orientation. This is not at all to say that the Marxists or the neo-liberals were or are all wrong. It is, rather, to say that it would be easier for all of us to get closer to useful understanding and good ideas about what can and should be done, and for others to form sound judgments about their views, if they could examine and be transparent about their life experiences and conditioning and the predispositions to which these have given rise.

Development studies especially needs self-critical *epistemological* awareness – that is, being critically aware of how knowledge is formed by the interplay of what is outside, and what inside, ourselves. Outside ourselves, this concerns being aware not just of methodology but also of the external processes of observation and interaction which inform us; and inside ourselves, this concerns trying to be aware of our own predispositions to select, interpret and frame. This makes doubt a virtue, and being able to say ‘I don’t know’ and ‘I was wrong’. And it can lead to modifying how we seek to learn, changing the approaches and methodologies we use, trying to understand and offset our mindsets and orientations, and to be more sensitive to, and aware of, the realities of others.

Agency and the personal dimension follow on. This is so self-evident that it is embarrassing even to make the point. But what happens in development results largely from human action, from the choices and actions of actors. For many actors in development studies, making a difference is a major, if not the major, motivation. Yet, and again strangely, there is little systematic analysis of the causal links between our work – that book, that conference, that idea – and the poor, deprived, vulnerable and excluded people whom we seek to serve. There is little analysis of career trajectories and life experiences, or of the best balance between specialization and nomadism, between working in one sort of organization and in several. Unsurprisingly, I would argue we need more semi-nomadic, perhaps transhumant, professionals who move around and gain experience in different contexts, countries and organizations. In North and South alike, this would mean more people who had spent different parts of their lives in other countries, in aid bureaucracies, NGOs and research institutes, who had done grassroots fieldwork, and who could bring to their

power and relationships have only recently become a major focus of attention in development studies. Although power in political science has a long genealogy, power in relationships between development actors has received little attention. In their edited book *Inclusive Aid: Power and Relationships in International Development* (2004) Leslie Groves and Rachel Hinton have placed it firmly on the agenda, with the challenge to change behaviour, attitudes and mindsets, and procedures, principles and conditionalities, to make real the rhetoric of partnership, empowerment, ownership, participation, accountability and transparency.

Methodology, reflexivity, agency and making a difference, and power and relationships, converge and overlap, and together with parts of my life experience point to the need for a pedagogy for the powerful or (with apologies to Paulo Freire, though I hope he would have approved) for the oppressors, or more tactfully, the non-oppressed. My power, ignorance and ignorance of my ignorance as a district officer led me to do harm when I meant to do good and thought I was doing good. In the history of development there are many good things, but the avoidable errors are appalling. Tens, perhaps hundreds, of millions of poor people were deprived, suffered and often died as a result of policies of structural adjustment alone. We need better ways, procedures, methodologies and experiences to enable those who make and influence policy, and ourselves in development studies, to be more aware, to get it right and to do better. The big priority now is realism, to bridge and close the chasm that has opened even wider between the incestuous love-hate relationships of lenders, donors and policy-makers in their capital-city and five-star-hotel meetings and workshops, and the poor people for whose benefit our development industry is said to exist. Recognizing their power in development studies, we can ask too whether we need a pedagogy for funders.

There is no magic wand, no one solution. But one process shows promise of practicality and impact. It is the practice of immersion.<sup>16</sup> In this, outsiders – policy-makers, powerful people, development professionals of all sorts including academics – have the opportunity to spend a few days hosted by a poor family or community, sharing some of their life, helping them in their daily tasks, learning their life histories, and seeing things from their, peripheral, perspective. Pioneered by Karl Osner in the 1980s, used by the World Bank for senior managers and others since the mid-1990s and now spreading to other agencies and organizations, immersions have shown a potential to make a radical difference to those who can make a radical difference. When

errors and failures of understanding, I can speculate on how differently (and better) I would have acted had I had the experience of participatory research and regular immersions.

A radical reconfiguration of development studies would then include more individual reflexivity, especially self-critical epistemological awareness, and deliberate efforts, through practices such as immersions, to gain the experiential learning of reversals. It would pay more attention to methodology. It would entail more conscious actions to support some nomadism, and to avoid the traps of isolation, insulation and complacency to which we are so vulnerable, especially, but not only, those of us in and from the North. Above all, it would recognize the importance of policy-makers, the wealthy and others with power, and make it a priority to learn about how they, as well as ourselves, can change and act more for the better. For they are the biggest blind spot in development studies. If we are serious about poverty, we have to be serious about powerful people as people.

#### Notes

- 1 I am grateful to Uma Kothari for constructive critical reflections on drafts of this chapter.
- 2 There are markers of ageing. One is the first time you are, if thin, described as 'sprightly'. Another, which I recently passed, is when you are introduced as having '... spent a lifetime ...'.
- 3 This is not the place for detail on subjects such as relationships with parents, childhood traumas, early toilet training and the like, although we know these have a profound effect on us. To recount these would not, I think, significantly illuminate what follows.
- 4 Another form of optimism, perhaps more common in our credit-for-consumption Northern world than before, drains the half-full glass and asks for more.
- 5 I suspect that there was a security file on me dating back to wild days during National Service and carrying the motion 'This House welcomes the advent of communism in China'. This was at the time of the Korean War. In my interview for HMOCS I was probed for my reasons, perhaps political or ideological, for wanting to go to Kenya, a 'difficult' colony with minority problems. It ended happily enough with 'Oh, my dear chap, if you want to go to Kenya for the *mountains* ...' and I was through.
- 6 As teaching material I requested the British Council to send us two books: Isaiah Berlin on Karl Marx, and *Mein Kampf*. The response was that these could not be supplied because of their political nature. Perhaps someone feared a parliamentary question: 'Is the minister aware that the British Council in Kenya is supplying ...?' We asked for Lord Lugard's diaries instead. These were deemed acceptable.
- 7 The East African Staff College had headquarters in Nairobi in what are now the income tax offices. It subsequently grew in size and scope, and has become ESAMI (the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute) with a multi-storey building in Arusha, Tanzania.

8 So many researchers descended on Mwea that Jon Moris and I were able to edit a book on the scheme, *Mwea: An Irrigated Rice Settlement in Kenya*, Weltforumverlag, Munich, 1973.

9 Before I joined it UNHCR was described to me as a '*panier de crabes*' (a basket of crabs).

10 I have to qualify this. In the 1990s at IDS I found myself managing a substantial budget but was immensely fortunate that before it got completely out of hand John Gaventa came and took over.

11 I smile at my hypocrisy in writing this. I have a book that has been with the publisher for nearly three months during which much has happened. Instead of updating it urgently, I am trying to complete this chapter to meet its third deadline. The kindest gloss I can give this is that there are always trade-offs.

12 This paper symbolizes the scope for reversals and the vicissitudes of development: the authors' names are in reverse alphabetical order; and within months the International Service for National Agricultural Research, which published the paper, had ceased to exist.

13 For example, an innovative MA in Participation, Social Change and Development was launched by IDS and the University of Sussex this year (2004).

14 A recent manifestation of the neglect of the multiple interlocking dimensions of seasonal deprivation for poor people is an artefact of the top-down, insulated, centre-outwards analysis which is informing efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Perhaps this is only to be expected from season-proofed, mainly Northern professionals.

15 See Cornwell et al. (2001) and Barahona and Levy (2003) for examples from Malawi. Many professionals persist in thinking that they can take participatory methodologies off the shelf, as though they were like questionnaires.

16 For an overview and sources see Eyben (2004); for fuller analysis and distillations of experience, Irvine et al. (2004); for an example and outcomes, Chen et al. (2004); for practical guidelines, Osner (2004); and for a participatory research variant, Jupp (2004).

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## 5 | Secret diplomacy uncovered: research on the World Bank in the 1960s and 1980s

TERESA HAYTER

My first period of research and writing on the World Bank<sup>1</sup> was from 1967 to 1970 at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in London. The Overseas Development Institute had published the first report I wrote for them on French Aid (1966). But my report on the World Bank in Latin America was censored by the ODI and the World Bank. It was eventually published in 1971 as *Aid as Imperialism*. I then worked as a research assistant to Professor Ian Little at Nuffield College in Oxford and in Kenya, and later wrote a short book on imperialism entitled *The Creation of World Poverty* (1981). From 1981 to 1984 I returned to research on the World Bank with a grant from the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and wrote *Aid: Rhetoric and Reality* (1985).

When I initially carried out research and wrote about foreign aid in the 1960s I believed that its real, and not just stated, purpose was to improve the situation of poor people in developing countries. At the time, there was virtually no published material arguing anything else, and my illusions were widely shared. As I learnt more, and in particular when I began to do research on the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, I came to believe that the purpose of aid is, and cannot be other than, to serve the economic interests of the major capitalist powers, especially the USA, and of their big corporations and banks. It became clear that these two international institutions are not even enlightened defenders of the capitalist system as a whole, but instead give priority to the interests of their major funders. Their claims to political neutrality have no foundation in reality. The result is that the effect of foreign aid, including the 'aid' provided by the two major international institutions, on the poor of the Third World is, on balance, negative. This chapter explores these issues through experiences of working on the World Bank over a period of about twenty years from the 1960s to the 1980s, and my subsequent disillusionment about the real purposes of 'aid'.

### *The purposes of aid: early illusions at the Overseas Development Institute*

At the ODI in the 1960s, we believed that our task was to lobby for more aid, and to make it 'more effective'. By this we meant that aid should be reformed or improved so that it made a bigger contribution to promoting 'development'

attempt, however, to define development. Instead, there was an unquestioned assumption among the staff that 'development', whatever it was, would lead to improvement in the situation of poor people. The ODI prided itself on the fact that it was not funded by government, and its studies could be quite critical of the failures of government aid policies to promote the purposes for which we believed it was intended. The ODI was, on the other hand, funded by Barclays Bank, Unilever and others with banking and commercial interests in developing countries. This began to sow some seeds of doubt in my mind as it became clear that we could not, for example, produce research that questioned the contribution of foreign private investment and lending to 'development'. Any attempts at staff meetings to raise questions about this issue were not popular. My first book written for the ODI, *French Aid* (1966), however, complied with the necessary ideological framework and met with approval. Numerous interviews with French aid officials had convinced me of their good will and I was generally impressed, for example, with their claims that their intentions, when they intervened in the policies of governments mainly in former French colonies in West and North Africa, were to increase their independence and self-sufficiency in the medium term.

In 1966 the ODI organized a conference on 'Effective Aid', at which there were representatives of the World Bank and the bilateral aid agencies of France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. Also present were the chairmen of Barclays Bank UK, and of the International Nickel Company USA. Naively, members of ODI staff assumed that 'effective' here meant in terms of the alleviation of poverty. In the report of the conference's proceedings, and in a section on 'Motives and objectives of aid' in a book entitled *Effective Aid* (1967), I dismissed the argument that aid could be justified on the grounds that it was in the economic or political self-interest of the countries providing it, and asserted that 'a sense of solidarity' which had made progress within states was now being extended to the world as a whole. The most debated topic at the conference was the legitimacy, effectiveness or otherwise of an activity called 'leverage'. This meant making aid conditional on the adoption, by receiving governments, of policies of a general nature, unrelated to the specific projects financed by aid. The participants divided roughly along national lines, with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) representative, the French and also the World Bank favouring the idea, and the British and Germans against it. Michael Hoffman of the World Bank contributed a paper on the coordination of aid (1967) which hinted at the need for donors to examine the performance of recipients and coordinate their responses:

To put it a bit crudely, the potential donors are interested in getting the most for their development dollars and are, therefore, likely to approach the exercise [of aid coordination] with a critical eye on the economic performance of the claimant country and the reasonableness of its claim for external assistance ... The Bank ... is almost equally concerned about both increasing the general flow of development finance to worthy countries and encouraging maximum mobilisation of domestic resources in recipient countries and steadily improved general economic performance. (Hoffman 1967)

The USAID paper was a good deal more explicit, stating that:

AID has increasingly recognised that economic aid can promote development not simply by supplementing the host country's limited capital and technical resources but also by exerting influence on host country policies and programmes. As we have become more aware of aid's potential leverage role, we have experimented with techniques for exercising such leverage more effectively ... Existing government policies, priorities and administrative capacity should not be taken as immutable, but rather regarded as policy variables. (USAID 1966)

During the discussion, the British participants raised objections on the basis that donors did not always know best, and that, for example, an aid agreement with Chile incorporated a wages policy agreement that went to the heart of the question of income distribution. Similarly, efforts to persuade countries to control their population could have large effects on the age and sex profile of the population. They suggested that these issues needed to be addressed with caution, as trying to intervene in these choices could be dangerous. Both the British and the German participants were worried by the prospect of 'intervention of one state in the internal affairs of another'. The US response was that they did it anyway, and they might as well make sure that the intervention was beneficial. An aid official was quoted in the proceedings as follows:

I think you intervene just as much by not doing anything but providing \$100m to some existing government. Essentially you are supporting whatever that government wants to do, you are making the opposition of that government unhappy because you have supported that government. You cannot say that you are not intervening; you are intervening. (USAID 1966)

The representative of the World Bank, apparently, concurred, supporting the principle that:

The World Bank had been trying to obtain greater commitment to policies

favourable to development in recipient countries for some time. Its efforts were increasingly accepted. Complaints of 'infringement of sovereignty' had in the past been heard much earlier in the process ... Finance ministers sometimes incorporated agreements with the bank on policy measures in their budget speeches. (ibid.)

The word 'dialogue', subsequently much used by the World Bank as an innocuous-sounding description of its attempts to persuade governments to change their policies, was introduced. A British participant told 'the story of the man who was asked whether he had persuaded another man. The answer was: "Yes, we sat up all night, I persuaded him, and in the morning his hair was as white as the snow."' There was much agreement that attempts to exercise influence were more likely to be successful if they were made through a multilateral organization, and that 'multilateral agencies could stick much more objectively to technical and economic considerations'. For example, 'a Frenchman with experience of trying to achieve the same policy changes in Africa through bilateral and through multilateral channels had found that the latter could be more effective'.

#### *Research on the World Bank: an encounter with reality*

Following the conference, the World Bank offered to fund research on its activities and policies by the ODI. I was subsequently invited to research the activities and policies of the World Bank in Latin America. I suggested to the ODI that I should examine the issues raised at the conference around the subject of 'leverage' (which was the original title given to the book I wrote in 1968, which, on publication, was amended to *Aid as Imperialism*). The World Bank accepted our proposal, which was couched in cautious language, but stated that the study would concentrate on 'activities which involve a fairly close relationship between the international agencies and Latin-American countries' and 'an examination of the potential role of international institutions and of economic aid as catalysts in development, assuming that more is involved than a simple transfer of resources or the setting up of isolated projects'. At the time I was fairly open-minded on the topic. The Bank later accused me of having a thesis to which I bent the facts; in fact the opposite was the case. Like the British and German participants at the conference, I had some doubts about excessive interference by foreigners in the policies of recipient countries. I assumed, however, partly because of the reformist rhetoric of the US-led Alliance for Progress in Latin America, which called for reforms such as increases in taxation to fund public services so as to avert the danger of more

Cubas, that the exercise of influence could be in directions that I considered progressive. In 1967 I set off for Washington and then, for three months, to Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Chile.<sup>2</sup>

In my three weeks in Washington, World Bank officials briefed me and were quite forthcoming with introductions and advice. But the Bank generally did not publish even the most final and sanitized of its country economic reports from which one might have gleaned what its policies were, and I was not given access to any of its unpublished materials and reports. I obtained from other sources some of its unpublished materials, and the disclosure of the existence of Operational Memorandum no. 204 (see below). There was at the time very little written material that analysed or questioned the role of the World Bank or aid, although I had read, and disbelieved, a paper published in Pakistan which argued that aid served the purposes of imperialism. I dredged through all the material I could find, and included it in long quotations and footnotes in my report. But the report was essentially based on numerous interviews with government officials, politicians and aid officials and some academics and journalists in Washington and in the four countries I visited. Of the aid officials, by far the most open were from USAID.<sup>3</sup> Most World Bank and IMF officials, apart from one or two mavericks, were on the whole extremely reticent and cautious. It became clear that they were, mostly, a tough lot, with a harsh right-wing ideology. Unlike the French officials whom I had earlier interviewed, they were unsubtle in their attitudes towards the countries and governments they dealt with.

My interviews with senior officials in the central bank and finance ministry in Rio de Janeiro began the process of opening my eyes. At the time there was a right-wing military dictatorship in Brazil; a more populist one had been ousted, with CIA assistance, in a coup in 1964. Yet a very senior central banker complained to me that World Bank officials knew nothing of the reality of Brazil. They merely, he said, travelled by car from their hotel to the finance ministry with their eyes closed, and refused to accept the evidence provided by the fact that the unemployed were sleeping in the street. It slowly emerged that the three aid agencies I was studying, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and USAID, were thoroughly in favour of the policies of the dictatorship, and in fact considered them a model of 'monetarist' austerity. A few minor reservations were expressed by AID officials, one of whom said that the Brazilian economics minister Roberto Campos was 'more royalist than the king' and should, for example, have used some of Brazil's reserves to import food and consumer goods at a time when shortages were forcing up prices. But in general, as another AID official put it, the three agencies were 'all in it together'. Such pressures as they did exert were in the direction of cutting, not

raising, levels of social expenditure, keeping wages below the rate of inflation and paying off debts.

Next was Colombia. In Colombia the three agencies were engaged in a battle with the government to get it to devalue its currency. In November 1966 President Lleras had announced on television that he would not devalue the peso because foreigners told him to, that he was breaking off relations with the IMF, and that he was reintroducing controls that his government had agreed to give up under an IMF programme of import liberalization. This agreement had in addition specified that if the IMF's measures did not result in Colombia meeting certain balance of payments targets, the IMF would stop lending. Colombia failed the balance of payments test even though it had complied with the IMF's conditions. The IMF and World Bank missions met USAID officials at the US embassy in Colombia and decided that devaluation was required. An IMF representative advised the Colombian government that the IMF would not renew its stand-by loan unless Colombia devalued, and apparently specified by what amount. The other two agencies, according to varying accounts, either initiated the demands for devaluation or even demanded more toughness, merely using the IMF as spokesperson, or alternatively fell in behind the IMF, supporting it with actions of their own. The World Bank, for example, apparently 'told' the New York banks to stop lending to Colombia.

In Peru the engagement of the international aid agencies in general economic policies was less evident, although there was some pressure to raise taxation in order to deal with problems of financial instability, and at the same time some pressure to cut public expenditure for social purposes and for a wage freeze. The main issues raised by Peruvian officials and politicians concerned projects, their objections to direct US pressures in the interests of US private investors in Peru, and the World Bank's refusal to take social and political considerations into account when determining project location, saying, for example, that 'people could be moved'. I subsequently discovered the existence of an internal Bank document called Operational Memorandum no. 204, adopted by its governors some time after the Bank was set up, which states that it may not lend to countries that default on debt repayment or servicing, which nationalize foreign-owned assets or which fail to honour agreements with foreign private investors. This memorandum was invoked in 1967 in Peru over the issue of long-disputed assets of the US International Petroleum Company, as well as in numerous other places and times.

In Chile the issues emerged with yet more clarity. The orthodox 'monetarist' or neo-liberal policies of the aid agencies were confronted by the modernizing, somewhat progressive but not anti-capitalist Christian Democrat



government of Eduardo Frei. Frei's government initially intended to follow a middle way between the monetarists and the revolutionary left. It adopted some of the ideas of the Latin American structuralist school, attempting to achieve the hat-trick of less inflation, more growth and some income redistribution, including land reform. The aid agencies thought these aims were impossible to achieve and, as some Chilean government officials and politicians complained, had no sympathy with their ideas and made no attempt to understand them. What they wanted was financial stabilization, which for them meant cuts in government expenditure, lower wages and less land reform than even the Christian Democrat government intended. By the end of the Christian Democrats' term, they had largely caved in and abandoned their attempts at reform. When Allende's socialist coalition was elected, the IMF and the World Bank stopped lending, but with the overthrow of Allende's government, they got what they wanted – that is, uncritical support for their economic policies under Pinochet's brutal dictatorship, with their devastating effect on the Chilean poor.

It was becoming clearer to me whose interests the aid agencies represented. The IMF and the World Bank share a large building in the centre of Washington, their voting systems are weighted according to the size of member countries' financial contributions, and the USA with a few other major powers has a veto on decisions. Even that does not always provide the USA with the power it wants, since the US delegate requires the support of other delegates to exercise a veto, and the USA therefore intervenes at times to ensure that decisions do not reach the executive directors. Even more important, the World Bank raises the bulk of its funds from the major capital markets, especially Wall Street, and therefore depends on their approval; it also has a more immediate interest in the repayment and servicing of debts, its own and those of the private banks, than the IMF. While in theory financial stability is the business of the IMF and the World Bank is supposedly interested in investment and growth, in practice there is no clear indication that the IMF presses harder for austerity than the World Bank; it was sometimes the other way round. The aid agencies also pushed for the liberalization of imports and capital movements, policies in which the major industrialized powers have a clear interest.

All the presidents of the World Bank have been citizens of the USA. The IMF's managing directors have been Europeans; their deputies, and the heads of its Western Hemisphere Department, have been US citizens. The institutions have much autonomy even from the supervision of their boards and executive directors, and they are hierarchical and authoritarian. Most of the staff are from the USA, some are from Britain and other European countries,

few are from the Third World; of the latter, the overwhelming majority have postgraduate degrees from major North American and European universities. Some of the Bank's senior staff, and all its presidents except McNamara, come from private US banks, and some return to them. The staff are normally located in Washington, and usually make only short trips to the countries they are dealing with, to avoid, I was told, the danger that they might 'go native'. The pay and perks are so good that there is also much incentive for staff to stay in line. In my various encounters with World Bank staff, I perhaps got most information from Indians at junior levels whom I met unofficially. Some of them knew exactly what was going on, knew it was not in the interests of the poor in the Third World, and were prepared to tell me so, and perhaps to add that they needed to save up enough money for themselves and their families to buy a house and eventually retire in India.

*Reality is not for publication: the World Bank's attempts to 'bury' the ODI report*

On returning to Washington it became clear that the senior World Bank officials had now understood, belatedly, what I was interested in. They told me that their objections lay not with my conclusions, which were not only still unclear even to me and which I had not conveyed to them, but with the subject matter of my research. I was summoned to an interview with two Bank officials and told that I should abandon my research and write about something else. My hair did not go white, but I had to retreat to recover from the Bank's onslaught. As I wrote later in the Appendix to *Aid as Imperialism*, 'I came out of this interview battered, but eventually realised that I was in a position not to be bullied out of my research; I had a lot of material on the Bank's activities, and merely wanted to hear from them their version.' Although all the officials I asked to interview, apart from the official most concerned with Colombia, agreed to see me, however, they were often hostile or suspicious and few were informative. The interview with Gerry Alter, director of the Western Hemisphere Department of the Bank, as I wrote in the Appendix to *Aid as Imperialism*, 'was devoted almost exclusively to unsolicited explanations of why the Bank preferred the public not to know about leverage, and also to an attempt to discover what my conclusions would be if, in spite of everything, I persisted in my desire to write about leverage'. He told me that he believed the Bank could operate less effectively if it was publicly known to be engaged in the business of leverage, and drew an analogy with 'secret diplomacy'. The IMF was even less helpful. I saw only one of the IMF officials whom I asked to see in Washington, although after they had received the draft of my book, they

offered to 'arrange for an oral discussion between you and interested members of our staff' if I were to return to Washington.

On returning to London, I wrote the first draft of the findings of the research (1967-68). My ideas had radically changed, partly because of meeting people on the left, especially in Chile, but mainly because of my observations of the behaviour of aid agencies. I had become convinced that not only were they not, as they claimed, politically neutral (it was inconceivable that they could support socialism), but that they were not even interested in reforms which, according to some theories, might avert socialism. They supported a right-wing, monetarist orthodoxy whose main concern was the never-never land of financial stability that was to be achieved by cuts in government spending, wages and sometimes employment. They were interested in implementing policies that favoured foreign interests, such as debt servicing and import liberalization, supporting private enterprise, especially foreign private enterprise, and the so-called free market. They were barely interested even in economic growth, which they saw as following after, and as a more or less automatic consequence of, stabilization. I had also become convinced that there was little possibility that any real improvements in the situation of the rural and urban poor in Latin America could be achieved through reforms, and without a socialist transformation of society. This would of course entail expropriation of the interests of both local and foreign capital, and would therefore be unacceptable to the international aid agencies. The latter could not be reformed, given their sources of funding; the World Bank has a particularly close relationship with, and dependence on, the major financial markets of the rich countries, especially Wall Street, from which it raises most of its funds.

My employers at the ODI said that I should continue to write what I believed, provided I tried to put the agencies' case 'fairly'. They were not enthusiastic about the first draft produced in June 1968, saying among other things that it read a bit like Sunday-paper journalism. I made some changes in response to their criticisms, but it was some time before they agreed to send the second draft to the World Bank, IMF and others for comments. There followed a year of claims, counter-claims, many and voluminous criticisms and comments from the Bank, and some tedious redrafting by me. A Bank official said he hoped ODI would 'give very careful thought to publishing such a document. My main concern is whether it gives the impression that what the agencies do is wrong.' Another hoped the study 'could be quietly buried'. I was assured by ODI that the objections were primarily technical and that it was a matter of merely correcting 'factual errors'. Consequently, I produced a further draft, incorporating a few corrections of 'fact' that the Bank had pointed out,

and, as requested, changing the order of the text to improve its presentation. At the beginning of 1969, I incorporated a short section on Cuba following a visit to the country and in response to the ODI's comments that I had failed to show what the alternative might be to the aid agencies' policies. The ODI's director and director of studies pronounced themselves satisfied, and said the study was 'now well on the way to publication by the ODI'. Three months later they wrote to me again, to say that 'Alas we are not home and dry yet, as the IBRD/IMF have written to us recently and raised the whole issue of the use of confidential information.' I was given a copy of their voluminous comments, including one from William Clark, former director of the ODI and then information director at the World Bank, which was at variance with my recollection of what had happened. He said:

First thing on my return I have had the Hayter story in full storm on my desk ... It would be very unpleasant to exert any sort of a veto on publication, but I can see the extreme awkwardness of publishing what Bank people consider very confidential material. Lars Lind did go out of his way to ensure that Teresa saw all the top brass, and that they treated her as a colleague. They not unnaturally expect that their confidence would be respected. (quoted in Hayter 1971)

He went on to write, 'I should add that the opinions of the people who have read the revised draft remain very adverse on the grounds that it remains unbalanced and hence unscholarly' (quoted in *ibid.*). Gerry Alter, director of the Western Hemisphere Department of the Bank, wrote a long memo which included the statement that:

I must say that, like the IMF, I had been assuming that ... steps were being taken to ensure that the paper would not be published in anything like its present form ... Our objections cannot be met by minor changes in drafting. The real trouble is that the author has tried to bend the facts to suit her thesis, and in the process she has not only got a lot of things wrong, but she has also made quite indiscreet use of information given her in confidence by people with whom she talked in the Bank and the Fund. (quoted in *ibid.*)

Most of the information to which Alter objected was of course not given to me by Bank officials, but generally by discontented officials of the governments on which the Bank was putting pressure. Alter then gave 'a few examples amongst many passages in the paper which, whether true or false (and most are false), could seriously embarrass the Bank in its relations with its member countries'. They included references to the discussions between the three aid agencies in the US embassy in Colombia, the failure of the Bank to inform even

its board about its activities, the fact that the Bank's agreements looked like carbon copies of IMF agreements, the Bank's claims of success in persuading India to devalue, the Bank 'telling' the New York banks to stop lending to Colombia, its hostility towards land reform, the negative effects of stabilization programmes on growth, the pressure on Argentina to sack railway workers who 'could always go back to rural areas' (whence virtually none of them had come, unless perhaps the Bank official meant rural areas in Europe).

The IMF also responded, saying that:

publication of this study would be most undesirable from the Fund and Bank's point of view, although it may be argued that it would do more harm to the ODI than the international agencies. Moreover, we feel, as we did on the first round, that the paper is so tendentious and so distorted throughout that it does not lend itself to amendment by specific comments. We intend so to inform Miss Hayter again, though more succinctly and probably more firmly than on the previous occasion.

They never did inform me again, but they added that the current director of the ODI had assured them, on an earlier visit to London, 'that the paper would not be published'. Had I been wasting my time in redrafting it?

I was told about, but failed to see, the Bank's next communication. Apparently it said, again, that the study was unscholarly, tendentious and inaccurate; that it made use of confidential material supplied by the Bank (without, apparently, specifying which material); and that if the ODI published the study, or allowed it to be published elsewhere, this would be a breach of confidence and the Bank would have to draw its own conclusions. ODI took this to mean that it would withdraw its financial support, a loss to the ODI of around £15,000. There followed a proposal from a member of ODI's staff that he should redraft the study to make it acceptable to the Bank, which of course meant mainly changing its ideological line, removing the reference to Operational Memorandum no. 204, removing any reference to alternative possibilities, and removing the section on Cuba. I turned down the proposal. The decision whether or not to publish was then taken to the executive committee of the ODI, which in October 1969 unanimously decided against publication. Writing to inform me of this decision, the director of the ODI said, among other things, the following:

The Committee was of course aware of the views of the World Bank, and of its opposition to publication. But I can assure you that this influenced the decision only to the extent that it was felt that in such circumstances ODI had to be

completely confident about the craftsmanship of any study that was published – since it would obscure subsequent debate if fundamental hostility to the conclusions of the study could be presented as valid criticisms of its technical competence. This confidence was, I am afraid, lacking ... (letter to Teresa Hayter from the director of the ODI)

ODI did not, however, make any attempt to stop me publishing the study elsewhere, saying it did not 'have any right, legally or otherwise' to do so, and that this was fortunate, since otherwise they would be in 'an awkward situation', given that the Bank felt strongly the study should not be published by ODI or anybody else. I took the draft to Penguin, who published it virtually without changes, but with the addition of an appendix that contained the above quotes and a bit more. The book was on the Penguin 'bestseller' list for non-fiction publications, and sold around fifteen times the number of copies it would have if ODI had published it.

#### *The World Bank revisited*

In 1980 I applied through the Oxford Polytechnic for a Social Sciences Research Committee grant to revisit the conclusions of *Aid as Imperialism*. The grant was for three years and included travel expenses for me to go to India, Algeria, Peru and Washington. At the end of the three years I published, with Catherine Watson (a disaffected former 'token' environmentalist in the World Bank), a book called *Aid: Rhetoric and Reality* (1985). The offer of the grant was made conditional on my having a 'review panel' to 'provide balance', but the people who agreed to support my application in this way kindly made no attempt to influence the conclusions. The SSRC's other main concern was that I would not get access to Bank officials, which of course was potentially a bar to any critical research on the Bank. Although the Bank now claimed to believe that a policy of greater openness was desirable, when I asked for interviews the Bank's information department informed me that the Bank 'had been burnt once and did not see why it should be burnt again'. They gave me permission to request interviews on an individual basis. I gathered that a memorandum had been circulated instructing officials to talk to me only in general terms. I was able to see only one of the senior officials in the Latin American and Caribbean department of the Bank, whom I knew personally; he specified that the interview was on a personal basis and did not allow me to take notes. Elsewhere in the Bank some officials did talk to me quite openly. I believed, and believe, that their case for more openness should not have been weakened by their experiences with me; 'On the contrary,' I wrote in my preface to *Aid: Rhetoric*

*and Reality*, 'the continued hostility of their colleagues provided further proof that the Bank had not significantly changed.' Some of the officials who refused to meet me had genuine excuses, or were perhaps nervous that they might divulge information they should not. 'Mostly,' I wrote in this preface, 'they were just the inveterate reactionaries who know quite well that they have nothing to gain by talking to me.' This meant that, as before, the bulk of my information came from the officials, politicians and economists whom I interviewed in the countries I went to. Cathy Watson wrote a detailed appendix to the book on 'working at the Bank' which contained a description of the nature of the staff at the World Bank, who, as she put it, 'treated us like scourges. As far as they were concerned, we were trouble ...'. She found that it was easier to respect the ex-colonials, mainly British and Australian, who held mainly technical positions in the Bank, in agriculture, for example, than the 'young professionals' straight out of graduate school who knew a good deal about neo-liberal economics but knew and cared very little about the real world.

This research followed the period, from 1968 to 1981, when McNamara was president of the World Bank. Many people believed that his tenure resulted in a substantial change in the Bank's policies and practice. Certainly its rhetoric changed. McNamara had been secretary of state for defence during the US war in Vietnam, and was held responsible for some of its more devastating acts. He appeared to have had a change of heart, believing that a better way to combat subversion was to promote development, and that the West needed to find a successful capitalist alternative to China. In 1966 McNamara asserted that 'order' and 'stability' were not possible without 'internal development of at least a minimal degree'. This at least was a more progressive position than, for example, Kissinger's, who is said to have believed that starving people do not make revolutions. McNamara recruited some relatively progressive economists, who talked and wrote about 'redistribution with growth' and 'basic needs'. Among observers of the Bank, affected no doubt by this rhetoric, there continued to be startling illusions about what the Bank was doing, or could do. For example, in 1982 the British Labour Party, then in opposition, published a report entitled *Development Co-operation*. It contained some strongly worded criticisms of the IMF's lack of political neutrality and its bias in favour of the market mechanism and the private sector. But it advocated increasing funding of the World Bank, as follows:

Ten years ago, Teresa Hayter produced a damning report ... which suggested that [the Bank's] contribution to the Third World was 'negative'. There was a good deal of evidence to support this claim - the Bank strongly encouraged

'free enterprise' and especially the use of private foreign capital ... Since then, however, the Bank has produced a much more radical approach to the problem of the poorest countries, and is now concerned to improve the position of the most disadvantaged section of the population through a policy of 'redistribution with growth' ... We should therefore ... use our influence on its board of directors to support the progressive policies which it has been developing, and also encourage it to support forms of *socialist organisation* where these can make a visible economic contribution to Third-World development. (Emphasis added)

Apart from the rhetoric, the biggest difference from Bank policies in my earlier period of research was that the Bank was now willing, in fact quite eager, for it to be known that it was engaged in the business of persuading governments to adopt 'reforms', through what it called 'dialogue'. In 1980 it introduced 'Structural Adjustment Lending' (SAL) to supplement its project lending. Project lending was, and remains, the Bank's main form of lending. But it has clear disadvantages from the point of view of putting immediate pressure on governments to change their general policies. Structural Adjustment Lending has clear similarities with the IMF's long-standing tradition of stand-by loans, as both have a set of general economic conditions attached to them. Bank publications did not advertise what these conditions were; in theory they could have had something to do with adopting measures to alleviate poverty and redistribute income. In practice it became clear that they did not. When I asked what effect the Bank's new 'poverty orientation' was having on the policies it promoted through its SALs, its 'dialogue' and so on, it turned out that the effects, such as they were, were confined to *projects*. For example, as I wrote in *Aid: Rhetoric and Reality*:

Thus an official close to McNamara, asked to give examples of pressure being put on governments to pay more attention to poverty and income distribution, cited the case of Brazil. Pressure was indeed put on Brazil: the government was told it had to begin negotiations on a rural development *project* before the Bank would negotiate on other projects. There was no fundamental reappraisal of development strategy and certainly no reassessment of the orthodox IMF/World Bank methods of achieving 'stabilisation'.

The proportion of the Bank's lending for 'social' or 'poverty-oriented' projects was, moreover, small. In the early 1980s projects financed by the Bank amounted to less than 2 per cent of total investment in the Third World. Of these, between a third and a half had what the Bank called a poverty orientation.

But nearly all of these (between 24 and 31 per cent of total projects) were in agriculture, which, as I wrote in *Aid: Rhetoric and Reality*, 'does not necessarily mean that income is redistributed to the poor, and may mean the opposite'. In general, the effects even of the other 'poverty-oriented' projects were doubtful. The Bank, true to its neo-classical doctrines, strove to achieve 'full cost recovery' on its projects. Projects had to pay for themselves. People would find their free, though unsatisfactory and polluted, supplies of water replaced by cleaner water which they had to pay for. Similarly with housing and education. Thus, as I wrote in *Aid: Rhetoric and Reality*, Bank officials accepted that:

governments' methods of eliminating slums frequently involve merely bulldozing them, and, where relocation does occur, people are moved to distant suburbs. As McNamara eloquently put it, 'there is one thing worse than living in a slum or squatter settlement - and this is having one's slum or settlement bulldozed away by the government which has no shelter of any sort to offer in its place'. So, in the Philippines, the Bank set out not to destroy slums, but to upgrade them. But, because of the principle of full-cost recovery, and in theory also so that the projects would be 'replicable', it wanted the inhabitants to pay for the improvements.

The Bank's claims that its projects in agriculture were of interest to the poor related almost entirely to the fact that they were located in rural areas with high concentrations of poverty. In reality their benefits went overwhelmingly to medium or large landowners.

On land reform, the Bank's attitude was unchanged. Its main stated concerns were whether land reform would create instability, and whether it would lead to disruption of production; a less often stated, but undoubtedly present, concern was its effect on the big landowners who supported the governments of which the Bank approved. A Bank official, who met me surreptitiously in a bar, told me that he had written a report demonstrating that, without expropriating large landowners who made little use of their land, there was no chance of improving productivity, let alone alleviating poverty, in the Brazilian north-east; the report, he said, was suppressed at higher levels in the Bank. A sample of the Bank's attitudes is contained in a 1980 confidential report entitled *Poverty, Basic Needs and Employment*, quoted in *The Development Debacle* (1982) by Walden Bello and others, which advocated retreat from partial land reform measures introduced by the Marcos government in the Philippines, partly on the grounds that:

Some former tenants, and other potential tenants, were not really ready for a

shift in tenure status; they need and prefer the protection of the landlord, who is also their creditor, particularly for insurance against bad harvests. Indeed, [the Bank] complained that agrarian reform contributed, 'in many areas [to] disruption of healthy landlord/tenant relations'.

Bank reports welcomed the termination of land reform programmes. As I wrote in *Aid: Rhetoric and Reality*:

For example [the Bank's] laudatory presentation to the consultative group for Peru says with evident approval that 'the Agricultural Promotion Law ... ends the agrarian reform expropriation process - an important measure to instil investor confidence'. Another report on Peru describes the failures and 'negative effects' of land reform under previous reformist military governments and a report on the Peruvian agricultural sector states that: 'This entire period (1970-80) from its start has been characterised by ill-conceived and mal-administered sweeping land reform and economic control measures.' The sector report tells, at length, the sad story of an expropriated coffee grower, 'a highly respected professional living in Lima' ...

On the other hand, both in Peru and in Algeria, two of the countries I went to, the Bank did advocate 'land reform'. By this it meant the return of state farms to the private sector, or breaking up large-scale land reform cooperatives into small privately owned units.

The Bank was also, unsurprisingly, interested in a problem long experienced by the colonizers and others who embarked on Third World ventures: how to persuade small farmers to produce a surplus for export (so that the foreign currency earnings could, for example, enable their governments to service foreign debt, as well as giving urban elites access to the luxury imports to which they had become accustomed). Cheryl Payer, in her book *The World Bank*, published in 1982, quoted a Bank country economic report on Papua New Guinea as follows:

A characteristic of PNG's subsistence agriculture is its relative richness: over much of the country nature's bounty produces enough to eat with relatively little expenditure of effort. The root crops that dominate subsistence farming are 'plant and wait' crops, requiring little disciplined cultivation ... Until enough subsistence farmers have their traditional life styles changed by the growth of new consumption wants, this labour constraint may make it difficult to introduce new crops.

As for the general economic policies the Bank did promote in its 'policy dialogue' with governments, it turned out that there was little or no change.