1 Thinking about Culture and Development

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1 Overview and introduction

The aim of this chapter is to define the two key terms of this book: "culture" and "development." The organization of the chapter, taking each of our two key concepts in turn, itself reflects the surprising lack of connection established between culture and development in the study of development. As we show in section 2 of this chapter, development has most often been thought of as an aspect of economic process: more to do with "getting the prices right" or establishing the conditions for industrialization than with cultural transformation or transfer. However, culture is not absent even from these approaches to "development." In chapter 2, the various strands of modernization theories are explored to show how culture is, explicitly and implicitly, central to the ways in which modernity is conceived of as an outcome of the development process, even when expressed mainly in economistic or technocratic terms. In modernization approaches, culture is seen as something development acts upon.

A different kind of link between culture and development comes into view when we explore development as a *discourse*. The meanings attached to the term development are produced within and by a particular cultural context, that of the so-called West – or, more precisely, the political, economic, and social institutions of Euro-American societies, generating a particular discourse of, or way of talking about, development. Seen in this way, it becomes clear that development is a cultural artefact, rather than a natural process which can be accelerated and guided by development planning. Where do the ideas and measures come from according to which we categorize societies into "developed," "developing" and "underdeveloped"? If development is not an objective status but a cultural construct, what are the implications for development studies as a field of academic inquiry, for development practice as a multibillion dollar industry, and, more generally, for the way we look at the world in which we live?

But what does "culture" mean? How do we use the term in this book? In section 3, we look at how "culture" has been defined within Western intellectual traditions in ways which relate primarily to development as process: "culture" as something development acts upon. Drawing on the new discipline of cultural studies, we propose a definition of culture which is able to encompass both of the aspects of development we have identified here: as a process, and as a discourse itself implicated within specific cultural contexts of meaning and power.

2   What do we mean by development?

Ask the question what is meant by "development," and you will receive a great variety of answers. Despite, or perhaps because of, the voluminous literature on development that has accumulated over the past 50 years, the concept seems to be impossible to pin down in a neat definition. One reason why confusions arise is that development is variously used to refer to means and goal, process and intention.

2.1   Development as process and development as intention

The question "What is development?" is often confused with "What is intended by development?" Cowen and Shenton (1996: 1) point out that the two questions are different. Outlining a distinction earlier made by Australian economist Heinz Arndt (1987: 165), they explain that the first question relates to development as an immanent process, which creates the new by destroying the old, much like a plant grows. This pre-modern conceptualization of development was already commonly used by the ancient Greeks, who also acknowledged that decay and destruction are an integral part of the development cycle. The second question, about the intention of development, is rather different from the first. It assumes that it is possible to act in the name of development, to give order to the process of development so as to avoid, stop, or at least alleviate its negative dimensions. In this conceptualization, development is no longer immanent and cyclical, but rather it has "come to represent the potential and possibility for a linear movement of human improvement" (Cowen and Shenton 1996: 57). Usually it is the state which expresses the intention of development by imposing order on the often chaotic process of development. It formulates development doctrines and policies of development which spell out the desired outcomes and the strategies by which to achieve them.

Most countries in the Third World provide examples for development as an intent. However, it was not in relation to the Third World that development doctrines first started to emerge. Their history goes back to the early nineteenth century, when Auguste Comte and his followers first sought ways of dealing with urban poverty and unemployment in France, produced, according to their analysis, by capitalist development. Similarly, in Britain the industrial revolu-

tion had produced social tension, due to the "combination of working classes despairing because they had not enough to eat and manufacturers despairing because they genuinely believed the prevailing political and fiscal arrangements to be slowly throttling the economy" (Hobsbawm 1968: 59, quoted in Cowen and Shenton 1996: 11).

Around this time Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels provided what was to become a famous description of the rapid rate of change and the intimate relationship between destruction and creation inherent in the capitalist process of development:

> All fixed, fast-frozen relationships, with their train of venerable ideas and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become obsolete before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and men at last are forced to face with sober senses the real conditions of their lives and their relationships with their fellow men. (Marx and Engels, 1967)

Marx described the capitalist development process as a "constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation." For many people, the experience was not only deeply unsettling and frightening, but it also did not lead to improvement. On the contrary, they were plunged into unemployment, destitution, and squalor, or what later would be called "underdevelopment." Thus, in the early nineteenth century development doctrines were formulated in the industrializing countries of Europe to "ameliorate the disordered faults of progress" (Cowen and Shenton 1996: 7). Rather than just leaving the movement from the old to the new to an objective, natural process of development, the first developmentalists argued that this movement had to be confronted, compensated, and pre-empted in order to realize universal human improvement. Thus, it was in the European context that development was first conceived of as "one means to construct the positive alternative to the disorder and underdevelopment of capitalism"(Cowen and Shenton 1996: 57).

In the second half of the twentieth century, development has come to refer mainly to the processes of change occurring in the newly independent countries of the Third World. Here, too, the concept is used to describe the "natural" processes of capitalist expansion (industrial development, the development of natural resources), but more frequently it implies the actions of a national government or international organization, such as the World Bank, to purposely enable those types of activities which promise a better life and alleviate suffering. In short, development has increasingly come to mean something we do, rather than something that happens to us.

2.2 Enlightenment, modernity, and progress

As we have seen in the previous section, while development processes have been identified much earlier, development doctrines that prescribe what should be done emerged in nineteenth-century Europe. It was only in the modern era

that humans came to believe they were able, entitled, and even compelled (by moral considerations, for example) to have a lasting impact on the processes of nature. Modernity is the broad world view which has become established over the course of the eighteenth century in the West (mainly in Europe and in the USA), and which has subsequently spread, initially through colonization, to other regions of the earth. Echoing Marx's observations, Marshall (1994: 7) explains:

> modernity is associated with the release of the individual from the bonds of tradition, with the progressive differentiation of society, with the emergence of civil society, with social equality, with innovation and change. All of these accomplishments are associated with capitalism, industrialism, secularisation, urbanisation and rationalisation.

Thus, in the writings of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophers and social thinkers, modernity is commonly seen in contrast to traditional social order and beliefs. Traditional forms of knowledge in the old regime were dependent on religious authority, such as the Bible, which kept people ignorant and superstitious. These forms of knowledge legitimized absolutist forms of power, as exemplified by the French kings prior to the Revolution. Modern knowledge, according to the Enlightenment philosophers, was based on experience, scientific experiment, and reason (Hamilton 1992; Porter 1990). Science allowed humans to control nature and make her more productive in ways that improved their lives, through the invention of machinery which would abolish drudgery, and free humans from illness and famine.

Subtle analysis, critical thinking, and a diversity of ideas offered by Enlightenment thinkers also had consequences for the way in which political power was organized. In France, it spelled the end of absolutist rule (at least for a short time) by inspiring the French Revolution, which sought to construct a system of power which was scientific and based on a rational contract between the free individual (who in those days was male and white), and his elected government. The modern state became the representative of the nation of individuals, and a trustee of their interests, hopes, and ambitions for a better future. Nineteenth-century European governments became involved in managing and disciplining people, to regulate and bring order to society which was undergoing massive changes in the industrial and urban revolution.

One of the most powerful ideas of the Enlightenment is that the natural and social condition of humans could improve through application of reason and science. The idea implies ever-increasing well-being and happiness, a movement from badness to goodness. Shanin (1997) maintains that this idea has become so powerful in the modern era that it penetrated all strata of society, and is seen as common sense. In Shanin's (1997: 65) words, the idea of progress "offered a powerful and pervasive supra-theory that ordered and interpreted everything within the life of humanity – past, present and future."

The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment is "a set of interconnected ideas, values, principles, and facts which provide both an image of the natural and social world, and a way of thinking about it" (Hamilton 1992: 21). But the Enlightenment was also a diverse movement, with a plurality of ideas (Porter 1990) which cannot be circumscribed easily within the term "Age of reason." Indeed, many eighteenth-century intellectuals rejected the rationalist philosophies of the seventeenth century, arguing, with Voltaire, that reason can lead to false and absurd conclusions if divorced from experience and sensitivity. Despite numerous internal contradictions, the central ideas of the Enlightenment (Hamilton 1992: 21–2) can be summarized thus:

- **Reason** – the process of rational thought and principal way of organizing knowledge. It produces clear "ideas independent of experience which can be demonstrated to any thinking person," but it must be "tempered by experience and experiment."
- **Empiricism** – all knowledge based on empirical facts and can be apprehended through the senses.
- **Science** – scientific knowledge as the key to expanding all human knowledge.
- **Universalism** – reason and science produce general principles and laws which can be applied to all situations everywhere.
- **Progress** – natural and social condition of humans can be improved through application of reason and science. Propelling progress is the quest of ever-increasing well-being and happiness.
- **Individualism** – the individual cannot be subjected to a higher authority; he/she is the starting point for all knowledge and action. Society is the product of thought and action of individuals.
- **Secularism** – secular knowledge and structures replace traditional religious authority.
- **Toleration** – all humans are essentially the same, and beliefs of other races are not necessarily inferior to European Christianity.
- **Uniformity of human nature** – principal characteristics of humans are always and everywhere the same, i.e., there is a human essence.
- **Freedom** – opposition to feudal and traditional constraints on beliefs, trade, communication, social interaction, sexuality, ownership of property.

In particular, it permitted Europeans to solve two conceptual problems which modernity posed. One was how to deal with the ever-increasing range of dif-

ferent societies and cultures with which European explorers were confronted in their travels to distant lands. The diversity they observed could not be explained with the old dichotomy of civilized and barbaric, and required a more sophisticated way of categorizing and making sense of the range of different societies. The second problem was that in pre-modern times change had been understood in terms of a cycle, similar to the way in which immanent development was understood; the end was the same as the beginning. However, the changes occurring in the modern age, as described by Marx above, were more radical; societies undergoing industrialization, for example, were different at the end of the process. History came to be seen as a linear trajectory, rather than a cycle. The future was uncertain, but this was compensated by a sense of optimism and promise implicit in the notion of progress. After all, those who invented the notion saw themselves as representing the highest achievements of humanity to date. They were able to conceive of themselves as the model for societies which they categorized as less developed. The concept of progress became

> an immensely "energizing" tool of policy and counterpolicy, as well as serving to mobilize the devotion and readiness of its followers, who were often prepared to sacrifice much . . . to help speed up the inevitable approach of the necessary and glorious future. (Shanin 1997: 68–9)

The Enlightenment can thus be seen to have ushered in a new era, that of modernity, which for the first time allowed humans to conceive of development as an intention. Science, rather than God, became central to modern society (Touraine 1995), and the individual, rather than the king, empowered government. Furthermore, the history of human societies came to be understood in terms of linear progress and improvement. These three fundamental changes in how the world was seen and understood had in common the notion that the process of development could be controlled by human agency. Where Shanin (1997) differs from Cowen and Shenton (1996) is that the former sees development as closely linked to progress, and both of these as the *raison d'être* for statehood, while the latter perceive development doctrines emerging from the limitations of the notion of progress.

2.3   Third World development doctrines

Development studies, as an interdisciplinary field mainly devoted to the study of Third World countries, has a recent history. Some writers have located the beginning of development thinking in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, concurrent with the break-up of the British empire (e.g. Arndt 1987; Escobar 1995). Escobar (1995) begins his book about the making and unmaking of the Third World with a quotation of Harry Truman's inaugural address as president of the United States of America in 1949. Truman defined half of the world's population as poor, hungry, disease-prone, and, in short, underdeveloped, and then went on to argue that the West possessed the knowledge and the skill to redress their suffering:

What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealing. . . . Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge. (Truman [1949] 1964, quoted in Escobar 1995: 3)

Since Truman's speech, a range of different theories have been formulated, some of which build on his doctrine, others adopting a critical view of it. Each of these theories shares an intention to develop, but they differ on how this is to be achieved, what the outcome should be, and what type of principles should guide it. As Colin Leys points out, these development theories emerged to deal with a more narrowly defined development issue, namely, how the economies of (former) colonies of Britain, France, Portugal, and other European countries might be made more productive. He points out that, surprisingly, few development theorists drew on "the existing body of theory about development that had been prompted by the original advent of capitalism itself" (Leys 1996: 5). He mentions three reasons for this: first, the practical orientation of post-war development theory, which focused on intervention and action, rather than on reflecting on philosophical questions; second, the tendency to treat development studies as a science, and to ignore political and historical issues; and third, the dominance in the post-war period of Keynesian economics, which highlighted the role of the state, and of international development agencies, in promoting national economic growth.

What is often forgotten are not only the nineteenth-century writings on development in Europe, but also how at the same time colonialism was perceived as an exercise in development. In the heydays of colonial expansion, the colonial territories constituted not only a source of wealth, to be exploited by the colonial administration, but also a convenient workshop in which to invent and try out the new development doctrines. Generations of nineteenth-century British social thinkers, including Edmund Burke, James Mill, and John Stuart Mill, worked as civil servants in India, where they developed their ideas about development policies in the areas of education, public works, and taxation (Cowen and Shenton 1996).

The colonial endeavor was often justified in the names of progress and the civilizing mission. As Ashis Nandy (1997) points out, even some of the finest minds of nineteenth-century Europe supported colonialism as a vehicle through which modern structures could be introduced into the barbaric non-Western world. The European colonial administrations were thus able to perceive themselves not as exploiters, but as benevolent agents of progress who have taken on the heavy burden of bringing the underdeveloped colonies into the modern age. Colonies were seen as children for whose mental and physical well-being the colonial administrations were responsible, but economic progress was not among the benefits sought for the indigenous populations (Arndt 1987). Thus, a clear distinction was made in many colonial policies between economic development which was to benefit the colonists, and their obligations to ensure

the social welfare of the "natives." At the same time, in Latin America, European ideas of development and modernization were acted out by the new mestizo elites which had seized power in the early nineteenth century after more than three hundred years of Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule.

Clearly, then, the development theories emerging after 1945 to deal with the postcolonial Third World were not born into a vacuum. They drew on nineteenth-century social theories, on the vast and diverse colonial experience in Asia, Africa, and Australia, and on the postcolonial history of development of Latin America. We should bear this in mind when examining the most influential post-Second World War theories of development in the following sections.

Underdevelopment in the USA

While the president of the United States pledged to fight uneven development on the global stage, one of the most prolific development thinkers, Gunnar Myrdal, had focused his early work on inequality in the USA itself (1944) before going on to write his seminal work on *Asian Drama* (1968). Myrdal's work raises two key issues: first, it puts a question mark over America's claim to an advanced, developed status by suggesting that global inequalities are mirrored in American society; and second, it highlights the role of cultural constructions of racial prejudice, and its associated social and economic inequality, in development.

Myrdal argued that systemic and institutional racial inequality – based in racial theories of the nineteenth century – was one of America's greatest failures, and seriously undermined the ideals of the Enlightenment, which he described as the "first principles" of American democracy (Jackson 1990: 193). With a view to the global process of decolonization, Myrdal warned that unless Western countries abandoned white supremacy and racial segregation, their prestige and influence abroad would suffer, and the "colored nations" could end up taking revenge and inflicting violence on white nations. Conversely, if the United States embraced racial justice, its influence abroad would not only be based on economic and military might, but also on "spiritual power" (Myrdal 1944: 1018, 1022).

While Myrdal was one of the few social scientists at the time to consistently argue that the negro problem was really a problem of white racism, he also believed that black Americans should strive to assimilate into American culture, "to acquire the traits held in esteem by the dominant white Americans" (Myrdal 1944: 928–9). At a time when the dominant social scientist opinion held the view that white Americans and black Americans had fixed and mutually incompatible cultures, Myrdal held out the possibility of assimilation. Foreshadowing much of what would later become Third World development planning,

he believed that social engineering, the "supreme task of social science," would help achieve equality and assimilation. Social engineering was to be orchestrated by the state, and involved a range of policies from desegregation of public housing and raising the standard of black education, to full employment, planned migration to areas of high job growth, and the granting of civil rights to all Americans (Jackson 1990: 229–30).

Many of Myrdal's policy recommendations were initially taken up by the President's Committee on Civil Rights, established by President Truman in response to the upsurge of racial violence and liberal protest after the end of the Second World War. The resulting legislative program on civil rights, however, was swept aside as the United States government prioritized its fight against communist tendencies among and embarked on anti-communist wars in the Third World (Jackson 1990).

Modernization theories

Modernization theories are the most widespread and persistent theories of development. These theories dominated development thinking in the 1950s and 1960s, and should be seen as one expression of a long-standing Western concern with progress. They have been so pervasive that it is difficult to separate the idea of modernization from that of development, which in turn is linked to notions of capitalism and economic growth (Roxborough 1988). The distinction between the concepts of modernity and modernization is often blurred, as in Inglehart's recent study (1997), where he defines modernization broadly as

> a process that increases the economic and political capabilities of a society: it increases economic capabilities through industrialization, and political capabilities through bureaucratization. Modernization is widely attractive because it enables a society to move from being poor, to being rich. (Inglehart 1997: 5)

Inglehart goes on to trace modernization back to Marx and Weber, thus identifying the line of descent of the specific set of modernization studies that characterized development studies (and also social sciences in First World countries more generally) in the 1950s and 1960s. Modernization theorists argue that a wholesale change must take place in underdeveloped societies in order to break the vicious cycle of poverty, ignorance, and low productivity. Not only the economy had to be transformed, but also the education system, the ways of thinking, acting, and living. A World Bank "mission" to Colombia in 1949, of the first World Bank visits to a Third World country, called for a "comprehensive and internally consistent" development program. Twenty years later, Gunnar Myrdal wrote about the comprehensive "modernization ideals" he

identified in the South Asian region. He argued that although these ideas stem from foreign influences imposed by colonial rule, they have become "the official creed of the South Asian countries." As he points out, they are "composed mainly of the ideals long cherished in the Western world as the heritage of the Enlightenment" (Myrdal 1968: 55). In his listing of modernization ideals we find a number of Enlightenment ideals that have been tailored to the context of the developing world: rationality, development planning, social and economic equalization, improved institutions and attitudes, national consolidation, social discipline, political democracy and grassroots democracy. Myrdal quotes from a speech by the first Indian prime minister, Nehru, to illustrate how modernization requires leaving behind tradition:

> We have got to get out of many of these traditional ways of thinking, traditional ways of acting, traditional ways of production, traditional ways of distribution and traditional ways of consumption. We have got to get out of all that into what might be called more modern ways of doing so. … The test of a country's advance is how far it is utilizing modern techniques. Modern technique is not a matter of just getting a tool and using it. Modern technique follows modern thinking. You can't get hold of a modern tool and have an ancient mind. It won't work. (Nehru, quoted in Myrdal 1968: 56–7)

Modernization involved development planning as a key strategy to achieve desired change, with the state playing an important role. When the development era began in the 1950s, there was widespread optimism about the capability of Third World governments to guide the development process. Governments made up development plans, often with the assistance from experts of international organizations, such as the World Bank. In these early decades of the development era, development planning was perceived to be the appropriate method by which to apply the economic development theories of Rostow and other development economists (Escobar 1992). More generally, Myrdal defines planning as "the search for a rationally coordinated system of policy measures that can bring about development" (Myrdal 1968: 58).

Economic development – expressed in terms of increasing productivity of labor and rising living standards – was perceived to be crucial to modernization. Rostow (1971) provided an important contribution to the economic component of modernization theory. His book, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, was written in the early 1960s as an anti-communist manifesto. Clearly inspired by a linear concept of history and progress, he described different stages of development which societies all have to go through, from traditional stage, through to a stage of high mass consumption. While he pointed out that industrialization is the most visible sign of a modern society, he traced the antecedents of the industrial revolution far back into Europe's history, with two essential steps toward industrialization being the invention of the mechanical clock and the "discovery of nature" (Arndt 1987: 11). Rostow thus considered industrialization as a part of Western civilization, embedded in the broader changes signaled by the European Enlightenment.

Samuel Huntington (1971: 285), one of the leading proponents of modernization theory, pointed out that the concepts of modernity and tradition were central to post-war modernization theory: "These categories were, of course, the latest manifestations of a Great Dichotomy between more primitive and more advanced societies which has been a common feature of Western social thought for the past one hundred years." In chapter 2 we shall examine this dichotomy in modernization theory in more detail.

To summarize then, in the eyes of the modernization theorists, modernization is

- a revolutionary process, involving radical and total changes in developing societies.
- a complex process, including industrialization, urbanization, social mobilization, differentiation, secularization, media expansion, expansion of political participation, increasing literacy and education.
- a systemic process, in the sense that "economic development, cultural change, and political change go together in coherent and even, to some extent, predictable patterns" (Inglehart 1997: 5).

More controversial are several other characterizations of modernization theory: a process which takes time, going through a number of stages (e.g. Rostow); that it is a global process which in the long term is homogenizing; and that it is an irreversible process from which no turning back is possible.

Modernization theory's assumption, that development was an inevitable process which could, however, be accelerated through an enlightened government and technological assistance from outside, was strangely apolitical. From a critical perspective, Chomsky (1969) pointed out the lack of self-analysis among Western intellectuals in the 1960s, who did not acknowledge how modernization theory was part and parcel of the Cold War competition between the West and the Soviet bloc. He observed that where attempts to solve problems through piecemeal technology failed, methods of coercion would be applied to Third World countries to preserve order and stability, and to keep communism at bay. Chomsky (1991: 58) noted "the striking correlation between US aid and human rights abuses," "elite hostility to democracy," and "the general US opposition to social reform" during the Cold War. He argued that these were all consequences of the United States' determination to maintain a world order that guaranteed the needs of US investors, and to prevent Third World countries from embarking on an independent development path.

Modernization with a human face: the basic-needs approach

The increasingly vociferous critics of top-down modernization approaches (e.g. Myrdal 1968), and the growing realization among mainstream development institutions that their battle against poverty and hunger was failing, led to a

crisis of the modernization approach to development. Statistics on poverty were by the mid-1970s indicating that the reliance on the trickle-down effect of high-technology solutions such as the "green revolution" in agriculture or import substitution industrialization to uplift the poor had not worked. Indeed, evidence suggested there might even have been a relative decline in the standard of living for the world's poorest people, particularly women and children. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that in 1979 eight hundred million of the rural poor were destitute and increasingly reliant on imported food supplies from the West (Blumberg 1981: 34). Dire news of this kind prompted a major policy reorientation within the international development community to the so-called basic-needs approach. This involved moving away from high-technology, top-down development strategies which modernization theorists had advocated. Instead, development should be oriented to providing "the minimum standard of living which a society should set for the poorest of its people" (International Labor Organization 1976). Leading the way on this new development path, the International Labor Organization (ILO) defined the satisfaction of basic needs as:

> the minimum requirements of a family for personal consumption: food, shelter, clothing: it implies access to essential services, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, transport, health and education; it implies that each person available for and willing to work should have an adequately remunerated job. It should further imply the satisfaction of needs of a more qualitative nature: a healthy, human and satisfying environment, and the popular participation in the making of decisions that affect the lives and livelihoods of the people, and individual freedoms. (ILO 1976: 7)

In paying more attention to the experience and objectives of development at the household and even individual level, it was realized that women were central to the provision of basic needs, precisely because of their roles in food production, family consumption, and birth control. Thus the shift to a basic-needs approach went along with a greater attention to women and their part in achieving development. It opened the door to a perhaps more challenging shift in thinking about development which was inspired by feminism – both the social movement for gender equality and the contributions by feminist scholars to social theory (for a more detailed discussion see chapter 4).

In other ways, too, the basic-needs concept was conducive to interpretations that went beyond a technocratic, capital investment approach to development. It raised the issue of investing in humans through greater emphasis on health and education, and identified the equitable distribution of wealth and resources as a development goal and strategy. It also made possible the inclusion of social justice issues, such as gender equality and indigenous rights, in development agendas from the 1970s onwards. Despite the short life of the basic-needs strategy, its main elements have lived on, and have recently been revived under new slogans, as Truong (1992: 8, quoted in Braidotti, Charkiewicz, Häusler, and Wieringa 1994: 19) has pointed out. They inhabit the Human Development

Index of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (1990), and the "basic rights" campaigns of non-governmental development organizations (e.g. Simmons 1995; Facio 1995).

Dependency theory and autonomous development

If the basic-needs strategy was a moderate policy-oriented response to the failures of modernization, Marxist theories of development and the so-called dependency school were much more substantial critiques of modernization. Not surprisingly, it was in Latin America where such critiques were first expounded. After all, Latin American countries had enjoyed independence for almost a century and a half, and their level of development remained far below that of the USA and the industrialized nations of Europe. In trying to establish what kept Latin America developmentally retarded, the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), led by the Argentinian Raul Prebisch in the late 1940s, argued that one reason was the unequal exchange between raw material-producing Third World countries and industrialized countries of the First World, who were unwilling to share their technological expertise (Sunkel 1977). The First World was increasingly substituting raw materials and was demanding high prices for its own industrial products (Larrain 1989). This analysis implied an unequal distribution of power between the industrialized centre of the global economy and its underdeveloped periphery.

In the 1960s, André Gunder Frank (1969) expanded on this view of the world with his own theory of underdevelopment. He questioned whether capitalism could bring the benefits of development to the periphery, arguing instead that capitalism was a world system which systematically exploited peripheral countries through monopolistic trade. Indeed, the wealth of Europe and the USA derived from their exploitation of the Third World since the beginning of the colonial era. The developed status of these First World countries was, therefore, structurally linked to the underdevelopment of the Third World, much like "the opposite sides of the same coin" (Frank 1969: 33). Frank perceived the world capitalist system as a hierarchy stretched across the world, so that each stratum was exploited by the next highest stratum, from the rural regions of the Third World, through their regional towns and capital cities, up to the top of the hierarchy where the capital cities of the Western countries resided. Third World nations therefore had to sever the trading and other relations with the First World in order to allow their economies to develop. In a sense, then, Frank turned modernization theory on its head by arguing that the ties with the West were a harmful disruption to the normal course of development in Third World countries (Manzo 1991). He also challenged assumptions that development was a linear process of continuous improvements by interpreting the development process in Latin America as a downward spiral.

In subsequent years, other neo-Marxist development theorists came to exert a strong influence on development thinking. Some of them (e.g. Cardoso and Faletto 1979) associated themselves with the dependency school, which added

to Frank's (1969) critique of the capitalist world system an analysis of class structures within developing countries. Cardoso, who has gone on to become the president of Brazil, and his Chilean co-author Faletto did not agree with the view that Third World countries could only "underdevelop," but rather interpreted the socio-economic changes in Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina as "dependent development." The concept of dependence indicated that the empirical events in Third World countries could be understood neither on their own terms nor just by reference to their relations with the First World. Rather, the internal and external structures and processes were linked in complex ways.

Others, such as Emmanuel (1972), Amin (1979), and Wallerstein (1979), developed ECLA's thesis of unequal exchange within a capitalist world system marked by the division of countries into a poor world and a rich world, with limited scope for transition between the two camps. In short, the underdevelopment and dependency theories constituted a structuralist analysis of the obstacles to capitalist development in the Third World (Leys 1996).

Underdevelopment and dependency

While Leys (1996: 45–6) recognizes that there are differences among individual theorists on several issues and concepts, he summarizes the general points that underlie underdevelopment and dependency theories as follows:

1 Today's Third World, its "underdeveloped" social, economic, and political conditions, are the underside of the same world-historical process in which the First World became "developed." This directly contradicts modernization theory's view of the Third World as undeveloped or untouched.
2 "The prime mover in this combined process was capital seeking profits, i.e. seeking opportunities to accumulate capital – specifically, capitalist merchants, capitalist bankers, capitalist insurers, etc., and finally capitalist manufacturers" (46).
3 Capital accumulation is easiest in countries where labor and resources are cheap, and governments weak. This is the case with many newly independent Third World countries, whose economies had already been given an external orientation during the colonial era to fit the economic structures of the imperial center.
4 "Secondary structural consequences of this served to reproduce the process and constantly block local initiatives to pursue an autonomous development path; e.g. the low incomes of the majority due to the creation of surplus labor and marginalization imply a generally small domestic market; highly unequal income distribution implies a narrow import-orientated consumer demand, etc."

> 5   "The corresponding emergence and formation of social classes at the capitalist periphery with interests in common with the bourgeoisie of the metropoles made possible the development of colonial, neo-colonial and semi-colonial states representing successive types of such alliances."

As Leys (1996) points out, the underdevelopment and dependency theorists revealed the ideological premises of modernization theory. Influenced by Marxist critiques of capitalism, their analyses focused on economic processes and structures rather than on political, social, and cultural processes. It can be deduced from their work that they see the direction and definition of development as an object of political struggle. However, it is not clear what kind of development Third World countries can strive for that differs from that of capitalist development. In chapter 2 we shall look at some countries that were, at various times, held up by dependency theorists as examples of positive development, such as China and Tanzania, which in different ways attempted to forge a socialist path to development.

2.4   The meaning of development

In the literature reviewed thus far, development has a range of different meanings but is generally regarded a desirable objective. Whether capitalist or Marxist, development theorists and policy makers have identified development with material progress and improved living standards. But how these goals are best achieved, who should be the primary beneficiaries, and who or what stands in the way of development, have been matters of ardent debate. Another consensus which emerges from the discussion thus far is that development is closely related to the broader definition of modernization, as a process of economic and social change that emerged from Europe and expanded from there to the rest of the world. Similarly, development policies developed in those parts of Europe which first underwent rapid industrialization, to respond to the poverty, dislocation, and suffering it produced. Coherent economic development policies for Third World countries only became common after they had become decolonized, and then they frequently were patterned after First World policies, or development experiences. It appears, therefore, that development thinking has its cultural home in the European Enlightenment. A third point which we have established thus far is that development cannot be conceived of without a notion of its opposite, whether it be underdevelopment, or non-development. The close conceptual link between development and modernization provides a clue for what many development theorists have perceived as development's opposite – backwardness, stagnation, and, above all, tradition. Unlike the modernization school, however, dependency and Marxist development theorists, to different degrees, have strongly challenged the idea that de-

velopment is linear and denotes progress. Their work helped to reveal the blinkered vision of modernization advocates by demonstrating that countries and regions can become underdeveloped by colonialist and capitalist expansion, and their people be worse off than before the onset of development.

3 What do we mean by culture?

It is not easy to pin down "culture" with a precise and singular definition. "Popular culture"; "high culture"; "national culture"; "youth culture"; consumer culture; global culture; multicultural; culture clash and so on; in a myriad of phrases, clichés, and references, "culture" is much in vogue as a topic in the media, politics, and in everyday life. Rarely, however, do those who use it say what they mean by it. It is one of those words whose meaning is often taken for granted. Yet, as Raymond Williams, a leading cultural theorist, pointed out, "Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (Williams 1983: 87).

The word has a long and involved history, and this is reflected in the variety of ways the term has been defined and used across various academic disciplines, ranging from literary studies to anthropology and sociology. Many of the everyday ways in which the word is used reflect this history and diversity, often incorporating bits and pieces of several different definitions or historical usages.

Robert Bocock (1992) has identified five ways in which culture has been defined, summarized in table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Definitions of culture

1   Culture = cultivating land, crops, animals
2   Culture = cultivation of mind, arts, civilization
3   Culture = process of social development
4   Culture = meanings, values, ways of life
5   Culture = practices which produce meaning

Source: adapted from Bocock (1992: 234).

3.1 Culture and hierarchy

The first definition of culture listed by Bocock (1992) was the earliest, referring to the cultivation of nature. This had, by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, been extended to humans. Culture now referred to the "cultivation" of the human mind as well as the fields and plants. By the late eighteenth century, class was a significant dimension of this meaning of culture. "Culture" became an attribute of birth and rank; "refinement" the exclusive preserve of the aristocracy. Economic and political power underpinned a cultural power, expressed

Figure 1.1 A hierarchy of races. Profiles and skulls of various "races" showing facial angles, from a European (top left) through various peoples to "savage" African towards an ape (1850)

in the ability to define what was considered "cultured." Certain human activities were designated as "cultured" – the arts and scholarship – while other activities such as manual labor, trade, and manufacturing were seen as uncultured. Increasingly, "culture" also included particular forms of social conduct, lifestyle, manners, and speech.

This hierarchical notion of culture as the lifestyles of an elite was translated in the nineteenth century into a sense of culture as the pursuit of perfection. In its modern guise, the familiar distinction between "high" and "popular" culture privileges the artistic pursuits of a social elite, while "popular culture," covering those aspects of creative and imaginative life accessible to, and enjoyed by, a mass audience, are considered second-rate.

These distinctions in culture on the basis of class were generalized across groups of people as a distinction between the civilized and the uncivilized, to include entire nations. This extension of the meaning of culture occurred as European societies came into sustained contact with regions, people, and ways of life very different from their own. Exposure to these different societies generated a range of European responses, both negative and positive. A widespread fascination and marvel at the wonders of ancient civilizations such as China and India, particularly in terms of their artistic achievements, often went along with less generous comparisons.

At the same time, the intellectual ferment of the Enlightenment was throwing up new ways of thinking about human societies based on scientific knowledge, displacing religion as the sole basis of knowledge. Human history was no longer seen as one of decline from an original God-given innocence, but as a story of progress, based on the ever-increasing "self-knowledge" of "man." This important shift to a secular understanding of human history was reflected in new scientific models emerging in the nineteenth century, the most famous being Charles Darwin's theory of human evolution. Darwin's linear model of human evolution as a steady progression from ape to man was extrapolated by early social scientists (Robert Young 1995; Nederveen Pieterse 1992: 48) to rank human societies on a scale from "primitive" to "modern." Culture was defined more explicitly as the acquisition of civilization and was conceived of as a process of social development.

By the mid-nineteenth century, as industrialization and imperial expansion established European, and particularly British, technological and economic dominance over large parts of the globe, European societies, and specifically white middle-class men, were cast as the epitome of modernity and progress. Non-Europeans were ranked at lower stages of cultural development, with black people at the bottom of the evolutionary heap, labeled "primitive." Serious debates were conducted amongst social scientists as to the implications of this ranking. Were non-Europeans simply at an earlier stage in a common evolutionary progression to "civilization"? In which case, a "civilizing mission" on the part of Europeans – as missionaries, colonial administrators, and imperial legislators – to bring culture to the less developed, would eventually bring even the primitive into the light of progress and modernity. Or did the different rates of social development indicate biologically different human races, each with specific limits to their respective cultural developments? Such reasoning often legitimated slavery, arguing that Africans were racially suited to physical labor and incapable of self-direction or autonomy. It was even argued that some societies or "cultures" were evolutionary dead ends, best left to "die out."

In the case of Australia's indigenous peoples, such arguments legitimated geno-cidal and eugenicist policies intended to "breed out" a people caricatured as "stone-age" and incapable of surviving in a "modern" world.

The Hottentot Venus

This understanding of culture was mapped across class, sexuality, and gender as well as race. Sander Gilman (1985) shows how all four came together in the stereotyping of women around race and sexuality. African women were located in nineteenth-century scientific models of human development at the opposite end of the evolutionary time line to European women on the basis of their presumed greater sexual appetite, itself taken as an indicator of primitiveness. Medical scientists "proved" this theory of sexuality by documenting its expression in the "primitive genitalia" and "protruding buttocks" of African women. The "Hottentot Venus," an African woman named Sara Bartmann (or Saartjie Baartman), was displayed and exhibited throughout Europe in the early nineteenth century as living proof of the inherent differences between the African and European; her body, reduced to its sexual parts, attesting to the fundamental difference between the "primitive" and the "civilized," physically and temperamentally.

  By the middle of the century, a connection was made between the "primitive sexuality" of African women and the "degenerate" sexuality of prostitutes, that other group of women seen as the antithesis of virtuous white middle-class womanhood: "The primitive is the black, and the qualities of blackness, or at least of the black female, are those of the prostitute" (Gilman 1985). As the two illustrations show (figures 1.2 and 1.3), the same physiology assigned the "Hottentot Venus," protruding buttocks, are now assigned the white working-class prostitute, identified as a pathological form of female sexuality and a "throwback" to the "primitive" sexuality of the Hottentot.

The example of the Hottentot Venus and the white prostitute illustrates how the definition of culture as a process of social development, drawing on new scientific explanations for human history and evolution, was able to rank so-cial groups on a scale of cultural development or "civilization." The two axes of this scale were, at the lowest point, the primitive or savage, and at the high-est, modernity. By the mid-nineteenth century these two notions of the primi-tive and the modern were firmly tied to ideas about racial difference, and attached not only to social descriptors such as ways of living but to physical attributes. Progress and modernity were the pinnacles of cultural development – civilization – represented by the societies and peoples of Western Europe.
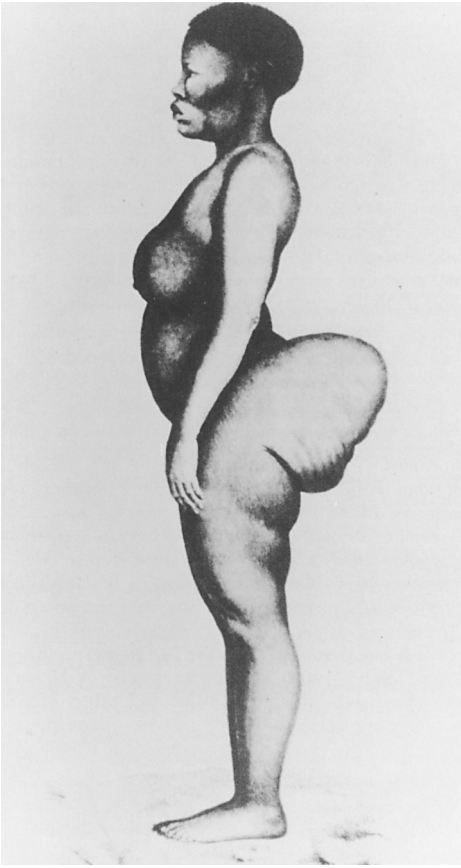
Figure 1.2   "The Hottentot Venus." Georges Cuvier, "Extraits d'observations faites sur le cadavre d'une femme connue à Paris et à Londres sous le nom de Vénus Hottentote" (1817)

Figure 1.3   Italian prostitute. Abele de Blasio, "Staetopigia in prostitute," pl. 1 (1905)

Although, as Gilman's example demonstrates, even within these "modern" societies, certain social groups, such as the working class and women, were distinguished as in some ways lacking the necessary attributes of culture and modernity.

3.2   Anthropology and culture

At the same time as hierarchical notions of culture were becoming established in nineteenth-century social science, another way of defining culture emerged as a core concept of the new discipline of anthropology, whose central concern was the study of culture, specifically non-Western cultures. Western anthro-

pologists were less concerned with culture as a measure of civilization or as a ranking tool for an evolutionary scale than with describing and explaining different cultures. Two main anthropological definitions of culture have been widely influential in the social sciences generally (see 4 and 5 in table 1.1). These two ways of defining culture are not mutually exclusive. They each represent distinct but related ways of approaching the study of culture. The first definition is primarily concerned with what culture is, while the second focuses more on what culture does, or how it does it, rather than on what it is (Bocock 1992: 232).

Culture defined as the meanings, values, and ways of life of a particular group

This is probably the most common definition of culture in contemporary social science. While there is a diversity of ways of interpreting it, these can be broadly included within two main approaches, briefly summarized below.

Functionalist: building on aspects of the work of Emile Durkheim, one of the founders of modern sociology, this approach emphasizes the "shared and normative nature of culture and its functions for integrating the individual into the group." Thus culture is seen as a "design for living," an aspect of the social structure ensuring the cohesion and continuity of society as a whole (Billington, Strawbridge, Greensides, and Fitzsimons 1991: 4).

Interactionist: drawing on the work of another founding father of sociology, Max Weber, this approach puts much less emphasis on the structural dynamic of culture. Instead, it emphasizes how culture, as meanings, values, and ways of life, is formed out of the interaction between individuals and society. A greater emphasis is placed on individual agency. As Clifford Geertz, the foremost exponent of this approach in contemporary anthropology, has elegantly stated,

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. (Geertz 1973: 5)

Culture defined as the social practices which produce meaning

This approach emphasizes the symbolic nature of culture and focuses on the symbols, rituals, and activities involved in the construction of everyday social reality. Structuralism is the main intellectual tradition which has explored this understanding of culture. Structuralists emphasize the centrality of language, by which they mean "any system of communication which uses signs as a way of referencing objects in the real world" (Bocock 1992: 233). Words, drawings, movies, material objects, all function as signs or symbols which enable communication between social actors. "When a group shares a culture, it shares a

common set of meanings which are constructed and exchanged through the practice of using language" (Bocock 1992: 233). Lévi-Strauss, the leading exponent of structural anthropology, argued that by analyzing these language or sign systems, it was possible to reveal the underlying rules or structure of a culture. For example, in his study *The Raw and the Cooked*, Lévi-Strauss (1970) argues that the norms of food preparation and consumption, such as when to eat and how to prepare specific foods for particular occasions, are not important in themselves but reveal something about the cultural order as a whole. Take the contemporary concern about "fast food" frequently aired in the press. While this is often expressed in terms of health and nutrition, a structuralist analysis might argue the real significance of the debate lies in the underlying concerns it reflects about changes to family structures and social values as meals become individualized items of consumption rather than home-cooked opportunities for family togetherness (Billington et al. 1991: 33).

3.3   The critique of anthropological conceptions of culture

Anthropology has largely defined itself in terms of the description and explication of "Other" cultures, radically different from those, usually European in origin, within which anthropology and its practitioners have been located. Roger Keesing, a cultural anthropologist himself, has somewhat acerbically written: "If radical alterity did not exist, it would be anthropology's project to invent it. Radical alterity – a culturally constructed Other radically different from Us – fills a need in European social thought: what Trouillot (1991) calls 'the savage slot.'" (Keesing 1994: 301). Keesing goes on to criticize anthropological theories of culture for exaggerating and even inventing "[t]he tribal world . . . of unchanging tradition."

Despite the diversity and vigorous debates conducted between the various anthropological approaches to culture outlined in the previous section, they each share a view of "culture" as a discrete, bounded entity, consisting of particular sets or structures of social relations, practices, and symbolic systems which forge a cohesive unity for the group, whether as society, nation, community, or class. Depicting culture in this way ignores and is unable to grasp the dynamic qualities of cultural flows, trapping anthropological method in a constant search for the "real" or "authentic" Other. These "Other" cultures are caught in a static time warp as unchanging repositories of "tribal," "peasant," or "traditional" ways of living and belief systems, essentially outside of the modernity inhabited by the contemporary West (Fabian 1983). This ignores the broader global context within which contemporary societies, communities, and individuals live, a world in which, to use Keesing's example, dreadlocks, Bob Marley, and Kung Fu movies are as much a part of Solomon Islands' contemporary "culture" as ancestral religion, magic, and ritual are (Keesing 1994: 302; 304).

This anthropological search for and depiction of exotic authenticity has been influential well beyond the narrow confines of the academic discipline. Indig-

enous Australians are still struggling under the weight of public attitudes and government policy informed by an anthropological construction of "authentic" Aboriginality based on tribal lifestyle, skin color, and remote bush communities which excludes the lived reality of many indigenous people within rural and urban community networks embracing a range of lifestyles as survivors of past and present assimilationist state policies.

White Australian Aborigines: a contradiction in terms?

As a member of an Aboriginal family in the southwest of Queensland, Wendy Holland writes about not fitting into the images that white Australians have of Aborigines. She writes: "growing up blonde, blue-eyed, and fair-skinned, I certainly cannot deny my english and irish heritages. Nor can I deny the opportunities I have been afforded as a result of my whiteness and being mis/taken as white in this racist society" (Holland 1996: 97). She grew up in an ethnically mixed neighborhood, where it was not necessary for her family to name themselves Aboriginal – the family was accepted for who they were.

It was in school that Holland first remembers learning about her "own family difference via racism":

"Aborigines" and their society (note singular usage, as if "aborigines" were monocultural, which was clearly not the case) were depicted as simplistic, childlike and heathen. . . . "Aborigines" were presented as if they were transfixed in time. There was no reference, let alone any discussion, in relation to the british invasion and colonization of this land and its impact on indigenous people. The one and only illustration on the page of the text was of a naked black man standing on top of a rock with one leg up on the other, poised holding a spear as he gazed into the distance . . . ah, the timeless "noble savage"! When I explained in class that some of my mother's family were aboriginal and that we did not live like the murris depicted in the textbook, I [remember] feeling really embarrassed and confused when the teacher dismissed my family as not *real* "aborigines." (Holland 1996: 101)

Holland goes on to explain that since British colonial administration there had been a fixation on classifying Aboriginal people according to racial criteria which some Aboriginal people themselves have adopted in coming to terms with their identity. Claiming that one is either Aboriginal or not, some Aborigines romanticize the "traditional" Aboriginal society while denying "difference that has always existed and continues to exist within our communities" (Holland 1996: 106).

More generally, the essentializing of culture as a discrete set of forms and behaviors marking identity has lent itself to a diverse range of effects, including:

- a global tourism industry geared to locating the authentic and exotic "Other" for commercial consumption. For example, the hill tribes in parts of Southeast Asia are "integrated" into the postcolonial nation-state and coerced out of opium growing (under the pressure of powerful foreign interests) by relocation into "traditional" villages as tourist exhibits for a tourism industry that is a cornerstone of national development plans.
- Third World nationalist discourses that reify "tradition" as a counter to the perceived threat of "westernization" or "neo-colonialism." As chapter 5 discusses in more detail, this is often a process of invention, frequently reducing a complex and varied history into a singular version which is then liable to imposition on subaltern groups or used to exclude those not seen to follow the "tradition," of belief, language, dress, lifestyle, from the new national collectivity.
- romanticized notions of "traditional," particularly tribal societies, usually by outsiders, often expressed as an anti-development rhetoric to preserve a "vanishing world" against the influx of modernity. This frequently pits Western activists against Third World communities or states who see themselves not as remnants of a past world but as agents in a dynamic present.

Emphasizing culture as an integrative mechanism shared by all fails to acknowledge the power dimensions of cultural cohesion and uniformity. It

Figure 1.4   A tourist exchange in Sapa, Lao Cai Province in northwest Vietnam

Figure 1.5   Doors from a ceremonial house in Tutulala, East Timor, adorning an Australian living room

ignores the ways in which apparent homogeneity and conformity are manu-
factured through subtle mechanisms of hegemony which define non-dominant
cultural practices as deviant and marginal. It gives no sense of the ways in
which "culture" is resisted and contested in any social unit. This is reinforced
by the definition of "culture" as a discrete component of the social, separate
from the economic and political dimensions of social life, as if ways of living,
belief systems, rituals, and symbols are quarantined from the arenas of pro-
duction and power. The Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979 is only one example
showing the interconnectedness of culture, economics, and politics to which
many Western observers had been blind (Allen 1992). As Tim Allen (1992: 333,
337) points out, Middle East expert Fred Halliday, in a book written on the eve
of the revolution, "ends up deflecting attention away from religion as a key

factor," glossing the apparent revival of Islam as "the consequence of superstition, ignorance and poverty" and much less significant than the real issue of class inequalities.

These anthropological theories of culture have had particular consequences in terms of the study of development and the Third World, often unintentionally reinforcing and extending the hierarchical notions of culture developed in the nineteenth century, outlined in 2.1 above. Cultural difference between the West and the non-West or Third World is depicted as a gulf not only of lifestyle and belief systems but of time. Effectively, the non-West is removed from modernity and described as inhabiting a qualitatively different temporal space, a contemporary location which bears all the hallmarks of the West's past rather than its present. A location, moreover, implicitly devoid of any dynamic of internal change, given the static, unchanging quality ascribed to these societies. As a consequence, any impetus for change is reserved for external influences, particularly those from the dynamic and modern West. Hence "development" in this context inevitably meant processes of westernization. "Traditional cultures" are variously seen as either barriers to the – desirable and/or inevitable – march of progress, or as helpless victims of a relentless modernity, doomed to disappear. The idea of modernity as a temporal space inhabited only by the West or westernized has had a pervasive influence throughout the "development industry" and within the Third World, with perhaps its most tragic manifestation in the apparent intentions of the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia to remove their war-devastated country and its people from any contact with modern time and return them to a cleansed "culture" of the past – Year Zero (see chapter 2).

3.4   Culture and power

An alternative approach to defining and studying culture has emerged recently out of a synthesis of literary studies and social science, institutionalized as the new discipline of cultural studies. Originally motivated to both dismantle the elitism of the distinction between high and popular culture within literary studies and to challenge the economic determinism of orthodox Marxism, cultural studies has synthesized and extended the anthropological definitions of culture in ways which overcome some of the criticisms made of them. Culture is, from this perspective, no longer conceived as a discrete, bounded entity distinct from the economic and political. Rather, as Frow and Morris (1993: viii) put it, "[i]t is a network of representations – texts, images, talk, codes of behaviour, and the narrative structures organising these – *which shapes every aspect of social life*" [emphasis added].

Culture, from this perspective, is not apart from, or derivative of, other arenas of social life. It is, as the highlighted phrase emphasizes, productive, in the sense of being an active component in the production and reproduction of social life. In Raymond Williams's (1961) phrase, it is the "whole way of life" of a social group as it is structured by representation and by power. Social groups

coalesce around a variety of circumstances that form the basis of a sense of shared identity, the most important being the categories of class, gender, sex, "race," nation, but including a range of other axes such as rural/urban, age, region, and so on. These categories of identity formation are not discrete but intersect, even within the life of an individual, in ways which often conflict or contradict one another. Take for example the ways in which race and class can intersect in conflicting ways, as when a minority ethnic group may share an economic location with another dominant ethnic group, the divide of race and ethnicity may lessen the sense of shared class interest, in Malaysia or the USA. The shared or cohesive quality of "culture" is thus limited to a social segment rather than the social whole, consequently building in to this model of culture the dynamic of difference. "Culture" is, from this perspective, a site of contestation rather than a force for social cohesion.

Frow and Morris's definition also collapses the distinction drawn in anthropological approaches between culture as a way of life and culture as the production of meaning. The two are linked by the concepts of reproduction and power, such that ways of life are here conceived as being constituted by, or made up of, meaning-producing practices: "texts, images, talk, codes of behaviour, and the narrative structures organising these" (Frow and Morris 1993: viii). Reproduction and power are two key tools used by cultural studies to rework anthropological approaches to culture in ways which have particular relevance for the study of development as concept and as process. What does representation mean and how does it relate to power?

Representation

Stuart Hall (1997) provides a clear introduction to representation and its role in the study of culture generally. Language lies at the heart of culture understood as shared meanings, and language constructs meanings through representation. By language, Hall does not mean only spoken languages such as English or Vietnamese, but a range of ways of communicating and comprehending between people, including body language, visual images, dress, and so on. "They are 'systems of representation'" in the sense that they "all use some element to stand for or represent what we want to say, to express or communicate a thought, concept, idea or feeling" (Hall 1997: 4).

The emphasis placed on the construction of meaning through and within representational systems is why this approach is often labeled the constructionist perspective. It turns on its head the materialist approach to culture, which assumes a "true" meaning exists external to representation, in the material world, a meaning language seeks to represent accurately. Representation, from a materialist perspective, is less important in the study of culture than identifying this underlying structure. Another important distinction between the two approaches is, therefore, that for materialists, meaning is fixed – there is one "real" or "true" meaning more or less accurately rendered in the symbolic realm of representation. Taking a constructionist approach, however, necessarily assumes

meanings are multiple and variable, specific only to particular systems of representation.

Discourse, knowledge, and power

The constructionist understanding of representation and its role in the production of meaning was extended by the French philosopher-historian Michel Foucault (1985; 1991) through his notions of discourse and power/knowledge. Foucault was concerned to address not simply how meanings were produced through representation, but also the relations of power underpinning the production of meanings and the processes by which certain meanings were rendered "true." In a series of historically based studies of the European systems of crime and punishment, sexuality, and madness, Foucault developed the concept of discourse to refer to the systems of representation which produced a particular kind of knowledge about a topic. In any given time and place, certain discourses acquire paradigmatic status as "truth," providing the boundaries within which shared meanings are construed through a particular system of representation. Hence knowledge is inextricably caught up with power – the power to "make itself true" (Hall 1997: 49). It is important to note, however, that the notion of power developed by Foucault is not linear, in which power is deployed from above to exploit and oppress those below. His conception of power/knowledge conceives of power as circulatory, pervasive, and multicentered, operating in diffuse and productive ways through discourse in ways which imbue all social actors with degrees of agency – and complicity – within the effects of power/knowledge (Foucault 1980).

Sander Gilman's case study of the "Hottentot Venus," which utilizes a Foucaultian analysis, summarized in 1.3 above, illustrates how a "discursive regime" of representation can operate to construct power/knowledge – in this case, about race, sexuality, class, and female bodies – across a range of topic areas, including visual art, medicine, science, and criminology, as "truth." The body of Sara Bartmann is pathologized and generalized into a model of deviant female sexuality powerfully deployed to police, coerce, and stereotype certain subjects, in this case, black people and (black and white) women. Yet this same "regime of truth" was also productive of vibrant bordello cultures (e.g. late-nineteenth-century London and Paris) in which an active female (and male non-hetero) sexuality was aligned to free-thinking intellectuality in counterpoise to a constrained and repressive respectable society (Showalter 1990).

Culture, power, and development

Foucault's concepts of discourse and power/knowledge, along with representation, constitute the analytical toolbox of cultural studies. "Culture" is no longer defined as an entity in the common-sense way we talk about "a culture," whether we are referring to a national culture or particular subcultures. As Keesing (1994) observes, from this perspective it makes much more sense to talk about "the

cultural," implying practices and processes intrinsic to all social relations and structures. Power and difference now lie at the heart of the definition of culture, placing an emphasis on how shared meanings are constructed through discourse in ways which are productive of contestation and resistance as much or more than social cohesion and unity.

This framework for the study of culture has had a profound effect on development studies, opening up in new ways the question of what is meant by development and in whose interests it operates. Focusing on representation, power, and discourse, a number of scholars have now convincingly demonstrated how "development" operates as a discourse of power/knowledge within which the global relationships between the so-called First and Third Worlds are constructed, imagined, and operationalized. Development, they have argued, is not a means of addressing global inequalities and power differentials. On the contrary, it is itself constitutive of those very inequalities it purports to address. As Arturo Escobar passionately writes,

> instead of the kingdom of abundance promised by theorists and politicians in the 1950s, the discourse and strategy of development produced its opposite: massive underdevelopment and impoverishment, untold exploitation and oppression … it is about how the "Third World" has been produced by the discourses and practices of development since their inception in the early post-World War ll period. (Escobar 1995: 4)

Chapter 3 will look at how Escobar and others have deconstructed development as both discourse and process in ways which reveal the multifaceted ways in which it relates to and is part of the cultural.

4 Summary

The initial meaning of culture to refer to the cultivation of nature was extended to apply to the cultivation of the human mind. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this meaning became enmeshed with the development of class distinctions within Western European societies, establishing a hierarchical quality to the term between those social groups, activities, and lifestyles recognized as cultured and those which were not. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Enlightenment shift from a religious to a secular view of human history had become entrenched in scientific models of human evolution which fostered a definition of culture as the process of social development. Against a background of European technological and industrial advancement and imperial expansion and aggrandizement, the idea of culture as social development drew on scientific models of human evolution to describe a hierarchy of cultural development across societies and social groups. Mapped across race, sex, class,

and gender divisions, this definition of culture placed Western European societies at the pinnacle of cultural achievement and social development as modern progressive nations, ranking other societies at various "stages" of development down to the lowest level of primitive.

Having traced the two key concepts of "development" and "culture" through time, and viewed them from a number of perspectives, we now turn to the question where development and culture connect. One way of responding to this question is by excavating and analyzing the assumptions about culture, both Western culture and Other cultures, in the various approaches to development that have dominated development studies in the past few decades. Such an analysis reveals, as chapter 2 will do, that many studies which ostensibly concern themselves with economic development are actually laden with assumptions about culture and its interaction with development. What is puzzling here is that on the one hand, many of these studies tend to relate culture to tradition, and to argue that the cultural traditions of non-Western societies must change under the impact of development, which is conceived in terms of a universal modernity. On the other hand, however, this universal modernity clearly has its cultural roots in the European Enlightenment, and therefore it easily slips into the concept of the West, or westernization, even when it is not expressly identified in these terms. The shorthand of this connection is development = modernization = westernization.

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