



Anthropology in or of Development? On Tracing Pragmatic Relevance of Anthropology in Development Studies

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1. Executive Summary

Within Development Studies, the relationship between Anthropology and Development, has been documented as uneven, inconsistent, and marred with conceptual complexity and pragmatic ambivalence. The complexity becomes more vivid when Anthropology is traced within Development Studies in the context of Pakistan wherein the theoretical and applied domains of Anthropology are singularly separated. The current knowledge brief is an attempt to articulate the normative and instrumental dimensions of development, position Anthropology within Development Studies, as a theoretical domain, as an analytical inquiry, and as a pragmatic space, and finally trace ways to engage both disciplines for social change that is needed, unforced, and comes from within. The contested definitions of development, the competing debates around Development-Anthropology articulation, and the application of anthropological knowledge for meeting incremental or normative needs of development practice have also been detailed in the write-up.

2. Setting Up the Context

Development Studies, as where it stands today, has experienced many paradigm shifts, seen competing theoretical positions, borrowed concepts and constructs from intersecting social sciences and metamorphosed into action plans and concrete policies. The struggle for finding its theoretical and epistemological footings is also deeply-rooted in shifting frontiers of Development Studies wherein the contestations to define what actually development is, where is it located, what are its core issues, and are those issues solvable resurface after every two decades, early on in the name of modernization, intermediately in the name of dependency or rather recently in the name of neo-liberalism. The classical versus contemporary debate, just like other fields of social scientific inquiry, is also persistent in Development Studies. Considering the composite nature of Development Studies and resultant importation of theoretical concepts from related disciplines of social sciences, the influence of Sociology, Demography, Political Science, and Economics has always remained strong in articulating what development is and broadening as well as shifting the frontiers of Development Studies. The contours of what constitutes development practice, how and why is it important to dimensionalize it, and which prescriptive solutions can be made accessible for practitioners and policymakers to follow, are also deepened and widened by critical theory, primarily with the post-structural, post-modern, post-colonial, and post-developmental critiques of development. It is within these critiques, that Anthropology finds its relevance both

theoretically and pragmatically. But before articulation of anthropological knowledge with development practice and theory, a brief tabulation of what development is, has been represented under next section.

3. Dimensionalising Development

Table 1: Dimensionalizing Development (Tabulated from Rist (2014))

Dimension of Development	What Does it Entail?
Instrumental	Speed, growth, movement, maneuver, acceleration, target-oriented, and target-achieving.
Normative	Processual: process-led and process-oriented.
Self-reliant	Endogenous, self-dependent, and self-perpetuating.

The instrumental approach, given its target-oriented lens, focuses on the output and outcome. The output can be a tangible good or service or can be meeting a substantial policy objective, an outcome. Whatever the output or outcome it entails to achieve, the approach is not committed to sensitize with the process; the process to bring about the change and the process that led to meet the intended-target. In this way, the sensitization towards what human, social, economic and psychological costs have been borne to achieve the target is silence in this approach. Therefore, the dimension finds its footing in the sub-discipline of positive economics. Normative dimension, on the other hand, focuses on the process following which the target is achieved, therefore it factors in the costs, the tribulations, and the lived-in experiences, to the extent that its complete focus-shift on the process lends it both theoretical rigor and pragmatic heft. For instance, the Sen's Capability Approach (Sen,1983), by focusing on how individual or collective capabilities can be translated into achieved functionings explicitly states that income is not always an end; sometimes it can be a means to an end or sometimes it can be irrelevant considering there are realities other than material, which actualize capabilities into functionings, for instance, inclusion, participation, voice, social environment, empathy, visibility, etc. Also, this approach holds a strong grip on ethics of change rather than incessantly succumbing to meeting targets at the cost of human displacement, environmental degradation, and social exclusion. Participatory development is also processual in which community participates on three different degrees; for obtaining knowledge from the community so that their voice can be articulated at the policy level, for economic participation and visibility of community, and finally for steering social change endogenously without exogenous social engineering (Willis, 2021). The last dimension, self-reliant, propelled by the former president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, reverberates the long-standing need for the post-colonial countries to develop its own targets of development, outline its own processes to achieve the targets, generate its own economic, human and social resources, and frame their own policies without being dependent on the exogenous factors which impinge upon making painful adjustments endogenously through stringent conditionalities of donors. These three different, yet overlapping approaches, also umbrella other conventional dimensions of development. For instance, instrumental approach encompasses economic dimension, normative approach encompasses socio-cultural dimension, and self-reliant approach encompasses self-sustaining and perpetuating dimension of development.

4. Theorising Development

The three dimensions (detailed under preceding heading) are funneled down to explaining layered complexities, complex theorizations, and intersecting concepts of development. The following table gives a comprehensive theoretical trajectory of development and where do we stand today.

Table 2: Theorizing Development (Tabulated from Hopper (2012))

Development Theory	What Does it Entail?
Colonial Economics	Based on the colonial experiences, colonial economics is largely about colonial administration, construction of physical infrastructure, extraction of economic resources, expropriation of human resources, and unlawful occupation of land.
Keynesian Economics	The inexplicability of classical economics to bring economy back through free market economy, foregrounds Keynesian economics which merely fine-tuned economy through government intervention.
Modernization as Development	Post second World War, the most conventional and mainstream theory which was claimed to work as the blue-print for the post-colonial countries was modernization which by using the analogy of an airplane conceptualizes a uni-directional, ethnocentric, monolithic, and Eurocentric trajectory of development for the post-colonial countries. This essentialized conception of modernization as development is hugely debated and falsified through empirical research conducted in many developing countries, including though not limited to South American, South Asian and African countries.
Dependency	Views under-development of and in the post-colonial countries as the agenda of the West to keep growth and development per se <i>satellized</i> in the East. Using the concepts of core and periphery, and analogies of orbit and satellites, the theory concludes that under-development in the peripheral economies is largely due to development of the core economies in which the later does not allow the development to be self-perpetuating and self-sustaining in the former. The absolutist positioning of core and peripheral economies with no cross-mobility is challenged with the emergence of Asian Tigers, China, India, and Brazil moving closer to the core with rapid economic growth and social development, materializing into a third band; semi-periphery.
Structuralism	Reeking of the economic lucrateness of capitalist ventures and resultant global domination, the Economic Commission of Latin America developed and proposed to implement protectionist policies in the post-colonial countries to give an economic push to nascent industries through import substitution industrialization. The protectionist policy measures couldn't be materialized due to issues in uniform policy implementation and incapacitation.
Neo-liberalism	With the aggrandization of economic issues in the post-colonial countries, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank developed and institutionalized Structural Adjustment Programs, targeting structural issues of loan recipient countries; minimum government footprint, privatization, and devaluation of currency. These stringent conditionalities have caused socioeconomic unrest in the loan recipient countries including a civil unrest in Mexico, circular debts in Pakistan, and regional inequalities in India, among other adversities.
Post-developmentalism	The idea that development is a political and politicized concept, enframed, professionalized and institutionalized by the West in East to augment relationships of dependency, extraction, and appropriation. The proponents of this theory are dismissive of effective application of anthropological theory and ethnographic methods to improve material realities of people of the post-colonial countries based on the critique of development as a hegemon.

Table 2, in addition to outlaying the development trajectory, also positions Anthropology as a critical theory to development practice and affirms its position in the Critical Development Studies ethos. This proposition is true but requires granular and full-roundedness and completeness of argument. Therefore, the following text details how (and if) anthropological knowledge can be of significance for Development Studies.

5. Anthropology in Development

Anthropological knowledge is cultural, eclectic, thick and explanatory, based on which socio-cultural processes and phenomena are detailed. The collection of primary data and analyses of ethnographic data are critically essential. Ethnographic data (which the anthropologists collect) entails participation, inclusion, representation, multi-vocality, and granularity. In late 1980s, when the World Bank and IFI's recommendations about economic acceleration in the post-colonial countries was receiving flak, one of the points which needed critical assessment was the overtly use of secondary data, top-down policy framing, and intellectual hegemony of economists in the World Bank. Their one-shoe-fits-all approach was not only yielding misrepresenting economic policy prescriptions, but also overstepping into prescribing how poverty and inequalities can be addressed. The results of both were dismissal. With political unrest, widened disparities, and rising poverty as a result of ascribing to the donor policies, the need for participation and inclusion was needed. Under this inclusion agenda, the World Bank started hiring anthropologists and sociologists in late 1980s and early 1990s, who rendered their ethnographic insights into the issues of poverty, exclusion, food insecurity, and inequality. Anthropologists with their knowledge of context building, importance of applying bottom-up approach to problem identification, and conversational and observational methods not only challenged the usual methodological frameworks adopted and practiced by the World Bank but also questioned the status quo and hegemony of intellectualism of economists (Lewis, 2005). The shift to primary data (both qualitative and quantitative), collection of experiential and narrative-driven data through individual and group interviews, observation of social events, and socio-cultural mapping widened the framework for development practitioners and policymakers across the globe. This domain wherein anthropological theoretical and analytical knowledge is believed to improve the development practice is called Anthropology in Development, within the broader sub-discipline of Development Anthropology. Development Anthropology is not a linear and normative depiction of Anthropology-Development relationship. It is marred with contested argumentation from the other group of anthropologists grouped under the domain of Anthropology of Development.

6. Anthropology of Development

As stated above, criticality is the mainstay of this Anthropology-Development relationship. According to the proponents of this domain, the application of anthropological knowledge to improve development practice is explained as a compromised decision taken by the anthropologists in development who on the surface believe and popularize their normative roles in development practice. On the contrary, the anthropologists of development believe that anthropological knowledge cannot help change material realities of people and hence better development practice, because development in itself a western concept to reinforce the western hegemony of knowledge, practice, and policy. They also question the methodological appropriateness of anthropological knowledge by asserting that the World Bank's projects are time-, and resource-bound. The minimum time to collect observational data for context building is six months. If the length of the project is six months, then how can anthropological insights be furnished? Epistemologically and ontologically as well, the development practice largely falls under positivist and objectivist positions respectfully and anthropological knowledge aligns with interpretivist epistemological and constructivist ontological positions. In addition to these disciplinary critiques, development as practiced in the post-colonial countries by the former colonial masters is criticized as a hegemon. Some of the critical voices to propel this argument is detailed in following points.

Development as a Professionalised and Institutionalised Space

Arturo Escobar's critique of development merely as a professionalized and an institutionalized domain has been propounded in his research on development policy framing on poverty, hunger and destitute in Colombo. To Escobar, development is nothing more than an industry for the Wes-

tern scholarship, consultants, and practitioners to exercise their economic, decision-making, geostrategic and discursive powers. The policies developed by these experts who are trained in the affluent universities and institutions of the worlds are unquestionably followed and believed to be the only development reality of the post-colonial countries. The poverty-stricken, the destitute, the hungry, the unlettered, the uncivilized, the unexposed, the archaic, and the deprived and depraved of the post-colonial countries need a foreign expert to fix his/her issues and change their realities. This unchallenged and blind-folded adherence to the west guarantees the institutionalization of development. Hence, development which requires professional experts to professionalise it and the machinery for implementation to institutionalise it, is divorced from the lived-in realities of the post-colonial countries – for whom policies are developed (Escobar, 1991).

Development as an Apparatus

Speaking of machinery, James Ferguson, another post-developmental anthropologist, builds on the idea of machinery by asserting that development apparatus is operationalized by the local political, economic and social elites who co-opt with the international elites to institutionalise development. Hence, the apolitical nature of development is questioned by Ferguson (1994) in his ethnographic research on Lesotho. The mere optics of development by constructing infrastructural design in the loan-recipient counties with no actualization of intended objectives to improve living conditions of the locals, was also deconstructed by Ferguson.

Postcolonial Critique

Majid Rahnema's critique of development sector, knowledge hierarchies in the knowledge production, captive land and markets for western biomedical interventionist policies, and narrative construction and image-building of East by West as an extension of imperial and colonial power is also contributing (Rahnema, 1997).

Politics of Representation

Edward Said's influential deconstructionist research on the politics of representation and knowledge production of the Orient by the Occident as a discursive practice lays a strong foundation of criticality on development discourse (Said, 1979). This politics was pinned down by Gayatri Spivak's silencing and voicelessness of a subjugated and occluded identity, of a subaltern because his/her/their voice is silenced by the dominant hegemonic ideologies of capitalism, colonization, oppression, subjugation, exclusion, and patriarchy (Spivak, 1988). Homi K. Bhabha's third space and hybrid identities that subaltern may socially reproduce an alternative discourse to the hegemonic ones through subliminal modes of literary texts, prose and poetry, music, and performing arts (Bhabha, 1994). These non-demonstrative modes challenge the existing status quo, implicitly.

Development as Discourse

Discourse is the knowledge which is produced as a systemic inequality of the ways narratives, literatures, archives, images, and representations about the East are constructed by the West (Cornwall and Eade, 2010). This inequality in construction and dissemination of knowledge is discursive in nature and a type of non-physical colonization. The knowledge as produced and popularized through this modus operandi, is conformist and discouraging of dissonant discourses. These assertions about development being discourse is promulgated through application of deconstructionist techniques, such as discourse analysis in which power hidden behind text, conversations, signs, symbols, and documents are to be explained (Escobar, 1995). The power which discourse focuses on is capillary, omnipresent, and horizontal and can be manifested by those in power including the machinery and apparatus operationalized in the name of developm-

ent (the donors, the foreign consultants, the foreign development practitioners, the State, the judiciary, the policymakers and the local political parties).

7. Anthropology in Pakistan: Which Way Now in Development Studies?

Development, though debated, has profound impacts on human lives. When looked at from a humanist lens, one can easily identify issues which are not manufactured by the West and yet they are prevalent in the post-colonial societies. The issues of climate-induced vulnerabilities, displacement of the dispossessed, anti-encroachment drives against the urban poor, the social occlusion of the transgender community, water scarcity, unsafe public spaces for women and children, and income and social poverty are prevalent as locally identified issues in need for local solutions. Anthropology in Pakistan can, as it has in other parts of the world, help not only identify the issues on the research level, but through adopting action research design, voice key takeaways on various governmental and international platforms. Some of the key findings of the research, conducted in the Global South (mostly in the post-colonial contexts) have been detailed in the box below.

- Amita Baviskar's research on the bhilala adivasis displaced because of the construction of Sardar Sarovar Dam and the Muslim community dispossessed due to premediated fire in the Geeta Colony located in Delhi are illustrative ethnographies which question the livability, survivability, and positioning of urban poor in contemporary India. This research produced evidence by identifying a key urban issue the results of which have been presented and advocated on various civil society and governmental forums in India (Baviskar, 2012).
- Firdous Azim's research regarding putting sexuality on the policy agenda for restoring citizenry rights (right to work, right to hold child custody and right to hold property) of female sex workers of Daulatdia (red light area), Bangladesh is another research that captures the essence of gender rights movement in which women were not mere recipients but active and agentic agents of change (Azim, 2012).
- Angana P. Chatterji's research on forming a tribunal for the documentation of unmarked and unnamed graves in multiple districts located in the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) is critical in identifying the issues of human rights violation, sexual violence against Kashmiri Muslim women, and extrajudicial and encounter killings of Kashmiri Muslim men. Chatterji's another research documenting the majoritarian Hindutva ideology and the rampant communal violence against religious minorities in India is another contribution to action-oriented research. The results of both researches were presented by Chatterji as testimonies before Committee on Foreign Affairs (Chatterji, 2012).
- Michelle Obeid's research on practicing third degree of participation for the Aarsal Project in a Lebanese town shows how locals trained in western knowledge from the top-ranking global universities not only come back to their town after the civil war ends but also develop Local Users' Networks for local women and herd community for Lebanese women and herd community to lead their individual projects autonomously (Obeid, 2012).
- Nida Kirmani's research on fear and the city voices fear, threat and intimidation experienced by Baloch young men residing in Lyari. The systematic existential and ethnicized violence Baloch men are subjected to provides textured, nuanced, and eclectic documentation of peripheral masculinities under the broader theme of Gender and Urban Spaces in Pakistan (Kirmani, 2015).
- Asim Sajjad Akhtar's and Ammar Rashid's research on militarized developer state documents forceful eviction of migrants from the katchi abadis of Islamabad. The research in addition to highlighting a critical migrant issue also runs a socio-political commentary on the military, civil, and real estate bureaucracies and city administrations running capitalist ventures in the country's capital (Akhtar and Rashid, 2021).

- Parveen Rahman's 'Orangi Pilot Project' which she inherited from Akhtar Hameed Khan in 1999 is an exemplary work of poverty graduation. This project, despite her assassination in 2013, is still regarded as one of the most socially relevant, institutionally profound and academically rigorous initiatives in the domains of urban planning, unlawful land grabbing, water and sewerage management, and extension of micro-credits to the disadvantaged.

8. Future Directions for Pakistan

The following points highlight what can be desired of anthropological knowledge in Pakistan.

Evidence for Policy

For future direction, what needs to be done in Pakistan is more positional and action-oriented anthropological research concerning development issues grounded in local realities of contemporary Pakistani society and economy.

Change over Jargons

Also needed is to go beyond the anthropology in development, of development, anthropology of critique and discourse analysis of western development practice through deconstructionist approaches, and apply methods of applied anthropology concertedly to bring about change in real time and space.

Anthropology of Policy

The purpose of policy is to govern code of conduct, align behaviors, codify social norms, bring about change in targeted and desired actions, and identify areas where evidence is required for interventions. In this regard, anthropologists in a country like Pakistan which is marred with developmental issues, can contribute significantly by simply reading policies as cultural texts where their role can be of cultural intermediaries between people and implementer/regulator, as a deconstructionist who can sensitize by critiquing how certain policies are framed to preserve the status quo, and as an important stakeholder who provides an anthropological evidence for policy formation or change. These roles are lacking in applied anthropologists of Pakistan.

Anthropological Association

Internationally, Anthropological Associations for Applied Anthropology exist for profiling, documentation, and coalition of anthropologists contributing on development and human rights issues, and bringing about social change. In Pakistan, this coalition is needed for documentation of applied research on issues pertaining to climate-induced vulnerabilities, socio-economic lives of the ultra-poor, communities on the peripheries (religious, ethnic, linguistic, sexual, and sect-based minorities), and civic life of contemporary Pakistan.

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