Michael Cernea

Indigenous Anthropologists and Development-Oriented Research

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MICHAEL CERNEA**

The issues related to the central topic of this conference—"Indigenous Anthropology in Non-Western Countries"—encompass a broad and complex span of theoretical and epistemological problems. My own angle in approaching this topic, however, is not exclusively a theoretical one. I am also interested in the possible consequences of the concept "indigenous anthropology" on applied anthropological research in developing countries and on the contribution of anthropologists from both western and non-western countries to development programs. More specifically, I am interested in how research carried out by anthropologists from developing countries contributes to social change in their own countries.

Sharng my experience both as a field researcher from a non-western culture and as a sociologist working within an international development agency, I will attempt to bring to your attention some of the issues involved in the actual use of anthropological knowledge by an international agency for operational development purposes. This may possibly bring our discussions closer to the practical relevance of the anthropological endeavor and clarify whether the issue of so-called "indigenous" versus "non-indigenous" field research has any consequence on the uses of the knowledge generated by this research.

1. **The epistemological implications of the concept of "indigenous anthropology"**

   Some questions initially should be asked about the very concept of "indigenous anthropology." Is "indigenous anthropology" an epistemologically valid concept? Is it really clear what we have in mind when using it? Should we

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advocate further the perpetration of a distinction between "indigenous" and "non-indigenous" anthropology, or is this a false dichotomy?

I have strong reservations about the very concept of "indigenous anthropology". It is fraught with the epistemological dangers of legitimizing a particular nationalistic approach to science and to social facts. This concept implies the possibility of having several anthropologies about each object of anthropological study, depending on the national identity of the individual or the group doing the study. My contention is that this concept would tend to legitimize a situation which I feel should be avoided, not validated.

The working definition given for "indigenous anthropology" in the preliminary statement circulated in preparation for this conference suggested that it is "the research conducted by anthropologists within the national boundaries of their countries" (Fahim, 1977). As a shorthand term for approximating our debate, one could temporarily use it. I trust that in fact it was just this shorthand usage and meaning which was intended in the title of our conference. But I cannot accept it as a concept defining a distinct brand of science, because such a concept would incorporate precisely the type of limitations which science is trying to overcome.

Therefore, I would say that the very title of our conference contains a potential epistemological trap which we should be aware of. As an alternative, I propose that we reinterpret this title to refer to indigenous anthropologists, rather than to indigenous anthropology.

The set of problems related to the roles and constraints on the work of anthropologists who are natives of the countries in which they are doing their research deserves utmost attention and full-scale debate. There is a long history of neglect of indigenous anthropologists—of distrust of their work, of underestimating their potential contribution or political difficulties. Recognizing the comparative advantages and disadvantages they may have in performing anthropology within their own native culture, however, should not lead us to blur the distinction between the notion of indigenous anthropologists and the concept of "indigenous" anthropology. It would be too simplistic to say that if there are indigenous anthropologists doing anthropology in their own native culture, then there necessarily is an indigenous anthropology. I am distrustful of segmenting science along the lines of the national identity of its practitioners. The surreptitious implication contained in the concept of "indigenous anthropology" undermines the concept of universality which is part and parcel of science as a human endeavor.

To say that the anthropology of a certain society written by members of this society would be a different science from the anthropology of the same culture if written by non-natives, would be tantamount to saying that anthropology is not a science, but it is instead an impressionistic collection of biased descriptions by various authors. In other words, it would mean that anthropology is more a mirror of its practitioners rather than a mirror of its object of study. Examples of anthropological research done in the same country by both indigenous and
foreign scholars are plentiful. In many cases their approach has been more or less similar, their findings have been convergent, the data complementary, reinforcing each other and enlarging the body of information and knowledge. But even if their findings are different and divergent, this does not prove that two different “sciences” (“indigenous” and “non-indigenous”) are at work. Of course, there are and will ever be differences between various authors, but these differences are to be found among anthropologists who are all natives of the same country. Differences between researchers native to one country might very well be even bigger than differences between natives and non-natives. Why should we trace the differences in findings and conclusions to the national identity of the author, rather than to his conceptual framework, method of study or to his personal competence?

Consequences stemming from the individual scholar’s cultural background do exist and may leave an imprint on the research and intellectual products of this individual. Recognizing this, however, does not imply that the body of knowledge generated by the group of indigenous anthropologists would constitute a different science from the anthropology produced by non-native scholars who study the same country.

A major effort of anthropology, sociology and other so-called “soft” sciences has been geared towards developing a body of research procedures, techniques, and methodologies which would lead to capturing the “hard” facts. Further, this effort aspires to overcome the observer’s own cultural limitations and biases in grasping these facts, be they limitations derived from his national group identity or from his individual social/cultural position and bias.

A science which depends more on the personal qualities of the researcher than on the accuracy and precision of its research methods is a science in the infancy of its development. This view does not belittle the importance of personal talent in science. It only enhances the importance which the research techniques must have.

Legitimizing “indigenous” anthropology as a distinct branch of science would be a setback in this effort for objective research methods and a tremendous concession to the assumed “softness” of this science. Indigenous anthropologists, natives of the culture they are studying, have no reason for perpetuating this “softness.” On the contrary, they strive to generate a body of information, explanations and knowledge which is minimally subject to cultural biases, which does not resign itself to be a second-class science, i.e., “indigenous” science. Nonwestern indigenous anthropologists are keen to assert their role as scholars on an equal footing with their colleagues from Western cultures, be it when they study their native culture or when they study the culture of other societies.

Last, but not least, admitting the concept of “indigenous anthropology” would immediately raise the obvious question: which is the correlative or complementary term for “indigenous”? If there is an “indigenous” anthropology, then is there also an “international” anthropology? Logic requires that if we say “a”, we should be prepared to utter “b”, and then be prepared to say “c”
Beyond National Boundaries

and so on. This means that if we accept an "indigenous" anthropology, we should accept "international" anthropology as its counterpart, or "foreign" anthropology. Or is "national" or "universal" anthropology a preferable phrase? I suspect that all these terms would pay tribute to the old enemy: ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism is a multifaceted animal and one should not be misled by any one of its appearances.

The fact that ethnocentrism has not given up its grip or simply disappeared is suggested sometimes by the way in which some anthropologists perpetuate another old way of fragmenting anthropology as a science, speaking about "Anglophone anthropology," or "Francophone anthropology." This categorization seems to be another way of putting the national identity of the researcher above the object of his study. The implication of such categorization is the obsolete definition of anthropology as "the study of others," which ipso facto questions the anthropological nature of the studies done by native anthropologists in their own countries. If one were consistent with such an approach, one would have to admit not only an "Anglophone" anthropology or a "Francophone" anthropology, but also a "Germanophone" anthropology, an "Italophone" anthropology, etc. of any region or culture of the world. To carry this approach to its absurd limits would mean that for each culture we would have as many anthropologies as there are groups of anthropologists of different nationalities who are studying this culture. I do not believe, however, that anybody wants to end up in anthropology or sociology with as many anthropologies and sociologies as we have professors of anthropology and sociology.

The culture of the anthropologist himself is not irrelevant to his work, but the methodology of scientific knowledge attempts to limit the cultural and personal biases of the researcher in order to allow the researched object to be grasped as objectively as possible. This means for instance, that the anthropology of the Peul culture tends eventually to be one area of scientific endeavor, regardless of whether it was written by Dupire, Pelissier, Gallais, by Stenning, Horowitz, by Diallo, Laye, by Peul or non-Peul authors, regardless of whether Peul is spelled "Peul" or it is spelled "Fulani." Or the anthropology of the Odissa tribesmen, either written by Bailey or written by Mohapatra and his colleagues, is a corpus of knowledge about the same social group. Their findings mostly coincide, and sometimes conflict, but they merge into one body of knowledge. When I did my field work in an Odissa tribal area I was able to use both Bailey's writings and the contributions of the local social scientists. And at no moment, their differences notwithstanding, at no moment did I perceive them as belonging to two different distinct sciences.

2. Indigenous anthropologists and development activities

I turn now to some aspects of the role of indigenous anthropologists and their research in connection with development processes in their countries. From the vantage point of working within an international development agency, I would like to share some of my experience and information about the work of
indigenous anthropologists and the way in which development agencies perceive indigenous anthropologists. This discussion ought to be part of our more encompassing interest in the practical problems facing anthropology in the Third World countries and their possible consequences on the global concerns of the discipline.

Indigenous anthropologists and sociologists have a tremendously important role to play both for the scientific development of the discipline and for the progress of their societies. If anything, their role has so far been too restricted. The absence of indigenous anthropologists is harmful not only to science, but to the socio-economic development process as well. Present circumstances call for, and I believe give promise of, increasing support for the development of indigenous anthropological research, for expanded cooperation between indigenous and non-indigenous anthropologists and for more assistance from official development agencies, national and international.

Some new trends in the use of anthropologists and sociologists by an institution like the World Bank suggest significant developments. The Bank made very limited use of professional anthropologists and sociologists in the 1960s in its Bank-financed development projects and has relied on the general competence of its technical staff for examining the sociocultural aspects of projects (Husein, 1976). Even today the scope and the needs for such use are much larger than the actual use of anthropological and sociological expertise. Nevertheless, the situation has started to improve, as Table 1 suggests.

Table 1 refers to eight fiscal years, from 1971 to 1978. It covers the activities of consultant sociologists and anthropologists employed by the Bank temporarily, and some activities of the in-house sociologists. To make contributions of staff and consultant anthropologists comparable and quantifiable, we have used as a conventional measurement a “unit of sociological/anthropological input” into a project activity (for instance, participation in a project preparation or project appraisal mission) or into other activities in the Bank.

Examining the sociological and anthropological inputs in various stages of the project cycles, a look at the year 1971 will find a zero in almost all the columns. It was not possible to identify more than one sociological activity in that year, despite the vast spectrum of Bank operations. The situation did not change too much in 1972 when there were four such units of input, most of them carried out within project-oriented activities and some as policy-related research or seminars.

A more significant increase in the use of socio-anthropological expertise in Bank projects is visible over the last four fiscal years. This was not a mere coincidence. The increase was basically related to a change in the Bank’s lending
<table>
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<tr>
<th>FY</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Ident.</th>
<th>Prepar-</th>
<th>Pre-</th>
<th>Tech.</th>
<th>Supervision</th>
<th>Eval</th>
<th>Program Work</th>
<th>Project Work</th>
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</table>
policies; namely, to the shift in emphasis from investments in infrastructural projects regardless of their beneficiaries, toward investments in poverty-oriented projects. This shift was made following the 1973 Nairobi meeting and was best expressed in the Rural Development Policy Paper issued by the World Bank (1975). For the first time in the Bank’s activities the concept of “target group” was introduced. The social group (defined as target group) is different in various countries, according to the differences in absolute and relative poverty levels identified in each developing country but basically it consists of the poorest, most deprived strata of the rural and urban population.

The very presence of the target group concept as a goal and criterion for development lending required a better understanding of the social stratification, culture, self-defined needs, and social institutions of the beneficiary populations. Thus the Bank started to move, yet slowly, towards recognizing the need for expertise in social sciences, specifically for more such expertise than the Bank was accustomed to use before. In 1974 the first sociologist for project activities was taken into the Bank as a permanent staff member, and since then the number of in-house anthropologists and sociologists has increased.

A more spectacular increase has occurred in the use of anthropologists and sociologists as temporary consultants. As indicated by Table I, while in the first four years only about 41 units of use of sociologists and anthropologists were identified, in the last four years, from 1975 to 1978, there was a fourfold increase to more than 170 such units. Fiscal year 1978 peaked this period. Most instances of employment of anthropologists occurred directly in project related activities.

The appraisal of development projects has the lead among various other project related activities. An interesting emerging trend is the use of sociologists and anthropologists not only at the appraisal or at the end—evaluation—of the project, but also in supervising the actual implementation process of these development projects and for analyzing on an on-going basis the reactions of the project affected population.

Given the main issue of our debate, it would be interesting to consider the national identity of the consultant anthropologists employed by the Bank. Stavenhagen (1971) suggested that involving social scientists from developing countries in operational development programs is a part of the complex and much broader process of “decolonizing applied social science.” We will briefly examine, therefore, who are the consultant anthropologists employed by an international agency like the World Bank. Are they anthropologists from developing countries as well, or only western anthropologists? Table 2 contains some factual information relevant to these questions.

\[2\] It is also important to bear in mind that this Table refers only to social scientists employed directly by the Bank. These figures do not include the total number of social scientists contributing in one way or another to these projects, namely, those anthropologists and sociologists who have worked as employees (nationals or foreigners) of the governments of the countries in which these projects are implemented.
### Table 2 National Identity of Consultant Sociologists/Anthropologists (FYS 1971-78)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Totals</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Totals, Sociologists, Anthropologists</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area USA and European Economic Community</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of which:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRA</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other EECa</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Developed Countriesb</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Developed Countries</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Less Developed Countries</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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</table>

*E.g., Holland, Germany, etc*

*E.g., Austria, Sweden, Australia, Canada, etc*

The 214 units of sociological inputs have been provided by a total of 107 different consultants, plus the in-house anthropologists. By country of origin, most of these consultants (77) come from the US and other developed European countries. The largest national contingent is the American group, with 45 individuals. Including other industrialized countries, the total number of anthropologists and sociologists coming from what, in the language of this conference, we call “western cultures” is about 84, out of which 61 were men and 23 were women. The balance consisted of about 23 anthropologists and sociologists from less developed countries, out of which 20 were men and 3 were women. Thus, 21% of the total number of consultant social scientists used by the Bank in this period originate from less developed countries.

This proportion is susceptible to different interpretations. It may seem, at first glance, rather higher than expected, given the unsatisfactory record of many UN specialized agencies and other international development agencies in using experts from developing countries. It may also be pointed out that the proportion of non-Western anthropologists employed by the Bank to the total number in existence seems to be higher than for westerners. On the other hand, this proportion is quite low, given the fact that Bank-supported operations take place in developing countries and that local social scientists might certainly provide a much larger input and be involved on a larger scale. The trend, however, is

1 A year after this paper was delivered, it was possible to ascertain the actual trend during the one year immediately subsequent to the period covered in Tables 1 and 2 (namely, during Fiscal Year 1979). It appeared that during FY 1979 about 30% (compared to 21% in the preceding period) of the
towards increasing the use of what we call here "indigenous" or "non-Western" social scientists as experts for the socio-cultural and institutional aspects of Bank-assisted development projects.

Some reasons for this trend, and the difficulties it is still facing, are discussed in the next two sections.

3. The comparative advantages of the indigenous anthropologists

While performing my tasks at the World Bank, I am in touch with most of the social scientists employed by the Bank as consultants, as well as with staff members—non-sociologists (economists and experts in technical fields) who are cooperating with the anthropologists. The employment of consultant social scientists often depends on the decisions made by the technical staff in charge of these projects, on their perceptions about the special contribution which indigenous anthropologists are able to make to development interventions and on their information about the availability of such experts. These outsiders' perceptions and understanding of the status and potential abilities of indigenous social scientists are relevant, I believe, for our own discussions about how the status and functions of indigenous anthropologists can be enhanced. These perceptions can be grouped under two sets: (1) comparative advantages vis-à-vis non-indigenous social scientists and (2) constraints or difficulties which are viewed as a consequence of operating within one's native culture and society.

(a) The insider's knowledge

Many, though by far not all, of the technical experts working in this international agency (and possibly this is true for others as well) consider it advantageous that the anthropologist they are cooperating with be native to the culture within which the development program is to be carried out. His expertise is being relied upon for interpreting the society and its "mysteries" for the technical experts who are not conversant with the local culture. Contrary to the beliefs (or prejudices?) accepted in some academic circles, the bias which may result from being part of what has to be explained is not perceived as an essential risk to knowledge. It is largely assumed that by actually being part of a developing society, the indigenous scholar has a much better chance to know it and to understand it than a scholar who has studied this society for a limited amount of time as a foreigner. One may agree or disagree with this assumption, but it is a fact that this assumption operates when the selection of an indigenous anthropologist is made.

This is not to say that the expertise of non-indigenous anthropologists is underestimated. On the contrary, many technical experts believe that on the average it compares favorably with the training and knowledge which indigenous anthropologists possess. This probably explains, but only in part, the paradoxical situation that despite the confidence in the comparative advantage held by consultant anthropologists and sociologists employed by the World Bank were nationals of developing countries (e.g., Colombia, Peru, India, Egypt, Senegal, Yemen, etc.)
indigenous anthropologists due to their belonging to the native culture, the number of non-indigenous anthropologists recruited as consultants is still much larger than the number of indigenous anthropologists.

There is, however, an additional factor at work here: the development technicians themselves come in most cases from developed countries. They often tend to work with an anthropologist who is part of their own culture, in the expectation that, although he may be less familiar with the culture of the country in which a development action has to be implemented than an indigenous anthropologist, he would still be more efficient to translate this knowledge into the language of the technical planner. This, in my view, is a fallacious way of assessing the trade-offs.

(b) Perception by the target group

Another comparative advantage of the indigenous anthropologist is thought to be the fact that the local population in a development project area will regard him more as one of their own rather than as a foreigner just in transit in the area. On this assumption the expectation of better communication with the target group is being built; the expectation of more openness is being nurtured; the hope that the development program will be accepted more readily is being entertained. Is this assumption valid? Or is it just wishful thinking? Do indigenous and non-indigenous anthropologists identify in the same ways with the group they study? More debate on these aspects, based on actual field experience, is necessary.

(c) Understanding of the macro society

While anthropology has often been criticized for the narrowness of its focus on small and isolated communities, and the magnification of the unit of its analysis at the cost of severing linkages to the whole society, the indigenous anthropologist is regarded as having a much better chance to understand the macro society than his fellow foreign anthropologist. This is another point supporting the "insider's" argument.

The foreign student who comes to a country to write a book (or a dissertation) has to condense the study of language and local communities within a limited period of time. He does not have a chance to learn much about what is not the main focus of his interest. On the contrary, an indigenous anthropologist usually has a good knowledge of the history of his country, of its formal and informal pressure groups, its political parties and religious institutions. This information enables him to connect better the micro- and macro-levels and understand the linkages which are extremely important for development planning purposes. It is thus also believed that the indigenous anthropologist understands better the country's bureaucratic institutions and systems, the nuts and bolts of administrative activities. Awareness of structural linkages is operationally relevant when anthropological efforts are part of the development planning process.
(d) Action and militancy

Who has a better chance to advocate and promote the practical conclusions derived from the scientific study: the indigenous anthropologist or the foreign anthropologist? Most developers tend to think that the former is in a better position. He is a member of the given society, may be in a position to follow up his scientific findings with action, sometimes even militant action, action of a political nature. Further, political engagement is often necessary for any development action to be effective. The commitment of the social scientist to the anti-status quo might also lead to his increasing role as activist (Stavenhagen, 1971), not only as a participant observer. In making these assumptions, the development practitioners tend to pay less attention to the set of epistemological and ethical doubts which may haunt the indigenous anthropologist about whether he has the right or obligation to act, or whether his duty is to remain a student and stay away from the public arena.

These four points do not exhaust the comparative advantages of indigenous anthropologists, but I presume that they cover some of the more crucial ones. A closer examination would find that almost each one of these comparative “advantages” may have another side to it, a built-in limitation. But by and large, I feel that on certain important counts the indigenous anthropologists are in a better position to insert their knowledge, their expertise, their efforts in the development process. I hasten to add, though, that in the experience of international agencies countless non-indigenous anthropologists have performed a superb job in contributing knowledge to development activities. It would be short-sighted and a disservice to development and to developing nations to disregard the contributions which such scholars may bring to them. Similarly, it would be short-sighted to suggest intellectual separation from non-indigenous social scientists. On the contrary, cooperation should be expanded. More and more the group of indigenous (not expatnate) anthropologists and sociologists are going to be called upon for development activities in their own countries.

4. The constraints and difficulties of the indigenous anthropologist

I am not sure whether a view from within an international development agency can bring any new information to indigenous anthropologists about the constraints they are facing in their activities in their own countries. I would, however, make a few comments as to how these constraints are perceived from the outside.

(a) Insufficient preparedness for applied developmental research

The most important and consequential constraint on the potential contribution which indigenous anthropologists might bring to development programs is their insufficient preparedness for producing the kind of advice needed for development programs and for feeding back their data into the policy-making process. This deficit is a consequence of (a) the academic training they have received, which in most cases was not development-oriented and of (b) the
lingering effects of the doctrine of value-free science and of the neutrality of the "true" scholar. As Yehudi Cohen put it in his paper "nothing in an anthropologist's training in the tradition of Tylor, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown will prepare him or her to tell the governmental agency how to relocate a community, where to relocate it and what the effect of the relocation will be. The same is true in connection with new sources of energy or new modes or production" as well as with designing an irrigation scheme or choosing the design for a feeder roads system. This educational perspective is a consequence and a shortcoming of the training system of anthropologists in both western and non-western societies.

An insufficient ability to understand developmental issues and to gear their minds and research efforts toward operational aspects is the major weakness shared by many indigenous anthropologists with their fellows from western cultures. The preservation of vanishing cultures can no longer be the primary non-academic goal for anthropologists. Political realities dictate the participation of anthropologists in formulating mechanisms of social change which should both help implement development policies and also mitigate harsher effects of programs often designed at removed bureaucratic levels. The evaluation of human costs and benefits in social change can no longer be regarded as being outside the bounds of appropriate curricula and training in anthropology departments. The role of the applied anthropologist is nowadays not to facilitate "indirect rule" in the British Colonial tradition or "direct rule" in the French one, but to focus on political, cultural and economic alternatives and implications of development policies (de Ganne, 1978). But the training for this new role is absent or only incipient. Such skills are still mostly being learned "on the job." A reorganization of the setup, the curricula, and the training procedures of anthropology departments is probably needed as much in developing countries as in the more developed ones.

(b) Cultural bias

A much discussed constraint which limits the effectiveness of some, if not all, indigenous anthropologists is their supposed imprisonment in their own native culture. This argument is the reverse side of the insider's comparative advantage, discussed earlier. They are said to need to extricate themselves from this cultural bias, from the status quo and from only looking inward. This is a well known and controversial contention and I will not elaborate on it here, except to say that I feel that most often this "constraint" has been exaggerated and overblown.

What may be more real and important, in that respect, is that native social scientists are often under the pressure (from administrative quarters or for other reasons) to provide justifications rather than objective assessments, to defend rather than to criticize the existing cultural and social structures. Indigenous social scientists, when employed as consultants by an international organization, or even by domestic authorities, are sometimes subject to pressure, or to long-term adverse consequences, if they take a stand which goes against the current
practices of these domestic agencies. They are less independent, professionally and economically, from the local structures than, comparatively, foreign consultant social scientists; this may affect their effectiveness as outspoken analysts if protection adequate to the given situation is not provided.

(c) Lack of exposure to other cultures

A characteristic of the role of the expert as a broker of social experience is his familiarity with a variety of social or technical solutions, adopted in various ecological settings. This familiarity enables him to ponder and compare development strategies and to look for alternative options. Eventually, it enables him to extrapolate solutions within similar or somehow different social/cultural circumstances, and with appropriate circumspection. This approach is basically how an irrigation expert proceeds about his work, how a soil expert or an agronomist operates. The complexity of creating or extrapolating social patterns is understandably greater. Nevertheless, the social expert is also required to be familiar with many social experiences, to possess not only library familiarity but "personal familiarity" with social settings other than his native one, with other solutions which have "worked," and with other patterns and institutions.

This is why the function of cross-cultural experience in training an anthropologist is vital and "indigenous" (non-western) anthropologists should be encouraged whenever possible to work in other societies. But some foundations even discourage candidates from developing countries from doing dissertation research outside their home area. Thus, western anthropologists end up being the lucky ones and the non-westerners are ghettoized. Sometimes, the following rationale is given: hiring one of the few good Nigerian anthropologists to work in the Philippines is robbing Nigeria. Answer: unless he never returns to Nigeria, letting him field-train in the Philippines a few years can significantly improve his future work in Nigeria.

An anthropologist is not a scientist in the sense that a physicist is a scientist; like a doctor or psychiatrist, he concentrates on building a personal capacity to observe, analyze, and categorize, for which he filters out an enormous quantity of material in order to identify the few variables that seem most critical in making the diagnosis. While this argues for an "indigenous" anthropologist, who already knows many of the possible variables in a situation, the insider has also learned over the years not to notice some of the variables, or to doubt whether they could change, or to suspect that the immutable X is actually present because of Y. While literature and theory help to shake up these assumptions, many social scientists believe that they cannot begin to be eradicated until the anthropologist has experienced personally the operation of other combinations of variables in other cultures. Solutions may be found through improving the training process, through the use of available resources of information and travel, cooperative projects between indigenous and non-indigenous anthropologists in development work outside their home culture.
(d) Distrust by local authorities

Sadly enough, but perhaps not surprising, is that one of the major obstacles in involving indigenous anthropologists in developmental activities is the frequent reluctance of governmental agencies from developing countries to do so. In some cases the reasons are political. Certain agencies are distrustful of indigenous social scientists because they perceive them as potential political adversaries, as radicals. Not seldom do they resort to open or more subtle pressures against social scientists, attempting to control their opinions and assessments and/or to prevent the kind of social analysis which they subjectively consider too sensitive or “disloyal.” Certain local agencies fear that involving sociologists and anthropologists in development planning might open for them avenues to classified information, which government authorities are not willing to release for public circulation. As an anecdote, I came across this situation when a Ministry of a developing East African country opposed the idea of hiring a local social scientist as the Head of a Monitoring and Evaluation Unit for a rural development project. The explanation was candid: “We do not trust our own social scientists: they are mostly radicals and they will certainly use the evaluation information not just for improving project implementation, but as a weapon against our government.” As a consequence, the Project Manager went on a tour to London, Paris and New Delhi, to interview and recruit a foreign sociologist as head of this evaluation unit.

In other cases, the explanation for neglect or overprotection may be traced back to the justified distrust of anthropology in earlier colonial times, when it was regarded as a handmaiden for the economic and cultural imperialism of the dominant powers.

Another frequent reason for this distrust is the overestimation of the sociological knowledge and sensitivity possessed by native administrators and planners. Indigenous anthropologists are sometimes regarded as superfluous by their own domestic agencies on account that a native administrator, as opposed to a colonial administrator, is part of the culture, not alien to it. Therefore, he thinks he does not need an anthropologist as an expert for better understanding the social groups of his own country, because he believes that he knows them. He would willingly admit that anthropologists were needed by the colonial administration, which was alien to the local culture. But he would not admit that anthropologists are needed for the present day independent administration. This is the well-known fallacy of confusing the individual’s experience for the professional, systematic understanding and analysis made possible by science. The native administrator often tends to consider himself sociologically self-sufficient. Unfortunately, other non-sociological experts (engineers, irrigation experts, agronomists, etc.), who should point out to the administrator of a government program that a social expert is needed as well, are willing to remain silent on this issue, particularly when faced with a scarcity of resources available for hiring development experts. The competition for financial support tends not
to favor indigenous experts (Kamenetzky, 1975) This practice may become, unfortunately, a vicious circle. the absence of an opportunity for indigenous social experts to assert themselves reinforces the lack of confidence in their potential usefulness.

International and bilateral development agencies, by recruiting a growing number of indigenous anthropologists, will contribute to enhancing their operational capability and scientific status vis-à-vis the development agencies in their own countries. And this should be part of a general policy to make more use in general of that country's expertise, including indigenous engineers, economists, agronomists and so on. I know of more than just a few cases where outside insistence for involving local anthropologists and sociologists in the preparation of rural development projects and in the implementation of development programs has raised eyebrows in the borrowing agencies. Quite a few such agencies still tend to be misled by the false belief that a foreign expert is in all instances better than local experts. Often enough, international and bilateral development agencies have in turn entertained and reinforced such a belief.

It is also worth pointing out that the use of non-Western anthropologists by an agency like the World Bank is not limited to the use of these experts only in their country of origin. In this sense, the 21% indigenous anthropologists indicated in Table 2 (or the 30% mentioned for 1979) were not entirely employed as "indigenous" anthropologists, but in some cases as international experts. This means that anthropologists from developing countries have been employed to work on development projects and programs in other developing countries, in cultures and societies which are foreign to their own culture and societies. This professional circulation provides a rather new "role" for the anthropologist from a developing country: the role of "international consultant," typically played until recently by western anthropologists. What kind of problems is he facing in performing this job? Is he more or less efficient/acceptable than his colleague from a western country in identifying local needs, the target populations' expectations, social structures, institutions? This is another aspect of our core problem regarding the "indigenous" anthropologists' position, which deserves some attention in our further debate.

There is another distinction between two types of anthropological expertise, relevant for development purposes. The first is an areal (geographical) expertise, where the expert has deep knowledge of the local sociocultural system including the language and the various political nuances. The second is topical expertise, dealing for example with inland fisheries, pastoral systems, cooperatives, or irrigation systems (i.e., specialized in the study of one aspect of culture). Many development agencies, in general, do not realize that most anthropologists are not generalists (Almy, 1977) and, tend to be less aware of topical anthropological expertise than of geographical expertise. Yet in regard to certain types of projects topical expertise may in fact be more important. Thayer Scudder mentioned a case when he and an areal anthropologist gave conflicting
advice to the Bandama River Authority in the Ivory Coast about whether or not the local people in the Kossou Lake Basin could be expected to respond to the fisheries potential of the new lake.

"I said emphatically 'yes' after checking out some crucial indices, even though I knew very little about the local sociocultural systems of the people involved, because as a specialist in tropical inland fisheries I knew that local populations had responded without exception to the fisheries created by other new major reservoirs throughout Africa. The areal expert said 'no' because he thought a cultural bias against eating fish would interfere. In this case he was wrong and I was right, since the locals took to fishing very well indeed (the local bias against eating fish quite possibly was a mechanism to keep people away from a river infested with the Simulium fly carriers of river blindness—a disease which ceased to be a problem on the new reservoir)." (Scudder, personal letter).

In closing, I would like to reiterate the basic conviction which underlies this paper. Development activities offer an extremely broad and promising field for anthropological endeavor both for Western and for indigenous anthropologists. It is the primary task of indigenous anthropologists to participate in their own country's development efforts, although the foreign anthropologists and sociologists with good skills and keen interests in these cultural areas have still a major role to play in the development efforts. For this to happen, both indigenous anthropologists and non-indigenous anthropologists need to cooperate. Foreign anthropologists have a responsibility in helping their colleagues from developing countries to assert themselves, to obtain the recognition and means to perform and expand their activities, and to relieve the formidable constraints under which they have to carry out their activities.

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