

STUDENT COMMENTARY

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Globalization dominated international affairs prior to September 11, 2001, and the discipline continues to manage a network of issues crossing academic dialogues. Literature, science, and the arts — all fields — have witnessed the convergence of culture and business on a grand scale. Experts charge technology as primary instigator of the new paradigm and herald the clear result, rapid change. Many analysts contend gadgets and diversity promise economic gain. As a renewed capitalist spirit envelops the planet, these scholars boast financial achievement will function as mankind's saviour. *Human Development Report 2001* (HDR 2001), published for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), makes a similar argument. The remedy for poverty, disease, and inequality is technology. Harnessing new technologies, and the monetary success that ensues, advances human development.

Opponents to globalization challenge this logic through protests. Targets consistently include the international development regime, organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Yet anti-globalization forces' interests match the more noble aspirations of development projects. Both movements share a common aim, world poverty reduction. Protesters, however, contest the mechanisms by which the development establishment attempts to realize this goal. Offices and acronyms drive development rather than individual knowledge. The international development

regime is a layer of the same larger bureaucracy promoting a North-South divide. Max Weber may have sided with this interpretation as globalization demonstrates the historian's forecast for extreme rationality. Webs of bureaucracy are overwhelming themselves and losing the common denominator, people. While globalization promotes disregard for individuality in many forms, the aid industry is particularly guilty. HDR 2001 serves as an excellent example of the development order's modernist tendencies to strive for order at the expense of human experience. Adding an anthropological perspective to the discourse will restore this element, but to do so requires adjusting the UNDP and wider regime's approach to development work itself.

Development fails to account for people. Groups, statistics, and machines concern the UNDP, not human beings. High-modernist traditions plague the field preventing widespread project success or significant reduction in world poverty. In *Seeing Like a State*, James C. Scott cites Vladimir Lenin, Le Corbusier, and others to present the ideals of high-modernism. These values include administrative order through rationalization and standardization and precedence of scientific knowledge over nature and society (Scott, 1998: 4). Comprehensive plans, grids, right angles, and legibility instruments (maps, censuses, and indices) characterize modernist enterprises and development projects as well. Development's reverence for progress indicates

the discipline's devotion to a sweeping plan or outcome, a Western standard of living. In the experience of the Basotho in Thaba-Tseka, James Ferguson relates development's affinity for modernism (Ferguson, 1990). *The Anti-Politics Machine* highlights multiple aid agencies' inability to incorporate local knowledge into the development scheme for Thaba-Tseka. Ferguson shows that in place of improving living conditions for the region's inhabitants, the initiative fosters an expanded degree of order for the state. The development bureaucracy's "sprawling symbiotic network of experts, offices, and salaries" benefits more than the Basotho (Ferguson, 1990: 269). The aid industry neglects people and views countries and organizations as the agents of development.

Both Scott and Ferguson portray how development ignores local populations and knowledge when shaping and executing a project. HDR 2001 commits this offence, too. Throughout the report, the UNDP rarely mentions people as agents. HDR 2001 concentrates on groups and inanimate entities instead of individuals. Public initiatives run development. Examine the comments of the UNDP Administrator, Mark Malloch Brown (*Human Development Report 2001*: iv). When discussing the groundwork for development, Brown recognizes the importance of "communication systems," "policies," "institutions," and "countries" for significant advance. The Administrator never acknowledges human actors. Reaching the individuals behind and in front of Brown's list is key. Employees of development agencies and residents of the developing world, people, are of greater interest to project success than "communication systems" and "policies." Given a specific proposal, one assumes those persons most affected by the initiative would contribute vital input to the route taken by development in their place of residence. The project, moreover, interrupts these people's lives. Locals undergoing aid industry processes deserve a voice in their own future.

HDR 2001 pays cursory attention to people's roles in development (*Human Development Report 2001*: 8–9). The report, however, falls into the same modernist trap outlined by Scott and Ferguson. Rather than teaching how to empower individuals, UNDP provides advice for "low-income countries" and "developing countries." Thus, the nation-state remains the principal actor in development schemes. Development, as a field of knowledge, emerges as an engine

for state control. HDR 2001 supports technology for state use and encourages a hierarchical procedure. UNDP officials favour promoting services to improve the operation of nations and firms. Then, according to the report, poverty will decline, and people's lives will improve. The argument never makes the connection between groups and individuals, though. HDR 2001 speaks of "unleashing human creativity" by bolstering technological innovation for farms and businesses, urging competition in the telecommunications sector, and "stimulating entrepreneurship" (*Human Development Report 2001*: 79–84). One wonders how such activities help the average person. As project results in Thaba-Tseka verify, the goals of the national bureaucracy and other groups are often asymmetrical to those of its citizens.

The report's technological focus puts faith in the machine, a tenet of high-modernism. HDR 2001 overlooks the capacity of social applications for development work. Arts and culture fulfill no logical end for the UNDP. Machines are the solution to mankind's problems, but the report omits a discussion on how people in developing nations may harness this potential. Again, the report operates on a macro-level, detailing actions for international and national institutions to pursue. Alternatives are absent. Assistance must come from above according to the development regime. HDR 2001 forgets to consider paths people may take to help others or themselves. The UNDP hints that the strength of individuals may not really matter if development plans take advantage of technology. In any event, the report fails to account for people. Like a model bureaucracy, numbers and statistics stand for individuals in HDR 2001 (*Human Development Report 2001*: 13–14). Take the human development index (HDI) for example. The UNDP uses this measure as an indication of a nation's level of development: high, medium, or low. The index lumps all individual experience into a single national average for ranking purposes and considers only longevity, knowledge, and a decent standard of living as measures. Countries are the basis of analysis once more, and the UNDP's ability to gauge such abstract principles is shaky at best. The HDR utilizes this standard when formulating policy recommendations; policies lacking consideration for people.

More a condition of capitalism than high-modernism, HDR 2001 centres on economics

rather than human beings. Language like “markets,” “long-term potential,” and “costs and benefits” pervades the report (*Human Development Report 2001*). While money is essential for development funding, capitalist ideals lead officials at UNDP astray. The group defends stable markets and free trade repeatedly, yet pays scant attention to human rights and the individual experience of poverty. HDR 2001 champions the same Western ideals many scholars claim foster the development condition itself. Scott and Ferguson supply a way to balance the aid industry by incorporating local knowledge and human practice into the development establishment’s values and calculations. Linking development and applied anthropology will help fulfill this need. By integrating the study of human beings in the development regime, projects will account for people.

Kathleen Gough offers direction by turning the focus inward (Gough, 1968). Anthropologists have failed to examine the dominant society, and the development establishment it maintains. Serious study of capitalism as a social order and the effects of this system on different societies will enrich future development endeavours, including UNDP reports. HDR 2001 gives no thought to these issues and contains no anthropological sources. By investigating the people behind the UNDP, anthropologists will furnish a self-check measure the organization might use before publishing. Scrutinizing the beliefs and behaviour of UNDP workers will yield insight into why a people variable is missing from the development equation.

An anthropological look at HDR 2001 will improve UNDP analysis. To begin, specific case studies ought to capture more of UNDP officials’ deliberation efforts. Anthropology mandates local involvement in a study and therefore serves as a vehicle for integrating a greater number of case studies in the report. An anthropologist in the field contributes a real life aspect not present in the statistics of indices and offices. Glynn Cochrane describes how anthropology assists development by determining the relation between people and project (Cochrane, 1977: 21). The anthropologist explores the situation on the ground giving special thought to how a development project interacts with that dynamic. Details of the research entail “the beliefs, values, and attitudes that generate structural alignments in the society, the potentialities for change, and what harm may come from the change.”

This form of analysis would enhance HDR 2001 not only by arranging for a real world dimension to counter indices, but also by supplying a better chance for project success. For example, an anthropologist would produce data predicting individual and local reaction to Internet proliferation. Anthropology mobilizes local voices and determines what HDR 2001 labels “risks” (*Human Development Report 2001*: 65–78). Perhaps the precautionary principle remains a fundamental value for certain people. This information is important for deciding how technological initiatives should proceed, if at all. HDR 2001 imparts little more than hearsay as proof of the Internet’s promise for development. The report refers to diaspora without evidence as well. Anthropology, again, would furnish more than allegations. By analyzing the relationships of individuals across national boundaries, anthropologists would determine whether the ties between expatriate scientists and businessmen residing in the developed world and their counterparts in the Third World actually exist. Anthropology, and its concentration on people, is necessary to effectively complement the Western rhetoric evident in HDR 2001.

Development must embark on a balanced approach. The network age HDR 2001 proclaims is less about technology and more about expanding bureaucracy, and thus technological expansion may promote further loss of the human factor within development. Paper, plans, and processes affect human beings at a deep level, greater than anything endured by national governments. A “pro-poor development strategy” that excludes poor people is hypocritical (*Human Development Report 2001*: iii). Anti-globalization forces, nevertheless, will not topple the international development establishment. Therefore, instead of trashing the system, one should work within it to bring about sound social change. The regime needs to acknowledge the absence of a people perspective, and anthropology provides a way to do so. Anthropology may rise as a legitimate voice for the developing world in project planning, a voice of people, not bureaucracies. After the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, globalization still directs many intellectual dialogues. A benefit of the events may be a slowing down of globalization’s processes by forcing individual reflection in a collective world. Development holding to this value may prevent future tragedy.

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