

## ANTHROPOLOGY'S CONTRIBUTION TO UNDERSTANDING DEVELOPMENT

†*Harold K. Schneider*  
Indiana University, Bloomington

The concept of "development" emerged in the United States in the early 1960s and was greeted negatively by anthropologists from the start. Dominated by the Boasian paradigm, they saw this as an ethnocentric concept which yet again placed the industrial nations at the head of civilization and the non-industrial people at the primitive, underdeveloped bottom. Development was dominated by neo-classical economists whose Keynesian, dynamic economics was seen, as in the case of Rostow (1960), as the way to raise what later came to be called the Third World to the level of the developed nations. These economists not only did not understand the objections of anthropologists to the idea of development but did not care. They felt certain that "developing" underdeveloped people was the right thing to do.

Surprisingly, many anthropologists have in the course of time come to terms with the economists, political scientists and other working in development and while some, like De Garine (1978), may still attempt to stem the tide, most have accepted the idea that raising the standard of living of Third World people is a good idea. But there are still differences of opinion about how to go about this based on the different kinds of experiences of anthropologists and economists. Economists, even if they go into the field and actually observe the objects of their development policies, seldom spend much time there. Anthropologists, on the other hand, still spend long periods of time with the objects of their help and the difference in experience leads to difference in understanding of how to accomplish development.

The purpose of this paper is to detail certain generalizations I have devised in the course of more than a decade of involvement in development, as a participant in the Midwestern Universities

Consortium for International Activities, as a researcher and writer on the subject, as leader of several seminars on "Anthropology and development" at Indiana University, and as director of a number of doctoral dissertations dealing directly with development which have led to a number of publications (e.g., Massing 1980; Saul 1981; Johnson 1983; Little 1983). These generalizations represent my conception of what an anthropologist can contribute to development. I stress that these are my ideas. My specialization in the application of analytical economics to anthropological problems, which is not in the mainstream of American anthropology, makes some of my generalizations diverge from that mainstream. But because development is so dominated by economics, it also makes those ideas more understandable to the mainstream of development thought.

The first of these generalizations is no longer novel. It is that the people of the Third World, toward whom development activities are directed, are decision-makers who evaluate options open to them and attempt to move in directions which will improve their utility. In other words, Third World people are *homo oeconomicus*, at least to the same degree we are. In the 1960s this was a novel idea to economists and agricultural economists and the like in the United States, who had learned from previous generations of anthropologists that these people were not motivated to maximize their utility as we are. But experience with development problems and the urgings of some new kinds of economic anthropologists had banished this myth. Today the great debate in African development is whether the solution to antidevelopment is "getting the prices right", the argument being that if the prices of agricultural products are raised enough the people will respond by increasing production. This debate, obviously, depends on the participants accepting the idea that Africans are price responsive.

In summarizing this first generalization, it will be noted that I did not say that Third World people are economic men in the full sense of that phrase as used in analytical economics. Such a view, drawn from neo-classical economics, suggests that the only thing that motivates people is maximizing their utility. This is a theoretical concept which does not fit any ordinary human being. But it is a useful concept if modified to allow for the fact that people are also motivated by other things, such as religion. Insofar as this idea is useful in analyzing our own behavior it is useful in analyzing the behavior of people of the Third World.

My second generalization is that development is a combina-

tion of two elements, one well understood and the other not: development consists of an increase in the production and consumption of goods but also, and inseparably, change in consumption attitudes to value those goods valued by the donor nations. The first part of this conclusion is well accepted by developmentalists but the second is seemingly not understood at all. The commonest definitions of development point to the increase in gross national product and rise in standard of living. But the standard of living referred to is the one we understand.

Consider, for example, the case of the Somali people of East Africa. The Somalis, for the most part, consider themselves well off because they have many camels. They are certainly the richest camel owners in Africa. To them development in the first sense would be an increase in the number of camels per person in Somalia. But to developmentalists, the Somalis are «one of the poorest people in the world», a phrase commonly applied to Third World peoples whose possessions consist of things which donor nations do not value, or do not value very much. To them development for Somalis consists of getting rid of the camels, for which there is a poor world market, and shifting to agriculture and fishing in which occupations they could produce goods that have a world market.

To Somalis the possession of many camels makes a man rich because he holds a good which is the envy of surrounding agricultural people and other Somalis. It is a good not only in great demand by the people he knows but which multiplies itself, whereas he scorns agriculture as an occupation which is demanding of labor and creates wealth at a rate far inferior to herding. As long as the demand for camels remains no Somali would see a shift to the production of cotton or fish as a rational thing to do.

This generalization can be exemplified in other ways. To the producers of opium, heroin and other such narcotics, their production is development. It makes them richer. To donor nations such crops are anathema, to be stamped out. Or, to the people of upper Cameroon described by De Garine (1978) development would consist of increases in the size of their herds and in the production of sorghum. But to the government of Cameroon development consists mainly of the replacing of indigenous crops with cotton, a crop which has served these people poorly even if it has served the government of Cameroon very well. In short, as seen by the anthropologist, development policy is often ethnocentric.

The next generalization is that development is not only an increase in material wealth but a political or social process. The relations between people are affected by the "kinds" of goods, "relative value" of goods and the "amount of goods" in circulation. What I mean by this is well illustrated by considering Salisbury's (1962) classic study of the Siane of Highland New Guinea. His investigation of the effects on Siane society of the introduction of steel axes showed that the Siane used the increased efficiency of those axes over the old stone axes to reduce the amount of time allocated to various kinds of construction, which could now be accomplished in a shorter period, and put that released time into the production of *gima* pig feasts thereby increasing their ability to achieve higher Big Man status. This led to a greater polarization of Siane society as some Big Men rose to a higher level of dominance over others than ever before.

A recent study of the Il Chamus of the Baringo area of Kenya, by Little (1983) illustrates the point more contemporaneously. For many years the Il Chamus have decreased their dependence on agriculture and increased their pastoral wealth by trading with the Tugen to the west for grain. Recent government policy has forced the Tugen to sell their maize to government buyers thereby destroying the Tugen/Il Chamus trade link. The Il Chamus have reacted by increasing agricultural production through intensification of irrigation. But the small amount of irrigable land had been bought up by the wealthier Il Chamus who now have control of the grain supplies as well as larger herds, which they increase by selling grain to the poorer Il Chamus. The ultimate outcome, as in the case of the Siane, is a polarization of Il Chamus society as a few men become more wealthy than in the past and more and more Il Chamus lose all their cattle and are unable to obtain irrigable land.

The next generalization is that Third World people are not primarily oriented to production for subsistence. That is to say, these people do not set out to produce goods only to sustain their families but will produce for a market, in order to make profits, where they can.

This fact was first brought home to me full force when I conducted economic anthropological research among the Turu of west central Tanganyika in 1959-60 (Schneider 1970). I found that the Turu not only acted to produce profit but were able to verbalize a complex and clear financial philosophy. They told me that the wise person follows a course of production and exchange

activity which begins with getting married in order to obtain a wife for the production of grain. The wife is encouraged to produce all she can in hopes of obtaining a surplus of grain to store in bins in her house while waiting for a drought year. In such a year, many of the wealthier cattle owners would have to sell cattle at reduced prices to obtain grain because these wealthier people tend, in good times, to decrease their investment in grain production and so have less surplus to get by on. One of my informants explained that he became wealthy in 1938 during such a drought when he was able to sell off his large surplus of grain to obtain cattle at the rate of 120 lbs of bulrush millet for one heifer. The rate during more normal years was 800 lbs.

Cattle are for the Turu repositories of value, much like gold is to us, and the aim of every man is to build up the largest herd possible, thereby giving him position and power in the community.

I do not consider the Turu to be exceptional in their orientation to profit. But this point has to be made because so often in development the view is expressed that the prime task of development activities among "rural" people is to increase the amount of food they produce so that they can eat more and be better nourished. The primary emphasis, I suggest, ought to be on finding ways for them to get richer and nutrition will take care of itself. Human beings should not be thought of as living to eat but as producers of all kinds of goods, some of which are eaten, whose primary purpose is to exchange those goods where possible for profit.

The next generalization, implicit in much of what I have said up to now, and especially in the last conclusion, should be explicitly stated. Third World people are motivated to obtain power. American anthropology up to recent years was dominated by the idea that the societies we study are static and that the arrangement of power and position is a tradition supported by the structure of the social system and by custom. That belief is now seriously open to question. Mead's (1955) study of the reaction of the Tiv of Nigeria to the abolition of "sister" exchange marriage by the British colonial authorities in the 1920s pioneered in making this point. Her study showed that the powerful positions of the older men were enforced by their control of the women which they achieved by exchanging them with other older men. When this form of marriage was made illegal the young men took immediate advantage of the situation, obtaining wives through bridewealth

payments and thereby undermining seriously the power of the old men.

The civil war that emerged in Rwanda and Burundi at independence in the early 1960s, in which the Tutsi upper class was challenged by the Hutu lower class is another example, arguing that the caste system was not accepted by the Hutu as inevitable but maintained by the colonial authorities. An implication of this conclusion is that to characterize the elites in some developing countries as exceptional because they are attempting to control and exploit the rural people is false. The rural people themselves will attempt to obtain power and to exploit others if they ever get the chance. Since these elites probably understand this quite well, it is no wonder that they resist attempts by developmentalists to get them to raise prices of grain to producers since they would see this as increasing the power of the producers and diminishing their own power.

The next generalization is that current emphasis on achieving development with equity, a policy mandated to the United States Agency for International Development by the U.S. Congress, is probably an impossible goal in the face of the fact that development is so frequently accompanied by social polarization. One must choose development without equity or no development at all. A case in point is the introduction of dwarf wheat into the Punjab in India. The idea was to grow a new kind of wheat designed to give greater yields for the inputs, such as fertilizers, while making the wheat more resistant to storm damage because of its smaller size. It is reported that the wheat was successfully grown but that because of the nature of the costs involved, only those Punjabis who had 40 acres or more of land could take full advantage of the crop with the result that these farmers got richer while the farmers with fewer than 40 acres ended up poorer. It was the success of this venture which in good part made India self-sufficient in food by the 1970s. There surely are many who would say this is a small price to pay for the benefits to the country which were acquired. But, of course, there would be others, notably some Punjabis, who would disagree.

Another case in point is that of the Mbeere people of Kenya whose land tenure system is currently being transformed from that of a commons to individual titles (Mwaniki 1982). The result of the process is that the Mbeere people for the most part are increasingly unable to keep cattle or grow crops efficiently since individualization of tenure has led to conditions requiring a re-

volution in agriculture whose cost is beyond them. They are selling off their small parcels and their livestock and many have thereby become impoverished. Apparently from the national point of view the process is seen as necessary to pay for modernizing agriculture on Mt. Kenya. But the affected Mbeere surely do not see it this way.

An irony of this insistence on equity is that developmentalists seem to have little sympathy for pastoral people, such as those in East Africa, whose livestock husbanding systems have led to egalitarian societies (Schneider 1979) in the past and who are being urged to switch from keeping livestock as repositories of value to raising them for beef. If this switch were successful these people would in all probability be impoverished since cattle raised for beef give poorer returns than cattle kept as repositories of value.

Tanzania has also mandated development with equity, a goal built into its constitution. Yet many believe now that Tanzania's notable failure to develop is caused by this mandate, the money made available for development having been used mainly to provide services to the people, such as health care and education while investment in profitable activities has been neglected. It is undoubtedly true that if Tanzania had taken the other course there would have been a polarization of society into rich and poor to a greater degree than exists today but the question still stands whether that was the wise course for the long run.

The next generalization is that people of the Third World do not necessarily need direction or even capital from donor nations. They have shown abundantly in the past that they will engage in profitable enterprises if opportunity avails and the incentives are right. Earlier I mentioned the cocoa industry in Ghana, which was created by the Akwapim themselves, as Polly Hill (1961) has so ably demonstrated. This industry was the mainstay of Ghana at independence although it has now fallen on hard times, at least in part because of government policies which worked against it. Similarly, the Chagga people on Mt. Kilimanjaro created their coffee industry which was the most profitable enterprise in Tanzania at the time of independence.

The Teso of eastern Uganda, according to Uchendu and Anthony (1975), were forcibly urged by the British colonial government to begin growing cotton at the beginning of the century, a plan which would have probably failed because of its competition with their finger millet and cattle enterprises, but succeeded splendidly only because the Teso discovered themselves that cot-

ton growing could be integrated with their indigenous production system to the profit of both. Preparing fields for cotton using oxen for plowing not only earned them money from the cotton crop but led, by use of the cotton fields for a second finger millet crop, to a great increase in the production of finger millet, which they were able to sell to their neighbors and to use to increase the output of finger millet beer, a product of which they are very fond. By resisting government attempts to further increase their cotton crops and fence their fields they were also able to maintain their large cattle herds. Of course, the government looks upon the outcome as only partially successful.

In the Zaire basin the evidence suggests that over the last one hundred years the people have of their own volition taken to cassava, a root crop imported from Brazil, and have replaced the former indigenous staple crops with this new crop. Maize, also imported from America, has replaced indigenous crops in many parts of Africa, such as Botswana, through the choice of the people over the last 200 years. Many other examples could be invoked to show that development when tied to the proper incentives is something Third World people everywhere, not just Africa, can accomplish for themselves if the incentives are right.

The next generalization, which overlaps some of the others, as they sometimes overlap each other, is that development programs occur within a national and even international political context and are affected by this. Put otherwise, local development programs can never be organized or judged without reference to outside political forces.

This is exemplified by the above-mentioned program now being carried out in the Mbeere area of Mt. Kenya to individualize land tenure. On the surface the program is simply an attempt to create more responsible farming by eliminating the "tragedy of the commons" (Hardin 1968). Taking its lead from the Swynnerton plan, developed in Kenya in the 1950s, this policy claimed that if rural people were given individual title to their land they would be more responsible for it than under the usual East African condition where land was held in common, whether for agricultural or pastoral purposes. The result of implementation of this program, according to Mwaniki (1982), is to create a condition in which traditional methods of agriculture and herding are impossible. The raising of cattle, the most profitable occupation, requires open land so that the herder can take his cattle where there has been rain, rainfall being erratic. Individualization of land tenure



led to closure of lands and cattle had to be sold off. Traditionally farmers minimized agricultural risk on the mountain by growing different crops in different ecological zones at different altitudes. Now they cannot move freely between these zones. People have begun to sell off their useless plots expecting to use the money to educate their children and so provide some hope for the future. And they had begun to migrate to the cities looking for opportunity. The level of tension and assault has also gone up.

Many would see the outcome of implementation of this policy as undesirable, especially since the methods of implementation, including land adjudication courts, function poorly. But the government seems to have no intention of stopping it. The reason must in part be simply because it serves the aims of the government to translate land into a commodity, to individualize tenure and so the Mbeere are being required to pay the price. Similar situations exist many places in Africa, as in the Cameroon where, as De Garine (1978) details, cotton growing is being pushed upon certain peoples in the north who are being impoverished by engaging in this activity. Cotton is necessary to the government of Cameroon to earn hard currency so these people are being required to pay the price for getting it.

The effects of aims of the government on local development programs are not always so draconic but it is well always to be aware that what is being proposed for local development never escapes entirely being affected by the aims of the nation or even international aims.

The next generalization is that development proposals commonly depend for their success on luck. Development plans have to have something to work with – good soil, dependable rainfall, mineral wealth, rivers, disease free conditions, and so forth. Put another way, there is no use putting capital into a situation in which possibilities for development are lacking. Tanzania was poor compared to much of the rest of Africa before it ever became Tanzania. Except for the success of coffee growing on Mt. Kilimanjaro by the Chagga Tanzania showed few successes. Since independence in 1961 a great deal of capital has been put into the country with little to show for it. Somalia is another case. Except for a small area in the south which is amenable to agricultural development, the country is too arid for much except raising camels. On the other hand, Zaire was blessed with valuable minerals and so has the potential for growth even though growth so far seems to have been mismanaged.

Next I make the generalization that development policy is often doctrinaire. After reviewing many development programs it is possible to believe that the development planner brings to his evaluation 9/10 ideology and 1/10 objective evaluation of the facts. Take the Mbeere case again. It seems quite possible to conclude that when Swynnerton arrived at his conclusion he (and others involved) was rationalizing it by deciding there was inevitably a tragedy of the commons while unconsciously believing that individual land tenure was a good thing simply because that is the way people in Europe and America hold land.

This point can be illustrated differently, and perhaps more tellingly, by reference to the "stimulant" industry. Africans are great producers of alcoholic beverages, which they make from a great variety of things, including grain, palm oil, and bananas. Since the development process consists in large part of the encouragement of production to fulfill consumer demand, thereby leading to the expansion of industry, which leads to more jobs, leading to rise in income, leading to further expansion of production – the familiar dynamic economic growth cycle – one wonders why beer production has not been given more attention. In Burkina Faso, Saul (1981) showed that the production and sale of beer made from red sorghum is an important source of income and engine of production, benefitting especially the women but also the government through the export (illegally) of red sorghum mash to Ivory Coast. Nevertheless, the government of Burkina Faso has not supported this industry, giving subsidies instead to the cotton industry, which earns less than the export of red sorghum mash.

One suspects that the failure to support the beer industry, and perhaps a kola nut industry, rests in part on moral grounds, the ideas that these are disreputable products. My point is not to question whether a government should take such a stand. It is merely to underscore the fact that development policy is constrained in many ways, one of which is the moral principles of the people in charge of development.

Having detailed these ten generalizations about development derived from my anthropological study of the phenomenon, I will conclude by asking to what extent it may be claimed that these generalizations grow purely from the anthropological experience. For example, the first of the generalizations, that Third World people are optimisers of utility, can be said to depend on the fact that I, as an anthropologist brought this idea from economics with

me into the field and was able therefore to apply it based on empirical evidence of maximizing behavior among the people I worked with. But some agricultural economists working in the Third World came to this conclusion by themselves.

I have found a partial answer to this question by comparing my results with those of Robert Bates, whose writings (e.g., Bates 1981) on development, especially African development, have recently been well regarded. Bates has a training in political science, economics and anthropology, but his primary orientation is to political science. Bates has offered the following generalizations about development.

The first is that individual rationality does not equal social rationality. Because the resources of a society are being "misused", as perceived by its leaders, this does not mean that the individuals who are "misusing" resources are irrational. To them, what they are doing (e.g., increasing the sizes of herds in pastoral societies when the land is already crowded) may seem quite rational.

The second of his generalizations is that a general rise in income does not equal an increase in individual welfare. A rise in income may represent a rise for a few and no rise, or even a decline, for others.

His third conclusion is that the values of a government do not necessarily equal the values of the people as a whole. What the people who control the government want does not necessarily coincide with what people outside the government want.

Finally, social equilibria are not necessarily equal to economic equilibria. In other words, while a market may conform to the economic conditions which define it as efficient this condition is not necessarily a good thing for society in general. African governments are not agencies for maximizing social welfare, even if they say they are, but political coalitions designed to obtain and hold power. In most cases this means interfering in efficient markets, as when they hold down agricultural prices in order to placate urban elites with cheap food because these elites are the main support for the government.

Bates views are clearly complementary to mine. Both of us accept the idea that rural people are decision-makers who seek to maximize utility, and both of us perceive utility as more than just the price of material goods exchange in the market. The good life includes power as well as material well-being. Both points of view also see development as occurring within a national system in-

volving the rural producers and urban elites and governments, whose actions affect each other. Bates is not concerned with the question of whether rural people would undertake development on their own or whether this is a good thing. He has nothing to say about the role of chance in development and he has no reason to take up the question of whether development policy is doctrinaire.

However, it seems to me that there are certain areas of Bates' thesis which could benefit from attention to some of the principles I elucidated. The most purely anthropological of them is the matter of the difference between culture change and economic development. It would stress that Africans would not necessarily be mollified if prices were allowed to be expressed purely through the forces of supply and demand. The Africans have to value the goods in question in the same way as the developmentalists. In the case of East African pastoralists, this is not the case, and therefore the well-known tendency for these pastoral people to be unresponsive to price changes for cattle seems due to the fact that they value them as repositories of value while the developers value them as beef.

Bates and I also seem to differ somewhat with respect to attitude toward national governments. There does seem to be a bias in his thinking against these governments, reflected in the idea that paying prices to rural producers which do not coincide with those which market forces would create is unfair. There is no reason to believe that rural producers, if they had the chance, would not act exactly as the government. A social system is a system of competition for power. If this is combined with the conclusion that inequality of benefits seems almost always to accompany development it may be concluded that "unfair" prices are probably an inevitable counterpart of the whole development process.

The reader will have to decide for himself whether the differences between Bates and myself are radical or merely a matter of emphasis. What they seem to resolve to, as so often when comparing anthropological modes of thoughts with those of other disciplines in the social sciences, is a greater tendency for anthropologists to be more relativistic in their thinking about social problems. While we are perceived, especially by developmentalists, as having a tendency to come down on the side of the "native", I believe that what characterizes us ultimately is our greater sensitivity to the relativity of values among human beings.

## Sommario

In questo saggio Schneider espone dettagliatamente alcune generalizzazioni da lui sviluppate nel corso di un interesse più che decennale ai problemi dello sviluppo. Il suo scopo è mostrare come il modo di considerare e di affrontare lo sviluppo differenzi l'antropologo dall'economista o dal teorico dello sviluppo, essendo diverso il tipo di esperienze e di "coinvolgimento" con le realtà e le situazioni su cui si vuole intervenire.

Fra le dieci generalizzazioni proposte dall'autore possiamo distinguere quelle che mirano ad evidenziare il "comportamento economico" delle popolazioni del Terzo Mondo nel loro sistema di vita tradizionale, e quelle che riguardano alcune caratteristiche dei piani di sviluppo finora adottati e le loro conseguenze sul sistema sociale e culturale delle popolazioni "beneficarie" degli interventi.

Dal primo gruppo emerge la considerazione che l'uomo del Terzo Mondo è al pari di noi *homo oeconomicus* e come tale dimostra capacità di *decision-maker*, cioè valuta varie e reali possibilità e sceglie quelle che gli permetteranno di migliorare i profitti.

L'applicabilità di concetti presi dall'economia neo-classica a realtà etnografiche è stata dimostrata proprio dall'evidenza empirica del comportamento razionale delle popolazioni su cui l'autore ha lavorato a lungo. L'esperienza antropologica ha inoltre contribuito a eliminare il pregiudizio che le popolazioni del Terzo Mondo siano orientate alla produzione unicamente per la sussistenza. Oggi è chiaro che questa gente non produce solo per il sostentamento, ma per ricavare un profitto. Un esempio a riguardo ci è offerto dai Turu del Tanganyika studiati da Schneider nel 1959-60. I Turu considerano il bestiame da loro allevato deposito di valore ed aspirano ad avere mandrie sempre più numerose per poter migliorare la loro posizione e aumentare il loro potere nella società. Per raggiungere un tale obiettivo prima regola da seguire è sposarsi. Alla moglie infatti compete la produzione di grano e più ne produce più aumenta la quantità da immagazzinare e conservare per i periodi di siccità. Un grosso surplus di grano permetterà di ottenere bestiame a basso prezzo. I più ricchi allevatori infatti, avendo investito poco nella produzione di grano in tempi normali, quando capitano anni di siccità sono costretti a vendere bestiame a prezzi ridotti per ottenere il grano necessario.

L'orientamento al profitto è quindi presente nelle attività di gestione e produzione delle genti del Terzo Mondo. Il suo ricono-

scimento, come aspetto importante del loro comportamento economico, comporta una necessaria revisione dei principali obiettivi dei progetti di sviluppo, fino ad oggi miranti soprattutto ad aumentare la produzione di cibo per migliorare l'alimentazione.

Altra generalizzazione, implicita in quanto detto sopra, è che questa gente è motivata ad ottenere potere. È errato quindi considerare queste società statiche ed il loro ordinamento del potere una rigida tradizione mantenuta dal sistema sociale.

Fra i Tiv della Nigeria nel 1920, come riporta la Mead (1955), gli uomini più giovani trovarono un immediato vantaggio dalla situazione creatasi dalla abolizione, da parte del governo coloniale britannico, del tipo tradizionale di matrimonio per scambio delle "sorelle" da cui dipendevano il potere e l'alta posizione degli uomini più vecchi. I giovani poterono procurarsi mogli attraverso i normali compensi (*bridewealth*), minacciando seriamente il potere degli anziani che avevano invece un controllo assoluto sugli scambi tradizionali.

Questo ed altri casi citati da Schneider mostrano che quando si presentano particolari situazioni alcune sezioni della popolazione cercano di sfruttarle a loro vantaggio per ottenere potere a scapito di altri, provocando modificazioni nel sistema sociale. La constatata frequenza del fenomeno nega inoltre la possibilità di reputarlo "eccezionale".

Altri preconcetti devono essere abbattuti, come quello di ritenere che la gente del Terzo Mondo necessariamente debba essere guidata o indirizzata nelle scelte di sviluppo. Questa gente ha invece dimostrato di essere capace di realizzare per proprio conto forme concrete ed utili di sviluppo. Ne sono un esempio l'industria del cacao creata in Ghana dagli Akwapim e quella del caffè ad opera dei Chagga in Tanzania che si rivelarono le iniziative più vantaggiose per i rispettivi paesi al tempo dell'indipendenza.

Un caso particolarmente interessante è quello dei Teso dell'Uganda che iniziarono a coltivare il cotone all'inizio del secolo su pressione del governo coloniale britannico. Sebbene il cotone fosse in competizione con il miglio, loro prodotto tradizionale, il piano non fallì. I Teso infatti seppero integrare la coltivazione del cotone con il loro sistema di produzione di miglio, arrivando ad ottenere un notevole profitto da entrambi. L'aumentata quantità di miglio prodotto permise loro sia di venderlo sia di usarlo per fare birra. Inoltre, resistendo ai tentativi del governo di aumentare la produzione del cotone, mantennero con profitto le loro mandrie e i loro tradizionali sistemi di gestione.

Dal secondo gruppo di generalizzazioni proposte da Schneider, emergono due considerazioni: la prima riguarda il carattere etnocentrico della maggior parte dei programmi di sviluppo, l'altra l'impossibilità di raggiungere uno sviluppo con "equità".

Sarà sufficiente riportare il caso dei Somali dell'Africa orientale per chiarire la sua prima valutazione. Questa gente è fra le popolazioni africane allevatrici di cammelli quella che ne possiede di più. Questo fatto ed un confronto con gli agricoltori, ritenuti meno ricchi, hanno creato nei Somali una sensazione di benessere economico ed una alta considerazione del loro bene primario, i cammelli. Lo sviluppo dal loro punto di vista consisterebbe solo in un aumento del numero dei capi per persona. I teorici dello sviluppo invece, attribuendo un valore economico molto basso ai cammelli per i quali non esiste un mercato mondiale, considerano i Somali uno dei popoli più poveri della terra. Le loro proposte di sviluppo quindi consistono nel sostituire l'allevamento dei cammelli con l'agricoltura e la pesca, i cui prodotti hanno un mercato mondiale. Ma nessun Somalo vede in questa sostituzione una soluzione "razionale" per il proprio sviluppo.

I piani di sviluppo hanno per Schneider anche un carattere dottrinario poiché, basandosi in minima parte su una valutazione obiettiva dei fatti, sono dettati soprattutto dall'ideologia di chi è addetto alla loro programmazione. Per esempio il piano proposto per l'area Mbeere in Kenya che mira a individualizzare il possesso della terra, è solo in apparenza un tentativo di scongiurare il degrado dell'ambiente attraverso la creazione di una più responsabile agricoltura. In realtà è l'espressione dell'idea inconscia che la privatizzazione e lottizzazione della terra costituiscano un buon sistema poiché è il sistema usato in Europa ed in America. Altro esempio è la sostituzione in Burkina Faso della produzione della birra che costituiva una importante fonte di reddito, con l'industria del cotone che rende meno ma che ha una migliore reputazione.

La seconda considerazione riguarda l'impossibilità di raggiungere uno sviluppo equo. Ad essa Schneider arriva partendo dal presupposto che lo sviluppo è un processo politico o sociale. Ciò significa che quando per intervento del governo o delle nazioni interessate allo sviluppo del Terzo Mondo, vengono introdotte nuove o più avanzate tecnologie, oppure nuove forme di produzione, o innovazioni nella gestione ed uso delle risorse, si verificano fenomeni di polarizzazione sociale. Un esempio: in Kenya per disposizioni governative i Tugen, agricoltori, hanno interrotto il

loro legame commerciale con gli Il Chamus, popolazione prevalentemente pastorale. Questi ultimi allora hanno cercato di incrementare la loro produzione agricola intensificando l'irrigazione. Ma solo i più ricchi hanno potuto accaparrarsi le poche aree irrigabili. Ora questi hanno il controllo sulle provviste di grano e possono aumentare ancora le loro mandrie vendendo grano ai più poveri della loro gente.

Quindi poiché lo sviluppo è spesso accompagnato da polarizzazione sociale non si potrà raggiungere uno sviluppo equo. È meglio allora puntare all'equità o allo sviluppo?

Nel Punjab in India l'introduzione di una nuova specie di grano a più alto rendimento contribuì a risolvere in parte i problemi alimentari del paese nel 1970, ma contribuì anche ad aumentare la ricchezza di chi, già più ricco di altri, possedeva un numero di acri tale da permettergli di sostenere le spese che il nuovo prodotto comportava. Una situazione opposta si è verificata in Tanzania che ha seguito la via dell'equità. Il denaro destinato allo sviluppo del paese è stato infatti usato soprattutto per migliorare i servizi legati alla salute e all'educazione, mentre sono stati trascurati investimenti per attività produttive. Ciò ha impedito una polarizzazione sociale ma anche un vero sviluppo del paese.

Per Schneider, una risposta a quale delle due vie sia più saggio seguire è suggerita dalla previsione degli effetti dell'una e dell'altra a lungo termine.