Development and Anthropology: Moving From Participatory to Collaborative Methods

Temily Tavangar
Department of Sociology, University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong.
Corresponding authour: temily@hku.hk

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Abstract: The approach broadly known as participatory development has become a catchphrase in both development theory and practice. The idea of local populations becoming involved in processes of transforming their communities, first introduced as participatory rural appraisal (PRA), marked a paradigm shift in development methods. By the 1990s, participatory approaches, incorporated by the World Bank in its projects, had become incorporated into mainstream development methods. However, in recent years, development has come under severe criticism despite this approach. These critiques—part of the broader post-modern debate that gained prominence in the 1990s—though valuable, do not offer an alternative. Is participatory development—or development as it is currently theorized and practiced—achieving what it promises to?

This paper reviews recent critiques of development and then discusses a few promising approaches that may contribute towards transcending the current impasse. One approach can be found within recent methodological developments within the discipline of anthropology. Many of the criticisms against participatory development parallel criticisms raised against anthropological methods. It is in reflecting on the criticisms of "participatory observation" in anthropology that Luke Lassiter, drawing upon feminist and post-modern approaches to collaboration, developed an approach known as "collaborative ethnography." The standard of collaboration that he introduces goes much further than mere participation. Collaboration is an act of reciprocal co-creation and co-interpretation, from the conception of the project through to the analysis of the data collected. It requires that the project articulate knowledge from the indigenous standpoint, rather than through externally imposed assumptions and concepts. This approach, as Lassiter himself recognizes, calls into question current institutional practices within academia, such as favoring single-authored works and the tendency to favor academic knowledge over indigenous knowledge.

A similar shift needs to take place within development practice if it is to move beyond its current understanding of participation. The process of co-creating development projects based on local relevance and knowledge, and co-interpreting findings with the local community, will call into question the role of development "experts", the relevance of development organizations and fundamental assumptions of knowledge and power underlying development's world-building enterprise. This approach that I call *collaborative development* thus has the potential to re-imagine development from the bottom up and take into account local contexts, relevance and interests. In many ways, the move to collaborative development returns to the origins of activist participatory research, but goes further by taking into account the influence of global, hegemonic flows of power on local processes. It is at this global-local intersection that development consultants, or to be more specific, development collaborators will have relevance. Rather than being perceived as "experts", development collaborators are those intimately familiar with local processes in multiple places and are able to share experiences and insights generated from one grassroots locality to another without imposing formulas.

Keywords: Anthropology of development, collaborative development, collaborative ethnography, grassroots development, participatory development

Introduction

> Introduction of participatory approaches to development radically altered how development was theorized and practiced, leading some of the approach's strongest proponents to refer to it as a 'paradigm shift' within development. However, in just over two decades since its incorporation into mainstream development methods, many criticisms have emerged demonstrating that there was "little evidence" to show that "induced participation builds long-lasting cohesion, even at the community level." (Mansuri & Rao, 2012, p. 5)

This paper explores participatory development in two parts: The first provides a broad literature review of the rise of participatory development, along with criticisms raised against it, within the context of the history of

development. The second part of the paper explores the rise of 'collaboration' in anthropology and demonstrates its relevance to development. The implications for *collaborative development* are then explored.

A paradigm shift?

In his seminal work "The Structure of Scientific Revolution", Thomas Kuhn (1962/2012) introduced the term "paradigm shift" to describe the revolutionary process through which scientific knowledge advances. Long periods of "normal science" based upon past achievements and inherited knowledge, are suddenly subverted by a cumulating body of anomalies that call into question prior assumptions. This shift in worldview is so drastic that it resembles a complete change in perception, such that "what were ducks in the scientist's world before the revolution are rabbits afterward." (Kuhn, 1962, p.110)

The notion of a paradigm shift has since been used widely to describe the process of sudden and radical change. The introduction of participatory methods into mainstream development, to some, marked a seminal moment that would result in a paradigm shift. I begin by outlining a brief history of development and the conditions that led to the birth of participatory methods before proceeding to discuss its apparent failings.

Development: A brief historical overview

The concept of 'development' first came into being in the 1940s in the aftermath of World War II[1]. The notion of development had, in its essence, the purpose of replicating, in developing nations, the conditions that allowed for economically more advanced nations to experience rapid growth. This included the adoption of technology in agriculture, education, industrialization, urbanization and other modern values such as rationality and individualization. (Escobar, 1997a)

The birth of modern development, or 'development-as-aid', is often attributed to President Harry Truman of the United States. (see Sachs, 1997) In his inaugural speech, he said:

> "We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas…The old imperialism-exploitation for foreign profit-has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair-dealing." (Truman, 1949)

In the same speech,he strongly criticizes the "false philosophy" of communism, "based on the belief that man is so weak and inadequate that he is unable to govern himself, and therefore requires the rule of strong masters." (Truman, 1949) The overarching context of President Truman's speech was the Cold War, and it can be argued that modern development was a product of the political ideologies and strategies surrounding that conflict. Battle lines were drawn and categorical distinctions were made clear, at the cost of homogenizing diverse countries, both 'developed' and 'developing'. As a result of his speech, half the world was instantly declared as 'underdeveloped' according to criteria that had been decided for them.

The 1950s, shortly after development was first conceived, was the period when European colonies across Asia and Africa gained independence. These newly formed national governments sustained the development *discourse* (Foucault, 2012) to strengthen their legitimacy and give their constituents a unifying vision of the future of their nascent nations. This was solidified by policies set by far-reaching international institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Tasked with facilitating economic growth, these institutions offer loans to 'poor' countries in exchange for the imposition of fiscal policies.

The specific emphasis and approach to development—driven by international institutions and co-opted by national discourse— has varied from decade to decade, from 'basic needs' in the 1970s to structural adjustment policies in the 1990s to the currently popular good governance strategy. These shifts are summarized by Ellis and Biggs (2001, p. 439) in Figure 1 below. As they note, "it is useful to distinguish substantive theories or bodies of thought from trivial or transient ones, majority discourses from minority ones…some themes can be characterized as development 'spin' whereby ways of mobilizing the development lobby in rich countries are phrased in different ways over time. The rallying calls of 'poverty alleviation' (1980s), 'poverty reduction' (1990s) and 'poverty eradication' (2000s) perhaps fall into this category." (Ellis & Biggs, 2001, p. 438)

Critics have argued that modern development is a form of neo-colonialism controlled by 'developed' nations and doled out to 'undeveloped' or 'underdeveloped' nations, who had no say in the criteria of what should be considered 'developed' in the first place. (Escobar, 1995, 1997b) Others argue that the inconsistent approach to

[1] It is worth noting that some, like Pieterse (2000) argue that this is only one of the beginnings of development as it pertains to the global South. He points out that colonial economics is one example that predates this narrative of the birth of development.

development demonstrates that it is normative. (Jones & Petersen, 2011) A new development approach sometimes contradicts the aim and approach of the previous decade, essentially undoing prior achievements. (Korff & Schrader, 2004) Furthermore, the evaluation of the successes of development is also criticized as dubious because development institutions themselves do it. (van den Berg, 2004) This form of self-evaluation allows for circumstantial justifications, even at the cost of ignoring the feedback of those whom they serve.

Underlying all this is the broader issue of "an ethnocentric western model of social behavior" underlying economic theories driving modern development that are "based upon the individualism of utilitarian man which rides roughshod over the specificities of culture and context." (Long & Long, 1992, p. 22)

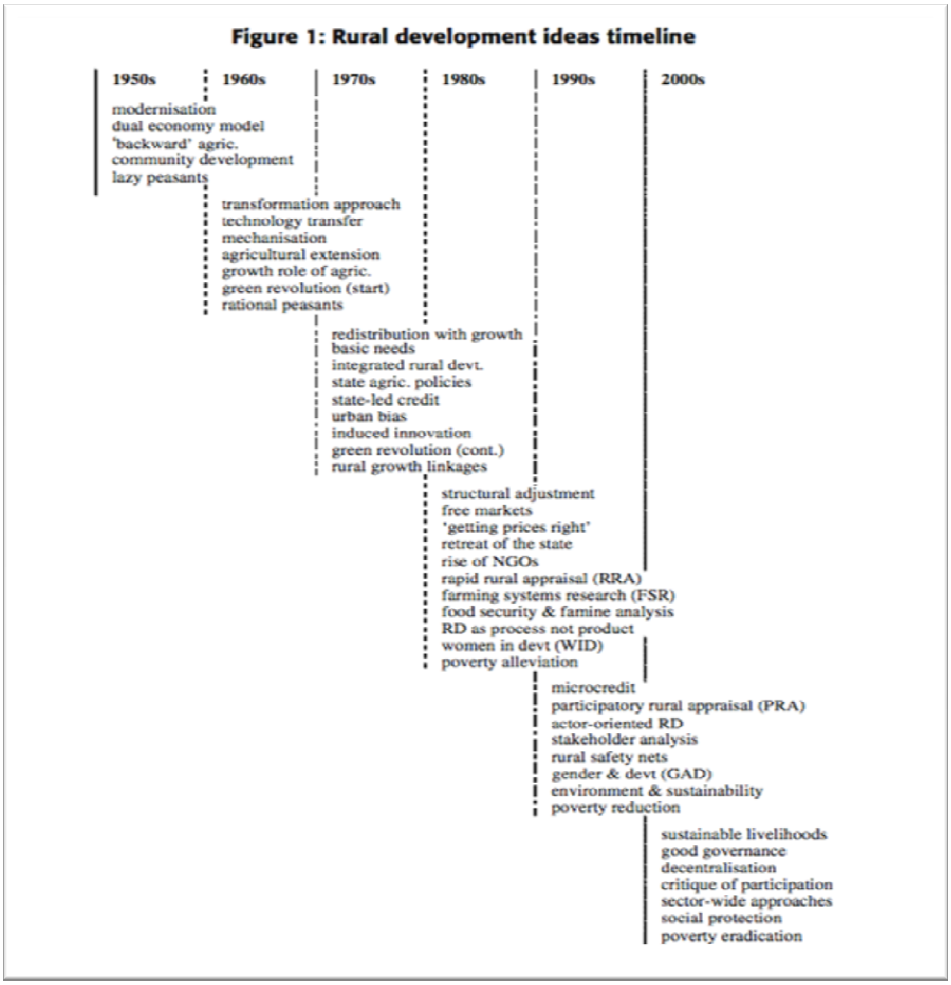

Figure 1: Rural development ideas timeline (Ellis and Biggs, 2001)

Participatory development

It is amidst these criticisms that participatory approaches to development held the promise of an alternative to the top-down approach to development.

As early as the 1970s, participatory/grassroots/community development[2] had already been put into practice, although specifically within the context of small-scale rural development in an approach known as Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). RRA, which emphasized data collection, would later evolve into Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), which emphasized data sharing and community empowerment. Robert Chambers was the first to formally introduce PRA as a set of evolving approaches and methods, and boldly argued that it would cause a "paradigm shift" within development. (Chambers, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c)

[2] I use these terms interchangeably as they broadly refer to the same approach.

PRA grew out of five key sources: activist participatory research, agroecosystem analysis, applied anthropology, field research on farming systems, and rapid rural appraisal. (Chambers, 1994a) At the heart of PRA was a firm belief—inspired by Paulo Freire's concepts of *conscientization*, *dialogue* and research as *praxis*—that the weak and marginalized have the capacity to reflect upon their own reality, make concrete plans and take action to bring about their own development based on their own indigenous understandings. (see Freire, 1970, 1985) 'Outsiders', as such, were present only to catalyze and facilitate.

It is not difficult to see why many of its strongest proponents saw participatory development as a promising way of addressing criticisms against development while continuing the underlying 'faith-in-progress' ideology that aimed to alleviate the suffering of the masses living in poorer nations.

Mainstream international development institutions very quickly incorporated participatory approaches in its projects. The incorporation of participatory methods into international development organizations also had spillover effects on governments and NGOs, who were now forced to include participatory approaches in their projects to qualify for continued funding. In less than a decade, participatory approaches had become "development orthodoxy". (Cornwall, 2003)

> "It is perhaps a truism of international development that, whenever the World Bank places its faith in a new buzz-word, developing nations are forced to follow suit. Hence 'participation' is being increasingly written in to Southern governments' (social) development projects, both as a method of delivery and (although perhaps more rarely) as an intended outcome in itself. It is perhaps another truism that whenever the World Bank embraces a concept, academics and practitioners wishing to label themselves as belonging to alternative-, post-, or anti-development camps 'outside the mainstream' often do their utmost to distance themselves from it." (Williams, 2004, p. 558)

A very broad range of criticisms has emerged against participation in the post-2000s. (see Cleaver, 1999; Hayward, Simpson, & Wood, 2004) These criticisms generally converge on three key points: "of emphasizing personal reform over political struggle, of obscuring local power differences by uncritically celebrating 'the community', and of using a language of emancipation to incorporate marginalised populations of the Global South within an unreconstructed project of capitalist modernisation." (Williams, 2004, p. 558)

These three criticisms[3] have been argued extensively by Williams (2004), and some potential pitfalls were even raised by Chambers at the outset of PRA. (see 1994c) These points will only be given a cursory overview.

1. Participatory development as an "anti-politics machine"

This line of argument accuses development of functioning as an "anti-politics machine" by stripping participatory methods of its revolutionary potential. This is achieved, to use Foucalt's term, by spreading governmentality through the incorporation of individuals into the development discourse. One way this occurs in practice is by using participation (or lack thereof) to determine whether or not a project was successful and deserving of continued funding. Participation becomes the purpose in and of itself.

> By directly incorporating swathes of intended development beneficiaries within the conduct of development projects themselves, the objects of development (constructed as 'the common people', 'the rural poor', etc) are deemed to become empowered subjects—or even authors—of their own development. In this way, any blame for project 'failure' is displaced from macro-level concerns, and re-localised onto 'the people' (as bad participants/non-participants), leaving the anti-politics machine free to grind ever onwards. (Williams, 2004, pp. 564-565)

Within this view, broader social, cultural and political contexts and dynamics are not paid due attention. As Kothari and Cooke (2001) note, the emphasis on participation incorporates marginalized segments of a society into the fold of development, but at the cost of binding them to conventions and structures that they cannot challenge. (Ferguson, 1990) also makes a similar point:

> By uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem, and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of powerless and oppressed people, the hegemonic problematic of 'development' is the principal means through which the question of poverty is de-politicized in the world today. At the same time, by making the intentional blueprints for 'development' so highly visible, a 'development' project can end up performing extremely sensitive political

[3] There are also practitioners who argue that the failure of participatory development is a technical issue that can be resolved through a constant revision of methodologies. (see Cooke and Kothari, 2001).

> operations involving the entrenchment and expansion of institutional state power almost invisibly, under cover of a neutral, technical mission to which no on can object…If the 'instrument effects' of a 'development' project end up forming any kind of strategically coherent or intelligible whole, this is it: the anti-politics machine. (pp.255-256, cited in Williams, 2004)

2. Participatory development as a homogenizing discourse

This line of argument points out that participatory development idealizes and homogenizes terms like "local" or "community" and ignores power dynamics within the local population. This consensual and harmonious view of the "local" is reflected in Chambers' own work which has been accused of "essentializing the poor" and pitting them against "an unspecified 'elite' whose only defining feature is their non-poorness." PRA thus sabotages its own claim of celebrating a diversity of perspectives by ascribing these "binary ontologies". (Mohan & Stokke, 2000, p. 253)

Feminist scholars like Cornwall (2003) have demonstrated the insensitivity to the nuances of gender and power at the local level despite the rise of mainstream discourses like Women in Development (WID). Even in its revised form of Gender and Development (GAD), "a particular form of Western feminism comes to be translated into development practice." (Mohanty, 1987, cited in Cornwall, p.1327)

Mohan and Stokke (2000) also found that the term 'local' was manipulated to serve the different ideologies of various stakeholders, ultimately resulting in Eurocentric perspectives continuing to permeate development. This point is depicted in a World Bank-commissioned study entitled "Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?" that evaluated the effectiveness of participatory development at the local level. The study found that "the poor often benefit less from participatory processes than do the better off, because resource allocation processes typically reflect the preferences of elite groups." (Mansuri & Rao, 2012, p. 5)

3. Participatory development as capitalist modernization

This criticism attacks the technical means-to-an-end logic—founded upon neo-classical economic theory—that finds a way of permeating participatory development, thereby sabotaging participation's revolutionary potential as conceived in PRA.

A good example that demonstrates this point is the very fact that participatory methods become adopted by mainstream development. Adoption implies being subsumed into something larger, and this point is depicted in a 1992 World Bank Discussion Paper that outlines the process through which participatory methods first came to be included in the Bank's approaches. A learning group comprising of 15 Bank staff was "given the mandate to assist in developing and documenting *20 Bank-supported operations that could be considered participatory*, accelerate Bank learning from different initiatives taking place inside and outside the Bank, and investigate any modifications the Bank may need to make in its operational practices in order to encourage popular participation where appropriate." (Bhatnagar & Williams, 1992, p. 1, own emphasis) Thus, from its inception, participation was not an organic bottom-up approach, but instead a top-down approach where *existing projects* could be reframed as participatory. The paper goes on to discuss the potential benefits and risks to the Bank of adopting a participatory approach, which includes the risk of "substituting, not complementing, technical knowledge with local information." (pg 4.) Clearly, this paper was meant for an internal audience working within the Bank's worldview. Nonetheless, it demonstrates why participation failed to live up to its promise.

This critique is linked to broader criticisms of development, addressed earlier, of being an ethnocentric, neo-colonial project. Participation, and other methods outlined in Figure 1, become tools of the well-oiled, all-encompassing, subversive machine of capitalist modernization, which inherently limits a diversity of worldviews. (see Arce & Long, 2000)

A paradigm shift, or not?

Returning to Kuhn's 'paradigms' raised in the introductory section, there is strong evidence, as discussed in the previous section, to argue that a "paradigm shift" did not occur. Underlying institutional structures of power do not seem to have drastically changed since participation was introduced. However, perhaps the notion of a "paradigm shift" is not fully applicable to the context of development. Kuhn himself argues that social sciences are pre-paradigmatic, as they do not operate within a professional scientific community that has shared frameworks, and taken for granted inherited knowledge. Still, many social scientists used 'paradigm' without any allegiance to Kuhn's natural and physical scientific models. Long observes that "sociological theories and metaphors are mostly rooted in contrasting, if not incompatible, epistemologies; that is, they conceive the nature of social phenomena and explanation quite differently." (Long & Long, 1992, p. 17) He further suggests "social

science has always been composed of a multiplicity of paradigms, of which none so far achieved the hegemonic status of a central theory or universal paradigm." (Long, 1992, p.17) [4]

Even Chambers noted this when he wrote: "In development thinking, paradigms tend to coexist, overlap, coalesce and separate." (1994, p.2) But this begs the question: why did he continue to tout his work as potentially paradigm-shifting, if, as he himself notes, it is not helpful to view changes in development thinking within this singular concept?

Still, 'paradigms'— whether Kuhnian or not—tends to limit discussions surrounding development practice because it either renders previous experience irrelevant or it discredits the possibility of a unified framework through which development can advance.

One way to transcend these limitations is to think of transformations occurring in development within Imre Lakatos' (1976) concept of a "research program". Lakatos developed this concept in contrast to Kuhn, arguing that scientific progress did not occur through dramatic revolutions, but through long-term, endeavors that built upon learning from the past. In this sense, present directions are in dialogue with, and constructing upon, past assumptions. The "research program" has a constructive, cumulative outlook. Auxiliary hypothesis can be tested to strengthen the explanatory power of core assumptions, but these core assumptions are rarely abandoned altogether.

In the section below, I explore changes within the field of anthropology within this understanding of a research program. Despite the critical debates and schisms that have occurred in the anthropology of development over the past few decades, when viewed collectively as a broad research program, these factions are now becoming unified in the idea of collaboration.

Anthropology and Development

Anthropology and development have a long and intertwined history. They share the same faith-in progress borne of the Enlightenment period and were heavily influenced by Darwin's theories of evolution. But some key differences were apparent from its inception. Anthropology, which grew out of natural history, emphasized the objective observation and documenting of pre-modern cultures in an attempt to understand the stages societies went through on the linear path to modernity, before these communities and ways of life disappeared completely. Development, on the other hand, was largely concerned with 'civilizing' and imposing change on people's ways of life, even in its early pre-secular forms. One was directly interventionist, while the other rejected intervention, leading some to refer to development as anthropology's "evil twin". (Ferguson, 1997; D. D. Gow, 2002) But this simple division underwent significant challenge after the fall of colonialism.

Anthropology and Development after Colonialism

The end of the colonial era marked the beginning of a period of crisis for anthropology. Since the field's inception, anthropologists had largely worked with colonial governments to conduct their research. Anthropological insights were often fed back to strengthen colonial legitimacy. The fall of colonialism strongly challenged the idea of a single linear path to modernity, of which European civilization represented the pinnacle.

Many anthropologists, who had viewed first-hand the devastating and oppressive effects of colonialism on local culture, no longer found it acceptable to be associated with Eurocentric notions of civilization and progress, which had failed. Debates also began to emerge about the political relevance of their research focus—founded upon the concept of cultural relativism—which held all cultures as equally valid. Whom should their insights serve? This marked the beginning a period of intense self-critique within anthropology, and political relevance would remain a controversial issue.

The end of colonialism marked the simultaneous birth of modern development and two major events occurred as a result: 1. Colonial governments, who had been a major source of funding for anthropological research, no longer made the same resources available, and the diminishing relevance of anthropology was also reflected in a drop in the number of academic positions available for anthropologists; and 2. The birth of 'development-as-aid' led to a mushrooming of Western aid organizations and many jobs that desired the field experience, cultural sensitivities and language abilities of anthropologists. These developments culminated in development becoming a primary object of the anthropological gaze, and by the 1990s there was a distinct split between two schools of thought.

[4] As to Kuhn's "open question", it could be argued, based upon the growing colonization of the social sciences by neo-classical economic theory, that the discipline of economics may have, to use Long's term, achieved hegemonic status.

The 'development anthropology' (also known as anti/beyond development) school advocated applied anthropology and encouraged anthropologists to create change from within development institutions and projects. Development anthropology was heavily influenced by the realist epistemology that shaped cultural anthropology and political economy in the 1960s. Within this school, the anthropologists' role ranged from translator to teacher to court witness to aid worker. As Gow wrote, development anthropology was about "speaking truth to power", even though this puts the anthropologist in a difficult—and perhaps contradictory—position. (D. Gow, 1993,cited in Escobar, 1997)

The other school, which espoused the 'anthropology of development' (also known as post-development), emerged through the influence of post-structuralism in the 1980s. Arturo Escobar's *Encountering Development* (1995) and William Sachs' *Development Dictionary* (1997) are among key works that shaped this school of thought. Influenced by Foucalt's writings on discourse, anthropologists in this school emphasized the role of language in *constituting* social reality. Through discourse analysis, they demonstrated the construction of the Third World through development language, and revealed development's embeddedness in practices and relationships. This school of thought came to reject all engagement in the development enterprise, because to do so would be to perpetuate "silent violence". (Escobar, 1997a)

It is important to note that these two schools of thought do not represent coherent theoretical frameworks and there is a wide range of perspectives within each. Still, the biggest criticism against the post-development school is that their outright rejection makes no political sense. Through their unwillingness to engage, the anthropology of development is in fact perpetuating the status quo. (Pieterse, 2000, p. 186)

Arguments raised by post-development scholars are premised upon the eventual death of development, at least in its current neo-colonial form. Nonetheless, it has also been pointed out that 'development'—despite all its failings—is a concept that is here to stay. (Arce & Long, 2000) 'Development' encapsulates the notion of modernity or progress so deeply rooted within society and its institutions that it is unlikely to disappear soon. (see Szakolczai, 2013)

Beyond the impasse

Gardner and Lewis (1996) point out that the emergence of these opposing schools of thought are symptoms of the postmodern crisis affecting both development studies and anthropology. To move beyond the impasse, they propose the need to remove the barriers between applied and academic anthropology. Their theory of action calls for anthropologists to change development from within its institutions by 'studying up' while simultaneously remaining critical of the flow of power and symbolic violence that exists in the development encounter. Even critical post-development scholars like Escobar have recognized the importance of Gardner and Lewis' proposal beyond the impasse.

Since then, anthropologists have permeated the highest ranks of development institutions and observed the implicit values and processes that shape development institutions. One example of this is Mosse's (2004) paper on his experience working as a consultant at the World Bank. He points out that although there has been a surge in the number of anthropologists working at the World Bank, they remain at the margins and are used to justify new approaches and products that are invented by the Bank's economists. Mosse's experience is an insightful illustration into the inner workings of the development enterprise and the underlying economic logic that permeates all its approaches. These insights reflect the broader colonization of the social sciences by the field of neo-liberal economics.

In her well-written argument for "remaking participation", Eversole (2010) concludes by making the case for "translation agents who are comfortable in the circles of both the powerful and the powerless, and who are able to facilitate the journeys of both." (p.37) These "translation agents" recognize the "qualitatively different" knowledge that the local community and development institutions bring to the table and seek to bridge the "deep chasm" between the two. (pp.37-38) She goes on to discuss the challenges, which she calls the "paradox of dual embeddedness" faced by these "coalface practitioners." (pp.38-39)

The problem is that her proposal assumes that 'translation' is possible, and though not naïve to the complex dynamics of power, she and others, like Gardner and Lewis (1996), see it as the only way forward. But there has been a large body of work by coalface anthropologists, predating Eversole's proposal by over a decade, that have proved this option problematic. (see Hobart, 2002; van Ufford, 1993) Although seen as valuable inputs, anthropological/community knowledge is often marginalized in favor of predictable, self-affirming development formulas.

Beyond participation to collaboration

> "'Participation' to date has largely moved in one direction only: communities have had to be willing to enter the terrain of others and learn to play by their rules. The challenge of remaking participation is to make it multi-directional. Truly participatory development does not just teach, engage, and empower communities, it teaches, engages, and empowers the organizations that work with communities, to see and do things differently." (Eversole, 2010, pp. 38-39)

Eversole's distillation of the way forward hits the nail on its head. However, I argue that it cannot be done as "participation". Structures of mainstream development institutions, though adaptive, have not undergone overhauling changes, and flows of power remain largely intact despite participatory development.

I propose that Lassiter's (2005) recent introduction of collaborative methods—growing in recognition within the anthropological community—may push us beyond the current limitations of "participation". Drawing upon the long history of anthropology beginning before the 18th century, Lassiter demonstrates that all anthropological research has always involved some degree of participation through 'gatekeepers' of a local community, translators, assistants, interlocutors and a host of other labels. What he argues is that this mode of 'participation', which engaged the local population during research, but alienated them during writing, is no longer appropriate, nor ethical. (see Fabian, 2014)

Addressing his discipline-specific audience, he makes the case for "collaborative ethnography", a toolkit for research that is *co-conceived*, *co-interpreted*, *co-authored* and even *co-written*. It even goes so far as to argue that theoretical concerns of the anthropologist, which may emerge in course of collaborative ethnography, should be put aside unless relevant to the community itself. This collaborative method thus addresses both feminist and postmodern critiques of anthropology, which resonate with criticisms against development. "To be sure, the differences between feminism and postmodernism are very real…But for anyone searching for the theoretical roots of a collaborative ethnography, these differences pale next to the similarity of their recurrent calls for reciprocation, coauthorship, citizenship, and action." P.101

Collaboration thus directly addresses the same theoretically rooted criticisms that have also been raised against participatory development, and modern development in general. Lassiter adds:

> "When taken seriously and applied systematically rather than bureaucratically, any one or a combination of these strategies leads us from the mere representation of dialogue to its actual engagement, from one-dimensional to multidimensional collaboration, and from a clichéd collaborative ethnography to a more deliberate and explicit collaborative ethnography that more immediately engages the publics with which we work." (p.96)

Within academia, institutional practices are already—and unsurprisingly—being confronted by collaboration, which exists as a direct threat "to the power and control which so many anthropologists still hoard." (p.102)

Collaborative development

Development practitioners and scholars would note the obvious parallels between the crises in anthropology and development. As discussed above, *collaboration*—founded upon coauthorship, citizenship, and action as well as an emphasis on local relevance— has the potential of unifying the divergent, critical, and theoretically grounded schools of thought. What would *collaborative development* look like, and what are some of its implications?

Collaborative development requires a reimagining of development from the ground up, and not in terms of theories and 'projects' based on external considerations. Collaborative development would also have to address new conditions that have emerged in the wake of globalization, such as increased human mobility and the proliferation of mobile information technology. Simplistic dichotomies of 'insider'/'outsider' used in PRA are no longer sufficient. For example, large groups of youth from rural villages might move to nearby towns for seasonal work. Should they be considered insiders or outsiders? Idealized notions of 'community' rooted in geographic space can no longer be taken for granted.

Rather than rejecting PRA as representing a previous 'paradigm', a more constructive approach is to build upon its strengths. Lakatos proposed that scientific advancement occurred, not through dramatic and sudden shifts in paradigm, but through "research programs" that built systematically upon previous knowledge and insights. In this sense, the idea of participation in development can be said to have established a new set of core assumptions in development, and in building upon its strengths, *collaborative development* represents a more mature stage in this research program.

It is beyond the scope of this present paper to fully outline the practical implications of collaboration, and perhaps these are best discovered through engagement. Interesting models of collaboration already exist and can be built upon. However, an obvious gap is the need for a grounded framework articulating the dynamic between individuals, institutions and communities as distinct agents of social change. Only then can issues of power-as-domination/control be prevented in practice.

To this end, a few sources seem to hold a promising direction:

1. Communitarian Liberalism

   Built upon the work of moral philosopher John Dewey, social theorist Philip Selznick (1994) introduces communitarian liberalism as a way to transcend the predominant rights-based framework by placing equal emphasis on the *responsibilities* of individuals and institutions. Only when rights are married with responsibilities does the emergent property of community flourish. This perspective seeks to transcend the limitations of the ideology of liberalism that has dominated Western thought since the 18th century.

   Within a communitarian liberal perspective, individuals are not 'means' to institutional ends or domination. Rather, ends cannot be desirable "without knowing what means are entailed." (Selznick, 1994, p.329) Summarizing a wide range of organizational theory, Selznick shows that the degradation of values within institutions often results in means and ends becoming divorced. However, this can be mitigated if institutions begin to explicitly engage in *process*, rather then *procedure*. Process, unlike procedure, "contains matrix of values, purposes and sensibilities that should inform a course of conduct" (331), thus marrying means and ends.

   Seen from this perspective, collaborative development must be seen as a moral endeavor, rather than a technical one. (see Giri & van Ufford, 2003) Collaboration, seen as a *process*, will need to be in ongoing and open dialogue: "a robust community, however pluralistic, must embrace the idea of a common good." (Selznick, 1994, p.ix) This perspective openly embraces the normative nature of development—distancing it from instrumental rationality—and thus reframes development as a moral endeavour. Collaboration, should have as its foundation, open and ongoing dialogue around the values and purposes that drive development and unite all collaborators. Within such an environment, ambiguity is a positive indicator of collaboration. (see Parfitt, 2004)

2. Mutualistic cultural formations/normative mutualism

   Normative mutualism is founded upon cooperative and synergistic understandings of power. It used in contrast to normative adversarialism, which has become a hegemonic discourse within modern society. Whereas mutualism emphasizes 'power with', adversarialism is founded upon 'power over'. Modern social institutions are founded upon what Karlberg (2004) calls the "tripartite system of contests" which includes economic, political and legal spheres. Within this tripartite system, economic contests have dominance over the political and legal spheres. Many of the criticisms of development discussed earlier can be attributed to this tripartite system of contests.

   Normative mutualism goes "beyond the culture of contest" and draws upon alternative cultural formations founded upon mutual empowerment. Drawing upon feminism, systems theory, communication theory, alternative dispute resolution, and the environmental movement, Karlberg calls for further empirical validation of mutualistic cultural formations. Collaborative development could provide one platform for this exploration.

3. Complex adaptive systems

   Complex adaptive systems function on the basis of non-linearity. They cannot be predicted, and their behavior is strongly influenced by local interactions within their components. Order and chaos organically interact, producing a state of self-organized complexity. A complex adaptive system is in constant communication with its environment and its survival is dependent upon small, effective adaptations over time.

   Rihani (2002) is the first to comprehensively argue that development should be viewed as a complex adaptive system and he hails it as the next 'paradigm shift' that needs to occur within development. As he points out, the shift to complexity would force international development institutions and governments to recognize that development cannot be 'imported' from elsewhere. "Command and control methods and detailed forecasts and plans, effective for linear systems, are inappropriate as it is not possible to select sensible actions to achieve desired objectives in situations driven by internal dynamics that involve vast numbers of interactions, and where results cannot be traced back to specific

causes." (Rihani, 2002, p.9) Development is an unpredictable, messy affair largely driven by millions of local actors. "Local freedom of action, learning, flexibility and variety are equally important, as control is limited to observation of outputs and encouragement for the elements to interact in away that moves the system towards desirable ends. Management of Complex Adaptive Systems is, therefore, a reiterative process that relies on slow, and uncertain, evolution." (p.9)

Although this paper disagrees with the notion of 'paradigm shifts' to understand changes that need to occur within development, Rihani's point is well taken, and cannot be ignored. Viewing development as collaboration implicitly recognizes its unpredictability, and calls for all actors involved to adopt an attitude of learning and openly share information and insights with each other so that evolutionary adaptations can occur. Diversity in the development process is also safeguarded.

Conclusion

This paper began with a broad historical overview of modern development, before examining the conditions under which participatory development emerged. The criticisms raised against participatory methods were then explored in an attempt to understand why a 'paradigm shift' did not occur.

Based on the body of criticisms, it is evident that 'participation' is no longer sufficient and a more dynamic, multi-directional, and non-linear understanding of collaboration needs to be advanced. Within the field of anthropology—a discipline inseparable from development—the 200 years of accumulated knowledge and practice now points to collaboration as the most ethical and relevant way forward if it is to serve the public.

It is in building upon the unifying potential of collaboration, which addresses both feminist and postmodern criticisms, that I explore the potential of *collaborative development.* To the keen reader, this represents much more than a semantic shift from 'participation.' Although collaboration does not preclude some participatory methods that are currently in practice, it represents much-needed theoretical expansion (see Gasper, 2000), and to this end I propose communitarian liberalism, normative mutualism and complex adaptive systems as promising frameworks that shed insights into the dynamics of individuals and institutions. A mutualistic, cooperative framework was proposed in response to ethnocentric, contest-driven models of power that underlie many of the criticisms against development. (cf. Kapoor, 2005)

Some interesting models of collaborative development that consciously move beyond a rights-based framework already exist in *practice,* often bringing together individuals, NGOs, minority voices and local governments in a process-driven, long-term co-creation and co-interpretation. The theoretical framework of collaborative development should be expanded in dialogue with grounded learning of these models, especially with regards to institutional changes over time.

It naturally results that the nature of learning needs to be a focus within *collaborative development.* How is learning best systematically generated, widely disseminated and applied within the separate but interconnected spheres of individuals, institutions and communities? An understanding of processes of learning, founded upon complexity, will add to the strength of collaborative development, and is a key area for future research. (cf. Gasper, 2000)

The field of development sits at a turning point with clear need for new models reflective of several decades of learning. As discussions surrounding the recent Brexit debate made abundantly clear, the post-World War II order upon which so many modern institutions and assumptions rest is cracking and in need of overhaul. "There is no coordinated conspiracy in the development industry, and not all projects obviously 'fail'. Still, a yawning chasm remains between the stated goals of development and many of its practices and outcomes." (103, Harrison, in Quarles van Ufford & Giri) I have attempted to demonstrate that more band-aid solutions, or bridges across the chasm, will not suffice.

It is hoped that *collaborative development,* as outlined above, can set in motion a process of re-conceptualizing development in such a way that the goals and practices are intimately intertwined through an emphasis on *process* and dynamic collective learning.

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