CHAPTER III

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT:
EMERGING CONCERNS OF SOCIAL THEORY
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The shift in the paradigm of participatory development against the backdrop of the neoliberal political economy has been quite perceptible in recent years as illustrated in the previous chapter. The transition from the Keynesian welfare mode to the neoliberal participatory agenda could be conceptualised in terms of a rupture in political economy as between industrial and post-industrial or between Fordist and post-Fordist. This transition to neoliberalism has been a very complex social process. According to Hall,

(this has been) related to the recomposition and fragmentation of the historic relations of representation between classes and parties; the shifting boundaries between state and civil society, public and private, the emergence of new arenas of contestation, new sites of social antagonism, new social movements, and new social subjects and political identities in contemporary society.¹

Obviously, the most crucial aspect of this social restructuring

process has been a new conceptualisation of the discourse on culture, which assumes a centrality and significance never previously attained. Characterising that 'culture' itself has been transformed into 'postculture' or 'postmodern culture,' social theorists Crook et al. observe that "'culture' has so pervaded 'society' that the distinction between the two is becoming obsolete." Affirming the dilution or even the negation of the primacy of the 'political' in the social realm, they argue that "postmodernisation erodes the boundaries of a specifically socio-structural domain and promotes the effectivity of cultural processes."

However, this perception on culture is not wholly new. It even predates the political economy trends in the 1970s. The idea that cultural production and consumption are absorbed into the system of capitalist production so that culture itself becomes commodified can be located in the conceptualisation of 'culture industry' by the Critical Theorists of the Frankfurt School in the 1950s. Following

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2 Stephen Crook, et al., *Postmodernization: Change in Advanced Society* (London, 1994), p.75; and for details, see the chapter on 'Post culture,' pp. 47-78.

3 Ibid., p.220.

this critical tradition, Jameson, while maintaining a Marxist position on the crucial significance of political economy, calls postmodernism "the cultural logic of late capitalism" whereby production of culture has become fully integrated into the capitalist commodity production. According to him, there is a "prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life from economic value to state power and practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself can be said to have become 'cultural'...." As a result of the process of commodification of culture, which has become hegemonic since the early 1970s, Jameson argues, political struggle becomes increasingly expressed in the arena of cultural production – in literature, film, art, theatre, music, and in the work of cultural critics. These new locations of struggle have largely replaced the traditional areas of commodity production where previously labour and capital waged high-profile battles. Though critical of much of the postmodern writings, Jameson too is apparently holding the view that active political struggle becomes virtually impossible in the face of hegemonic cultural discourse of global capitalism. This,

5 Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," New Left Review, No. 146, 1984, pp. 53-92; also see Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism (London, 1991).

6 Jameson (1984), n.5. p.87.
he argues, is because the global system of "late capitalism" is so large and complex that we are forced to think in fragments rather than in social totalities. According to Jameson, extreme cultural fragmentation under postmodernism disorients people and prevents them from locating themselves in history and altering its directions.\(^7\) This affinity towards fragmentation and localism and distrust of 'metanarratives' are of particular relevance in the neoliberal conceptualisation of participatory development. For, as Carter says, efforts are under way to use postmodernism and its associated concepts as the 'midwife'\(^8\) of an alternative paradigm to the now-defunct welfare state. Thus, the theoretical underpinnings of the link between participatory development and postmodernism, and the relevant tendencies and features encompassing the latter are of particular relevance here.

**Post-Marxism and Postmodernism**

Both post-Marxism and postmodernism, which often speak in the same language and mean the same thing, seem to have emerged

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from the structuralist and poststructuralist traditions\(^9\) in social theory. Their roots can be traced to the rejection of the fundamental Marxist notion of the working class as the revolutionary force in capitalist countries and in the Third World by the Critical Theorists of the Frankfurt School.\(^10\) This 'rejection' as Bottomore puts it, was made "without any investigation of the actual historical development of working class and working class movements and parties"\(^11\) both in advanced and Third World countries. Instead, the Frankfurt School theorists proposed that diverse social movements among students, ethnic minorities and movements in the Third World constituted "the elements of a new revolutionary subject of history."\(^12\) This has eventually encouraged the emergence of a whole set of post-Marxist thinking in social theory. Findlay says:

> The great bipolar struggle between capital and wage labour and between their social representatives, bourgeoisie and proletariat, is no longer seen to capture


\(^11\) Ibid.

\(^12\) Ibid.
the complex nature of contemporary industrial societies.... These new circumstances and the subjective responses to them on the part of many people are seen to have fundamentally altered political action and to require new theoretical explication. A 'post-Marxist' paradigm is seen to be needed to situate and comprehend the new social movements.13

According to him, the changing material conditions of post-industrial societies call for new forms of political action with a cultural orientation. For the post-Marxist theorists like Laclau and Mouffe,14 society is at the end of emancipation. The post-Marxism of Laclau and Mouffe is a methodological individualist conception, which states that interactions between individual sub-systems can be seen as possible without a totality that joins those sub-systems.15 In other words, the focus of attention shifts from the


15 For a lucid exposition of this aspect, see Milton Fisk, “Post-Marxism: Laclau and Mouffe on Essentialism,” in Roger S. Gottlieb (ed.), Radical Philosophy: Tradition, Counter Tradition, Politics (Philadelphia, 1993). Methodological individualism not only excludes the encompassing system but also attempts to understand interactions without it. Within a methodological holist conception, interactions are never possible except within the horizon of an encompassing system. The methodological holist treats the encompassing system not as the mere aggregate of the actual interactions of its elements, but as the basis for their interactions. See pp.150-52.
class-based statist politics and action to the multitude of locally based and culturally constructed identities that cannot be represented by 'old' class movements such as trade unions. By presenting a notion of "pluralist democracy" which emphasises the plurality of social movements and struggles, Laclau and Mouffe argue that the field of social conflict is extended rather than being concentrated in a "privileged agent of social change." The thesis of 'non-reductionism,' which articulates the autonomy of the state in relation to the economy, is also a significant aspect of Laclau and Mouffe's theory. Implicit in this is the assumption regarding the irreducibility of the so-called new movements to the class movement. Apparently, Mouffe goes further towards radical notions of pluralist democracy where widespread people's participation in decision-making over a wide range of issues takes place outside the formal world of electoral politics. Characterising the whole epistemological foundations of 'Enlightenment' and 'Modernity' as obstacles in the path of pursuing new forms of

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16 Laclau and Mouffe, "Post-Marxism without Apologies," *New Left Review,* No. 166, 1987, p. 106. Here Laclau and Mouffe seem to be reshaping the Gramscian concept of hegemony which describes the political process of acquiring political rule through interplay of coercion and consent into a post-industrial formulation. See pp. 79-106.

participatory politics, she welcomes the advent of postmodern philosophy as an indispensable instrument in the accomplishment of democratic goals.\textsuperscript{18} This theme of the decline or disappearance of the working class as a revolutionary force and the ascendancy of the new politics led by new social movements and NGOs has persisted in 'neo-critical theory' too.\textsuperscript{19} Habermas,\textsuperscript{20} for instance, notes that alongside or in place of class conflicts, which he calls "institutionalised conflicts over material interests," other conflicts animated by new social movements that centre upon the quality of life, human rights, ecological issues, gender equality and for participation in social decision making, have appeared. These new social formations and cultural actors, which transcend class boundaries, are located within the civil society against the encroachment or "inner colonisation" by the society's technocratic sub structure represented by the state and bureaucracy.\textsuperscript{21} Critical Theory, says Habermas, supports the normative commitment to modes of cosmopolitan democracy, which seeks to extend the


\textsuperscript{19} For details see Bottomore, n.10, pp. 75-80.


boundaries of political community by institutionalising universal moral principles, which embody respect for cultural differences. The "thesis of disorganization" put forward by Offe, another neo-critical theorist, in the context of capitalist crises, explains the contradictions in state management systems. In this line of thinking, welfare provision by the state under capitalism would indirectly persuade workers to withdraw from offering their labour power leading to what is called, "labour market contradiction." The other is "administrative contradiction" arising from bureaucratic inefficiency and waste associated with the delivery of social services. Offe argues that these two contradictions can be overcome by a new politics whose social base is the new middle class in coalition with economically marginalised categories such as welfare recipients and students.

At the conceptual level, the neo-critical theorists and the postmodern social theorists apparently share more or less identical views, especially in their denial of the primacy of political economy, since both "do not attempt either a theoretical analysis of the capitalist mode of production in its latest phase, or a historical

depiction of its development." It is the issue of culture that Touraine has brought to the forefront in his theory of social movements, as "in post-industrial society, social movements form around what is called consumption in the name of personal or collective identity" and "not in relation to the system of ownership." He held the view that the new social movements "no longer carried only in the economic order but almost always in the domains of culture."

In fact, the philosophical stream that holds the biggest appeal for fragmented, decentralised and flexible ideology at present is postmodernism which exists as a disciplinary archipelago consisting of poststructuralism, deconstruction, and critical hermeneutics scattered throughout the social theory. It not only denies the primacy of 'political' but even threatens to cripple the very concept of the 'political' in the human and social sciences. Postmodernism which has made considerable inroads into the

23 Bottomore, n.10, p.74.
literature of social science has its origins in several traditions – linguistics, literary criticism, a particular analysis of modern society, a rejection of Marxism, a debunking of modernism's epistemic foundations or metanarratives and an analysis of the nature of power.27

Lyotard, who introduced postmodernism into the current discourse of philosophy, politics, society and social theory, considers that social identities are complex and heterogeneous. Since social identities cannot be mapped into a social totality, there is little possibility of a totalising social theory or totalising metanarrative. As the field of the 'social' is heterogeneous and non-totalisable, criticism and struggle need to be local, ad hoc and untheoretical. Displaying a total lack of faith in the "great legitimising narratives of emancipation and enlightenment," Lyotard states that "our age is postmodernist, concerned only with local issues, not with the

27 Webb, n.9, pp.171-72. In Webb's view, postmodernism is a "term that may be applied to anything that the user of the term happens to like." Ibid., p.172. According to Bertens, postmodernism is posed against the universalism, homogeneity, rationalism and centralisation tendencies of modernism including Marxism. Postmodernist features of diversity, relativity, pluralism, decentralism, skepticism, anti-rationalism and anti-representationalism are set against the metanarrativness of Marxism and modernism. See Hans Bertens, The Idea of Postmodernism: A History (London, 1995), pp. 3-19.
history but with problems to be solved, not with a grand reality but with games.”

Foucault and Derrida carried the postmodern ideas to the level of a deconstruction of the state. In the Foucaultian conceptualisation of micro-politics, societies have no unitary locus of sovereignty, but a ubiquitous network of power, exercised from multiple points. Foucault argues that this power, which is everywhere, takes a capillary form of existence that reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies, and inserts itself into their action and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives. Deconstructing the state from a micro-perspective and conceptualising power as a discursive strategy, Foucault insists on the complexity of social reality as well as on the plural,

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28 Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Minneapolis, 1984), p.3. In Lyotard’s view, the transition to post-industrial society and postmodern culture has been under way since at least the 1950s.

29 Deconstruction is a particular type of analysis which seeks to reveal the contradictions and speculative characteristics inherent in the issue under consideration. Deconstruction also challenges the “taken-for-granted” rhetoric of Marxist theory. See J. Derrida, *Positions* (Chicago, 1981); J. Derrida, “Deconstruction and Actuality,” in Simon Malpas(ed.), *Postmodern Debates* (New York, 2001); also see C. Norris, *Deconstruction: Theory and Practice* (London, 1982).

fragmentary, dispersed and localised nature of power. In fact, he even went to the extent of saying that state power has ultimately been replaced by biopower and disciplinary power. Thus, "Foucault", as Said puts it, "turned his attention away from the oppositional forces in modern society and decided that since power was everywhere, it was probably better to concentrate on the local micro-physics of power that surround the individual."

Commentators from various persuasions have contributed in enriching the discourse on postmodernism and post-Marxism. Some of them seem to be relevant in providing valuable insights for the study of participatory development too. Giri, for instance, directly links the creativity of the 'particular' and the 'local' in postmodernism with "the collapse of socialism and the disillusionment with statism." He says:


32 See Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (Harmondsworth, 1977).

33 Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism (London, 1994), p.29. Foucaultian analysis of power as "not hierarchical, flowing from the top down, but everywhere local," it has been argued, "is simply a dead end that disallows any possibility of political action." See Lydia Alix Fillingham, Foucault for Beginners (Hyderabad, 2000), pp.143-151.

34 Comments on postmodernism like "it is not altogether clear what the devil it is..." are also common. See Webb, n.9, p.172.

Postmodernism as an all encompassing cultural movement arising out of the structural context of the postindustrial societies celebrates the coming of the local as a significant category and field of thought and action in contemporary theory and praxis. Postmodernism is characterised by the collapse of the great ‘summarising discourse’ and rise of local narratives. The rhetoric of the grassroots occupies a central place in the postmodern discourse of social transformation.\textsuperscript{36}

Postmodernism and the concepts like post-Fordism and post-Marxism, says Carter,\textsuperscript{37} have transformed the very content of politics and social policy. He says:

\begin{quote}
Already disoriented by globalisation, new technologies and the years of new right ascendancy, welfare faces a significant challenge in the postmodern. It suggests that rather than universality of state provision, the new social policy will be consumerised and fragmented - a welfare state of ambivalence.\textsuperscript{38}
\end{quote}

Crook et al., on the other hand, have identified ‘postmodernisation’ as ‘depoliticising’ several erstwhile welfare rights into ‘human

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p.392.
\textsuperscript{37} Carter,n.8, pp. 1-12.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p.1.
rights' and 'individual freedoms' and locating them above and beyond the reach of state control and guardianship. As an outcome of the confluence of neoliberalism and postmodernism, they have identified four elements:

A horizontal redistribution of power and responsibility to autonomous corporate bodies; a vertical redistribution of power and responsibility to local councils, civic initiatives, and extra-state self-governing bodies; the marketisation and privatisation of previously state-run enterprises; and an externalisation of responsibility by shifting it to supra-state bodies.

Thus, new social theorists seek to negate the crucial role of the state in the economy as well as in identity and national collectivity formation. Often this is manifested in the negation of the assumption of a "government perspective" implicit in which is a hierarchical socio-political structure capable of panoptically overviewing society and the acceptance of a "governance perspective" indicating the emergence of a more plural political

39 Crook et al., n.2, p.38. At present, this trend is reflected in the Third World development programmes devised by international institutions such as UNDP.

40 Ibid., p.38.

41 See, for instance, Daniele Archibugi et al. (eds.), Re-imagining Political Community (Cambridge, 1998).
world, a declining role of the nation-state and a complex view of societal problems. From a Foucaultian perspective, as Rosenau suggests, the aim is “fostering control mechanisms that sustain governance without government.”

This need not necessarily mean that postmodernism has become an indispensable tool to comprehend the neoliberal social reality in the West. Scholars who are even adherents of postmodernism in varying degrees have argued that existing tools and techniques in social sciences are capable of explaining and interpreting the recent trends in society. David Harvey, though accepts a version of the modernity-postmodernity distinction, is of the view that recent transformations are certainly within the grasp of historical materialist inquiry, even capable of theorisation by way of the metanarrative of capitalist development that Marxism proposed.

Krishnan Kumar also holds a similar perspective, though he uses the term ‘hyper-industrialism’ to explain current realities. His critique of theories of post-industrialism and postmodernism is

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42 James N. Rosenau, "Governance and Democracy in a Globalising World," in ibid., p.30; also see Salskov-Iversen, et al., n.30.


44 Ibid., p.328.
that the phenomenon that Bell, Touraine and others identified can be understood as the outcome of established processes in industrial societies.\textsuperscript{45} Even scholars who vehemently oppose postmodernism seem to share such views. For example, Adamson sees postmodernism as nothing but an "establishmentarian politics" which is made out to appear radical through the "willful inaccessibility of language."\textsuperscript{46} Eagleton also finds little scope of empowerment for the dis-empowered within the confines of a poststructuralist or postmodern discourse. According to him, it is marked by "a hedonist withdrawal from history, a cult of ambiguity or irresponsible anarchism." Eagleton says: "Since it commits you to affirming nothing, it is as injurious as blank ammunition."\textsuperscript{47} Some scholars have gone to the extent of characterising postmodernism as a "theoretical and political position marked by pessimism" arguing that "postmodern social theorists suffer from a theoretical myopia."\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{46} W. Adamson, \textit{Marx and the Disillusionment of Marxism} (Berkeley, 1985), p.165.
\textsuperscript{47} Eagleton, n.7, pp 124-125.For details, see the chapter on 'Poststructuralism', pp 110-130.
\textsuperscript{48} Edgar Gonzalez Gudiano and Alicia de Alba, "Freire-present and future possibilities" in McLaren et al. (eds.), n.13, p. 134-135. Here the authors are making a strong critique of The appropriation of Freire by postmodernists. See pp. 123-135.
Implications for the Third World

Since "the tendencies toward disaggregation and localisation" arising out of postmodernism and globalisation are "world wide,"49 countries in the Third World inevitably lie exposed to them. The ascendancy of neoliberalism and the consequent withdrawal of the state from social sectors, leading to the ever-intensifying socio-economic crises in the Third World countries since the beginning of the 1980s, have also extended the cultural sites for a replication of the new politics of governance, participation and civil society advanced by post-Marxist and postmodern theorists.50 In a recent article, Seethi has made a critical analysis of this "articulation of correspondence" between postmodernism and neoliberalism.51

Ania Loomba approaches postmodernism as "a specifically Western malaise which breeds angst and despair instead of aiding political action and resistance."52 In her perception, postmodernist insistence on fragmentation, culturally constructed identities and

49 Rosenau, n. 42, p. 51.

50 For a detailed account of this, see J. Haynes, Democracy and Civil Society in the Third World: Politics and New Political Movements (Cambridge, 1997).


multiple histories within the Third World has been detrimental to thinking about the global operations of capitalism today. Making a frontal attack on the "celebration of fragmentation as our new reality," she observes: "Postmodernism carries the ideas of multiplicity and fragmentation to the extreme so that we cannot understand historical dynamics at all."\textsuperscript{53} Postmodern attempts at privileging cultural analysis at the expense of political economy serve to obfuscate the ways in which local narratives are shaped by the international workings of multinational capital. Laying bare the link between cultural postmodernisation and neoliberal globalisation, Loomba concludes: "And often globalisation is celebrated as the producer of a new and liberating hybridity or multiculturalism, terms that now circulate to ratify the mishmash of cultures generated by the near unipolar domination of the Western, particularly United States, media machine."\textsuperscript{54} Similarly, Samir Amin being concerned with Third World emancipation is also very critical of the postmodern obsession with culture: "Emphasis on cultural diversity relegates the major differences of position in the economic hierarchy of world capitalism to secondary importance. But it is at the level of the latter that we must begin

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 240.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 257.
the attack on the problem." Postmodern cultural politics, according to Antonio, is the outcome of an alleged deconstruction of the left-right polarity in society. This has led to a neutralisation of the political spectrum and opened the way for the rhetoric of participation devoid of any meaningful political content. Thus, a wide array of writers hold that postmodernism is meaningless in relation to the creation of an emancipatory praxis or a struggle for democracy in the Third World. The implication of such positions is that postmodern formulation would undermine and distort the Third World realities. As Mohan and Stokke put it: "To characterise Third World as post-industrial and postmodern is to wholly misinterpret their histories of imperialism and underdevelopment."

Notwithstanding such positions, many Third World scholars seem to be engaged in invoking the perspectives/framework of postmodernism to conceptualise what they call the emerging "non-


party political processes” and “participatory grassroots initiatives.” Kothari, in particular, basing himself on India’s multiple traditions and cultural factors, identifies “local solutions” as the very condition of human survival. He calls for a “recapturing of class analysis in a new and different perspective” and a “different (categorisation) and conceptualisation ‘based on’ indigenous societies and cultures.” But Sharma is more explicit in this regard. He says: “India at the dawn of the twenty-first century not only has the (postmodern) cultural and political conditions but also makes any sociology other than (postmodern) a liability.” He pleads for a coordinated work with micro-communities on the part of post-Marxists, postmodernists and post-development theorists of various persuasions. Many Indian


60 Rajni Kothari, *Rethinking Development: In Search of Humane Alternatives* (Delhi, 1998), pp. 70-75.


62 Ibid., pp.60-61. Sharma is also making a postmodernist or post-sociological interpretation of Gandhi in order to conceptualise a postmodern alternative in India. For details, see Ibid., p.59. In a similar vein, Parekh also adds a postmodern and poststructuralist flavour to Gandhian philosophy, in his use of Western tools and concepts to rediscover Gandhi as a ‘radical traditional’ and a ‘cultural revolutionary’. See Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi's Political Philosophy: A Critical Examination* (London, 1989), p.231.
scholars seem to adopt a postmodern posture towards India's social problems. A notable trend in this stream is the alternative mode of thematisation (known as subaltern studies or postcolonial studies) which develops a discourse based on structurally split polity, culturally diversified society and multiple histories as opposed to the 'monistic' and 'unitary' character of society, polity, history and culture developed by the "elite discourse." Obviously, the orientation towards the "other domain," "the particular," "the local" and the "civil society" is the hallmark of subaltern studies. As if to substantiate Loomba's comment, "often histories from below are usually written from above," the 'subalternists', in spite of their stubborn opposition to Marxism and all modernist traditions, rely on the tools and ideas developed in Western historical and cultural context. This catachresis or eclecticism of subaltern writers may be seen in their use of Gramsci in spite of the latter's

63 See, for instance, ibid.; also see Bhikhu Parekh, Colonialism, Tradition and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse (New Delhi, 1989).


65 Loomba, n.52, p.257.

66 See Mridula Mukherjee, "Peasant Resistance and Peasant Consciousness in Colonial India: Subalterns and Beyond," Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.XXIII, No.41, October 8, 1988, p.2109. Mukherjee shows how the term 'subaltern' is derived from the works of Gramsci who is a favourite theme among postmodern cultural theorists. Criticising them, Antonio writes: "Reshaping radical conservatism for postmodern times, they employ cultural studies favourite forerunner theorist, Antonio Gramsci, an icon of their fusion of left and right and use his ideas of cultural hegemony against the liberal left." See Antonio, n.56, p.57.
acclaimed stature as a Marxist. This is also a general trend among those who profess to reject the Marxist conception of class and parties and use non-Marxist concepts of exploitation and oppression in their analysis of "new processes of contemporary capitalism but left unconceptualised by a pre-occupation with private property and wage labour."  

**Participatory Development as Post-development**

A significant aspect of the postmodern discourse concerning the Third World in recent years has been the emergence of a new critique on development called post-development or the post-structuralist critique of development. As exemplified in its antistatism, aversion to political economy and interest in culture, Pieterse observes: "Post development belongs to the era of the 'post' – post-structuralism, post-modernism, post-colonialism, post-Marxism." Portraying development as Western, posing a critique of modernism and science and problematising poverty in a

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69 Ibid., p.187.
particular cultural and non-material way, post-development rejects development altogether and offers no future nor any alternatives. Pursuing a 'discourse analysis' of development based on Foucaultian methodology, it expresses itself in nexus with localised, pluralistic and community controlled grassroots movements. Pieterse also speaks of "an elective affinity between neoliberalism and the development agnosticism of post-development." Tendencies of post-development thinking could be seen in the writings of Sachs, Korten, Wignaraja et al. albeit with variations since different adherents of post-development advocate different perspectives. A critical study by Nustad of the various post-development writings also comes to the conclusion that these works, inspired by Foucault, view development as a

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70 See the ensuing discussion on Amartya Sen.

71 It was Rorty, a postmodernist, who spoke about the transformation of political economy into a "discourse analysis." In the place of social analysis, Rorty brought 'description' to the heart of social science. See Richard Rorty, "Method, Social Sciences and Social Hope" in Michael T. Gibbons (ed.), *Interpreting Politics* (Oxford, 1987), p.245.

72 Pieterse, n.68, p.184.


75 Ponna Wignaraja et al., *Participatory Development: Learning from South Asia* (Karachi, 1991).

'discourse.' Consequent on a loss of faith in "the central paradigms in development thinking," post-developmentalists are apparently moving towards "globalisation-inspired notions and insights" such as participatory development with its attendant tools and concepts. But this move of the post-developmentalists away from development, which according to them is a discourse of power over the Third World, to the resort of participatory development and civil society appears to be quite meaningless "since the appropriation of a participatory vocabulary would not in itself constitute a transferral of power." In fact, Nustad, quoting various sources, is specific in explaining how in the name of post-development "local elite uses the language of 'sustainable' and 'participatory' development to secure their interests" and that "post-structuralist critics of development have largely failed to reveal the agents of this repressive system."

However, the postmodern and neoliberal perspectives of political economy and their linkage with the conceptualisation of

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78 Nustad, n.76, p.483.

79 Ibid., p.485.
participatory development and welfare are, probably, more manifest in the works of Amartya Sen, especially in relation to the methodological approach to political economy advanced by him. As with the other postmodernists,80 one can see in Sen also a move away from theory to description and narration. He observes: "Philosophical discussions in the social sciences have tended to concentrate on prescriptive and predictive exercises and, as a consequence, the methodological issues involved in description have remained largely unexplored."81

The espousal of description relative to the analytical method is essentially rooted in Sen's postmodern view of social reality as fragmented or disaggregated. This approach may be seen in Sen's studies on poverty, famine and hunger,82 where he calls for a description of human condition and necessities and is critical of the construction of aggregative statistical profiles or totalising...

80 Referring to Foucault and Derrida, Schuurman notes: "The ultimate consequence of their exercise, which they labeled 'deconstruction,' was that social research is no longer possible." See Schuurman, n.77, p.9.

81 Amartya Sen, *Choice, Welfare and Measurement* (Oxford, 1982), p.432. It is interesting to note that from a methodological perspective, Giri places Sen, Foucault and Rorty in the same category. In his view, "what we are witnessing in the work of Richard Rorty, Amartya Sen and Michael Foucault is a generalised turn away from systems and theories and a movement towards description." Giri, n.35. p.265. For an elaboration, see pp.258-265. A similar methodological approach is visible in Sharma too: "The analytical approach would not do justice to social reality and would be an outdated modernist explanation of change." Sharma, n.61. p.48.

picture by economists or a study of inequality. For example, one may see the distinction that he makes between the "food availability" or "commodity" approach and the "entitlement approach." While the former deals with the total food stock available to the economy, the latter, which is detotalising in nature, applies to particular individuals and families. Identifying the traditional approach to poverty and hunger, which is the food availability approach with "standard class analysis," Sen proposes his entitlement approach as a broader and superior method for understanding the predicament of poverty.

This entitlement approach may be read along with the "functioning and capability" paradigm of social development - also associated with the name of Sen. The capability paradigm questions the way in which the ends of development have so far been conceptualised or the social goals pursued, for instance, as the provision of a quantum of material goods and services. Its most distinctive feature is that it visualises development as a process of enabling people to have a wider choice. Here, Sen seems to be developing a

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83 Dreze and Sen, n.82, pp.30-32.
84 Ibid., p.31.
86 Ibid., p.144.
policy rationale, which accommodates the idea of a participatory
welfare provision with neoliberal economic thinking. Replacing the
concept of "basic needs" or "the commodity approach" of the
welfare era with his own concept of "basic capabilities", and linking
it with market expansion and growth of civil society in tune with
the neoliberal requirements, Sen notes: "Development requires the
removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny,
poor economic opportunities as well as intolerance of overactivity of
repressive states." Ostensibly, this reinforces the neoliberal,
postmodern argument that the scaled down social state would
reduce repression and empower communities. In his studies, Sen
pleads for an extension of certain 'capabilities' to the poor for whom
poverty is an attribute and thereby ignoring the important
fundamentals of poverty including the relationships between the
poor and non-poor in the emergence of poverty. Thus, a move
away from the redistributional politics and collective action of the
welfare state to a cultural politics inspired by individual freedom
and capabilities is perceptible in Sen. Here, poverty and related
issues are understood in terms of the personal failures of
individuals and not in terms of the structural contradictions

87 Ibid., p.3.
88 Sen, n.82.
inherent in the system. A reading of Sen may help one to agree with Lloyd: "The issues of poverty are directed more towards consumption criteria than to relationships of production."89 Diwan's comparative study of the conceptualisations made by Gandhi and Sen, found in Sen's work "the effect of misdirecting analysis of poverty and the relevant policies thereof."90 Thus, it may be seen that Sen has avoided the major determining political and structural relations of our time in his analysis.

Sen's theorisation that "economic growth cannot sensibly be treated as an end in itself"91 whose most distinctive feature is the separation of the logic and rationale of the economic domain from that of the socio-political sphere also reflects the position of Mahbub ul-Haq for whom "an excessive obsession with creating material wealth can obscure the goal of enriching human life."92 In


91 Sen, n.85.

92 Mahbub ul-Haq, Reflections on Human Development [New Delhi, 1996], p.15. As the architect of the 1994 Human Development Report of the UNDP, the late Haq had been instrumental in the conceptualisation of 'human security' and 'participatory development' in accordance with the neoliberal trends in the 1990s. See UNDP, Human Development Report 1994 (New York, 1994), p.23. It may be an irony of history that it was the same Haq who had been the intellectual leader in devising World Bank's 'Basic Needs Strategy' under McNamara during the Keynesian era, which is now disgusted as the 'commodity approach.' See George Rosen, Western Economists and Eastern Societies: Agents of Change in South Asia 1950-70 (Delhi, 1985), p.197.
contradistinction with the unified approach to development advanced by the UN through its Development Decades, one can also see in Haq, as in Sen, a compartmentalisation between “economic growth and the human development schools” - implicit in which is a kind of post-development thinking “that valuable social cultural traditions can be maintained at all levels of income.”93 In line with the idea of good governance and participatory development of the World Bank, Haq also envisaged a similar version of participation and empowerment suited to neoliberal conditions. He says:

Empowerment requires economic liberalism so that people are free from excessive economic controls and regulations. It means decentralisation of power so that real governance is brought to the doorstep of every person. It means that all members of civil society, particularly non-governmental organisations, participate fully in making and implementing decisions.94

This is also the underlying theme behind the concept of “human security” which “stresses that people should be able to take care of

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94 Ibid., p.20.
themselves." Defined as "a critical ingredient of participatory
development," it envisions a condition where "people can exercise"
their "choice safely and freely." Thus, the conceptualisations of
welfare and empowerment by both Haq and Sen have been
instrumental in the formulation of the strategy of good governance
and participatory development by both the UNDP and the World
Bank. This also resulted in coordinated efforts on the part of both
the World Bank and the UNDP in furthering the agenda of
participatory development at the global level.

Civil Society and Social Capital

The current trend towards global valorisation of civil society and
social capital, as associated concepts of participatory development,
may also be placed in the paradigmatic shift from Keynesian
welfare state to neoliberalism. The World Bank Discussion Papers

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95 UNDP, n.92, p.23. The concept was developed as a background to World Social Summit
held in 1995.

96 Ibid.

97 Together with Alain Touraine, Edward Said and Robert Putnam, Amartya Sen is also a
member of the Advisory Council to the Vice Presidency for Sustainable Development at the
World Bank. See Partha Dasgupta and Ismail Serageldin, "Preface," in Partha Dasgupta
and Ismail Serageldin (eds.), Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective (Washington D.C.,
1999), pp.ix-xii. Sen's association with UNDP is also obvious. His theoretical works
formed the basis for devising the Human Development Index (HDI), one of UNDP's
"flagship measures." See Diwan, n.90, p.437.

98 For details, see World Bank, Advancing Social Development: A World Bank Contribution to
the Social Summit (New York, 1995), p.53; also see www.world bank.org for details of
cooperation between the World Bank and UN agencies.
on Participatory Development explicitly state this: "as the role of the state is being redefined and rolled back in many countries, it has become more important ... for civil society (including private sector, NGOs and local government) to assume certain functions for which state was previously responsible." Obviously, the neoliberal link with 'civil society' has been a well documented one in the discourse pertaining to this subject. Characterising civil society as "an ally of the market," where "there exists rule of law so that people can exercise their freedom of choice," Giri makes this trend profoundly clear:

Thus propagation of civil society through the package of market gains currency in popular consciousness when the agents of market capitalism such as the World Bank today are also the votaries of civil society. They are vocal in their disenchantment with state and turn to the NGOs and actors of civil society for service delivery and other functions.100


Korten, in his advocacy of non-governmental voluntary action identifies “civil society as a fourth sector in development.” In his perception, civil society, in the context of the enhanced role of the non-state public actors, is “a primary agent of development.” While subscribing to the neoliberal perspective on civil society held by the World Bank and other agencies, Korten also observes: “Much of the effort to expand the role of civil society has focused on freeing up markets so that economic competition can work its magic.”

However, much of the debates on the centrality of civil society today take place in the domain of culture. This may be explained in relation to the emerging concerns of postmodern cultural politics over the redistributinal politics of the welfare state, or as what Fukuyama calls the dominance of the “cultural superstructure” over the “economic substructure.” Locating civil society in the exhaustion of the welfare state and the postmodern shift in

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101 Korten, n.74, p.95.
102 Ibid., p.28.
103 Antonio, n.56, p.49.
economic and social organisation, Crook et al.\textsuperscript{105} see its rediscovery as “the manifestation of a new paradigm challenging the boundaries of institutional politics” which ultimately leads to “the end of the political as a referent point.” They directly link civil society with the emergence of consumer culture and a “new politics” which is an increasing fusion and interpenetration of political and cultural spheres, and the decoupling of political conflicts and cleavages from the old structural class divisions.” In this sense, the term civil society encompasses the various trends encapsulated in such labels as ‘identity politics’, ‘citizen politics’, ‘anti-politics’, ‘counter politics’, ‘symbolic politics’, ‘lifestyle politics’, ‘politics of the moral protest’, etc., all of which rely on self-help and self-organisation.\textsuperscript{106} All these diverse versions of participatory and people-centred alternatives which have emerged in the broad context of the post-development thinking as an antidote to the ‘repressive’ and ‘paternalistic’ state, may, as Antonio puts it, be characterised as “the end of politics” which according to him “goes hand in hand with the end of history.”\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{105} For an elaborate discussion see Crook et al., n.2, pp.138-162.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{107} Antonio, n. 56, p. 55. Here Antonio’s reference is to Fukuyama’s ‘end of history’ thesis in which the world has entered into a post-historical era of global neoliberalism where no ‘realistic alternatives’ to market actually exist. See Francis Fukuyama, \textit{The End of History and the Last Man} (London, 1992), p. 51.
importance of civil society, also manifested in the increasing attention being paid to voluntary, non-party, non-government organisations and new social movements, has also given rise to the conceptualisation of what is called a "civil state" as an "alternative political arrangement" which conceives "a new relation between the state and civil society unmediated by the idea of a nation." ¹⁰⁸ The implication of this is the abandonment of the idea of development as national development, which reflects the post-developmentalist thinking already discussed.

Thus, civil society has become a tool in the strategy of sustainable and participatory development advanced by international institutions such as the World Bank, UNDP, OECD, and other donors.¹⁰⁹ By incorporating the whole private sector, inducing big businesses in civil society and placing them alongside the voluntary sector, neoliberalism is using the notion of civil society to replace the state by the voluntary and participatory people's initiatives.¹¹⁰ In other words, "the issue is how to nurture civil

¹⁰⁸ Harsh Sethi, "Multiple Crises in South Asia: Exploring Possibilities," in Wignaraja et al., n. 75, p. 94.


¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 1112.
society as a replacement for much of what government has previously done." At the same time, being a "slippery concept" civil society is currently attracting the attention of a broad ideological spectrum ranging from the New Right to the New Left. In a postmodern or post-Marxist perspective, the civil society could be seen as resurrecting from the 'deconstruction' of the political sphere, thereby occupying itself the vacuum created by the 'neutralisation' of both the Right and the Left. Here, the cultural theorists seem to draw intellectual resources from the works of Gramsci, whose primary concern was to explore the indeterminate superstructural terrain. Gramsci argued that it is in the civil society that the hegemony of one social group over the entire nation is exercised through the private organisations such as church, trade unions and schools.

To put it differently, civil society is the arena where the state operates to enforce intangible, invisible and subtle forms of power.


112 Ibid.

113 For a lucid exposition of this idea, see Antonio, n. 56, pp. 44-50.

through cultural, educational and religious institutions. In brief, the essence of Gramscian concept of 'hegemony' is that the strength or durability of a social order lies in the acceptance by the ruled of the worldview of the rulers. Through a series of layers of consciousness in the civil society, this conception of the world is filtered down to the masses and emerges as what he calls the "common sense." This Gramscian vision that the state exercise effective power through its hegemonisation of civil society in the cultural terrain is not theoretically inconsistent with the Marxist conception of the state as an extension of civil society, the nuances of which may be seen in Marx himself. On the other hand, ignoring the historical fact that dominant groups in civil society are always legitimised and sheltered by the state, the post-Marxists seem to be trying for a new-found legitimacy of the civil society based on a 'neo-Gramscian' interpretation. This line of argument

115 Ibid.


discards the essentially dialectic and continuous relation between state and civil society and, instead, poses the latter as a counter to the former and as the site of radical and plural democratic struggle against coercion and repression by the state. More precisely, the neo-Gramscian approach\textsuperscript{118} to civil society, now propagated by postmodern writers and neoliberal institutions such as the World Bank, while appropriating Gramsci to the extent of his supposed departures from Marxist position, negates the central emphasis on class by him. It is also in this sense that the World Bank equates good governance and participatory development with the rolling back of the state and freeing of civil society from state domination.\textsuperscript{119}

The attempts at fortification and glorification of civil society at the local level, in recent years, have assumed a transnational dimension too. Held notices the “new voices of an emergent transnational civil society, heard, for instance, at the Rio Conference on the Environment, the Cairo Conference on Population Control and the Beijing Conference on Women,” which

\textsuperscript{118} The neo-Gramscian interpretation by post-Marxists/ postmodernists also smacks of the neo-Gandhites' attempt to depict Gandhi as a postmodern thinker, an aspect mentioned in Chapter I.

\textsuperscript{119} Bhuvan Bhatnagar, n.99.
according to him, are also the trends towards "the possibility of a cosmopolitan democracy."\textsuperscript{120} In the same vein, Scholte also projects the "flurry of civic action" that "has surrounded the IMF/World Bank Annual and Spring Meetings for the last dozen years" and the recent handing over of "the microphone to grassroots associations" at Seattle as "civil society involvement in global economic governance."\textsuperscript{121} However, as noted in the previous chapter, the World Bank has been appropriating a major part of this global civil society in accordance with its neoliberal policies. In its effort to champion "a greater role for civil society" at the global level, the World Bank has even started to work with Christian global NGO coalitions like Jubilee 2000.\textsuperscript{122} In this sense, as Scholte admits, "there is a significant danger that global civic activities can reproduce the exclusions of neoliberal globalisation, even in campaigns that mean to oppose those inequities."\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{120} David Held, "Democracy and Globalisation," in Archibugi et al., n. 41, p. 24.

\textsuperscript{121} Jan Aart Scholte, "Cautionary Reflections on Seattle," \textit{Millennium Journal of International Studies}, Vol. XXIX, No. 1, 2000, pp.115-121. In her article on Seattle in the same issue of the Journal, Kaldor says: "The list of the 700 NGOs that were registered for the meeting reads like a roll-call of global civil society." Mary Kaldor, "Civilising Globalisation? The Implications of the 'Battle' in Seattle," p.105.


\textsuperscript{123} Scholte, n.121, p.119.
The concept of social capital,\textsuperscript{124} which is always used together with civil society, is a recent addition to the armoury of tools associated with participatory development. In tune with the main thread of analysis in this chapter, it may be seen that discussions on social capital are largely centred in the cultural context. The "discourse on social capital," writes Mohan and Stokke, "represents a highly reductionist approach to political economy" and an emphasis on the "cultural underpinnings"\textsuperscript{125} of development. Harriss notes: "The language of social capital does indeed understate the tougher questions of political economy."\textsuperscript{126} The concept of social capital was first introduced by Loury\textsuperscript{127} to designate a set of intangible resources in families and communities that help to promote the social development of young people. Later, Bourdieu\textsuperscript{128} pointed out

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{124}See Dasgupta and Serageldin (eds.), n. 97. This voluminous World Bank publication provides a comprehensive analysis on the theory and practice of social capital from a neoliberal perspective. World Bank's conceptualisation of social capital is now accessible at the Bank's website: www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital.
  \item \textsuperscript{125}Giles Mohan and Kristian Stokke, "Participatory development and empowerment: the dangers of localism," \textit{Third World Quarterly}, Vol.XXI, No.2,2000.p.255. For the authors' views on social capital and participatory development, see pp. 255-258.
  \item \textsuperscript{126}John Harriss, \textit{Depoliticizing Development: The World Bank and Social Capital} (New Delhi, 2001), p.103. Harriss provides a strong critique of the World Bank position on social capital as the missing link in development.
\end{itemize}
its sociological relevance to the community, which materially gains from the existence of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships arising from social interactions and interconnections. But it was Robert Putnam\textsuperscript{129} who is considered as responsible for popularising the concept of social capital in the discourse on civic engagement and participatory development. In his view, social capital refers to "trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions."\textsuperscript{130} In fact, the World Bank document on social capital seems to depend mainly on Putnam and Coleman, which considers the latter as the architect behind "the development of social capital as an organising concept in social sciences."\textsuperscript{131} The reason is obvious since, in characterising social capital as "emphatically an economic good," it has been Coleman's attempt at integrating the same as a "resource" into the "rational action paradigm" of the market that becomes more useful for the World Bank.\textsuperscript{132} Though 'amorphous' and appears as "different things to different people,"


\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., p. 167.


\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., p. 13.
Coleman’s “conception of social capital as a resource for action,” enabled the World Bank and other neoliberal agencies to project social capital for the Third World as a panacea, “paralleling the concepts of financial capital, physical capital, and human capital.”

This conception of social capital has also been found useful in moving away from conflict-oriented notions of power and class to a harmony model of participatory development in civil society ignoring the questions of wider political economy.

Following Putnam’s exposition of the role of social capital in economic growth, and World Bank’s recognition of it as the key concept in its strategy of participatory development and good governance, even post-developmentalists, who have a negative view on the whole course of development, seem to have become admirers of social capital theory. Korten, who denounces the political economy of development as ‘cowboy economics,’ for instance, finds the cause of under development as the lack of

133 Ibid., p.36.
134 See, for instance, Mohan and Stokke, n.125, pp. 257-258; also see Harriss, n. 126, pp. 102-103.
135 For an analysis, see John F. Helliwell and Robert D. Putnam, “Economic Growth and Social Capital in Italy” in Dasgupta and Serageldin (eds.), n. 97, pp. 253-268. In this rigorous study, the authors construct social capital as a composite measure of three indices, namely, Civic (Civic community), Perf (Institutional Performance) and Satis (Citizen Satisfaction). Each of these indices, in turn, are constructed out of several indicators.
required social capital. For him, "the limited social capital of most members of the population, particularly their levels of education and health, reduce their productive potential and thereby their ability to participate in the market as labourers and consumers."\textsuperscript{136} A corollary of this argument may be that people's participation in civil society will generate the requisite social capital for development. In this regard, the most explicit neoliberal version of social capital and civil society may be that of Fukuyama, as already noted. In his perception, state and civil society are separate and opposed spheres of action.\textsuperscript{137} In this sense, state policies will have a "negative impact on social capital." On the other hand, stressing on the cultural side, Fukuyama finds religion and globalisation as the two "potential external sources of social capital that may be more effective in promoting civil society."\textsuperscript{138} According to him, both religiously inspired cultural change and globalisation-induced ideas immensely contribute to development in the Third World via the creation of social capital.

\textsuperscript{136} Korten, n. 74, p. 49.

\textsuperscript{137} Fukuyama, n.104. This may be revealed from his observation that in Russia "durable civil society was destroyed after the Bolshevik Revolution." p. 18.

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., p. 19.
Today, civil society and social capital have become the key words in the discourse on participatory development. The enthusiasm for building civil society and developing social capital now goes hand in hand with the neoliberal agenda of state's withdrawal from the spheres of social development and welfare. Implicit in the concepts of civil society and social capital is the notion that people could look after themselves through self-help, association and voluntary action in civil society. These apparently progressive and attractive notions are now in wide use to bring about large-scale austerity measures such as cuts in public expenditure as part of SAPs. At the same time, the 'mystification' of the concepts, civil society, social capital and participation, as Harriss puts it, may also serve the political purpose of depoliticising the crucial problems of poverty and social justice in the Third World.139

**Participatory Development and Culture: New Dimensions**

What emerges from the foregoing analysis is a broad postmodern trend indicating a generalised shift from the sphere of political economy to the realm of culture in development thinking. In fact, the neglect of the dialectical relation between political economy and

139 For a detailed discussion on these issues, see Harriss, n. 126, pp. 113-132.
culture in favour of a one-sided emphasis on the latter may now seem more visible in World Bank itself which is acclaimed as one of the leading economic institutions in the world. For, stressing the “centrality of culture” in participatory and sustainable development, Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank said: “We start from the proposition that you simply cannot have development without a recognition of culture and of history.”

Announcing this new cultural orientation in the Bank’s policy and assuring Third World rulers regarding funding on culture, he further added:

I have told presidents and prime ministers throughout the world that if they want to have lending for culture, we will make additional loans. Whether it be $5 or $10 or $20 million or up to a certain percentage of the funding that we are providing to them, they can call on

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140 This issue is still the subject of an ongoing debate. According to Amin, the “links between politics and culture, remains unsettled both within the Marxist framework as so far developed, and within other theoretical frameworks including the postmodernist scheme.” See Amin, n. 55, p. 138.

141 For instance, see Ismail Serageldin and Joan Martin-Brown (eds.), Culture in Sustainable Development: Investing in Cultural and Natural Endowments (Washington D.C., 1999). This World Bank publication is the collection of the proceedings of a conference on sustainable development and culture co-sponsored by the UNESCO and World Bank in 1998. The conference on culture, first in the fifty years of Bank’s history, arose from the imperatives of an “increasingly globalised” world.

us for funding, but it cannot be used for anything else; it can only be used for cultural purposes.143

However, the issue is not that of giving importance to culture, but of approaching it in a particular neoliberal, postmodern way.144 The emerging neoliberal/postmodern tendency is to characterise the adherence to the ‘Enlightenment baggage’ including the ideals of secularism and democratic institutions as a “nostalgic recapitulation of the categories of modernity.”145 Instead, the attempt is to create a “theological legitimate space within the social realm” against the alleged “reductionism” of science which is “the philosophical basis of industrialism.” According to this reasoning, “religion and ethnicity thus become the preferred cohesion of the oppressed, their self-validation in the struggle against the injustices of the modern world.”146 This may appear to endorse the World Bank’s identification of the Third World poor as “deeply religious,” based on which it attempted “to explore the area of common concern between the faith and development communities”

143 Ibid., p. 6.
144 See the attempt by both the World Bank and Fukuyama to give a new-found legitimacy to religion and faith as the leading sources of development in the Third World. Belshaw et al., n. 122; and Fukuyama, n. 104.
145 See Crook et al., n. 2, p. 236.
146 Sethi, n. 108, p. 93.
for amassing the "spiritual resources for development."\textsuperscript{147} This trend is also visible in other international institutions too. Perhaps a best illustration may be that of the Ford Foundation, which, as noted in Chapter I, was working within a political economy framework during the Keynesian era, engaging in community and rural development, agricultural technology development and building up the Economics profession in India in accordance with the US foreign policy needs of the cold war period.\textsuperscript{148} However, in the neoliberal period, the Ford Foundation is specialising in those areas that may be catalogued as 'culture.' For instance, reverberating the World Bank's position, Ford Foundation's internet home page on education, media arts and culture speaks thus:

In Religion, Society and Culture we pursue a deeper understanding of religion as a powerful force in contemporary life and its role as resource for strengthening the cultural values and social practices

\textsuperscript{147} Belshaw et al., n. 122, p. viii. It is with this perspective that the World Bank initiated a new participatory experiment with the Churches of Africa representing 300 million African Christians. For details, see Vinay Samuel, "The World Bank and the Churches: Reflections at the Outset of a New Relationship," in Belshaw et al. (ed.), n.122, pp.237-243.

\textsuperscript{148} See Rosen, n 92. This work is a summary of Ford Foundation's South Asian operations during 1950-70.
that support democracy, human achievement, justice, equity and cooperation.\textsuperscript{149}

The conceptualisation of culture in religious terms, which has an international legitimacy now, may be seen replicating in the theorisation\textsuperscript{150} of participatory development. For instance, in conceptualising the relevance of participatory development for South Asia, Wignaraja unequivocally puts forth folk consciousness and religious traditions as “an ideological basis of a viable political alternative.”\textsuperscript{151} In his scheme of things, the “folk consciousness” behind religions such as Islam and Hinduism, and “cultural roots” of ethnicity could be used as intellectual resources in the “process of mobilisation, conscientisation and organisation” of people for participatory development.\textsuperscript{152} In a similar fashion, Kapur, in his theorisation of a “pluralistic humanism” which may be interpreted as a humanistic people’s alternative to the Western model of progress, pleads for rediscovering the same from “the soul of Asia’s

\textsuperscript{149} Ford Foundation online, April 21, 2002. www.wesleyan.edu/psyc/psyc261/fordlist.htm.
In the area of folklore studies and cultural initiatives, currently the foundation is running a global programme, namely, Campus Diversity Initiative. At present this project encompasses 24 colleges in India alone. See, www.fordfound.org/program/education.cfm.

\textsuperscript{150} See Wignaraja, et al., n. 75.

\textsuperscript{151} Ponna Wignaraja, “Genesis of the Intellectual Quest: An Overview,” in Wignaraja et al., n. 75, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{152} For details, see Ibid., pp. 1-21.
religions, cultures, myths and legends" which form "the accumulated wisdom of their own sages and seers and millennia of traditions."153

To proceed further, this trend is more manifest in the efforts to construct a people's alternative based on the 'neo-Gandhian' perspective, an aspect mentioned in Chapter I. This line of argument also defines culture ultimately in terms of religion. Interpreting Gandhi's "religious politics" as "a magical weapon," Parekh proposes it as an alternative to "the modern politics dominated age." Traditional wisdom based on religion, according to him, is a form of "cultural capital."155 The neo-Gandhian or postmodern interpretation of Gandhi is used here to rediscover India's traditions and cultures and pose them as a superior alternative to modernisation. In the process, the supreme political significance of Gandhi's effort to replace colonial rule with swaraj is often relegated to the background. The colonial encounter in

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155 Ibid., p. 19. Parekh's conception of 'cultural capital' seems to be a synonym for Fukuyama's formulation of 'social capital' since both are essentially religious based. For the World Bank, cultural capital and social capital are interchangeable terms. See James Allen Smith, "Conserving Cultural Heritage," in Ismail Serageldin and Joan Martin-Brown (eds.), n.141, p. 89; also available at http://www.worldbank.org/csd
India, as Parekh perceives, was not a political struggle between India and Britain, but a cultural contest between ancient and modern civilisation.\textsuperscript{156} Upholding the same logic, Escobar, the post-development thinker, also interpreted the local knowledge-based grassroots movements which emerged in various Third World countries as a “cultural resistance” against the development discourse of the post-war period.\textsuperscript{157}

Writers of various persuasions have commented upon the rampant culturalism that now sweeps across cultural studies in general and Third World development discourses in particular. Eagleton, for whom “cultural relativism” or over-emphasis of cultural dimension is “simply imperial dominion stood on its head,” says:

Culture is on any estimate important in a neocolonial world; but it is hardly what is finally decisive. It is not in the end questions of language, skin colour or identity, but of commodity prices, raw materials, labour

\textsuperscript{156} Parekh, n.154, p. 72.

\textsuperscript{157} A. Escobar, \textit{Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World} (Princeton N.J., 1995), p.214. According to Escobar, the dominant discourse on development that emerged in the post Second World War period has less to do with development and more to do with “the exercise of power over the Third World.” See pp. 3-4.
markets, military alliances and political forces, which shape the relations between rich and poor nations.\textsuperscript{158}

In fact, the ‘romanticism’ associated with Third World cultures and idealisation of the past have been critical subjects of study.\textsuperscript{159} The glorification of the past tends to offer scope for “many religious revivalists and xenophobic groups,” who “wanted to turn back the clock” on progress to be active in civil society.\textsuperscript{160} Nonetheless, this trend also prompted some scholars even to characterise the postmodern engagement with civil society as “reactionary tribalism\textsuperscript{161}” or “new tribalism.”\textsuperscript{162} On the other hand, Halbfass offers a philosophical explanation.\textsuperscript{163} Characterising the glorification of non-European cultures, including that of India, as a

\begin{footnotesize}

\textsuperscript{158} Eagleton, n.7, p.205. The shift from political economy to culturalism, according to Eagleton is the result of “postmodern suspicions of organised mass politics.” Ibid.

\textsuperscript{159} See, for instance, Ronald Inden, “Orientalist Constructions of India,” Modern Asian Studies, Vol.XX, No.3, 1986, pp. 447-460. In this study Inden shows how the romantic conception of a golden age in India’s past is shared by both religious revivalism and orientalist construction of Indian history.

\textsuperscript{160} Scholte, n.121, p.120.

\textsuperscript{161} For this conceptualisation, see Antonio, n.56. According to him, reactionary tribalism refers to the neopopulist resurgence based on new ethnicities or “tribes” rooted in religious, racial, linguistic and other cultural differences. These centrifugal forms of cultural fragmentation or what he calls new tribalism “bears the imprint of and helps drive postmodernization.” See p.55.

\textsuperscript{162} This idea is from Neera Chandhoke, “The New Tribalism,” The Hindu, April 4, 2002, p.10. Analysing contemporary religious revivalism-induced communal riots in India, Chandhoke opines that civil society has been “overtaken by the politics of a new Tribalism.”

\textsuperscript{163} Wilhelm Halbfass, India and Europe: An essay in Philosophical Understanding (Delhi, 1990).

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"tantalising paradox," he pleads thus: "The globalisation of the world coincides with its parochialisation; the meeting and 'dialogue' of the cultures and religions of this world coincides with their trivialisation." In answering those who insist on an alternative based on orientalist cultural traditions, he is emphatic that this question has already been "decided by the course of history itself."

Admitting the need for transcending "beyond Occident and Orient," he recognises that "there is no way to avoid the conceptual and technological ways and means of communication and interaction" which the West has produced. Dhirendra Sharma, has also philosophically approached this issue, though in a different perspective. In an enthusiasm for rejecting Western cultural domination, as he sees, postmodernists and Third World scholars have over-glorified the past cultural traditions and naively attempted to perceive resolution of socio-economic ills in a kind of neoliberal strategy. Criticising the attempts at dubbing science as reductionism and romanticisation of religious traditions, he said:

164 Ibid., p. 441.

165 Ibid., pp. 436-441.

Respect for the past achievements notwithstanding, we find, in fact, no sustainable folk science and technology. There was no sustainable agriculture, no eco-friendly cultural traditions, nor was there any people's movement for protection of forests, and natural resources.¹⁶⁷

According to him, the problems of development including the issues of sustainability and people's participation are relating to modern developments: “Any attempt to revive the age old faith in outdated cultural norms and unverifiable 'spiritual truth,' would help conservative forces and economic and political vested interests to misuse science in defence of Divine Faith.” Unravelling the ideology behind the conceptualisation of a sustainable and participatory alternative based on Indian cultural traditions, Sharma, in fact, concluded his position thus:

It is a defeatist view to argue that ancient civilisation was far superior, or that Indian culture offered better social order, or that our ancestors knew better water-management, or that the traditional agriculture was sustainable, or that the native people's scientific knowledge was far more advanced than the modern (Western) Science and Technology. The view that

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 7.
women, black and the disadvantaged (poor) have equal rights in the civil society is admittedly the modern scientific principle which is not recognised in any Holy Book of the past.\footnote{168}

Even scholars who criticise the cultural homogenisation associated with modernity are also skeptical of the mystification that is under way in the name of indigenous culture and identity. For instance, in spite of Edward Said’s affinity to the Subaltern Studies,\footnote{169} “identity”, for him, “is not only not natural and stable, but constructed, and occasionally even invented outright.” Characterising the efforts to construct identities rooted in nativist religion and primitive nationalism as disgraceful and meaningless, he said: “In short, the construction of identity is bound up with the disposition of power and powerlessness in each society and is therefore anything but mere academic wool-gathering.”\footnote{170} Leonard also seems to hold a similar view. According to him, culture is increasingly recognised to be more an invention constructed for contemporary purpose than a stable heritage handed on from the

\footnote{168} Ibid., p. 8.


\footnote{170} Ibid., p. 332.
past. In his view, the idea of "traditional culture" or local knowledge is a "product originally of Western anthropology, a means of conceptualising the exotic, the Other" or what is called a product of "imperialist nostalgia," i.e., a nostalgia for the colonised culture on the part of agents of colonialism. Quoting Rosaldo, Leonard explains this nostalgia's capacity to transform the responsible colonial agents who have intentionally altered or destroyed various forms of life in colonies into innocent bystanders.

This emphasis on traditional culture and knowledge has brought out the growing relevance of the discipline of anthropology itself in the paradigm of participatory development. For, in its Discussion Papers on Participatory development, the World Bank notes: "The focus on participation may require a marginal shift toward hiring more anthropologists and sociologists." Other World Bank


172 Ibid.; also see Loomba, n. 52, p. 235, where she calls it "a nostalgia for lost origins."


174 Bhatnagar and Williams (eds.), n. 99, p. 20. This World Bank move in search of anthropologists and sociologists instead of economists whom it traditionally employs may be seen as the outcome of a postmodernisation in World Bank's thinking.
studies also stress the relation between “postmodern anthropology” and participatory development initiatives which draw upon local or people’s knowledge at the grassroots.\textsuperscript{175} Similarly, the 1998 World Development Report had pleaded for approaching “development from a knowledge perspective” based on a recognition that “local conditions matter for the success of the programs.”\textsuperscript{176} However, the most explicit articulation between anthropology and participatory development may be found in Chambers,\textsuperscript{177} the chief theorist of PRA, the methodology of participatory development. He has shown how applied anthropology and development anthropology became more recognised as legitimate tools in the methodology of participatory development in the 1980s. During this period, a global network was established - led by the American Institute for Development Anthropology. As Chambers notes, social anthropologists from the United States found their way into various international aid agencies and agricultural research centres where “they had an influence disproportionate to their tiny numbers.”


Elucidating the crucial role played by anthropologists in participatory development, Chambers observes:

Social anthropologists helped development professionals generally better to appreciate the richness of the validity of rural people's knowledge ... and to distinguish the etic - the outsider's mental frame, categories and worldview, and the emic - those of the insider.¹⁷⁸

According to Chambers, the methodology of participatory development represents an extension and application of the methods, insights and approaches of social anthropology.

The indispensability of traditional culture and people's knowledge in participatory development and the consequent use of anthropology by agencies such as the World Bank raise certain related ideological issues too. Certainly, as a branch of knowledge, anthropology has its roots in the humanist visions of the Enlightenment. But as a university discipline and a modern science, it came into its own in the last decades of the nineteenth

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¹⁷⁸ Ibid. In fact, the involvement of anthropologists in participatory development is very important not only with respect to PRA, but also in resource mapping, data collection and crucial information gathering. This is why, as already noted, the World Bank and other funding agencies pay increasing attention to the role of anthropologists together with economists in its participatory experiments.
and early twentieth centuries. This period coincided with the all-out offensive on the part of Western powers to bring the whole pre-industrial and non-Western world under their hegemony. And, in this process of colonisation, anthropologists played a dominant role, since most of their fieldwork was carried out in the colonies. Claude Levi-Strauss' characterisation of anthropology as the "handmaiden of colonialism" becomes relevant in this context. According to him, it was the anthropologist who advised the colonial rulers on the manners and mores of the native people. In fact, this trend seems to have persisted even after the Second World War. Writing in the 1960s, Gough noted: "Anthropology is a child of Western imperialism." With reference to the complaint by anthropologists and of students that "cultural and social anthropology is failing to tackle significant problems of the modern world," Gough noted:

...anthropology came into being as a kind of social work and community development effort for non-white peoples, whose future was seen in terms of gradual

179 Claude Levi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (Allen Lane, 1958); also see the website http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/index.htm

education, and of amelioration of conditions many of which had actually been imposed by their Western conquerors in the first place.\textsuperscript{181}

Obviously, it is this anthropological framework that is currently used in participatory development by the World Bank and other neoliberal institutions. Here, Gough’s critique of funding agencies’ attempt to confine anthropology to a study of “small segments” of modern society, instead of the “larger system as a totality” is also very revealing.\textsuperscript{182} This criticism raised by her almost four decades back seems still relevant as it is equally applicable to the postmodern cultural and micropolitical perspectives which form the theoretical and methodological basis of the paradigm of participatory development.

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid. Gough also speaks of how “anthropologists are becoming increasingly subject to restrictions, unethical temptations, and political controls from the United States government and its subordinate agencies.” p.93.

\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., p.93.