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The “natural preserve of anthropologists”: social anthropology, scientific planning and development

***Abstract.** This article focuses on the relationship between practical and cognitive interests in the production of anthropological knowledge. It analyses the links between the projects of directed social transformation in “backward” societies that characterize the program of “development” since the 1920s, and the emergence of a discipline aiming at a scientific understanding of these societies. A reconstruction of the process of autonomization of British social anthropology in Africa during the interwar period thus offers at the same time a genealogy of the uses of anthropology in development. It is argued that, instead of viewing the relationship between anthropology and the colonial administration as an alternative between instrumentalization or independence, it is more fruitful to analyse it as structured by both common interests in producing knowledge about colonized societies and a competition between academic specialists and “practical men”. The “professionalization” of social anthropology and its institutionalization as an academic discipline then appears as a process of construction of a monopoly of competence on non-western social phenomena.*

***Key words.** Africa – Anthropology – Colonialism – Development – Great Britain – Professionalization*

This article presents an attempt of partial systematization of a work still in progress, which focuses on the relationship between anthropological knowledge and colonial power in the framework of a French–British comparison. The French case, distinguished by the difficulties of autonomization of a science of colonial social phenomena, is here but an implicit term of comparison. The object is to present the outline of a model of interpretation, which would require further refinement and qualification. The argument presented here owes much to previously published works on the history of British anthropology, those of Kuklick (1991),

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Knowledge gives foresight and foresight is indispensable to the statesman and to the local administrator, to the educationalist, welfare worker and missionary alike. The discovery of long-run tendencies, the capacity of foreseeing & forecasting the future in the light of full knowledge of all the factors involved, competent advice on specific questions – these are the tasks of the contact-ethnographer as a practical expert (Malinowski, *Methods of Study of Culture Contact in Africa*, 1938a)

Africa presents itself as a living laboratory in which the reward of study may prove to be not only the satisfaction of an intellectual impulse, but an effective addition to the welfare of the people (Lord Hailey, *An African Survey*, 1938)

The science whose material is human society should be called upon when nothing else than the complete transformation of a society is in question (Lucy Mair, "Colonial Administration as a Science", 1933)

Evoking in the early 1950s the prospects for the utilization of anthropology by the agencies of the United Nations, Alfred Métraux used a telling metaphor: "an underdeveloped country: the natural preserve of anthropologists." In fact, a certain number of organizations (UN agencies, World Bank, etc.) call upon social or cultural anthropology for the planning and implementation of development projects, especially in rural areas.¹ Defining the relationship between the attempt to objectify social phenomena, which constitutes the very aim of the social sciences, and the desire to control these phenomena, is a crucial question in the area of development, a voluntaristic project for the transformation of more peripheral societies, perceived as "backward" (or, euphemistically, "under-developed"), which has its roots in the colonial project. This paper offers a contribution to a sociology of the rapport between *cognitive* interests and *practical* interests, through an analysis of the relationship between a project of social transformation and the production of knowledge about social phenomena.² More precisely, the intent here is to shed light on the genealogy of development anthropology by tracing the evolution of a new specialty, social anthropology, which underwent a process of autonomization during the colonial period. This new academic

Kuper (1973) and Stocking (1984–), among others, even though it deviates from important aspects of their interpretations. I have not been able to use Stocking (1996), but it would not substantially modify my argument. part of the research for this article was made possible by a Fellowship from the british Council. I am very grateful to Maurice Bloch, Adam Kuper, Susan Rogers, Emmanuelle Saada, Lygia Sigaud, Terry Shinn, Christian Topalov and Roland Vast for their helpful comments at various stages of the writing of this paper. I am heavily indebted to Marie Benedict for her help in producing an English version of it.

discipline emerged as the result of a process of construction of a specific field of competence in the knowledge of those social phenomena that characterize “backward” societies, and the monopolization of that competence by a group of professional scholars, at the expense of those whose claim to competence had formerly been recognized: the “practical men”.³ Here we focus primarily on the case of Great Britain and its possessions in Africa, where this process of construction of a “preserve” for anthropologists is especially apparent.

Colonial knowledge and its uses

Analysing the relationship between practical interests and cognitive interests in the emergence of social anthropology requires us to re-examine the hackneyed theme of the colonial origins of anthropology. Criticism of colonial anthropology has sometimes been linked to an epistemological critique of the functionalist model,⁴ but it has most often been expressed in political and ethical terms, in the context of questioning the responsibility of the anthropologist.⁵ The controversy, which was especially virulent in the 1970s, but which remains active today⁶ revolved around the theme of “anthropology, handmaid of imperialism”. According to this line of thinking, anthropology originated largely as a response to colonial needs, and anthropologists, meeting the administration’s demands, acted as servants of imperialism. The canonical formulation of this discussion, as illustrated in titles or headings such as *Anthropologie et colonialisme* (Leclerc, 1972), *Anthropologie et impérialisme* (Copans, 1975), “Anthropology and Colonialism” (in Kuper, 1973), or “The Colonial Exchange” (in Kuklick, 1991), focuses on the nature of the connection between “anthropology” and “colonialism”, considered as two a priori independent entities, and endeavours to determine the effects of the one on the other. Expressed in less abstract terms it becomes: “The problem of knowledge and power is, and always has been, the problem of the relations of men of knowledge with men of power.”⁷ The question underlying the whole debate seems to have been the following: did colonialism have a corrupting influence on anthropologists by diverting their “normal” academic interests, or was their knowledge only marginally tainted by these dangerous liaisons? Assuming a fundamental contradiction between practical interests

and scientific interests, this led to a formulation of the basic problem as one premised on a relationship between two worlds that were essentially separate and that should have remained that way; this amounts to projecting onto the past an image of the relationship between “scholars” and “administrators” that corresponds to the (idealized) current division of labor between the largely autonomous administrative and scientific spheres. (Administrations have more or less specific needs for knowledge and call on scholars who try to meet those needs, but who might all the while be pursuing their own objectives within the academic world.) It seems to me, however, that the true object is precisely that which has most often been taken as a given: the transformation of an earlier form of division of labour with the autonomization of social anthropology, which took the social phenomena that had been objects of knowledge and practice for colonial “men of power” and reserved them as a specialty of professional “men of knowledge”.

“Knowing the natives” was in fact part and parcel (statutory in a way) of the very functions of the bush administrator or of the missionary, forced to live among the natives often for long periods. This could be supplemented by more systematic inquiries, more or less equivalent to what in military terms would be called “intelligence”.⁸ This knowledge of the “men on the spot” provided the raw material of anthropological knowledge; by definition colonial in origin, it developed, like other naturalist forms of learning in the 19th century, on the basis of a division of labour between scholars, who worked out of scientific centers in the home country, and explorers, missionaries, soldiers or administrators, who collected various types of information (customs, body measurements, folk tales, languages, etc.) or artifacts in the colonial periphery. Evolutionism, with its extensive capacity for integration, allowed for a broad definition of what were considered valid contributions; thus there was room for a significant participation of these “amateurs”, which scientific institutions in the centre progressively sought to control through the codification of data collection (using instruments such as the *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, published from 1874 on by the British Association for the Advancement of Science [BAAS] and the Royal Anthropological Institute [RAI]). The sending out of questionnaires to missionaries and administrators and the regular correspondence kept up by anthropologists with their best informants served the same function.

Such a theoretical framework, which was both all-inclusive and

rather unrestrictive, provided the unifying force for a synthesizing science that borrowed from diverse disciplines (paleontology, anatomy, human zoology, archeology, legal history, ethnography, prehistory, etc.). It allowed for a federation of weakly integrated subspecialties that were able to develop within the comprehensive programme of the science of man. These two characteristics were reflected in the structure of anthropological institutions such as the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland (later the RAI), or the section H of the BAAS, which were marked by their social and intellectual ecumenicism (see Stocking, 1985; Kuklick, 1991).

The elaboration of anthropological knowledge was then based on a system in which the task of knowledge production was divided between the “men on the spot” and “anthropologists”, or theorists. The former occupied a position that was admittedly subordinate, but nonetheless indispensable insofar as they held the monopoly of direct access to information. The connection between the development of anthropological knowledge and the colonial venture was thus not accidental or external, but indeed structuring.

In fact, anthropologists regularly defended the utility of their science for the imperial undertaking. This well-documented fact (Myres, 1929; Feuchtwang, 1973; Stocking, 1985; Kuklick, 1991) has been interpreted in contradictory ways. Some, taking these assertions at face value, have concluded that these anthropologists were offering to act as “handmaids of imperialism”. Others have seen a purely tactical facade for seeking funding, received, for that matter, rather indifferently by a colonial administration that considered anthropology useless. The position of Adam Kuper seems representative of those who tend to minimize the impact of the colonial context on the formation of British anthropology:

The inescapable conclusion is that there was never much of a demand for applied anthropology from Whitehall or from the colonial governments ... anthropologists in general went their own academic way. ... The reality is that British anthropologists were little used by the colonial authorities, and despite their rhetoric when in pursuit of funds, they were not particularly eager to be used. (Kuper, 1973: 116)

One of the ambiguities of the debate is due precisely to the vagueness of the notion of the “uses” of anthropology in the colonial context. In a logic of argument that is more forensic than academic (was the collusion recognized? or should the defendant be acquitted?), this question of the use of knowledge has often been limited

to determining whether or not anthropologists were the instruments (involuntary or otherwise) of colonial administration.⁹ One cannot, however, conclude that a scientific study is “of no use” simply because it does not apparently lead on to any administrative measures. It might be helpful to single out at least two ways in which science could be of use to the authorities in power; these we can call the “instrumental” function and the “legitimizing” function.¹⁰ In the first instance, science serves as an *instrument* of knowledge intended to increase through proper guidance the efficiency of an operation: it is thus a matter of *rationalization*, of finding the most effective means to achieve the desired ends. Scientific knowledge may be mobilized in order to provide: (1) a rationalization of the “means of orientation”, in which science is used to provide a better overall picture of the object (e.g. cartography, population censuses, surveys); and (2) “techniques” intended to resolve specific problems. The second “legitimizing function” refers to the symbolic profits gained through the use of scientific knowledge in a social context where science is highly valued. Two aspects may be distinguished: (1) the legitimation of bureaucratic authority, wherein possession of scientific authority reinforces the belief in the rational nature of the domination; and (2) the legitimation of personal status, wherein scientific activity, seen as the selfless pursuit of truth, serves as an ennobling activity that elevates the social status of those who practice it.¹¹

The ideal-typical distinction between these functions has an analytical purpose, but in practice the two often function simultaneously: making a claim for the use of science as a governing technique is itself part of a process of self-justification. Thus, anthropology furnished a “means of orientation” to “make sense” of often disconcerting interactions with the “natives”. In addition, the evolutionist schema of the progress of human societies toward civilization functioned as a sort of “master narrative” that provided a rational justification for European domination; at the same time, it also furnished a framework for thinking about colonized societies that were classified and ranked according to the stage of evolution they had attained. This schema directly structured administrative practices, or at least it was used to justify differences in administrative treatments.¹²

Scientific anthropology and the rationalization of colonial administration

The notion of “development” emerged within this framework of a legitimatization of European domination of the tropical colonies. In 1919, the League of Nations declared that “the well-being and development of peoples not yet able to stand by themselves, form a sacred Trust of Civilisation” (Article 22, Covenant of the League). This objective of “development” defined, within a clearly evolutionist perspective, the French and British mandate over the colonies confiscated from defeated Germany.¹³ Consideration for the “interests of the natives” was thus officially claimed as the justification for the maintenance of colonial supervision, and gave rise to monitoring by the Commission of Permanent Mandates of the League of Nations. The theme of “development” was taken up by Lugard in his famous *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1922), which constitutes a redefinition of the aims and methods of British colonial policy. The European “dual mandate” in Africa consisted of both (1) making productive use, for the benefit of all humanity, of the economic resources of territories that their inhabitants had failed to exploit (“development of Africa”) and (2) encouraging the “advancement” of the African peoples along the road of progress (“development of the African”).¹⁴ The protection of the colonial power would allow for a gradual evolution of African societies. They would be permitted to “develop along their own lines”, through the maintenance of “native” social and political systems, adapted to their specific needs.¹⁵ In this way, “troubles” such as encountered in India could be avoided. This doctrine, known as “Indirect Rule”, became the major reference of British colonial policy in the inter-war period.

In Great Britain itself, two camps clashed over African policy: the “pro-settlers” maintained that development in Africa could only come about through the reinforcement of white settlers, while the “pro-natives” stressed the primacy of native rights and the dangers of introducing economic upheaval. East Africa, where the interests of the active white minority were considerable, represented an essential stake. There, the 1923 proclamation by the British government of the “paramount” nature of native interests in Kenya was a major success of the Native Rights Lobby. The fact that the British crown had an obligation to protect the rights of the natives called for the maintenance of direct supervision

by the Colonial Office in the face of settlers' demands for "self-rule".

Taking native interests into account thus became a basic principle of the legitimization of colonial rule in the inter-war period – whatever the departures from this principle in actual practice: "the aim of government is first and foremost the well-being and development of the native peoples who are subject to it" as Lucy Mair wrote (1933). Conversely, the condition of the natives was the focal point for criticism of colonization, in the home countries and the United States: *The Native Problem in Africa*, based on an enquiry in colonial territories, by the North American professor Buell (1928) called into question the native policies of European powers. It was in this context, in which the definition of native interests became a major stake, that anthropology and "impartial" field research would acquire a new importance.

The philosophy of Indirect Rule found support in reformist Protestant missionary circles (especially those of the International Missionary Council), which played a leading part within the Native Rights Lobby. Fearing a moral collapse of colonized societies under the disturbing European influence, these groups advocated respect of local customs and consideration of cultural specificity. These new ideas were particularly influential in the area of education, which was supposed to be adapted to local specificities, and, in particular, provided in the vernacular, "their own medium of thought".¹⁶

In this context, the 1926 creation of an *International Institute of African Languages and Cultures* (IALC), was seen as an answer to the "need for an application of scientific method to a solution of the questions arising from the contact of Western civilization" (Smith, 1934). It constituted an instrument for the mobilization of resources, particularly scientific ones, to provide for stronger intervention in the politico-administrative debates. Through the IALC, the model of drawing upon experts to define colonial policy, first applied in the educational domain, gained a wider range of application.¹⁷ As the IALC president, Lugard, stated in 1928, in the first issue of the Institute's journal, *Africa* (p. 2), its aim was to bring about "a closer association of scientific knowledge and research with practical affairs". The new Institute would "attempt to relate the results of research to the actual life of the African peoples, and to discover how the investigations undertaken by scientific workers may be made available for the solution of pressing

questions that are the concern of all those, who, as administrators, educators, health and welfare workers, or traders, are working for the good of Africa". The Institute would then seek not only to mobilize scientific knowledge in order to resolve colonial social problems, but also to direct scientists' attention to the "pressing questions" facing (European) men concerned with the future of Africa. The IALC project was the product of a reformist plan that might have been called "technocratic" if the term had been in use: a technical procedure based on objective knowledge would replace an approximative and passionate approach to political problems.

The first objective of the IALC was to put linguistic expertise in the service of the promotion of education in the vernacular, but soon its center of gravity shifted towards anthropology. In 1929 Malinowski, Professor of Social Anthropology at the London School of Economics, formulated for the Institute an ambitious project, which entailed at the same time a plan for administrative reform and a program of scientific revolution, what Malinowski termed the "rationalization of anthropology and administration" (Malinowski, 1929, 1930).¹⁸ The basic idea was that anthropology could become the scientific arm of a renewed colonial administration . . . on the condition that it undergo a profound modification of its subject matter. Anthropology should become "practical" and occupy what Malinowski called an "anthropological no-man's land", by tackling "the problems of population . . .; the study of social organizations, above all of its fundamental institutions, the family, marriage, and educational agencies . . .; law, economics and politics as we find them at work in primitive communities; . . . sociological or cultural linguistics" (Malinowski, 1929: 37). What was at stake was less, as the history of anthropological ideas would have it, the replacement of evolutionist or diffusionist theories by a new "functionalist" contender than a redefinition of the boundaries and the subject matter of anthropology. This redefinition disqualified, in view of its lack of practical relevance, the core of what had until then constituted legitimate anthropological knowledge, as embodied in the Royal Anthropological Institute: "nor", argued Malinowski (1930: 428), "can the colonial 'practitioner' base his decisions upon an anthropology concerned with the pithecanthropus erectus, or with the purely antiquarian reconstruction of various archaic cultures". In other words, cognitive interests and practical interests appeared to be interdependent. Malinowski's appeal to the Institute that "this new branch of anthropological science

must be clearly *distinguished and treated in its own right*" (1930: 429) should be interpreted in the strongest sense. Malinowski thus explicitly presented the autonomization of social anthropology as a necessary precondition for its practical utility.¹⁹ The new anthropology defined itself as "social" and "functional", in that it claimed to study "native societies" no longer as "primitives", surviving evidence of civilization's past, but rather in the way that these societies *function in the present day*.

Symmetrically, Malinowski proposed a "scientificization" of administrative problems that would enable them to escape the realm of passion and politics so that they could be approached "scientifically", that is in an impartial and objective manner. Such an approach would lead to a transformation of the role of the administrator. Armed with an objective knowledge of social phenomena, he could leave the stage of conciliating the conflicting interests of the various social groups by "rule of thumb" and enter into a realm of rational arbitration (thus achieving what Malinowski termed "scientific control of colonial co-operation"). Social anthropology thus appeared as an indispensable aid for a practice of power that was "rational" insofar as it was based in science.

The idea that anthropology could furnish a scientific basis for the rational management of colonized peoples appeared indeed convincing to a growing number of representatives of the colonial elite. Thus General Smuts, former Prime Minister of South Africa, advocating, in a 1929 lecture at Oxford, the policy of "separate development" – that is to say, "segregation" – in South and East Africa, at times took on a Malinowskian bent: "for the natives, religion, law, natural science, social customs and institutions all form one blended whole . . . Attack this complex system at any single point and the whole is endangered"; lamenting the "mistakes" made in the past in fighting native customs, he asserted that "a knowledge of anthropology would have been most useful, and would have helped to conserve the native social system" (Smuts, 1929: 65). Oldham (1930: 42–3), spokesman for the Native Rights Lobby, replied to this in a chapter on "The Development of the African", which offered strangely similar arguments: "An understanding of the living forces and elements of value in African society can be obtained only by patient study. . . . In native society, religion, law, primitive economics and social custom form a blended whole, and changes introduced without an understanding of their effect may undermine the entire social fabric. For the

successful carrying out of the administrative and educational responsibilities of governments, the aid of scientific anthropology is indispensable." Anthropological expertise thus provided a ready resource for the debate on colonial policy. In particular, the Malinowskian view of cultures as "integrated wholes" informed ways of thinking about colonized societies and the transformations that they were undergoing, imposing itself as a new common sense, a scientific, objective basis on which could be founded opposing political choices.

This prospect of using science to resolve "social problems" also appealed to the Rockefeller Foundation, which financed, as of 1931, the IALC "Five-year Plan of Research in Africa" (see Stocking, 1985). Anticipating "development anthropology" the objective of the Five-year Plan was to study "in a purely objective and scientific way" the effects of the integration of Africa into the world economy on the cohesion of African societies. It was an attempt to obtain an objective knowledge of transformation processes that were perceived as inevitable; once these processes were known, they could be controlled and their disintegrating effects limited.²⁰

The process of redefining the objectives and means of colonial policy might have been the implementation of Malinowski's program of "rationalization of colonial administration", which he proposed as a counterpart to the development of a new anthropology. The task of reformulating Indirect Rule, undertaken among others by Lucy Mair and Margery Perham, was largely an endeavour to integrate the perspectives of Malinowskian social anthropology into the objectives of colonial administration; "the deliberate manipulation of human society", said Lucy Mair,

... is a task which it has been left to this generation to undertake. It is the essence of that "sacred trust" which colonial administration has been recognized to be. ... The criterion of policy therefore should be ... an estimate of its results in terms of such a development, based on a knowledge of the structure of the society concerned. (Mair, 1936, dedicated to Malinowski; see also Perham, 1934)

It is significant that the Department of Anthropology of the LSE became "Anthropology and Colonial Studies" in 1934: the two domains thus appeared to be contiguous territories. While Margery Perham flirted with anthropology without ever really crossing over,²¹ Lucy Mair's career may serve as an illustration of the continuity that was established for a time between colonial studies and social anthropology, and later development anthropology:

Malinowski's student, Fellow of the IALC in Uganda, she lectured from 1932 at the LSE on "The Place of Anthropology in Colonial Studies". Reader in Colonial Administration at the LSE from 1946, her post was rechristened "Applied Anthropology" in 1956. That same year she published *Studies in Applied Anthropology*, a collection of articles republished in 1969 as *Anthropology and Social Change*. In 1984, she published in the same vein *Anthropology and Development*. These titles illustrate the basic continuity under different reformulations.

The social backgrounds of these women – they came from the "intellectual aristocracy" (Annan, 1995) whose members held positions in the upper echelons of the Civil Service and Oxbridge colleges – predisposed them to play the role of intermediaries between the academic world and the world of civil servants.²² They took an active role in the circles where members of the British ruling class met to plan the new directions of colonial policy, including, in addition to the IALC and *Africa*, Malinowski's seminar at the London School of Economics,²³ the African Society and, especially, the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), which was a sort of informal "discussion club" for members of the establishment.²⁴

The *African Survey*, a collective work published in 1938 under the name of Lord Hailey, was produced under the patronage of Chatham House and financed by another American Foundation (Carnegie). It reflected and crystalized the concerns of circles that were influential in defining colonial policy (Hailey, 1938; Cell, 1989, 1992). The 800-page composite work was an attempt both to synthesize knowledge about Africa and to lay bare the colonial problems in all of Africa south of the Sahara. It is striking to note the report's factual, objective outlook, and the extent to which it drew on current scientific knowledge. Hailey himself insisted on this point in his preface: "The sole object for undertaking the Survey was the hope that it might prove of some service to the Powers which have possession of territories in Africa, and of some benefit to the African people. It has been felt that this purpose could best be served by a statement as largely as possible of a factual nature." Commentators also highlighted this aspect: "The second outstanding feature of the Survey as a whole is its objectiveness. It states the facts: it defines the issues. It does not judge: it does not preach" (Coupland, 1939: 6). The *African Survey* thus represented a moment of maximal convergence between scientific

and administrative interests in the objectification of social phenomena. Scientific objectification produced knowledge of a type that could be assimilated by the administration.

Absent from the *Dual Mandate* (there is no entry for “Anthropology” in the index), anthropological knowledge played a crucial role in the *Survey* published 16 years later. In fact, a number of the more important *Survey* collaborators (especially those who wrote preliminary reports) were linked to social anthropology and to the IALC.²⁵ The second chapter, entitled “The African Peoples”, was but an inventory of anthropological knowledge intended for administrations, including nine pages of bibliography. The section dedicated to “Aims and Methods of Social Anthropology” unequivocally supported “modern anthropology” – that is, Malinowski’s redefinition of the field – insofar as it took as its subject matter “social problems” of concern to governments.

A study of cultural origins, by whatever methods it may be pursued [i.e. in the manner of Tylor, Frazer or Elliot Smith], is of less importance than that type of inquiry which concerns itself with existing peoples and their social institutions. This branch of anthropology is variously described as social, practical, and functional; its avowed object is to assist the government and development of the peoples studied, and attention is concentrated on the practical problems involved . . . At its best, it indicates how a desirable reform may be brought about in such a way as to harmonize with the custom of the people whom it affects. (Hailey, 1938: 42–3).

Here we have the affirmation of an equivalence between three ways of describing the only anthropology of importance from a governmental point of view: social (concerning itself with social, and not biological phenomena); functional (explaining the workings of contemporary societies rather than offering an historical reconstruction); and practical (translating practical problems into objects of science). The integration of social anthropology in the *African Survey* is thus indicative of the part it played in the process of redefining pertinent problems, especially insofar as it provided a scientific, and thus legitimate, language in which to formulate them. In particular, it identified colonial problems as essentially social (and cultural), and not strictly as racial.²⁶ The *Survey* was unequivocal in its judgment that studies of mental capabilities or intelligence tests were of no interest for the administration. This scientific debate had corresponding policy implications: if, as some asserted, what was perceived as the “backwardness” of African

peoples had a biological or genetic origin, then any development program would be useless;²⁷ if, on the other hand, the characteristics of African societies had cultural and social roots, then a voluntarist development policy would be justified, especially in education.

As soon as it came out in 1938, the *Survey* replaced the *Dual Mandate* as the bible of the colonial administration. It played a major role in the change of direction of colonial policy (Lee, 1967), which led to the 1940 promulgation of the Colonial Welfare and Development Act (CW&D). For the first time, the CW&D made a provision for an important financial investment on the part of the home country. It encouraged active participation in the colonies on the part of the state, which would take charge of improving living standards and providing social services. The plan assigned a fundamental role to research, which was presented as an indispensable prerequisite for colonial social reform, and it provided for substantial research funding. The Colonial Research Council, of which Hailey would become Chairman, was created to administer these funds (initially £500,000, increasing to £1 million in 1945).

Social anthropology thus appeared during the 1930s as the scientific counterpart of Indirect Rule. (Although this statement seems polemical today, it was a commonplace observation at the time, as a number of anthropologists, led by Malinowski, adhered to the ideal of Indirect Rule.)²⁸ This connection, which was to reach its high point around the time of the Second World War,²⁹ appeared so obvious that those who criticized the ideology of Indirect Rule also questioned anthropology, seen as its scientific core. Various contemporary accounts thus refer to the opposition on the part of “educated Africans”, who condemned Indirect Rule and anthropologists for attempting to “keep the natives down”.³⁰ Representatives of rival disciplines also denounced the monopoly of anthropologists on colonial affairs. One of the more articulate critics, the South African historian Macmillan (1938) specifically questioned the privilege granted to a “science of primitive peoples” at the expense of history, in the study of colonial issues.

A redefinition of the division of labour

The debate within both the Colonial Office and colonial administrations during the 1930s revolved then less around the utility of

anthropology (which was generally recognized), than around the appropriate division of labor between academics and “practical men”. In effect, the demand for knowledge about indigenous societies, brought about by the practice of Indirect Rule, did not necessarily imply the use of outside specialists. What defined the role of the colonial administrator and justified his position of power, notably in the face of the settlers, was the fact that he was “in charge of the natives”. Therefore investment in a knowledge of “native minds” or “native customs” was an appropriate way of fulfilling the professional ideology of the colonial administration. Numerous approving prefaces written by colonial governors to their officers’ works of ethnography or folklore conveyed this message.

The assignment of a research task to an anthropologist with academic credentials can be interpreted as fulfilling a similar legitimizing function. In 1909–1910, 1911–1912 and in 1921–1922, the government of the Sudan thus employed Charles and Brenda Seligman for a survey of the “Tribes of Southern Sudan”, a work that Seligman’s student Evans-Pritchard completed in the 1930s among the Azande and the Nuer (cf. Seligman and Seligman, 1932).³¹ This kind of “ethnic mapping” (the expression is from Richards, 1944) did not imply that help from anthropologists was required to solve specific problems, which fell within the jurisdiction of political officers. In this way, Evans-Pritchard, who had regularly reported the results of his enquiries in government-sponsored *Sudan Notes and Records*, was able to claim that no one had ever asked his or Seligman’s advice on an administrative decision (Evans-Pritchard, 1946) – which does not necessarily mean that their work was deemed “useless” (colonial administrations were not keen on spending money on useless schemes).

However, most “government anthropologists” appointed by colonial governments were District Officers, seconded to devote themselves full time to an activity that was a normal part of the work of any administrator. A famous instance was Rattray, a Senior Political Officer in the Gold Coast, who as a “government anthropologist” produced a series of praised books on the Ashanti. With Indirect Rule, this investment in knowledge had indeed become a necessity, as Lugard pointed out: “in order to develop a system suited to their needs, the District Officer must study their customs and social organisation, for without a knowledge of their social organisation, the result must be a failure” (Lugard, 1922:

220). A minimum competence in Anthropology was soon acknowledged as an integral part of the technical qualifications that a "political officer" needed to possess. In fact, the training programme for Colonial Cadets offered at Oxford and Cambridge from 1926 onwards included basic training in anthropology. In many British colonies, officers were encouraged, through a bonus system, to learn the languages and study the customs of the natives. From 1924 on, the School of African Studies of the University of Cape Town offered a summer vacation course for colonial officers of British Southern Africa. This use of anthropology corresponded to the effort to "professionalize" the function of District Officer, now to be grounded on specific technical competence: the South Rhodesia Native Affairs Department thus justified the establishment in 1923 of an "examination in Native Administration & Customs for Civil Servants" on the grounds that "public administration is a profession calling for a considerable technical equipment in those who practise it" (*NADA*, 1923).³² A scientific knowledge of the natives legitimated both the administration as an institution, and the personal authority of its agents.

Nigeria, cradle of Indirect Rule, presents a particularly interesting case of administrative uses of anthropology (well documented in Forde, 1953; Lackner, 1973; Kuklick, 1991). After the failed experiment in recruiting an "academic" anthropologist, Northcote Thomas, in 1906, the work of "mapping" and "intelligence" was entrusted to Political Officers. Following the Indian model, census and ethnography were associated; the surveys done by the two *Census Commissioners* of Nigeria resulted in publications with a distinctive anthropological bent: Talbot's *The Peoples of Southern Nigeria: A Sketch of their History, Ethnology and Languages with an Abstract of the 1921 Census*; and Meek's *The Northern Tribes of Nigeria: An Ethnographical Account of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria Together with a Report on the 1921 Decennial Issue*.

The use of anthropology became even more systematic after the 1928 Aba uprising ("Women's War"), on the express recommendation of the Secretary of State. Commenting on this in 1931, a Colonial Office civil servant, Tomlinson, presented a viewpoint that was commonly held in the administration:

The need for further investigation makes me all the more inclined to agree ... about the importance of anthropological research. This does not necessarily mean that trained anthropologists should be *brought in from outside*. There are plenty of officers already in the service who have received adequate anthropo-

logical training. The great thing is that their enquiries should not be conducted in the spirit of antiquarian research, but should be directed to . . . the problems presented by native society as a living and changing organism, which are of immediate practical importance to the Administrative Officer. What is meant is that they should be followers of the school of which such men as Professor Malinowski are the chief exponents.³³

Tomlinson favored Malinowski's brand of anthropology over rival schools, but at the same time he insisted that anthropological enquiry came under the competence of Political Officers, provided they had received appropriate training, thereby refuting academic anthropologists' claim to a monopoly.

In fact, a number of Political Officers were seconded in order to carry out a series of "intelligence reports" on "the indigenous social and political organization of the peoples of South Eastern Nigeria, with a view to setting up Native Administrations which would be more in accordance with the institutions and wishes of the people". More than 200 reports were produced between 1930 and 1934.³⁴ The Colonial Administration seemed able to produce its own anthropological specialists: Meek, who had become an "anthropological officer" in the Northern Provinces, was transferred to the south to supervise the inquiries. This investment in the production of knowledge for specifically administrative purposes was to be converted into legitimate "anthropological" knowledge, that is, recognized as such. Meek (1937) wrote *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe: A Study in Indirect Rule*, on the basis of his participation in these reports.³⁵ Their contents were used later for the regional volume of the *Ethnographic Survey of Africa*, produced under the supervision of the International African Institute (Forde and Jones, 1950).

Thus, by the end of the 1930s, anthropological knowledge was integrated into administrative practice: "administrative reorganizations" (e.g. redrawing the boundaries of a district) were preceded by inquiries of an anthropological type.³⁶ Anthropology provided these investigations with a repertoire of tools, ranging from the technical (establishing genealogies, noting kinship, etc.) to the interpretive (from religious features to customs such as "bride-price" or witchcraft). In this way, the production of anthropological knowledge could appear derivative of the work of administration.³⁷

It was the very issue of the division of labor, more than that of the utility of anthropology, which was at the center of a 1930 debate in *Africa* on the strategy to be adopted by the IALC.

Faced with Malinowski's proposition to divide colonial management between scientists and administrators, a proposition that emphasized both their complementarity and the superiority of scientifically trained anthropologists over officers puzzled by the complexity of native institutions, Mitchell, Secretary of Native Affairs in Tanganyika, replied that the most urgent task of the Institute was not to send specialists, whom he likened to "laboratory workers", into the field where they would doubtless be lost, but rather to train "practical men" in anthropology, thus creating the anthropological equivalent of medical "general practitioners". Anthropology's role was duly acknowledged: it could provide "practical men" with technical means to improve their relations with the natives, but there was no need of anthropologists going to the field or meddling in colonial matters (L'Estoile, 1994).³⁸

In the event, Malinowski's proposals served as a program for the IALC, which could be carried out under the Five-year Plan. While a few scholarships were set aside for the training of practical men in anthropology, the bulk of the financial resources provided by the Rockefeller Foundation funded research stays in Africa for students associated with Malinowski at the London School of Economics. Thus they were provided with direct access to the field, without having to depend on the Colonial Administration.³⁹

In fact, it seems that once colonial administrations overcame their initial mistrust, anthropologists were on the whole well received. Some of them even found themselves asked to provide information or entrusted with research assignments (Margaret Read in Nyasaland, Siegfried Nadel in Nigeria, Audrey Richards in Northern Rhodesia, Meyer Fortes⁴⁰ in the Gold Coast).⁴¹ The Rhodes Livingstone Institute was another type of experiment in the use of anthropological expertise (Brown, 1973). The Governor of Northern Rhodesia, Young, justified the creation of a research institute centred on social anthropology in the hope it would help to ease race relations "by providing expert advice upon the potential economic and political future of the two communities". The *African Survey*, granting a specific realm of competence to academic anthropologists, gave official recognition to these practices. If it was necessary for administrators to be trained in anthropology, it was indispensable that governments also call on specialists, professionally trained researchers, who had looser ties to the administrative machine.

A similar conjunction of interests came to light during the 1943

celebration of the "centennial" of the RAI, in opposition to those who were attempting to reassert the validity of a unified Science of Man.⁴² While Hailey, assessing "the Role of Anthropology in Colonial Development", put a strong emphasis on social anthropology, Firth (1944), Malinowski's student and successor at LSE, asserted that the field had become an autonomous discipline, closer to sociology than to physical anthropology or prehistory. This convergence took actual shape in the Colonial Social Science Research Council (CSSRC), which was formed in 1944 to evaluate the needs for knowledge in the framework of the Colonial Welfare and Development program and to fund research projects. Firth himself served as the Council's first Secretary. The CSSRC was the first organization to federate the social sciences in Great Britain (Richards, 1977). Thus it was in direct connection with social planning needs that anthropology affirmed its "social science" nature.⁴³

The strategic importance that social anthropology had won for the project of colonial social transformation also accounts for its rapid rise as an academic discipline. The Hailey *Survey* supported the establishment of social anthropology within the university system specifically in response to the need to train colonial agents.⁴⁴ After 1945, the field benefited from both CSSRC funding as well as its growing presence in an expanding university system. In 1953, there were 38 teaching positions in social anthropology throughout Great Britain (Kuper, 1973: 122).

This evolution has often been characterized as a process of "professionalization", the transition from an "amateur" stage to a "professional" one. However, one should not consider these categories as neutral; they remain salient in academic conflicts, and are commonly applied as value judgments to distinguish "competent" from "incompetent" contributions ("amateurism" is hardly flattering); we ourselves are on the side of the "professionals", constantly mobilizing "professional criteria", in particular in order to distinguish valid, i.e. scholarly, discourse from other, "lay" discourses. One cannot therefore, when writing the history of academic disciplines, simply oppose the categories "amateur" and "professional" as purely descriptive, as if our own interests were not at stake.⁴⁵ This very opposition between "amateurs" and "professionals" was in fact constructed within the very process by which those who were establishing themselves as "professionals" claimed a monopoly on competence.⁴⁶

In anthropology, the establishment of this opposition came

about as a product of struggles around the definition of the division of labor. Academic anthropologists around Malinowski always emphasized the “scientific” character of their contributions, guaranteed by their specialized, professional training. The projects for a colonial reform grounded on science, funded first by the Rockefeller Foundation and then by the CW&D Act, granting academic anthropologists direct access to the “field”, allowed for a total shift in the division of labour. From this point on, anthropologists no longer had to rely on the collaboration of colonial informants to gather their “data”, for they were able to observe first-hand the phenomena that they wanted to study.⁴⁷ The “colonials” found themselves subsequently stripped of their field of competence and marginalized as “amateurs”. In 1946, the foundation of the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) thus marked a double reorientation with regard to the RAI. While stressing the distinction between social anthropology and earlier “generalist” anthropology, the Association, by being open only to holders of doctorates, firmly discriminated between those who defined themselves as capable of achieving “professional standards” and those who were confined to “amateur” status.⁴⁸ Social anthropologists had managed to impose a redefinition of criteria for competence.

This context may help us to better understand the reticence sometimes expressed by administrators faced with the arrival of anthropologists. Tensions resulted less from fears of a possible subversion (anthropologists underwent preliminary screenings by the Colonial Office) than from the objective competition in the field between the two groups: studying matters that had previously been the province of administrators, anthropologists effectively called their competence into question. In turn, administrators often challenged anthropologists’ credentials, as well as their claims to produce an esoteric knowledge deemed superior to that of the “practical men”.

However, Malinowski’s new definition of a competent anthropologist, which combined direct knowledge of the field with the theoretical and comparative skills that characterized earlier “arm-chair anthropologists”, allowed social anthropologists to make a successful bid for the monopoly of scientific competence, as evidenced by their growing recognition in the academic market. University recruitment for teaching positions for Colonial Cadets first offered new career opportunities to retired Colonial Officers

who had become anthropologists in the old way, such as Rattray, who taught at Oxford after leaving his post as government anthropologist, or Meek and Driberg at Cambridge. This type of recruitment gradually disappeared, and its products were progressively marginalized on the basis of their lack of theoretical competence. Similarly, the Chair of Anthropology at Cambridge first went to two former Indian Civil Service men, Hutton and then Hodson (who had been in charge of the Indian Census); it fell into the hands of the social anthropologists with Meyer Fortes in 1950. Meanwhile, those holding doctorates from rival schools (such as University College London, which offered a definition of anthropological knowledge by then outdated) and who had not had direct access to the field (given Malinowski's monopoly) did not get teaching positions in Britain.⁴⁹

Social anthropology established itself as a dual faceted "professional group" – on one side a producer of academic knowledge and on the other a provider of colonial expertise. Indeed, these functioned as two poles within the same "reputational system", to use Whitley's (1984) terms, simultaneously exercising control over training, access to resources (especially through the CSSRC), and career evaluation.⁵⁰ The profound continuity between these two poles allowed in-depth research on topics of "practical importance" (from political systems to social change), which in turn provided the empirical underpinnings of contributions that would come to be recognized as fundamental. Isaac Schapera's work, first as Professor of Social Anthropology at Cape Town, then at the London School of Economics, exemplifies this continuity. From the 1930s on, he produced for the administration of British Bechuanaland a series of reports on "pressing questions" (the codification of native custom, land problems and erosion, the effects of labour migrations on tribal life) that led to publications still considered landmarks in ethnography (Schapera, e.g. 1938, 1943, 1947).

The underlying tension between these two poles explains the importance that the debate over "applied anthropology" took on after 1945. All prominent anthropologists took part in the debate, for what was at stake was crucial: both defining the place of social anthropology within academia and, within the discipline, determining the relationship between knowledge produced for the administration and knowledge produced for an emerging academic market, the latter oriented (1) towards teaching needs, and (2)

towards an audience of professional peers.⁵¹ Positions ranged between two extremes, going from a plea for the active participation of anthropologists in planning, to an evocation of the dangers involved in abandoning “pure” research. Some anthropologists defended continuity between practical interests and fundamental research. Audrey Richards (1946), for example, arguing for the active participation of anthropologists in what was then termed “social engineering”, conceived in 1946 of “Colonial Problems as a Challenge to the Social Sciences”. She heralded the advent of a new relationship between social anthropology and social planning: “Caught up in the era of Colonial planning, anthropologists found themselves considering not only how to cushion the effects of change, but how to bring changes about as rapidly as possible – to study local grouping in order to facilitate the spread of mass education or the planning of social services, for instance” (Richards, 1946). Similarly, Nadel, in a letter to E.W. Smith, quoted in *Africa* (1946: 187) stressing “the need for scientists to share in the planning of society”, asked: “Who is more urgently needed than the social scientist? And what field of social planning more eligible than that of native society?”

On the opposite extreme, Evans-Pritchard (1946), Reader at Oxford after 1937, called for a return to an anthropological orthodoxy. Drawing a sharp distinction between “pure” and “applied” anthropology, blurred in Malinowski’s program, Evans-Pritchard strongly reaffirmed a hierarchical division between fundamental scientific problems, and the practical problems of interest to the administration. He recommended that this distinction be institutionalized through the establishment of a corps of anthropologists within the administration itself. The stands taken in the debate appear to correspond broadly to the institutional position of each contributor: the more he or she was solidly anchored in a well-established university, the more rapidly the anthropologist was prone to distance him- or herself from practical problems. Marginal at first, Evans-Pritchard’s standpoint was progressively strengthened as the discipline developed within the university system, so that the Oxonian dichotomy between “fundamental” and “applied” anthropology was consolidated.

In a sense, the debate over “anthropology and colonialism” in the 1970s took up this argument on “applied anthropology”, although in a different context. Social anthropology had by this point become solidly institutionalized within academia, to the

point where its autonomy could be taken for granted. The link originally proclaimed as consubstantial with a perspective of colonial management had by that time become a stigma that had to be shed in order to preserve the noble status of the discipline within the academic world; at the same time it could be used as a weapon in internal struggles, to attack the institutional and intellectual hegemony of those who dominated the field, as they had all been active during the colonial period.

Conclusions

1. It was therefore well before the beginning of decolonization, from the 1930s onward, that social anthropology became associated with a reformist, "development" project, a term whose changing meaning it helped to shape. British social anthropology proposed a scientific approach to the "Native Problem", and was available to play the role of scientific auxiliary to development in colonial Africa. It was ready to adapt to the post-colonial situation, in which those in charge of large development projects were faced with many of the same difficulties that had beset their colonial predecessors. Lucy Mair (1956) was to insist on the essential continuity, over and above differences of formulation, between the Victorian civilizing project and the post-Second World War development project, both aiming at progress through directed social transformation: "The civilising mission of Europeans in the Tropics, as it used to be called, the diffusion of technical assistance to underdeveloped areas, as it is called today, consists precisely in these processes. In the early period, the emphasis was on the whole more moral, in the latter it is more technological (p. 11)." The instrumental and legitimating functions that the "science of native peoples" had for colonial theory and practice did not disappear at once with decolonization. In fact, there is evidence to support the claim that colonial anthropology (along with North American anthropology) acted as a matrix for the use of anthropology by United Nations agencies for development projects.⁵² Anthropology, however, gradually lost its quasi-monopoly over matters having to do with "dependent" or "developing" peoples: it had to suffer large encroachments upon its "preserve" by (North American) political science and above all economics, which has become the science of development *par excellence*. This competi-

tion eventually led to a shrinkage of anthropology's field of expertise; it now plays a secondary role, reduced to analysing the "human factors" – or "irrational elements" – that cause development programs to fail.⁵³

2. The genealogy of development anthropology and the process of autonomization of social anthropology are thus intertwined. What later evolved into development anthropology, far from being a secondary by-product of "legitimate" social anthropology – as it is often considered today, given its intellectual and institutional status as a "subdiscipline" – was originally produced by the same matrix: an effort to build a science of social phenomena that could serve as a basis for the resolution of colonial "social problems". Insofar as anthropology was able to reformulate "social problems" as "scientific problems" it was able to become a "social science".⁵⁴ Social anthropology's strategic importance for the colonial project of social transformation thus appears to have been an essential factor in the autonomization of the discipline.

3. The recognition of social anthropology's expertise allowed for a radical shift in the division of labor involved in the production of knowledge, thus permitting the autonomization of social anthropology, i.e. the establishment of a monopoly of interpretation on social phenomena in "backward" societies. Academic anthropologists strove to accentuate what distinguished them from colonial agents, emphasizing the scientific nature of their approach to social phenomena, guaranteed by their *professional* competence. The undeniable tensions between anthropologists and colonial administrators, competing for control over the same "field", should not however be permitted to mask the convergence between scientific and administrative forms of rationality. A shared interest in objectifying social phenomena brought together social anthropology and an administration looking to better understand the populations under its rule.

4. One of the reasons that may account for the virulence of the debates about anthropology's role in colonialism is that, beyond questioning the involvement of certain individuals, the issue seems to threaten the entire anthropological project. It is as if exposing the link between practical and cognitive interests in the emergence of knowledge in the colonial context (nonetheless affirmed, in this case, by the actors themselves – at least for a time) might radically invalidate this knowledge. The critical analysis of implicit assumptions in colonial science is more necessary than ever, as it can serve

to point out both the “blind spots” of interpretative schemas, sometimes still in use today, and the extent to which they resulted from an insufficient consideration of the conditions of observation in the colonial context.⁵⁵ However, to posit that knowledge produced in conjunction with a practical project (be it “colonial” or not) is a priori invalid, as if fundamentally vitiated, is to confuse ethics and epistemology by applying contemporary ethical categories in the evaluation of the historical processes that produced those same categories.⁵⁶ This is not to say that one must preclude all ethical or political judgments on the production and usage of knowledge, but rather that one should try to avoid any confusion between this type of judgment and the reconstruction of the conditions of knowledge production, meant as a contribution to a critical epistemology of the social sciences.

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Notes

1. Anthropologists are called upon to resolve a problem “that neither freedom nor technology can solve: how to induce the peasantry to want what they need”, as the anthropologist Lucy Mair (1956) noted.

2. By “cognitive interest” I mean here “interest in engaging in an active process of knowing”, and more specifically “interest in producing knowledge” on a particular topic; by “practical interest” I mean “interest in engaging in an action upon the social world, be it of transformation or conservation”. “Cognitive” in this sense is contrasted with “practical” as “knowing” is with “doing”. On the links between concern for social reform and the emergence of social sciences, see e.g. Wagner et al. (1991) and Topalov (1994).

3. On scientific fields as loci of struggle for the monopoly of scientific competence, see Bourdieu (1975).

4. On this debate, see in particular Asad (1973) Leclerc (1972) and the defensive testimonies collected by Loizos (1977). Functional anthropology allegedly owes its success to the fact that it answered the needs of colonial administration at a time when the latter was emphasizing the stabilization of conquests (Stauder, 1980). Despite certain questionable assertions, Feuchtwang (1973) nonetheless shed light on a number of essential points.

5. This was not unrelated to the context of the Vietnam war, and to the revelation of the role played by (North American) anthropologists in the preparation of "psychological warfare". In its most extreme guises, this calling into question took the form of a denunciation of the ethical deficiencies of an individual or a group.

6. As illustrated by the recent critique by Jack Goody (1995) of Kuklick (1991).

7. According to the principle of C. Wright Mills, cited as an epigraph to the fine study of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute by Richard Brown (1973). The chapter in Kuklick (1991) entitled "Scholars and Practical Men" follows a similar logic. Begging the question in this way, however, leads one to forget that, as Foucault suggested, knowledge is constitutive of the relation of domination, particularly in its specifically modern form.

8. This type of knowledge, at the time of the colonial wars for example, mobilized simultaneously geography, cartography and knowledge of the divisions, alliances, and the power mechanisms of indigenous groups, etc. (see Nordman and Raison, 1980).

9. The debate has often taken the shape of an exchange of indictments and pleas for the defense that fail to offer a sufficient analysis of the complexity of the colonial phenomenon. (See, for a critique of the vision of monolithic colonialism, Thomas, 1994.)

10. Taking Weber as a starting point, this line of argument also borrows from Habermas (1968). It is a matter of considering scientific activity in terms of the objective gains that it yields, which in no way implies a judgment on the "scientific" validity of the knowledge produced.

11. Science can thus reinforce both the legitimization of the rational nature of bureaucratic domination (which Habermas relates to "rationalization in the Freudian sense"), and also the belief in the personal charisma (the symbolic status) of the agent of authority.

12. For instance, the 1924 *Report on the British Cameroons* for the Mandates Commission stated that "the highly organised state of Dikwa cannot be dealt with on the same lines as the primitive hill-pagans who are still in a state of savagery". The differences between various versions of this master-narrative, highly significant in a scholarly context, became rather unimportant when it served as a general frame for colonial policy.

13. Even if this "development" was seen as taking place over a long period of time and became a true political priority only after 1940 (see Lee, 1967). See also, on the historical context, Hetherington (1978) and vol. 7 of the *Cambridge History of Africa, 1905-1940*, especially ch. 1, "The Imperial Mind".

14. Lugard cites as an epigraph to his book both the above excerpt of the League of Nations pact and Chamberlain's phrase "we develop new territories as trustees for civilization, for the commerce of the world". (These two aspects of "development" will continue to coexist in the notion until the present day.) Former Governor of Nigeria, Lugard was the major figure of the African colonial establishment in the inter-war period (Perham, 1960).

15. This point represents a strong qualification of Victorian evolutionism, stripped of the idea of a unilinear development.

16. See the reports on the 1925 Le Zoute Conference in *International Review of Missions*, Special Issue on Africa, 1926 and also Lugard, 1933.

17. The Colonial Office had set up in 1923, through the mediation of the secretary of the International Missionary Council, Joseph Oldham, an Advisory

Committee on Education in British Tropical Africa. This Committee, chaired by Lugard, grouped "experts" in education in Africa, especially missionaries; it formed the nucleus of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures.

18. Rather than consider them "as any academic will recognize, a standard grant proposal" (Cell, 1992), one has to look at the conditions that enabled these texts to have both scientific and political significance and which make them unthinkable today, except as exemplars of rhetorical skill in obtaining funding (see L'Estoile, 1994).

19. A similar point was also made by Radcliffe-Brown. Rival research programs, all accepting the framework of the "Science of Man", were Tylorian and Frazerian history of civilization, the diffusionist school of University College, London, the Oxford school (Maret), Seligman's ethnology, etc. Seligman, who had been Malinowski's mentor at the LSE, reacted strongly against his program, but was defeated within the Institute; their personal relations soon deteriorated.

20. "The aim of the Institute is ... to provide through disinterested study of the facts a scientific sociological basis for dealing with practical questions of administration and education" (IIALC, 1932: 4).

21. Margery Perham thanked Malinowski in the preface to her *Native Administration in Nigeria* (1937). In her application for an IIALC scholarship, she described her research project on the functioning of "native administration" as a supplement to the anthropological work done on native groups in the framework of the Five-year Plan. After a degree in history at Oxford, Perham took courses in anthropology at the London School of Economics and participated actively in Malinowski's 1933-1934 seminar. Research Lecturer in Colonial Administration at Oxford (1935-1939), then Reader (after 1939), she became the main specialist of African colonial issues. After the war she headed the Oxford Institute of Colonial Studies.

22. While Margery Perham developed a privileged relationship with Lugard, whose biography she would later write (Perham, 1956, 1960), Lucy Mair, during the preparation of the *African Survey*, became the direct collaborator of Hailey, the theorist of the new colonial deal. Similarly, Audrey Richards, another of Malinowski's students and an IIALC Fellow, became Hailey's assistant in the Colonial Office during the war. She was later "Special Lecturer in Colonial Studies" at the London School of Economics (1944-1945) and then Reader in Anthropology before taking over the directorship of the Institute for Social Research in Makerere, and then finally heading the Cambridge Centre for African Studies (see Kuper, 1996).

23. Malinowski's seminar at the LSE brought together not only students but also a number of colonial civil servants, active or retired, and missionaries on leave, some of whom had scholarships from the IIALC for training in anthropology. The seminar constituted one of the principal locuses for the parallel development of social anthropology and Indirect Rule.

24. Its African Circle, a closed club of less than 40 members, included, notably, Lugard, Oldham, Audrey Richards, Lucy Mair, Margery Perham and Hailey.

25. Oldham, then Administrative Director of the IIALC, played an important role in the initiative. In addition to Malinowski, who was consulted regularly, participants included: Lugard, who handed to Hailey the drafts he had initially prepared for a new edition of his *Dual Mandate*; E.W. Smith; Margery Perham; Lucy Mair, who put off starting her fieldwork for several months to dedicate herself to

the Survey (she researched for and drafted the chapters on "Land" and "Native Policies"); and the South African Krige, holder of a law degree from Oxford, who had anthropological training under Malinowski, researched the chapters on "Native Legal Systems".

26. It is significant that the "Problems of Ethnic Classification" were dispatched in eight pages, while 20 pages were dedicated to "Studies in African Social Life".

27. Such was, for example, the conclusion of a Kenyan doctor, Dr Gordon (1934), who claimed that cranial capacity and thus intelligence of native Kenyans was significantly inferior to that of whites.

28. Malinowski clearly endorsed "indirect rule" on numerous occasions. For instance: "There are few subjects in applied anthropology which are as interesting to the ethnologist as that of Indirect Rule, for in this policy we have a practical recognition that Native institutions work. The anthropologist, as one who has analyzed and realized the importance of indigenous African cultures, is therefore likely to be in sympathy with supporters of indirect rule for those regions where tribal authority has not yet been undermined" (from notes, probably drafted in 1938, on "Indirect Rule and its Scientific Planning", posthumously edited by P. Kaberry; see Malinowski, 1946).

29. In some occasions Malinowski claimed for anthropologists the role of "expert advisor" and proposed an instrumental vision of the role, suggesting, for example, that the salaries paid in industrial areas take into account the economic needs of the "reserves" from which the workers came, "on the basis of a strictly scientific survey undertaken by an economist, an anthropologist and a medical expert" (Malinowski, 1938b: 900).

30. See L'Estoile (1997b).

31. Jones (1974) suggested that the creation of posts for government anthropologists was the result of a competition for prestige between colonies: Sudan, the most prestigious of the African colonies, was the first to imitate the Indian model of producing a scientific knowledge of native populations, and was then copied in turn by the West African protectorates.

32. In 1923, it also created a journal for facilitating the circulation of knowledge of the natives between officers, *Native Affairs Department Annual (NADA)*. The production of knowledge about native societies was encouraged by the administration: thus, officers of native affairs were reminded that their contributions to the *Annual* would be taken into account in decisions about promotions (*NADA*, 1926).

33. Colonial Office Minutes, 3.1.1931, quoted in Lackner (1973; emphases are mine).

34. Margery Perham (1937) provides a summary of the contents of these reports (see ch. XV: "The South East: Native Social Organization". The first section is significantly named "The Anthropological Task").

35. More detailed anthropological investigations on Ibo women were assigned to S. Leith-Ross and M. Green, both of whom wrote first reports and then books (Leith-Ross, 1938); Margaret Green (1947) even wrote a standard structural-functional monograph.

36. Kuklick demonstrates convincingly how evolutionist anthropology served at the same time as a blueprint of, and justification for, undertaking the "consolidation" of existing tribes or the creation of new political units, supposedly on a higher rung of the evolutionary ladder. Rattray thus played an important role in preparing the instauration of Indirect Rule in the Gold Coast. In its ideal-typical version, this

type of anthropology, which was directed at the reconstruction of the past, reinforced a naturalist vision of the social world. The aim was most often to reconstruct as precisely as possible the pasts of colonized societies, in order to discover the "natural" social organization of one people; this quasi-archeological conception of anthropology was in keeping with "antiquarian" concerns.

37. Charles Jeffries's official presentation of *The Colonial Empire and its Civil Service* (1938: 197) attests to the routine nature of the use of anthropology by the colonial civil service: "From time to time, special appointments such as that of government anthropologists are made; but in general anthropological study is carried out in the field by the administrative officers who are in direct contact with the people and who, as already remarked, receive a grounding in anthropology as part of their preliminary course of training. Many important contributions to anthropological knowledge have been made by members of the Colonial Service, as a result either of researches specially commissioned by a Colonial Government, or of observations gathered in the course of the daily work of administration."

38. Mitchell himself promoted a type of experiment in which the anthropologist played the role of expert charged with answering a list of specific questions formulated in collaboration with an administrator. The results of this experiment were published by the IALC as *Anthropology in Action* (Brown and Hutt, 1935).

39. In fact, a 1939 report showed that while two administrators and five missionaries received funding, the majority of scholarships went to academics.

40. Fortes for instance, on the request of the administration of the Gold Coast, published a handbook on "Marriage Law among the Tallensi" (1937).

41. Others were recruited into civil or military administration during the war: Evans-Pritchard thus served as an Officer of Native Affairs in Cyrenaica; Nadel became government anthropologist in the Sudan (Nadel, 1947).

42. See the proceedings of the centennial celebration in *Man*, Jan.-Feb.: 2-23 (1944).

43. This assertion may not appear particularly bold today. However, the "Anthropology" entry of the 1929 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* classified the discipline as that "branch of natural history that deals with the human species". According to Audrey I. Richards, writing in 1944, "15 years ago anthropological students studied archaeology, physical anthropology and technology as well as social anthropology, the subject of this article. To-day, social anthropology, the study of human cultures, has become a distinct discipline, and most of its followers are prepared to describe it as a particular type of sociology" (Richards, 1944).

44. "It is also of importance that facilities should be provided at the universities, and in the form of manuals on technique, for government officers to be trained in anthropological investigation, both during the courses which they take before entering their appointments, and subsequently when on leave" (Hailey, 1938: 57). In 1946, Evans-Pritchard stated that the majority of students enrolled in anthropology courses were future Colonial Officers, educationists or social workers.

45. Just as one cannot analyze the relationship between science and magic in ancient Greece without reflecting on the historical construction of this dichotomy, which we have inherited. As G.E. Lloyd (1991) points out, the opposition of "magic" and "science" in Greece, like that of "mythos" and "logos", did not refer to "objective" categories but was constructed in the context of a polemic intended to discredit predecessors' claims to truth.

46. Attempting to establish precisely who was the first "professional" anthropol-

ogist, as does Langham (1981), when he tries to demonstrate that Radcliffe-Brown was the first to fulfill "professional" criteria, is thus an illusory endeavour.

47. The first generation of doctoral students from the LSE (Firth, Schapera, Powdermaker, Richards, Read, etc.) wrote theoretical, "library theses" before going to the field. It was only later that students, through the various research programmes on "social problems", gained early access to the "field" and that "field-work" became a major component of the PhD.

48. The announcement in *Man* (1947) of the creation of the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) typically referred to "a general opinion among British social anthropologists that the subject has reached a stage of development warranting the establishment of a *professional organization*. Its aims are (1) to promote the study and teaching of social anthropology as a *specialized branch* of anthropology; (2) to represent the interests and maintain the *professional standards* of the subject, etc." (emphases are mine). The ASA success both reflected and buttressed the academic expansion of the subject: its membership rose from 21 at the time of its creation to 60 in 1953 (a third of whom were outside Great Britain).

49. Daryll Forde, who earned a doctorate at University College London, is an apparent exception, having converted successfully to social anthropology, including the study of social change.

50. Audrey Richards, for example, even if she felt her career had suffered from her choices, was highly respected for her scientific competence (cf. Kuper, 1996). Likewise, Lucy Mair occupied a relatively dominated position but was nonetheless considered a fully fledged anthropologist. She was even the author of an *Introduction to Social Anthropology* (1965).

51. Firth (1944) explicitly proposed developing two types of publications, one aimed at specialists, the other exoteric.

52. In the early 1950s, Alfred Métraux (1953: 880) thus claimed: "Their very existence [of anthropologists] might be overlooked, were it not pointed out by English-speaking officials, who seem to be almost alone in realizing that there is a practical value in anthropology. The services rendered by anthropologists to British colonial administration have considerably influenced the status of anthropology in international administration." Elements for a reconstruction of this process are to be found in a recent ASA monograph (Grillo and Rew, 1985).

53. It seems that, given the continued failure of large-scale development projects, anthropology, which allows for the "consideration of cultural specificities", is of growing importance.

54. A study of developments in France during the same period would confirm this hypothesis. The most successful attempts to establish a "social science" on the British model were G. Balandier and P. Mercier's "sociology of dependent peoples", developed within the Institut Français de l'Afrique Noire (IFAN) under conditions similar to those in British anthropology (see L'Estoile, 1997c).

55. See, for instance, for a criticism of what "primitive exchange" theories owe to their leaving aside the colonial context, and an attempt at a more appropriate re-contextualization, Thomas (1991).

56. The fact that the situation of domination was in this case, as in others, constitutive of the production of knowledge and as such must be subject to an epistemological critique, does not necessarily invalidate that knowledge. A denunciation of colonial anthropology has at times served as a substitute ritual for a true examination of what is really at stake in the objectification of social phenomena.

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