

The Anti-Politics Machine

“Development,” Depoliticization, and
Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho

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The effects of "failure"

By 1979, the Thaba-Tseka Project was already beginning to be considered a failure. It was clear by then that, for all the expensive road building and construction work, the project had not come close to meeting any of its production targets. All the money put into the project, critics said, had not managed to produce any demonstrable increased in agricultural production at all – only a lot of ugly buildings. One CIDA spokesperson reportedly admitted in 1979 "that this project is now considered a very large and costly mistake."¹ At the same time, the project was becoming the subject of newspaper articles with titles like "Canadian aid gone awry?" and "CIDA in Africa: Goodby \$6 million."² Meanwhile, in Lesotho, the project became a commonly cited example of "development" gone wrong. One local writer declared that "the people of Thaba-Tseka have now come to think in terms of the 'failure' of the project" (Sekhamane 1981); a student at the National University even called it "a monster clinging to the backs of the people." But the bad news came not only from the press and the other critics in and out of the "development" establishment. Even the local people, according to a 1979 CIDA evaluation (CIDA 1979: 22), considered "neither the households nor the area to be better off," five years after the start of the project. Instead, the report said, "the quality of village life as perceived by the people and as measured by people's perceptions of well-being has not improved and has, in fact, declined." In 1982, a dissertation by a former project employee reviewed the project history and concluded that "[t]here is little evidence that this huge investment in the mountain region has had any effect in raising agricultural production or improving the well-being of rural households" (Eberhard 1982: 299).

At the start of Phase Two of the project, there had been some talk of a "commitment" for at least ten more years of CIDA funding, and that is apparently what the original planners anticipated. At the TTCC meeting of February 7, 1979, the CIDA representative, according to the minutes of the meeting, declared that, although it was impossible to give any formal, written commitment for more than the budgeted five years, CIDA was "morally committed for at least ten more years to the

development in the District." But, when the project's inability to effect the promised transformations in agriculture – particularly in the area of livestock – was compounded by the collapse of the "decentralization" scheme in 1980–1, CIDA elected to pull out. By 1982, CIDA's chief interest was in getting out as quickly and gracefully as possible. The 1982 revision to the Plan of Operations was tailored to do just that. Funding was gradually phased out and, by March 1984, the CIDA involvement in Thaba-Tseka was over. Moreover, I was told explicitly by officials at CIDA headquarters in Ottawa that the pullout had not been a matter of lack of funds, but that the project had been discontinued on its merits. At last report, neither CIDA nor any other donor has sought to continue the project.

But even if the project was in some sense a "failure" as an agricultural development project, it is indisputable that many of its "side effects" had a powerful and far-reaching impact on the Thaba-Tseka region. The project did not transform crop farming or livestock keeping, but it did build a road to link Thaba-Tseka more strongly with the capital; it did not bring about "decentralization" or "popular participation," but it was instrumental in establishing a new district administration and giving the Government of Lesotho a much stronger presence in the area than it had ever had before. The construction of the road and the "administrative center" may have had little effect on agricultural production, but they were powerful effects in themselves.

The general drift of things was clear to some of the project staff themselves, even as they fought it. "It is the same story over again," said one "development" worker.³ "When the Americans and the Danes and the Canadians leave, the villagers will continue their marginal farming practices and wait for the mine wages, knowing only that now the taxman lives down the valley rather than in Maseru."

But it was not only a matter of the taxman. A host of Government services became available at Thaba-Tseka as a direct result of the construction of the project center and the decision to make that center the capital of a new district. There was a new Post Office, a police station, and an immigration control office; there were agricultural services such as extension, seed supply, and livestock marketing; there were health officials to observe and lecture on child care, and nutrition officers to promote approved methods of cooking. There was the "food for work" administration run by the Ministry of Rural Development, and the Ministry of the Interior, with its function of regulating the powers of chiefs. A vast number of minor services and functions that once would

have operated, if at all, only out of one of the other distant district capitals had come to Thaba-Tseka.

But, although "development" discourse tends to see the provision of "services" as the purpose of government, it is clear that the question of power cannot be written off quite so easily. "Government services" are never simply "services"; instead of conceiving this phrase as a reference simply to a "government" whose purpose is to serve, it may be at least as appropriate to think of "services" which serve to govern. We have seen in earlier chapters that one of the central issues of the deployment of the Thaba-Tseka Project was the desire of the Government to gain political control over the opposition strongholds in the mountains. It was shown in Chapters 7 and 8 that many of the project's own resources and structures were turned to this purpose. But, while this was going on, a much more direct political policing function was being exercised by other sections of the district administration the project had helped to establish. The Ministries of Rural Development and of the Interior, for instance, were quite directly concerned with questions of political control, largely through their control over "food for work" and chieftainship, respectively; then, too, there were the police. Another innovation that came with the "development" center in Thaba-Tseka was the new prison. In every case, state power was expanded and strengthened by the establishment of the local governing machinery at Thaba-Tseka.

In the increasingly militarized climate of the early 1980s (see Chapter 4 above), the administrative center constructed by the project in Thaba-Tseka quickly took on a significance that was not only political, but military as well. The district capital that the project had helped establish was not only useful for extending the governing apparatus of government services/government controls; it also facilitated direct military control. The project-initiated district center was home not only to the various "civilian" ministries, but also to the "Para-Military Unit," Lesotho's army. The road had made access much easier; now the new town provided a good central base. Near the project's end in 1983, substantial numbers of armed troops began to be garrisoned at Thaba-Tseka, and the brown uniforms of the PMU were to be seen in numbers throughout the district. Indeed, it may be that in a place like Mashai, the most visible of all the project's effects was the indirect one of increased Government military presence in the region. The project of course did not cause the militarization of Thaba-Tseka, any more than it caused the founding of the new district and the creation of a new local adminis-

tration. In both cases, however, it may be said to have unintentionally played what can only be called an instrumental role.

The anti-politics machine

It would be a mistake to make too much of the "failure" of the Thaba-Tseka Project. It has certainly been often enough described in such terms, but the same can be said for nearly all of the other rural development projects Lesotho has seen. One of the original planners of the project, while admitting that the project had its share of frustrations, and declaring that as a result of his experience with Thaba-Tseka, he would never again become involved in a range management project, told me that in fact of all the rural development projects that have been launched in Lesotho, only Thaba-Tseka has had any positive effects. Indeed, as the project came to an end, there seemed to be a general move in "development" circles both in Ottawa and Maseru toward a rehabilitation of the project's reputation. It may have been a failure, but not any worse than many other similar projects, I was told. Given the "constraints," the Project Coordinator declared in 1983, "I think we've got a success story here." As one CIDA official pointed out, with what appeared to be a certain amount of pride, the project "was not an unmitigated disaster."

In a situation in which "failure" is the norm, there is no reason to think that Thaba-Tseka was an especially badly run or poorly thought out project. Since, as we have seen, Lesotho is not the "traditional," isolated, "peasant" society the "development" problematic makes it out to be, it is not surprising that all the various attempts to "transform" it and "bring it into the 20th Century" characteristically "fail," and end up as more or less mitigated "disasters." But it may be that what is most important about a "development" project is not so much what it fails to do but what it does do; it may be that its real importance in the end lies in the "side effects" such as those reviewed in the last section. Foucault, speaking of the prison, suggests that dwelling on the "failure" of the prison may be asking the wrong question. Perhaps, he suggests,

one should reverse the problem and ask oneself what is served by the failure of the prison; what is the use of these different phenomena that are continually being criticized; the maintenance of delinquency, the encouragement of recidivism, the transformation of the occasional offender into a habitual delinquent, the organization of a closed milieu of delinquency. (Foucault 1979: 272)

If it is true that "failure" is the norm for development projects in Lesotho, and that important political effects may be realized almost invisibly alongside with that "failure," then there may be some justification for beginning to speak of a kind of logic or intelligibility to what happens when the "development" apparatus is deployed – a logic that transcends the question of planners' intentions. In terms of this larger unspoken logic, "side effects" may be better seen as "instrument-effects" (Foucault 1979); effects that are at one and the same time instruments of what "turns out" to be an exercise of power.

For the planners, the question was quite clear: the primary task of the project was to boost agricultural production; the expansion of government could only be secondary to that overriding aim. In 1980, the Programme Director expressed concern about the project's failure to make headway in "what is really the only economic basis for the existence of the Thaba-Tseka District, the rangeland production of livestock." He went on to declare:

If this economic base, now as shaky as it appears to be, is not put on a much firmer footing, it is inevitable that the Thaba-Tseka District will eventually become an agricultural wasteland where there will be no justification whatsoever for developing and maintaining a social infrastructure with its supporting services of health, education, roads, rural technology development, etc.

(TTDP Quarterly Report, October-December 1980, p. 5)

If one takes the "development" problematic at its word, such an analysis makes perfect sense; in the absence of growth in agricultural output, the diversion of project energies and resources to "social infrastructure" can only be considered an unfortunate mistake. But another interpretation is possible. If one considers the expansion and entrenchment of state power to be the principal effect – indeed, what "development" projects in Lesotho are chiefly about – then the promise of agricultural transformation appears simply as a point of entry for an intervention of a very different character.

In this perspective, the "development" apparatus in Lesotho is not a machine for eliminating poverty that is incidentally involved with the state bureaucracy; it is a machine for reinforcing and expanding the exercise of bureaucratic state power, which incidentally takes "poverty" as its point of entry – launching an intervention that may have no effect

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development

on the poverty but does in fact have other concrete effects. Such a result may be no part of the planners' intentions – indeed, it almost never is – but resultant systems have an intelligibility of their own.

But the picture is even more complicated than this. For while we have seen that "development" projects in Lesotho may end up working to expand the power of the state, and while they claim to address the problems of poverty and deprivation, in neither guise does the "development" industry allow its role to be formulated as a political one. By uncompromisingly reducing poverty to a technical problem, and by promising technical solutions to the sufferings of powerless and oppressed people, the hegemonic problematic of "development" is the principal means through which the question of poverty is de-politicized in the world today. At the same time, by making the intentional blueprints for "development" so highly visible, a "development" project can end up performing extremely sensitive political operations involving the entrenchment and expansion of institutional state power almost invisibly, under cover of a neutral, technical mission to which no one can object. The "instrument-effect," then, is two-fold: alongside the institutional effect of expanding bureaucratic state power is the conceptual or ideological effect of depoliticizing both poverty and the state. The way it all works out suggests an analogy with the wondrous machine made famous in Science Fiction stories – the "anti-gravity machine," that at the flick of a switch suspends the effects of gravity. In Lesotho, at least, the "development" apparatus sometimes seems almost capable of pulling nearly as good a trick: the suspension of politics from even the most sensitive political operations. If the "instrument-effects" of a "development" project end up forming any kind of strategically coherent or intelligible whole, this is it: the anti-politics machine.

If unintended effects of a project end up having political uses, even seeming to be "instruments" of some larger political deployment, this is not any kind of conspiracy; it really does just happen to be the way things work out. But because things do work out this way, and because "failed" development projects can so successfully help to accomplish important strategic tasks behind the backs of the most sincere participants, it does become less mysterious why "failed" development projects should end up being replicated again and again. It is perhaps reasonable to suggest that it may even be because development projects turn out to have such uses, even if they are in some sense unforeseen, that they continue to attract so much interest and support.

Some comparative observations

So far I have extended specific conclusions about the "development" apparatus and its operation only to the case of Lesotho. Yet the reader is certainly justified in wondering if that is really their only domain of application, and asking to what extent these conclusions might apply to the rest of the world beyond Lesotho's tiny borders. My strategy here has been to avoid making grand or general claims about the way the "development" apparatus functions in other settings – claims which I, in any case, lack the scholarship to support – but instead to present carefully a single case and to let others more knowledgeable than I judge to what extent the processes I have identified may be in operation in other contexts. While adhering to this general strategy, I will here provisionally suggest some possible points of commonality between Lesotho and a few other "development" contexts, after first noting a few of the particularities that make Lesotho such a special case.

First of all, any attempt to expand the conclusions presented here to the global "development" apparatus in general must take account of the peculiarities of the Lesotho case. Lesotho is a very unusual national setting, and one that makes the "developers," task extraordinarily difficult. Many of the most common "development" assumptions are there more completely confounded by reality than almost anywhere else one could name. Where "development" often sees itself entering an aboriginal, primitive agricultural setting, Lesotho offers one of the first and most completely monetized and proletarianized contexts in Africa. Where "development" requires a bounded, coherent "national economy," responsive to the principle of "governmentality," Lesotho's extraordinary labor-reserve economy is as little defined by national boundaries, and as little responsive to national planning, as any that could be imagined. Lesotho is not a "typical" case; it is an extreme case, and for the "development" problematic, an extremely difficult one.

The extremity of the case of Lesotho has the effect of exaggerating many "development" phenomena. The divide between academic and "development" discourse, the gap between plans attempted and results achieved, the paucity of economic transformations next to the plenitude of political ones, all are more extreme than one might find in a more "typical" case. But the unusualness of Lesotho's situation does not in itself make it irrelevant to wider generalization. Indeed, the exaggeration it produces, if properly interpreted, may be seen not simply as a distortion of the "typical" case, but as a clarification, just as the addition

by a computer of "extreme" colors to a remote scanning image does not distort but "enhances" the photograph by improving the visibility of the phenomena we are interested in. The very oddness of the Lesotho setting might make it a privileged case, allowing us to see in stark outline processes that are likely present in less extreme cases, but are obscured by the haze of plausibility and reasonableness that is so strikingly absent in Lesotho. At any rate, the task of denaturalizing and "making strange" the "development" intervention is facilitated by the very atypicality of Lesotho.

One of the main factors supporting the view that some degree of generalization may be possible from the case of Lesotho is that, however diverse may be the empirical settings within which the "development" apparatus operates, many aspects of "development" interventions remain remarkably uniform and standardized from place to place. One aspect of this standardization is simply of personnel. If "development" interventions look very similar from one country to the next, one reason is that they are designed and implemented by a relatively small, interlocked network of experts. Tanzania may be very different from Lesotho on the ground, but, from the point of view of a "development" agency's head office, both may be simply "the Africa desk." In the Thaba-Tseka case, at least, the original project planners knew little about Lesotho's specific history, politics, and sociology; they were experts on "livestock development in Africa," and drew largely on experience in East Africa. Small wonder, then, that they often looked on the Basotho as "pastoralists," and took the nomadic Maasai of Kenya as a favorite point of comparison. Small wonder, too, if the Thaba-Tseka Project ended up with such visible similarities to other livestock projects in very different contexts.

But it is not only that "development" interventions draw on a small and interlocking pool of personnel. More fundamental is the application in the most divergent empirical settings of a single, undifferentiated "development" expertise. In Zimbabwe, in 1981, I was struck to find local agricultural "development" officials eagerly awaiting the arrival and advice of a highly paid consultant who was to explain how agriculture in Zimbabwe was to be transformed. What, I asked, did this consultant know about Zimbabwe's agriculture that they, the local agricultural officers, did not? To my surprise, I was told that the individual in question knew virtually nothing about Zimbabwe, and worked mostly in India. "But," I was assured, "he *knows development*." It is precisely this expertise, free-floating and untied to any

specific context, that is so easily generalized, and so easily inserted into any given situation. To the extent that "development" projects the world over are formed by such a shared, context-independent "development" expertise, Lesotho's experience with "development" is part of a very general phenomenon.

Another aspect of standardization is to be seen in specific program elements. Because of the way "development" interventions are institutionalized, there are strong tendencies for programs to be mixed and marched out of a given set of available choices. As Williams (1986: 12) has pointed out, "development" comes as a "package" of standard available "inputs." Plans that call for non-standard, unfamiliar elements are more difficult for a large routinized bureaucracy to implement and evaluate, and thus less likely to be approved. With standardized elements, things are much easier. As Williams says, "Project evaluations may be written on a 'cross out which do not apply' basis; the overall frame is standardized, and odd paragraphs are varied to fit in the names and basic geography of particular project areas" (Williams 1986: 12). Lesotho's empirical situation may be unlike that of many other countries, but the specific "development" interventions that have been attempted there, from irrigation and erosion control schemes to grazing associations and "decentralization," are nearly all familiar elements of the standard "development" package.

Finally, there is clearly a sense in which the discourse of "development" in Lesotho, too, is part of a "standard" discursive practice associated with "development" in a broad range of contexts. As I have noted, the contrast with academic discourse is likely stronger and more extreme in Lesotho than in many other contexts. In the same way, the closure of the field of "development" discourse, which is so striking in Lesotho, cannot be simply assumed to hold in general. (Such closure could be substantiated globally only through an extensive analysis that is beyond the scope of this study.) But even casual observation is enough to suggest that it is not only in Lesotho that "development" discourse seems to form a world unto itself. At any rate, it is distinctive enough world-wide to have inspired the coining of a generic term like "development speak" (Williams 1985a: 3). This is sometimes put as a matter of "jargon," but it is much more than that. Indeed, my own unsystematic inspection would suggest that "development" discourse typically involves not only special terms, but a distinctive style of reasoning, implicitly (and perhaps unconsciously) reasoning backward from the necessary conclusions — more "development" projects are needed — to

the premises required to generate those conclusions. In this respect, it is not only "devspeak" that is at issue, but "devthink" as well.

Moreover, the maneuvers used in constructing these chains of reasoning, if not identical from place to place, do seem at least to bear what one might call a strong family resemblance. The figures of the "aboriginal society," "national economy," and "traditional peasant society" that were identified in Chapter 2 can be easily found in other contexts, as, for instance, in the World Bank's definitive declaration (1975: 3) that "[rural development] is concerned with the modernization and monetization of rural society, and with its transition from traditional isolation to integration with the national economy." The fourth characteristic figure for Lesotho, "governmentality," is perhaps even more widespread. Indeed, the extreme state-centeredness of "development" discourse in a wide range of settings is nearly enough to justify Williams's blanket claim (1986: 7) that "Policy makers, experts, and officials cannot think how things might improve except through their own agency."

The above considerations are perhaps enough to suggest that there may be important commonalities at the level of discourse, planning, and program elements between "development" interventions in Lesotho and those in other countries. But do these standardized elements, deployed in a wide range of different settings, produce anything like standard effects? Are the "instrument-effects" identified for Lesotho part of a general, regular global pattern? Is the "anti-politics machine" peculiar to Lesotho, or is it a usual or even inevitable consequence of "development" interventions?

These big questions must for the time being remain open. They will be answered only when they have been empirically explored in each specific context. At a glance, it is clear that the economic transformations effected by "development" interventions may well be greater in other settings than they have been in Lesotho, even if they differ from those claimed or intended. But the two-edged "instrument-effect" identified here for Lesotho – "anti-politics" combined with an expansion of bureaucratic state power – does seem to be operative, and even dominant, in at least some other contexts.

The first and most immediate point of comparison is with South Africa. Although "development" agencies in Lesotho resolutely refuse to see any connection between Lesotho and the South African "homelands," the South African experience of government intervention in the rural areas is in some ways continuous with that of Lesotho. In

particular, the long history of South African "betterment" schemes in the "reserves" and "homelands" bears some striking similarities with "development" interventions in Lesotho. Indeed, the Sesotho word used for "development" in Lesotho (*ntlafatso*) is a literal translation of "betterment," and is applied by Sotho-speakers equally to international "development" projects and to South African "betterment" schemes in the homelands.

"Betterment" schemes were first instituted in South Africa in the late 1930s as a way of "rationalizing" and improving agriculture and land use in the "reserves," with the aim of slowing out-migration to the urban areas. Responding to perceptions of inefficiency of "native agriculture" and crisis in soil erosion, the state set about reorganizing the settlement and cropping patterns in the reserves. Village settlements and family landholdings were alike "consolidated," and land carefully divided into distinct zones of residential, crop, or range usage. Model villages were laid out in straight-line grids ("dressed," as some Transkeians began to say, borrowing military usage, Beinart 1984: 77). Grazing lands were fenced for rotational grazing, and "improved" practices encouraged, with stock limitation and culling enforced by law. Erosion was combated through extensive contour works, and village woodlots were established (Beinart 1984, Yawitch 1981, Unterhalter 1987, Platzky and Walker 1985, de Wet 1981).

With the rise to power of the Nationalist government and its *apartheid* program in 1948, the "reserves" acquired new prominence as the intended "*bantustans*" or "homelands" for the whole of the African population. The Tomlinson Commission, set up to explore the viability of "separate development" in the "*bantustans*"-to-be, proposed that agriculture in the reserves be "rationalized" and "developed" through the creation of a class of yeoman farmers, working "viable plots." The Commission recommended that 50 percent of the population of the reserves should leave farming to dwell in "closer settlements" as full-time workers, leaving the other 50 percent as a "viable," productive, class of professional farmers. (Actually, the Commission thought that to make a viable living from the land, a full 80 percent of the population should be removed, but rejected this as involving the relocation of too many people.) The job of "betterment," in this scheme, was to bring about this transition. But, as the grim process of "separate development" proceeded, it became more and more clear that "betterment" was functioning less as a means for boosting agricultural production in the "homelands" than as a device for regulating and controlling the process

through which more and more people were being squeezed on to less and less land, and through which the dumped "surplus people" (Platzky and Walker 1985) relocated from "white areas" could be accommodated and controlled. As the *bantustans* assumed their contemporary role as dumping grounds, "betterment" schemes, as one source puts it, "lost almost entirely any aspect of improvement or rationalization of land use and became instead principally instruments of coercion" (Unterhalter 1987: 102).⁴

These "betterment" interventions have been fiercely resisted by the supposed "beneficiaries" from the very start. Indeed, attempts in the name of "betterment" to move people's homes and fields, to control and regulate their cultivation, and to restrict and cull their livestock have provoked many of the most intense and significant episodes of rural resistance in South African history (Beinart 1982, 1984; Beinart and Bundy 1981, 1987; Unterhalter 1987; Yawitch 1981).

A number of similarities between South Africa's "betterment" schemes and Lesotho's "development" will be immediately apparent. Government interventions in colonial Basutoland, from the 1930s onward, centered on consolidation and pooling of fields (e.g., the "Pilot Project" of 1952-8), and, especially, soil erosion control (Wallman 1969). They also involved tree-planting and mandatory culling, especially of sheep (Palmer and Parsons 1977: 25). Since independence, too, many elements of South African "betterment" have been replicated by various "development" projects. Fencing and rotational grazing, of course, were attempted at Thaba-Tseka, as we have seen. Woodlots have been planted not only by the Thaba-Tseka Project, but by a nationwide "Woodlot Project" funded by the Anglo-American Corporation, the giant South African conglomerate. Soil erosion control and contouring was the focus of the large Thaba-Bosiu project in the early 1970s, while in the same period, amalgamation of fields was attempted in the Senqu River Project. And finally, when I returned to Thaba-Tseka for a brief visit in 1986, I was told by the District Extension Officer that the latest plan for "development" of the mountain area involved dividing land up into residential, crop, and grazing zones, and consolidating some small, scattered settlements into larger and more accessible villages on approved sites.

But it is not only program elements that are similar. In both cases, technical, apolitical aims justified state intervention. And, in both cases, economic "failure" of these interventions ended up meeting other needs. As one study of two "betterment" areas found,

betterment has not fulfilled its stated purposes of rehabilitating the bantustan areas or rationalising agriculture to become viable economic units. Betterment has become a way of planning these two areas so as to accommodate and control as many as possible of the people uprooted and settled in the bantustans. (James 1983: 60, cited in Unterhalter 1987: 102)

Moreover, in the "homelands," as in Lesotho, there is the same central tension between espoused goals of "professionalizing" farming on the one hand, and the political need to settle, stabilize, and regulate the regional economy's "redundant," "surplus people" on the other (see Chapters 6 and 8, above). And in both cases, the political imperative of keeping people tied to the land has generally predominated over any economic "rationalization." In both cases, too, the "anti-politics machine" has been at work, as state power has been simultaneously expanded and depoliticized. "Betterment", like "development," has provided an apparently technical point of entry for an intervention serving a variety of political uses.

In many respects, of course, the South African case is also a strong contrast with Lesotho. Most obviously, Lesotho does not share the South African government's *apartheid* agenda, and is concerned not with implementing the bad dream of "separate development," but with coping with its consequences. But more than that, the nature of the state, and thus the nature of state interventions, is very different in the two cases. In place of the institutionally and financially weak Lesotho state, the South African state has had the administrative capability to direct and enforce massive rural relocations and disruptions. It has demonstrated the capability and the willingness to routinely use staggering levels of coercion to achieve its desired results. Where in Lesotho, "development" failures are easily written off as resulting from poor administrative capacity and an inability to make "tough" political choices, in South Africa, a strong and often brutal state is able to radically transform the countryside. In the "homelands" and rural areas, millions have been relocated (Platzky and Walker 1985), while villages have been "dressed" in rows, plots radically rearranged, and the culling and fencing of livestock enforced in a way that is difficult to imagine for Lesotho. "Betterment" was more than a plan on paper; according to one source, by 1967, 60 percent of the villages in Natal were "planned," while 77 percent of the plan for Ciskei and 76 percent and 80

percent of the plans for the Northern and Western Territories (respectively) had been implemented (Platzky and Walker 1985: 46).

But the force of state intervention has not meant economic "success." With respect to the stated goals of establishing a viable, stable population of professional farmers and improving peasant agricultural production, South Africa's experience with "betterment" must be judged to have "failed" nearly as completely as Lesotho's with "development." But in South Africa just as surely as in Lesotho, economic "failures" have produced their own political rationality. No doubt there have been important economic effects, but "betterment," in its "instrument-effects," is not ultimately about agricultural production, but about managing and controlling the labor reserves and dumping grounds.

"In this and other respects," as Gavin Williams (1986: 17) has noted, "South Africa is not just a special case." Elsewhere in Africa, Beinart (1984) has made a convincing case for strong parallels between the South African experience and those of colonial Zimbabwe and Malawi, where struggles over land and political control were also filtered through a range of apparently technical interventions connected with soil erosion, conservation, and "inefficient" African farming. But, as Beinart notes:

Technical interventions were not in themselves socially neutral. And they became increasingly linked with broader attempts to restructure rural social relationships and 'capture' the peasantry ... Rural resistance, though in specific cases aimed at particular state initiatives which were seen as technically inadequate, became geared to opposing the kinds of controls and social disruption which planning seemed to hold in store. (Beinart 1984: 83)

For Zimbabwe, Ranger (1985) has given a detailed demonstration of how government interventions ostensibly aimed at agricultural improvement and soil conservation became a central terrain in rural political struggles throughout the colonial period. As in South Africa, "conservation," "centralization," and "improvement" were closely linked to land alienation and control, while coopted African "Demonstrators," ostensibly agents of agricultural improvement, came eventually to serve as a kind of rural police. The peasants, driven off their land and policed on the deteriorating "reserves," responded with an anger rising at times to "seething hatred" (Ranger 1985: 151). This anger very logically found expression in attacks on such symbols of "conservation" and "improvement" as contour ridges and dip tanks, as well as on the

African Demonstrators themselves. For failing to see the benefits of their own subordination, the peasants were of course characterized as "backward," and thus all the more in need of controlling interventions (see Ranger 1985: 99-171).

It appears, moreover, that the specifically political role of the "development" intervention in Zimbabwe has not ended with Independence. The revolution has undoubtedly brought some real gains for the peasantry insofar as land-starved occupants of "Tribal Trust Lands" were in at least some cases able to press successfully for land redistribution through squatting on land abandoned by white farmers, and to benefit from higher producer prices instituted by the new government (Ranger 1985). But it is also clear, as Ranger notes that, as the revolutionary situation fades and the ability of the peasants to apply political pressure on the government diminishes, "the unusual advantageous position of Zimbabwe's peasants *vis-à-vis* the state will give way to quite another balance of power," in which the state may well "become a predator" in relation to the peasantry. For Ranger, this "gloomy expectation" is not inevitable; but the prospects for a different outcome are "cripplingly handicapped by the lasting effects of ... colonial agrarian history" (Ranger 1985: 319-20).

The suggestion that "development" even in liberated Zimbabwe may be principally about state control and not economic improvement or poverty amelioration is strengthened by Williams's analysis (1982) of one of independent Zimbabwe's key policy documents for "development" strategy (Riddell 1981). Williams shows how government plans for the impoverished "Tribal Trust Lands," involving the consolidation of village holdings, and the division of all land into residential, grazing, and arable zones, virtually duplicate key aspects of the "betterment" schemes of South Africa. It is far from clear that such an extraordinary expenditure of governmental energies will do anything to improve farming. But there is no doubt, as Williams notes (Williams 1982: 16), that, like other "development" interventions, "it will subject farmers to more effective control and administrative supervision." The plan also calls for the regrouping of settlements into "unified village settlements" where "village leadership committees" would, so the planners anticipate, "plan the whole life of the village" (Riddell 1981: 688), including allocating land and coordinating a planned pension and social security scheme. As Williams caustically remarks, "Bureaucratic rationality requires that people's land and lives should be reorganized the better for government to administer them" (Williams 1982: 17). Once again, what

look like technical, apolitical reforms seem to bring with them political "side-effects" that overwhelm whatever might exist of the originally intended or claimed "main effects." As Williams concludes:

As is so often the case, "rural development" turns out to be a strategy for increasing state control of the peasantry. The policies outlined in the Riddell report bring together many of the worst aspects of the agricultural policies of Kenya (dependence on large-scale maize farming), Nigeria (settlement and irrigation schemes), Tanzania (villagization) and South Africa (betterment schemes). Thus far, Zimbabwean peasants have resisted them, both under white rule and since independence. (Williams 1982: 17)

Another well-known case is that of Tanzania. Here, very extensive state interventions in rural life have been formulated and justified in the name of "development," including the now-famous program of "*Ujamaa*" villagization. Familiar elements in these "development" interventions have included compulsory villagization and the centralization of crop land, regional "development administrations" and "integrated rural development projects," extension of state marketing monopolies, and "decentralization" through the central appointment of "Regional Commissioners." In spite of the widely admired populist ideology articulated by President Nyerere, it is by now clear that these "development" interventions, much like their colonial predecessors, have met with stiff resistance from their supposed "beneficiaries," and have not achieved their supposed goals. Again and again, projects have "failed"; and, again and again, for the same reasons: producer prices were too low, administration was inefficient, and technologies were inappropriate (Coulson 1981, 1982; Bryceson 1982a, 1982b; Williams 1986). Government intervention has not increased agricultural production (though state marketing monopolies have driven much of it underground), and the "development" intervention in Tanzania has done little to transform or improve peasant agricultural production.

As in the other cases discussed here, however, the "side effects" of "failure" turn out to be most powerful. It is open to debate whether or not Tanzanian "development" policies are best explained as a straightforward expression of the material interest of an extractive "bureaucratic bourgeoisie," as some (Shivji 1976, von Freyhold 1979) have argued. What is more certain is that the expansion of the state and the bureaucratization of nearly all aspects of life in Tanzania may well be the

most lasting legacy of the "development" intervention. At the same time, the "anti-political" nature of "development" interventions is equally well illustrated here. Under Nyerere (the consummate "anti-politician"), bureaucratic interventions have been very effectively depoliticized, both in Tanzania and for a foreign audience. "Development," insistently formulated as a benign and universal human project, has been the point of insertion for a bureaucratic power that has been neither benign nor universal in its application (Coulson 1975, 1981, 1982; von Freyhold 1979; Bernstein 1981; Hyden 1980; Shivji 1976, 1986; Malkki 1989; Moore 1986).

I will restrict this very tentative review of possible points of comparison here to these few cases drawn from Africa, simply because my knowledge of the literature, scanty enough for the African cases above, begins to grow perilously thin as the focus moves further afield. But my sense is that elsewhere in Africa, and likely in Latin America and Asia as well, it might be possible to show that technical "development" interventions ostensibly organized around such things as agricultural production, livestock, soil erosion, water supply, etc., have in fact often had "instrument-effects" that would be systematically intelligible as part of a two-sided process of depoliticization and expansion of bureaucratic state control. If so, this would not of course prove that such an association is in any way inevitable or universal, but it would suggest that at least some of the mechanisms that have been explored for the case of Lesotho may be of some wider relevance.

Etatization?

A few writers have recently attempted to formulate a general model for the involvement of "development" interventions with the expansion of state power in Africa, based on the concept of "etatization" (Dutkiewicz and Shenton 1986; Dutkiewicz and Williams 1987; Williams 1985a). According to this picture, which Dutkiewicz and Williams identify as a Weberian "ideal type" model, the state-dominated economies of the late colonial period set the stage for the emergence of a distinctive post-colonial "developmental state" (Dutkiewicz and Williams 1987: 41). The "developmental state" was distinguished by the central and direct involvement of the state in the appropriation of surplus value from producers, and by the dependence of the "ruling elite" (Dutkiewicz and Shenton 1986: 110) upon this form of appropriation. Under these distinctive circumstances, the state bureaucracy

expanded rapidly, while the larger economy was more and more subordinated to the needs of the state sector. The "ruling elite," meanwhile, became a "ruling group," united by its near-total dependence for its social reproduction upon its control of the state apparatus. As the state expanded, so did the power of this ruling group, which in turn required, for its reproduction, the continued expansion or "involution" (Dutkiewicz and Williams 1987: 43) of the bureaucracy. But this very process eventually led to a crisis of "diminishing reproduction" (Dutkiewicz and Shenton 1986) of the social resources (especially peasant, household-based production) on which the state depended for its own reproduction. "Etatization" ended up, as in the current crisis, threatening to kill the goose that laid the golden egg.

At every stage, in this view, whether under socialist or capitalist ideologies, this expansion of state power "is justified by the notion of 'national development'" (Dutkiewicz and Williams 1987: 43). With an infinitely expandable demand for "development" providing the charter for state expansion, whatever "problems" can be located are just so many points of insertion for new state programs and interventions for dealing with them. "Development," then, is an integral part of "etatization." And if the "development" interventions fail, as they usually do, that, too, is part of the process. As Dutkiewicz and Shenton put it:

Like corruption, inefficiency in establishing and managing state enterprises, financial institutions, import and exchange rate policies, and development projects, rather than preventing the social reproduction of this ruling group, was an absolute prerequisite for it. The ruling groups' social reproduction required an ever-expanding number of parastatals to be created and development projects to be begun. The completion, or, in a rational capitalistic sense, the efficient operation of such parastatals or development projects would have obviated the need to generate further plans and projects to achieve the ends which their predecessors failed to do. In this sense inefficiency was "efficient," efficient for the expanded reproduction of the ruling group. One result of this was the geometric expansion of a poorly skilled and corrupt lower level bureaucracy incapable of fulfilling even its few professional obligations, itself fuelled by academics and others who saw the solution to every problem in the creation of yet another position or agency to deal with it and to employ more of their own number. By generating a never-ending series of parastatals and development projects the ruling group provided employment and, no matter how small, inadvertent or fleeting, an amelioration of the conditions of life and a share of state resources for at least some

members of the underclasses. In doing so, the conditions of the social reproduction of the ruling group increasingly penetrated and reshaped the conditions for the reproduction of society as a whole. (Dutkiewicz and Shenton 1986: 111)

The international "development" establishment is, in this view, deeply implicated in this process as well. "Development" agencies have not only promoted statist policies, the "development" bureaucracy is itself part of the sprawling symbiotic network of experts, offices, and salaries that benefits from "etatization." As Williams argues:

Since their origins in the colonial period, the project of "development" itself [along with] the "development community" which has grown up to implement it, has instigated, legitimated and benefitted from the process of "Etatization". Within the "development community", whatever disagreements there may be about particular policies and institutions, L'Etat is internationalized and multilateralized.

(Williams 1985a: 11)

The argument, like my summary of it, is extremely general, and unashamedly short on specifics. Like any very general formulation, this one loses much of the complexity and specificity of particular cases, and opens itself up to charges of over-simplification. Certainly, it would be easy to find serious objections to the general model for any given specific case. And it is far from clear that "Africa," an entire continent with a gigantic range of different economic and political realities, is really a suitable object for such a general model. (Are the state formations of, say, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Swaziland more closely related to one another than they are to other post-colonial states, simply by virtue of the fact that all three countries are located in Africa?) In spite of such serious reservations, it must be said that as a broad, general characterization, the "etatization" thesis is provoking and stimulating in a way that the familiar, localized "case study" cannot be. However badly it may short-change the specificity of particular socio-political contexts, it does suggest important larger connections that deserve attention.

The "etatization" synthesis is important not only for its bold attempt at significant generalization, but also as a corrective to what has sometimes been a kind of romance between the academic Left and the Third World state. Perceiving the state as the chief counter-force to the

capitalist logic of the market and the chief instrument for bringing about progressive economic transformations, leftists have too often been willing to take statist interventions at their word and to interpret them uncritically as part of a process of "self-directed development" or "socialist construction." Williams makes the same point in noting the strong appeal of state marketing boards for socialists, who by rights "have no business defending or reforming such exploitative institutions" (Williams 1985b: 13), but have been "all too willing to take statism as at least offering a foundation for socialism" (Williams 1985b: 4). Identifying "etatization" as a central process in recent African history is an important step toward breaking what Deleuze, in a related context, has called "a complicity about the state" (1988: 30).

However, it seems to me that in seeking to describe and explain the "instrument-effects" of the "development" apparatus, there are important limitations to the utility of the notion of "etatization," at least as it has been formulated by Dutkiewicz, Shenton, and Williams. First of all, while it clearly points out the way in which "development" figures in the expansion of bureaucratic state power, it does not so clearly identify the second axis along which the "anti-politics machine" operates – the axis of de-politicization. Dutkiewicz and Shenton (1986) note that state "development" interventions may in fact inhibit or squash peasant production, leading to the "crisis of diminished reproduction." But they do not give enough emphasis to the parallel fact that this same "development" may also very effectively squash political challenges to the system – not only by enhancing the powers of administration and repression, but by insistently reposing political questions of land, resources, jobs, or wages as technical "problems" responsive to the technical "development" intervention. In other words, the conceptual "instrument-effects" of the "development" deployment may be as important as the institutional ones.

A second, and more fundamental, limitation has to do with the way in which the "etatization" thesis theorizes the state and the relation of state power to "the ruling group." In the picture sketched by Dutkiewicz, Shenton, and Williams, "the state" and "the ruling group" both appear as unitary entities. What is more, the relation between the two is seen as one of simple instrumentality. Instead of seeing the "etatizing" results of "development" interventions as emerging counter-intentionally through the working out of a complex and unacknowledged structure of knowledge in interaction with equally complex and unacknowledged local social and cultural structures, as I have tried to do here, these

authors explain such an outcome as the simple, rational projection of the interests of a subject (the "ruling group") that secretly wills it. "Etatization" thus appears as an almost intentional process, guided by the calculations of this ill-defined "ruling group." Indeed, for Dutkiewicz and Shenton, the expansion of state power is not simply an effect of failed state interventions, it is the purpose of such interventions. "Etatization" occurs, they seem to imply (in functionalist fashion), because the social reproduction of the ruling group "requires it" (Dutkiewicz and Shenton 1986: 111). And because the ruling group's position is based exclusively on its control of the state, "state power" in such a formula becomes interchangeable with the power held by the ruling group in its extractive relations with the peasantry. "Etatization" thus reduces to a straight-forward attempt on the part of this unitary "ruling group" to augment its own power *vis à vis* the peasants.

This portion of the "etatization" argument is in fact unsettlingly reminiscent of Hyden's (1980) notion of a post-colonial state with a historic mission to "capture" its peasantry. Dutkiewicz and Shenton (1986) and Williams (1987) have vigorously attacked Hyden's silly idea of a primordial "economy of affection," but their interpretation of "etatization" as the process through which a "ruling group" uses the state to extract surplus value from its rural population does have similarities with Hyden's notion of "capture." There is, of course, a crucial political difference; while Williams, Shenton, and Dutkiewicz see the expanding power of the "ruling group" and its state apparatus as debilitating and oppressive, Hyden sees the accumulation of ever more power by this ruling group as desirable, and actively hopes that the governing classes can acquire enough control to bring the peasantry to its knees, in the bizarre belief that they will then somehow duplicate the experience of industrializing Europe. But in both cases, the state is seen as a tool "in the hands of" a unitary subject, and state interventions are interpreted as expressions of the project of a "ruling group" bent on controlling and appropriating peasant production. Both views agree on what the struggle is over (the control and appropriation of peasant production) and who the protagonists are ("the state" and "the peasantry"). Their difference, which is real enough, lies at another level: for Hyden, the peasantry is "uncaptured," insufficiently subordinated to the needs of a weak and ineffectual state, thus "development" is frustrated; for Dutkiewicz, Shenton, and Williams, it is precisely the heavy hand of an overgrown state (e.g., through state marketing monopolies) that suffocates peasant production. These contrasting interpretations

contain within them a puzzle: Is state power in these settings feeble and ineffectual (as Hyden would have it), or is it overgrown and crushing (as Dutkiewicz, Shenton, and Williams seem to suggest)? Does the African state have too much power, or too little?

This puzzle in fact lies at the center of much recent debate by political scientists and political economists on the nature of the post-colonial state. In the 1970s, a number of theorists argued (along lines similar to Dutkiewicz, Shenton, and Williams) that the historical legacy of coercive colonial state apparatuses had laid the foundation for "overdeveloped" post-colonial states, in which overgrown state institutions (originally deriving from the repressive colonial context) could dominate the rest of society (Alavi 1972; Saul 1979; cf. also Leys 1976). Against this view, in the 1980s a number of writers have suggested that notwithstanding often autocratic and despotic appearances, post-colonial states are more typically "enfeebled" (Azarya and Chazan 1987) than they are "overdeveloped" or "overcentralized." Thus Migdal (1988), for instance, argues that "fragmented" structures of social control in post-colonial societies often make effective state control impossible, while writers like Chabal (1986), Bayart (1986), and Geschiere (1988) emphasize the extent to which state plans are frustrated by a deceptively powerful "civil society." These writers differ only on the question of who is hero and who is anti-hero in this epic struggle between "state" and "civil society." Migdal, like Hyden, seems to prefer an outcome where a strong "state" can triumph over a weakened "society" (1988: 259-77). Writers like Bayart (1986) and Geschiere (1988), on the other hand, celebrate the means through which civil society is able to take "revenge" on the state through "popular modes of action," and thus to provide a form of "political accountability" (Chabal 1986), checking the despotic power of the state.

It is possible to move beyond this debate only by formulating the expansion of state power in a slightly different way. One can begin by saying that the state is not an entity that "has" or does not "have" power, and state power is not a substance possessed by those individuals and groups who benefit from it. The state is neither the source of power, nor simply the projection of the power of an interested subject (ruling group, etc.). Rather than an entity "holding" or "exercising" power, it may be more fruitful to think of the state as instead forming a relay or point of coordination and multiplication of power relations. Foucault has described the process through which power relations come to be "statized" in the following terms:

It is certain that in contemporary societies the state is not simply one of the forms or specific situations of the exercise of power – even if it is the most important – but that in a certain way all other forms of power relation must refer to it. But this is not because they are derived from it; it is rather because power relations have come more and more under state control (although this state control has not taken the same form in pedagogical, judicial, economic, or family systems). In referring here to the restricted sense of the word government, one could say that power relations have been progressively governmentalized, that is to say, elaborated, rationalized, and centralized in the form of, or under auspices of, state institutions.

(Foucault 1983: 224)

"The state," in this conception, is not the name of an actor, it is the name of a way of tying together, multiplying, and coordinating power relations, a kind of knotting or congealing of power. It is in this spirit that I have tried to describe the effects of the "anti-politics machine" in terms of "bureaucratic power" or "bureaucratic state power" rather than simply "state power" – in order to emphasize the adjectival over the nominative. The usage is meant to suggest not an entity possessed of power, but a characteristic mode of exercise of power, a mode of power that relies on state institutions, but exceeds them. I have argued that the "development" apparatus promotes a colonizing, expanding bureaucratic power, that it expands its reach and extends its distribution. By putting it this way, I have meant to imply not that "development" projects necessarily expand the capabilities of "the state," conceived as a unitary, instrumental entity, but that specific bureaucratic knots of power are implanted, an infestation of petty bureaucrats wielding petty powers.

On this understanding, it is clear that the spread of bureaucratic state power does not imply that "the state," conceived as a unitary entity, "has" more power – that it is, for example, able to implement more of "its" programs successfully, or to extract more surplus from the peasants. Indeed, it is no paradox to say that "etatization" may leave the state even less able to carry on "its" will or "its" policies. As "state power" is expanded, "the state" as a plan-making, policy-making, rational bureaucracy may actually become "weaker," less able to achieve "its" objectives. This is especially clear in cases, such as the one explored above in Chapter 7, where a superabundance of centralized, bureaucratic agencies (all ostensibly working hard for "development")

becomes seen as the key obstacle to "development" policies. The expansion of bureaucratic state power, then, does not necessarily mean that "the masses" can be centrally coordinated or ordered around any more efficiently; it only means that more power relations are referred through state channels – most immediately, that more people must stand in line and await rubber stamps to get what they want. What is expanded is not the magnitude of the capabilities of "the state," but the extent and reach of a particular kind of exercise of power.

In this respect, the way in which power is linked up with the state in a country like Lesotho differs from the model of a state-coordinated "bio-power" that Foucault (1980a) has described for the modern West. In Foucault's account, the development and spread of techniques for the disciplining of the body and the optimization of its capacities, followed by the emergence of the "population" as an object of knowledge and control, has made possible in the modern era a normalizing "bio-power," watching over, governing, and administering the very "life" of society. In this process, the state occupies a central, coordinating role – managing, fostering, and, according to its own calculus, "optimizing" the vital and productive forces of society. In a country like Lesotho, no doubt many planners of state interventions would like to take on such a role – to control the size of the population, for instance, or to set about making it more productive, healthy, or vital. But the empirical fact is that such interventions most commonly do not have such effects. The growth of state power in such a context does not imply any sort of efficient, centralized social engineering. It simply means that power relations must increasingly be referred through bureaucratic circuits. The state here does not have a single rationality, and it is not capable of optimally ordering the biological resources of its population in the sense of the "bio-power" model. The state does not "rationalize and centralize" power relations, as Foucault's quote above (p. 273) would suggest. It grabs onto and loops around existing power relations, not to rationalize or coordinate them, so much as to cinch them all together into a knot.

The "developmental" state, then, is a knotting or a coagulation of power. If we can speak of the "development" apparatus as part of a process of "etatization," that can only be a way of saying that it is involved in the distribution, multiplication, and intensification of these tangles and clots of power.

Up to now, I have explored some possible lines of empirical generalizations: some issues to be explored concerning the applicability of the

specific conclusions reached for Lesotho to the wider world. There remain a few suggestions to be made about possible generalizations at a more abstract or theoretical level. The final section therefore proposes some general observations concerning the nature of the process through which conceptual apparatuses like that of "development" in Lesotho are implicated in processes of structural change.

Discourse, knowledge, and structural production

I have argued up to now that even a "failed" development project can bring about important structural changes. This means that even where new structures are not produced in accordance with discursively elaborated plans, they are all the same produced, and the role of discursive and conceptual structures in that production is by no means a small one. The investigation has demonstrated two facts about the Thaba-Tseka case: first, that the project's interventions can only be understood in the context of a distinctive discursive regime that orders the "conceptual apparatus" of official thinking and planning about "development" in Lesotho; and secondly, that the actual transformations that were brought about by the project were in no way congruent with the transformations that the conceptual apparatus planned. This pairing of facts raises an important theoretical question: if official planning is not irrelevant to the events that planned interventions give rise to, and if the relation between plan and event is not one of even approximate congruence, then what is the relation between blueprints and outcomes, between conceptual apparatuses and the results of their deployment?

I want to suggest that, in order to answer that question, it is necessary to demote intentionality – in both its "planning" and its "conspiracy" incarnations – and to insist that the structured discourse of planning and its corresponding field of knowledge are important, but only as part of a larger "machine," an anonymous set of interrelations that only ends up having a kind of retrospective coherence. The use of the "machine" metaphor here is motivated not only, as above, by science-fictional analogy, but by a desire (following Foucault [1979, 1980a] and Deleuze [1988]) to capture something of the way that conceptual and discursive systems link up with social institutions and processes without even approximately determining the form or defining the logic of the outcome. As one cog in the "machine," the planning apparatus is not the "source" of whatever structural changes may come about, but only one among a number of links in the mechanism that produces them. Dis-

course and thought are articulated in such a "machine" with other practices, as I have tried to show; but there is no reason to regard them as "master practices," over-determining all others.

When we deal with planned interventions by powerful parties, however, it is tempting to see in the discourse and intentions of such parties the logic that defines the train of events. Such a view, however, inevitably misrepresents the complexities of the involvement of intentionality with events. Intentions, even of powerful actors or interests, are only the visible part of a much larger mechanism through which structures are actually produced, reproduced, and transformed. Plans are explicit, and easily seen and understood; conspiracies are only slightly less so. But any intentional deployment only takes effect through a convoluted route involving unacknowledged structures and unpredictable outcomes.

If this is so, then a conceptual apparatus is very far from being irrelevant to structural production. It is part of the larger system through which such production actually occurs; but it is only part of a larger mechanism. When one sees the whole process, it is clear that the conceptions are only one cog among others; they are neither mere ornament nor are they the master key to understanding what happens. The whole mechanism is, as Deleuze (1988: 38) puts it, a "mushy mixture" of the discursive and the non-discursive, of the intentional plans and the unacknowledged social world with which they are engaged. While the instrumental aims embodied in plans are highly visible, and pretend to embody the logic of a process of structural production, the actual process proceeds silently and often invisibly, masked or rendered even less visible by its contrast with the intentional plans, which appear bathed in the shining light of day. The plans, then, as the visible part of a larger mechanism, can neither be dismissed nor can they be taken at their word. If the process through which structural production takes place can be thought of as a machine, it must be said that the planners' conceptions are not the blueprint for the machine; they are parts of the machine.

Plans constructed within a conceptual apparatus do have effects but in the process of having these effects they generally "fail" to transform the world in their own image. But "failure" here does not mean doing nothing; it means doing something else, and that something else always has its own logic. Systems of discourse and systems of thought are thus bound up in a complex causal relationship with the stream of planned and unplanned events that constitutes the social world. The challenge is

to treat these systems of thought and discourse like any other kind of structured social practice, neither dismissing them as ephemeral nor seeking in their products the master plans for those elaborate, half-invisible mechanisms of structural production and reproduction in which they are engaged as component parts.

Epilogue

"What is to be done?"

"I understand your skepticism about 'development.' But after all, there really are an awful lot of poor, sick, hungry people out there. What's to be done about it? If 'development' isn't the answer, then what is?"

These are rather grand questions, to be sure. But in developing the argument I have presented here, I have found that many people have responded to it in just these terms. There seems to be a certain frustration with the fact that my analysis traces the effects or mode of operation of an apparatus without providing any sort of prescription or general guide for action. The first response to this sort of objection must be that the book never intended or presumed to prescribe, and that this is not what the book is all about. But it is perhaps worth making clear that this reluctance to dispense prescriptions is not a matter of neutrality or indifference. Indeed, I am no more indifferent to the political-tactical question of "what is to be done" than I am to the poverty and suffering of so much of the world. So I end the book with this epilogue – a brief personal statement on these issues – in anticipation of the reactions that many readers may have to the argument, and in hope of helping to draw out more clearly the implications of my analysis. Since these issues are, as I have argued from the start, intrinsically political, this must necessarily be a political statement. I offer it here not in order to suggest that everyone should share my politics, but to lay out as clearly as possible my belief that "development" is far from being the only available form of engagement with the great questions of poverty, hunger, and oppression that rightly pre-occupy us in thinking about the Third World.

Any question of the form "what is to be done" implies both a subject and a goal, both an aim and an actor who strategizes toward that aim. The question "what is to be done about all the poverty, sickness, and hunger in the Third World" immediately identifies the undoubtedly worthy goal of alleviating or eliminating poverty and its suffering. A first step, many would agree, toward clarifying that goal and the tactics appropriate to achieving it is to reformulate it somewhat more politically: since it is powerlessness that ultimately underlies the surface conditions of poverty, ill-health, and hunger, the larger goal ought

therefore to be empowerment.¹ But the question of the subject, the actor who is to do the "doing," still remains completely unspecified. A great deal of liberal policy science fills in the gap left by this lack of specificity in its own unacknowledged way, implicitly translating the real-world question of poverty into the all too familiar, utopian form of the question: given an all-powerful and all-benevolent policy-making apparatus, what should it do to advance the interests of its poor citizens? In this form, it seems to me that the question is worse than meaningless – in practice, it acts to disguise what are in fact highly partial and interested interventions as universal, disinterested, and inherently benevolent. If the question "what is to be done" has any sense, it is as a real-world tactics, not a utopian ethics. "What is to be done?" demands first of all an answer to the question, "By whom?"

"What should they do?"

Often, the question was put to me in the form "What should they do?", with the "they" being not very helpfully specified as "Lesotho" or "the Basotho" (cf. Chapter 2, pp. 60, 62). The "they" here is an imaginary, collective subject, linked to utopian prescriptions for advancing the collective interests of "the Basotho." Such a "they" clearly needs to be broken up. The inhabitants of Lesotho do not all share the same interests or the same circumstances, and they do not act as a single unit. There exists neither a collective will nor a collective subject capable of serving it.

When the "developers" spoke of such a collectivity ("they," "the Basotho," "Lesotho") what they meant was usually the government. But the government of Lesotho is of course not identical with the people who live in Lesotho, nor is it in any of the established senses "representative" of that collectivity. As in most countries, the government is a relatively small clique with narrow interests. Significant differences in points of view and interests can certainly be found within this governing circle, and undoubtedly one can see in at least some of these differences the indirect traces of popular demands, which even the most undemocratic politician must in one way or another take into account. But, speaking very broadly, the interests represented by governmental elites in a country like Lesotho are not congruent with those of the governed, and in a great many cases are positively antagonistic. Under these circumstances, there is little point in asking what such entrenched and often extractive elites should do in order to empower the poor. Their own structural position makes it clear that they would be the last ones to

undertake such a project. If the governing classes ask the advice of experts, it is for their own purposes, and these normally have little to do with advancing the interests of the famous downtrodden masses.

“If the question “what should they do” is not intelligibly posed of the government, another move is to ask if the “they” to be addressed should not be instead “the people.” Surely “the masses” themselves have an interest in overcoming poverty, hunger and other symptoms of powerlessness. At a certain level of analysis, there is no disputing that those who experience poverty and oppression must be first among those concerned with the question of what is to be done about it. But once again, the question is befuddled by a false unity. “The people” are not an undifferentiated mass. Rich and poor, women and men, city dwellers and villagers, workers and dependants, old and young; all confront different problems and devise different strategies for dealing with them. There is not one question – “what is to be done” – but hundreds: what should the mineworkers do, what should the abandoned old women do, what should the unemployed do, and on and on. It seems, at the least, presumptuous to offer prescriptions here. The toiling miners and the abandoned old women know the tactics proper to their situations far better than any expert does. Indeed, the only general answer to the question, “What should they do?” is: “They are doing it!”

As I argued earlier, the “development” problematic tends to exclude from the field of view all forces for change that are not based on the paternal guiding hand of the state; it can hardly imagine change coming in any other way. But, from outside that problematic, it seems clear that the most important transformations, the changes that really matter, are not simply “introduced” by benevolent technocrats, but fought for and made through a complex process that involves not only states and their agents, but all those with something at stake, all the diverse categories of people who craft their everyday tactics of coping with, adapting to, and, in their various ways, resisting the established social order. As Foucault remarked of the prisons, when the system is transformed:

it won't be because a plan of reform has found its way into the heads of the social workers; it will be when those who have to do with that ... reality, all those people, have come into collision with each other and with themselves, run into dead-ends, problems and impossibilities, been through conflicts and confrontations; when critique has been played out in the real, not when reformers have realised their ideas.

Southern Africa is not a place where such a "critique of the real" is difficult to foresee. The uncertainties of the contemporary situation are immense, and all but the most banal predictions are more than usually impossible. But there is no doubt that massive changes of one sort or another are inevitably coming in the whole regional political and economic system. Various categories of Basotho will participate and *are* participating in making these changes in the various ways appropriate to their circumstances, be they mineworkers joining the large and rapidly growing National Union of Mineworkers, political activists working with the liberation movements, women fighting for empowerment and autonomy in the villages, or targeted "farmers" resisting the encroachments of the bureaucratic state. They are not waiting for consultants to come and tell them what must be done.

It remains conceivable that at various points in these struggles, in various organizational locations, there may in fact be demands for specific kinds of advice or expertise. But, if there is advice to be given, it will not be dictating general political strategy or giving a general answer to the question "what is to be done" (which can only be determined by those doing the resisting), but answering specific, localized, tactical questions. The possibility of this form of engagement of expertise with political movements of empowerment is explored in greater depth below.

"What should we do?"

A second, and apparently less arrogant, form of the question is to ask not "what should they do?" but "what should we do?" But once again, the crucial question is, which "we?"

For many, the answer seems to be either "we, the governments of the West," or "we whose job it is to 'do' something," i.e., "we 'developers'." In either case, the question "what should we do?" quickly becomes "what should the 'development' agencies and the 'donors' do?" But like the "they" of "Lesotho," the "we" of "development agencies" as the implied subject of the question falsely implies a collective project for bringing about the empowerment of the poor. Whatever good or ill may be accomplished by these agencies, nothing about their general mode of operation would justify a belief in such a collective "we" defined by a political program of empowerment.

There is, however, a second and more productive way of posing the question "what should we do?"; that is: What should we scholars and

intellectuals working in or concerned about the Third World do? To the extent that there are common political values and a shared agenda, a real "we" group with shared political aims and common tactical problems, this becomes a real question. My experience suggests that many academic social scientists – and perhaps most anthropologists – working in southern Africa do broadly share what one might call a left-populist perspective. Having worked with a broad range of "ordinary people," often for long periods of time and with at least a certain degree of intimacy and affection, these intellectuals are often sympathetic with popular causes and suspicious of the usual claims that the elites and experts know best. Their instincts are generally democratic, egalitarian, and anti-hierarchical. Their political proclivity is to support struggles for empowerment on the part of exploited peasants and workers, and to oppose neo-colonialist and bureaucratic domination. "Development" researchers, too, are far from being all conservative bureaucrats. Many, especially anthropologists, share these same popular and democratic commitments, and seek practical ways of advancing them. Indeed, at least some "development" workers see themselves as practicing social activists. There is even a measure of continuity between contemporary "development" work and the popular and student movements centering on Third World issues that so many Western countries experienced during the 1960s. In spite of the very common involvement of "development" with counter-insurgency throughout the post-war period, a surprising number of Western progressives have been drawn to "development" work by way of political commitments to and solidarity with Third World causes. There are sometimes romantic and even missionary overtones to these engagements, to be sure; but often enough there is a real commitment to work for liberating, empowering social transformations. For these many scholars, intellectuals, and experts in various settings who would wish to apply their energies and talents on the side of economic and political empowerment, the tactical question "what is to be done" is indeed a real one. But any answer to this question must entail, if only implicitly, a theory of how economic and political empowerment comes about.

For anyone who shares the political commitments I have been discussing, making "development" the form of one's intellectual political engagement would seem to imply the view that democracy, equality, and empowerment are to be worked for and brought about through the benevolent intervention of state agencies – that these progressive changes are to be advanced through the action of progressive planners

acting on proper advice. There may well be specific contexts where this does happen. At a minimum, one can say that however bad "development" interventions have been for the "beneficiaries," no doubt many of them might have been worse were it not for these left-populists working from the inside. But there are distinct limitations to this way of theorizing the process of empowerment, and corresponding dangers inherent in this strategy of engagement.

Operating on the theory that the oppressed classes are to be delivered from their poverty and powerlessness through government agency can easily lead to a falsely universalizing or even heroizing view of the state. Further, experience suggests that identifying government intervention with progress and reform is likely to facilitate the dismissal or even suppression of the often oppositional forms of action initiated by those identified as requiring the intervention. Acting on such a theory, it is all too easy to enter into complicity with a state bureaucracy that, after all, in all but the most extraordinary situations, serves the dominant or hegemonic interests in society – the very social forces, in most cases, that must be challenged if the impoverished and oppressed majority are to improve their lot. The apparent alternative of looking to the "international agency" rather than the state as the author of the benevolent, empowering intervention contains all the same dangers. The international apparatus typically has a different agenda than the local government does, but in its interests, and in its effects, it is no less conservative. The difference here is between the guardians of the global hegemony and those of the local hegemony. As with local government, positing "development" agencies as the active principle charged with the task of empowering the poor may involve a certain lack of fit between subject and predicate.

Certainly, national and international "development" agencies do constitute a large and ready market for advice and prescriptions, and it is this promise of real "input" that makes the "development" form of engagement such a tempting one for many intellectuals. These agencies seem hungry for good advice, and ready to act on it. Why not give it? But as I have tried to show, they seek only the kind of advice they can take. One "developer" asked my advice on what his country could do "to help these people." When I suggested that his government might contemplate sanctions against *apartheid*, he replied, with predictable irritation, "No, no! I mean *development*!" The only "advice" that is in question here is advice about how to "do development" better. There is a ready ear for criticisms of "bad development projects," so long as these

are followed up with calls for "good development projects." Again, Foucault's analysis of the prison is relevant: "For a century and a half the prison has always been offered as its own remedy: the reactivation of the penitentiary techniques as the only means of overcoming their perpetual failure; the realization of the corrective project as the only method of overcoming the impossibility of implementing it" (Foucault 1979: 268). In "development," as in criminology, "problems" and calls for reform are necessary to the functioning of the machine. Pointing out errors and suggesting improvements is an integral part of the process of justifying and legitimating "development" interventions. Such an activity may indeed have some beneficial or mitigating effects, but it does not change the fundamental character of those interventions.

It is hardly a novelty to suggest that organizations like the World Bank, USAID, and the Government of Lesotho are not really the sort of social actors that are very likely to advance the empowerment of the exploited poor. Yet such an obvious conclusion makes many uncomfortable. It seems to them to imply hopelessness; as if to suggest that the answer to the question "what is to be done" is: "Nothing." Skepticism about the "development" intervention is read as political passivity. "Applied" researchers, the cliché goes, are willing to go out and get their hands dirty working for "development" agencies; "academic" researchers, on the other hand, stay in their ivory towers, and keep their hands and consciences clean. But is this really the only choice? Again, we return to the question of where empowering, progressive social changes come from. What forces are likely to bring such changes about? The elites of local government? USAID and the World Bank? Surely these are not the only possible answers. Working for social change is not synonymous with working for governments; indeed, it is perhaps not too much to say that the preoccupation of governments and government agencies is more often precisely to forestall and frustrate the processes of popular empowerment that so many anthropologists and other social scientists in their hearts seek to advance.

If, as I have suggested, the "development" intervention is not the only way for anthropologists and other social scientists to engage their intellectual and scholarly energies with the great questions of poverty and oppression, then what are the alternatives? How can we work for the social and economic changes that would make a difference for the ordinary people we have known as informants, neighbors, and friends?

One of the most important forms of engagement is simply the

political participation in one's own society that is appropriate to any citizen. This is perhaps particularly true for citizens of a country like the United States, where – thanks to an imperialistic power projected all across the globe – national politics powerfully impacts upon the rest of the world. But is it not also the case that there exist special opportunities – and even, as Chomsky (1969) has argued, special responsibilities – for political work for those with special knowledge, training, and expertise?

With respect to one's political engagement in one's own society, I think the answer is clearly yes. The anthropologist participates in the political process not only as citizen, but, willy-nilly, as "expert." Through teaching, public speaking, and advocacy, many Western anthropologists have applied their specialized knowledge to the task of combating imperialist policies and advancing the causes of Third World peoples. The involvement of American anthropologists in opposing US policy in Central America is a good example of this kind of engagement. The anthropologist who has seen "his village" exterminated by death squads, for instance, has both a special perspective and a distinctive political role to play on debates over aid to the "Contras" or support for El Salvador. Likewise, the field researcher who knows the Palestinians as real, flesh and blood human beings, and not only as shadowy figures brandishing machine guns, is in a position to combat the deceptions and misinformation that are put forward to justify the denial of Palestinian self-determination. And the anthropologist with first-hand knowledge of the realities of Southern Africa has both an opportunity and a responsibility to enter into the political debates surrounding *apartheid* and the world community.

Whether such a useful and appropriate role is available to the researcher in "the field," however, must remain in every case an open question. My own sense is that opportunity for such a role would exist only (1) where it is possible to identify interests, organizations, and groupings that clearly represent movements of empowerment, and (2) when a demand exists on the side of those working for their own empowerment for the specific skills and expertise that the specialist possesses. There are no doubt circumstances under which work for state or international agencies would meet these conditions. But the state is not the only game in town. The more interesting, and less explored, possibility is to seek out the typically non-state forces and organizations that challenge the existing dominant order and to see if links can be found between our expertise and their practical needs as they determine

them. Such counter-hegemonic alternative points of engagement ("counter-hegemonic" status depending always on an analysis of the local context, of course) might be found in labor unions, opposition political parties and movements, cooperatives, peasants' unions, churches and religious organizations, and so on. Such oppositional foci of power often have practical needs for empirical research, and sometimes even budgets and institutional support for it.

We must entertain the strong possibility that there will be no need for what we do among such actors. There is no guarantee that our knowledge and skills will be relevant. We must recognize that it is possible, too, that different kinds of knowledge and skills will be required, that the nature of our intellectual activity itself will have to be transformed in order to participate in this way. But the possibilities are there to be explored. Where such alternative points of engagement are available, of course, there may well be severe difficulties to be overcome in deliberately working against the existing dominant order. Official permission may be difficult or impossible to obtain, government harassment may in some settings make such research difficult, or even dangerous. There is no reason to assume that such an approach to applied research will be possible in every setting. But against such formidable obstacles, there may be some practical advantages, too. Anthropologists come cheap; they do not require big budgets or equipment or laboratories. What they do require is on-site room and board, inter-personal connections with a broad range of informants, and a stimulating intellectual context. Counter-hegemonic organizations and institutions can often provide these as well or better than the big state and international agencies, even where research budgets are small or non-existent. They may not be able to spring for a room at the Hilton, but the anthropologist's problem is usually getting out of the Hilton, not into it. Institutional linkages with such counter-hegemonic social forces will have to be built and worked at. They are not the connections that come most easily, and such a form of engagement will come about only by working against the grain, not simply by waiting to be summoned. But it is possible to imagine a network of researchers committed to forging such links, and to anticipate a day when such connections might multiply to the point where they become, if not commonplace, at least no longer so extraordinary.

These kinds of engagements will no doubt never replace or even seriously challenge the predominance of "development" in the world of applied social-scientific research. Such work will probably never by itself provide a living, let alone a profession or a career; by its nature it

must remain an intermittent and marginal practice. It does not take the place of "development," and it does not occupy the same space. It does, perhaps, offer a form of engaging one's intellectual and scholarly energies with the work of political and social transformation in a way that is consistent with the democratic and populist commitments that so many anthropologists share.

Notes

1 Introduction

- 1 This division of "mountains" from "lowlands" is sometimes expanded to a four-zone classification: lowlands, foothills, mountains, and the Senqu river valley, a strip of relatively low-lying land that winds some way up into the mountains.
- 2 The following lists of donors and "development" agencies have been assembled from the following documents: UNDP 1980, GOL n.d., GOL 1977, GOL 1975, TAICH 1976. The list is only as accurate as these documents, and it does not pretend to be authoritative. A number of agencies have no doubt been left out. It should be noted, too, that the donors and agencies listed are involved in Lesotho on very different scales; some are major actors on the local scene, while many others are involved in only a very minor way.
- 3 On "development assistance" to Lesotho, see Jones (1982), Wellings (1982, 1983), Curry (1980), Singh (1982), Linden (1976).
- 4 See, for instance, Myrdal (1957, 1968, 1970), Seers (1979a, 1979b), Streeter (1970, 1972), Hirschman (1963, 1967), Tendler (1975), Brookfield (1975), Bryant and White (1982), and Chambers (1983). More specific studies include Hunter, Bunting and Bottrall (1976), Morss *et al.* (1976), Arnold (1982), McNeil (1981), Mickelwait *et al.* (1979), and Morss and Gow (1983).
- 5 Within Marxism, it should be noted, there have been several important writers opposed to the neo-Marxist approach to development. Bill Warren (1973, 1980) has argued a strong case for imperialism as a historically progressive "pioneer of capitalism" and shown how much fight the orthodox Marxist view still has in it. For others, such as Cooper (1981) and Hyden (1980, 1983), if capitalism is not the engine of Third World development that Warren makes it out to be, this is only because it is frustrated by the resistances it encounters there. African underdevelopment is thus the sign of resistance to capitalist and state incorporation; from the point of view of capitalist development Africa is "under-exploited," its peasantry "uncaptured." Anne Phillips (1977) has attacked the whole neo-Marxist focus on the ability or inability of capitalism to promote "development" as an idealist approach attempting to base the case for socialism on an ethical objection to capitalism rather than on a scientific investigation of tendencies and forces immanent in capitalism. Gavin Williams (1978) and Corrigan, Ramsey, and Sayer (1978) have also attacked the neo-Marxist view of "development."
- 6 Writers in this vein include Magdoff (1969), Frank (1969), Hayter (1971, 1981), and Heatley (1979).
- 7 See works cited in Willis (1981).
- 8 Theorists in this vein include, with important differences, Althusser, Bordieu, Bowles and Gintis, and Michael Apple. See Willis's afterword and