Inside-Out and Outside-In? Global Development Theory, Policy, and Youth

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Abstract  Humanity is young: In 2006, over a third (34 percent, or 2.2 billion) were under age 18 and almost half were under age 25. Moreover, the near majority (47.6 percent) of young people ages 15–24 live in moderate poverty (< $2 per day; 18 percent live in extreme poverty, < $1 per day), 15 percent are undernourished (Curtain 2004), and at least 14.4 percent are unemployed (United Nations 2005). The demographics of youth (defined as persons ages 15–24) reflect tectonic shifts in health, education, and economy. First among these shifts is the success in global efforts to increase infant and child survival that has combined with residual high fertility to yield the largest-ever cohort of young people (Lloyd 2006). Second are the worldwide advances toward universal schooling whereby in 2006 88 percent of primary school aged children and 78 percent of secondary school aged youth were in school even as disparities in accessibility and quality of education increased (Watkins 2008). Third is globalization and urbanization (half the world’s population now lives in cities) that have transformed the media, mobility, and economic landscapes for youth, creating youth cultures and opening opportunities but also competition for those opportunities on an unprecedentedly global scale (Kagia 2005). Such massive shifts involve the reorganization of lifecourse cultural models for how to get and live a life, with consequent changes in parent and youth priorities, perceptions, and behaviors. Thus, circumstances
converge to create new fields of possibility but also of risk and inequity for today’s young people.

I open this analysis with an exploration of a dual model in the logic of “development,” integrating human development and socioeconomic development, as this logic informs—and increasingly is complicated by—global transformations over the last 50 years. The logic drives society-to-individual (outside-in) investments in health and education early in life with the expectation of a return later through reciprocal gains in lifetime productivity that benefit society as a whole (inside-out). I then proceed to weigh the current burden and benefits of this approach as it bears on young people at the global level. I assess the relationship of rapid culture change and cultural models of the lifecourse to make the case that lifecourse cultural models offer a potent framework for mediating among realities, perceptions, and behaviors of youth, parents, and policies. Finally, I examine the local dynamics in the social production or mitigation of suffering with a case study of former child soldiers in Nepal.

My overarching purpose in this article is to draw attention to global youth, and how their needs are or are not met by prevailing logics that drive policies influencing their entire lives. Although 86 percent of young people live in developing countries (Lloyd 2006), only a minute fraction of the research on adolescent development and emerging adulthood originates there and much of it comes from anthropology, particularly psychological anthropology. This discussion draws on case studies from collaborative anthropological work aimed at narrowing that information gap, by tracking pathways in human development and health disparities in such settings. It also illustrates the need and value for the constructively critical cultural analysis and research from psychological anthropology in dialogue with policy and practice to recognize and promote the needs of youth. As such, the analysis complements existing critiques of development policies that call for enlarged agendas toward capacities to build lives worth living.

**Multiple Meanings of Development and the Concept of Human Capital**

The divergent meanings of development are not merely semantic concerns, for they reflect foundational assumptions about relationships between individual and society, particularly with regard to human welfare. These assumptions permeate research, policy, and programs and thus have practical force, while they also have cultural salience and thence gain personal and collective force as well. Development itself is commonly taken to be socioeconomic advancement of societies or nations. Human development has disparate meanings. Biomedicine and several branches of public health and the social sciences each study aspects of human development at the individual level, as the processes of physical, psychological, and sociobehavioral change across the life course. Economics, demography, and development studies, however, define human development on the societal level (society human development, or sHD) as “a process of enlarging people’s choices,” particularly the acquisition and use of
capabilities “to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and self respect” (ul Haq 1990:10). The use of sHD in the sense of expanded choices and realized potential aims to draw attention away from a purely material-economic view of development as economic growth and put people at the center of development, the ultimate purpose of which should be expanded human welfare (Ranis 2004). This enlarged sense of sHD nevertheless ratifies the role of economic growth as critical to development in every sense, and has pervaded the logic of actors and agencies regarding development and, to some degree, globalization.

Prefiguring the sHD approach, the seminal concept of human capital arose from economics and cuts across diverse conceptualizations of development, by referring to embodied knowledge and capacities that support production of economic value (Becker 1964). Human capital comprises skills, literacy, strength, and health related to labor capacity, and as such, human capital formation should fuel social-economic transformation. The concept has been criticized for overlooking the sociostructural determinants of the capacity to use or benefit from human capital (Sen 1979) as well as for its focus on economic value. Sen’s critiques launched the capabilities approach that stresses personally and socially realistic opportunity and emphasizes freedom (in terms of functional capabilities), choice (in the classic microeconomic sense), and intangible socioemotional “goods” (e.g., affiliation, control) that make life worth living (Nussbaum 2000, 2011). The capabilities approach inspired development economists to form the Human Development Index, in use by the United Nations Development Program since 1990. Despite this powerful critique and alternate account of development, impact on standard development practices has accumulated slowly. The present analysis aims to support the case for reconceptualizing development and suggests why change has been slow.

The concept of human capital appropriated from scholarship in policy and practice has informed global development activities for over 40 years and bolsters an emphasis on two lynchpins of human capital formation, namely education and health. Health and education programs essentially provide outside-in, society-to-individual routes to building human capital, by providing social resources aimed to build embodied capital by promoting physical wellbeing and acquisition of knowledge and skills during the course of development. In turn, embodied human capital is expected to yield inside-out, individual-to-society returns by forming the basis for a productive, healthy adulthood that turns the wheel of progress and pays back outside-in investments. By the calculus of this model, outside-in social production of embodied capital during individual development works in synergy with inside-out social returns based on embodied capital during adulthood. Youth stand at a social watershed, namely the transition between outside-in investments in children and inside-out returns from adults. In effect, they are expected to realize, or begin to realize, the anticipated return on investments. In consequence, they experience the fit or misfit of the logics of “development” as will be discussed below.
Education and Development

“Development” can denote lifetime changes of individuals, the processes of socioeconomic advancement of a population, or the realization of human potential or capacities in a society. All three are presumed linked, but how the linkages work may be more variable than universal. The presumed mediating role of education in individual welfare and societal development is a case in point. Education has long been regarded as a universal catalyst for poverty reduction, health improvements, and overall social-economic development (Gorseline 1932; Walsh 1935). Accordingly, vast effort and resources have been expended on convincing nations and individuals of this catalytic role, and then implementing universal schooling through primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Education—literacy skills in particular—is widely regarded as “fundamental to informed decision-making, personal empowerment, active and passive participation in local and global social community” (Stromquist 2005:14). From this perspective, the wide-reaching benefits of literacy include human (e.g., self-esteem, empowerment), political (participation, democracy, ethnic equality), cultural (cultural change and preservation), social (health, reproductive behavior, gender equality, childcare), and economic (national growth, income) advantages (Hannum and Buchman 2003). Clearly, this logic puts education and literacy at the heart of human development in sHD terms: for example, in 1995 the United Nations voted education as first among the ten priority areas for youth development (United Nations 2005).

Conviction of the need for education swept the globe over the last century. By 2002, youth worldwide spent an average of 10.5 years in school (Burnett 2005). Surveys taken 1995–2005 document that the project for universal education had advanced to embrace enrolments at 87 percent of primary school aged children and 78 percent of secondary school aged youth, yielding literacy rates at 82 percent of adults and 87 percent of youth (Watkins 2007). The project is incomplete: such statistics hide substantial inequities in access to and quality of education on economic, ethnic-regional, gender lines. For example, 156.4 million youth remain illiterate (Burnett 2005).

Given these numbers, the inconsistency of evidence in support of the core logic—that education fuels economic growth and development—is remarkable. And here we see how scholarship can reciprocally inspire policy and critically gauge its results. For individuals, the direct causal link between education and income is evident and widespread (Krueger and Lindahl 2001). But societal economic returns beyond the personal benefits from schooling have been more difficult to establish on a global level, and for individual countries, expansion of schooling has not guaranteed better economic conditions benefiting the whole population (Hanushek and Wößmann 2008). Studies finding no or inconsistent relationships between increased educational attainment in the labor force and key economic indicators challenged an axiom of development theory and stimulated review of basic assumptions as well as concern over the quality of data and the problems of establishing causality (e.g., disentangling the impact of education on growth and vice versa; see Hannum and Buchman 2003; Krueger and Lindahl 2001; Pritchett 2001).
Recent analyses suggest that it is results from schooling, rather than years of schooling that matter. Measures of literacy and cognitive skills do appear to have positive relationships not only to individual income but also to income distribution and economic growth (Coulombe and Tremblay 2006; Hanushek and Woßmann 2008). These analyses identify benefits from average rather than unequal literacy, from education of women, and from a mix of skill levels. But they also reveal wide disparities in skill formation not evident in school enrolment and academic attainment, but that argue a daunting need to restructure educational systems. Disparities in efficacy of education systems further compound economic disparities at the regional or national level. That overall education level in countries predicts their differential ability to benefit from the recent economic changes of globalization exemplifies this point (Ciccone and Papaioannou 2009).

**Health and Development**

Health forms the second cornerstone of outside-in formation of embodied capital toward social-economic development. Here, as in education, the statistics are dramatic. The prime targets for outside-in investment have been under-five mortality and growth-nutrition indices (reviewed in Worthman 2009). The first goal is child survival, for mortality rates among children under age five greatly exceed those of any other age group until late in life (age 60 and above). Worldwide efforts over the last 50 years have dramatically improved early survival and cut the global under-five mortality rate from 159 to 68 per 1,000 live births by 2007 (UNICEF 2008). The second goal is child welfare, for which the widely used physical indicators are child growth and nutrition. Here the results have been more mixed and the selection of reference groups is contested: rates of severe malnutrition (stunting: height-for-age < 2 SD below reference median; wasting: weight-for-age < 2 SD below median) have declined, but in 2005, stunting still afflicted nearly 30 percent of children and wasting, over 20 percent. Initial differences and unequal rates of decline have maintained or exacerbated regional disparities that highlight the dependence of child health and nutrition on the material and social conditions of rearing.

Child mortality and anthropometrics represent merely “the tip of the iceberg” of early losses to human potential (Grantham-McGregor et al. 2007:60) that curtail the capabilities of youth later on. These markers of child welfare derive significance from their representation of embodied capital, namely how a child’s potential is being nurtured and realized under the conditions in which she or he is growing up. An emerging, more inclusive view highlights psychosocial development, comprising cognitive, socioemotional, and sensory-motor dimensions, for which health and nutrition are necessary but not sufficient conditions. Based on the performance of children with stunting and extreme poverty (adjusted income < $1 per day), an estimated 200 million children under age five fail to reach their psychosocial potential (Grantham-McGregor et al. 2007). The strong associations of stunting and poverty with inadequate rearing conditions make them good indicators of poor child development. The impact of these indicators on school and cognitive performance is powerful. WHO and UNICEF data show an eight percent drop in rates of reaching the final grade
of primary school for every ten percent rise in national prevalence of stunting. Additionally, school attainment rates fall by over six percent for every ten percent increase in poverty. The prevalence of these risk factors is high: nearly one-third of children in developing nations are stunted, and 37 percent live in absolute poverty (Gordon et al. 2003).

Youth embody the cumulative effects of their rearing conditions and reflect the strengths and limitations of care for children, the outside-in investments per development theory. Furthermore, youth are where the rubber meets the road as the strengths and vulnerabilities formed in development hit the demands of transitioning into adulthood. The human potential approach highlights the impact of nutrition and health on youth psychosocial development, including educational attainments and capabilities. During adolescence and transition to early adulthood, the dimensions of psychosocial development expand to a new set of cognitive, socioemotional, and skill domains. These parallel a period of brain maturation that expands cognitive-emotional capacities and alters their regulation, and is associated with the emergence of romantic emotions and sexual behavior, an increase in independence and risk-taking behavior, and shifts in orientation to self and others (Steinberg 2008). The impact of negotiating these changes is directly reflected in a new set of health issues, namely in injuries, and mental and behavioral challenges (see Figure 1; Patel et al. 2007a). Hence, adolescents and emerging adults commonly are associated with their risks, rather than their potential; ages 15–24 in particular comprise a period when smoking commences, sexual risk-taking accelerates, substance use and abuse peaks, accidents rise dramatically, mood disorders and psychoses (particularly schizophrenia) emerge, and suicide and homicide rates accelerate (Bearinger et al. 2007; Patton and Viner 2007; United Nations 2005). Rates of sexual and political victimization escalate, in part as youth are differentially affected by armed conflict.

But not all youth encounter such difficulties, many of which recent evidence traces to early and current experience and conditions. For example, in a literature largely drawn from western settings, harsh early family conditions and childhood maltreatment systematically have been observed to interact with current hardship to predict risk for mental health problems (Repetti et al. 2002), including depression (Taylor et al. 2006), suicide (McGowan et al. 2009), and antisocial behavior (Kim-Cohen et al. 2006) among youth. Furthermore, availability of psychosocial resources such as hopefulness and self-esteem moderate the impact of stressors (Taylor et al. 2008). The sociocultural factors that drive exposure to adversity early in life and later on converge to moderate vulnerability and resilience to life challenges that confront youth (Kohrt et al. 2008). Such findings, albeit in limited settings, concur with other evidence for the powerful role of environment and hence culture in human development and health (outside-in; see Worthman and Costello 2009).

The Gap in the Map

The outside-in–inside-out view of human development’s relationship to socioeconomic development includes a set of assumptions about how social resources (schooling, health care)
will shape individual lives during rapid social change and globalization. These assumptions map successful human life course development, in terms of long-term life chances, health, and prosperity, as a product of investments in health and education that will, in turn, drive the engine of economic development. Specifically, the expectation is that educated and healthier youth will be positioned to pursue more and better life options, particularly employment, and be better able to flourish in them. Real gains in scores on specific cognitive tests such as IQ are evident with modernization, although the meaning of such tests remains debated (Flynn 2007; Gauvain and Munroe 2009). Not only policymakers but also parents and their children have bought into this outside-in–inside-out, dual development model that

**Figure 1.** Upper panel: Crude annual mortality rates for age groups 0–60 years; lower panel: Crude annual mortality rates by cause for age groups 0–60 years. Communicable diseases comprise infection, and parasitic and infectious disease. Insults comprise maternal conditions, perinatal conditions, and nutritional deficiencies. Noncommunicable diseases consist of diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular and other organic and mental disorders. Injury involves intentional and unintentional physical harm. Rates in both panels compiled from 2001 data reported in Mathers (Mathers et al. 2006:174–179, table 3B9).
has transformed life goals and plans and guided choices and commitments (World Bank 2006).

But the dual development model shows signs of strain. The achievements of widespread schooling are challenged by disparities in outcomes, such as the gaps in literacy and cognitive skills noted above. Similarly, the achievements of child survival are strained by persistent or growing disparities in nutrition and function (Grantham-McGregor et al. 2007). These strains have been exacerbated by recent economic disruptions and are in places severe. A recent analysis of global trends in labor market data to 2007 detected scant progress toward improving the position of youth in labor markets and concluded that “young people still suffer disproportionately from a deficit of decent work opportunities” (International Labor Organization 2009:12). Indeed, global youth unemployment increased from 11.7 percent in 1993 to 14.4 percent in 2003. The lack of progress during favorable economic times bodes ill for youth labor prospects during the current economic downturn. The unemployment numbers are particularly distressing, given that recent analyses regard livelihood as a key factor in breaking chronic poverty (Moore 2006). The International Labor Organization (ILO) report noted that women and youth are the most vulnerable to competitive economic marginalization and entrapment in inescapable poverty, and urged both developing and developed economies to act more effectively on their behalf (ILO 2009).

What happens to the life plans and commitments made by parents and youth when the logic of dual development proves faulty? Sociopolitical upheavals across North Africa and the Middle East in 2011 avowedly arose from this problem. The 2009 ILO report raises a common concern that social tensions may begin to rise with the global decline of many economies and suggests that “the way out of the global economic downturn that the world is facing does not lie solely in fiscal and monetary policies but requires creative multilateral action with an integrated economic, social and environmental outlook that the United Nations system can provide” (ILO 2009:9, 25). Any moves toward “creative action” might benefit first from examination of the assumptions that inform current policy. The prevailing cultural logic of dual development that grounds the global discourse of “development” requires critical evaluation. The evidence for widening disparities in educational outcomes and markers of physical well-being merits special concern. Social disparities have been widely associated with poor physical and behavioral health outcomes such as life expectancy or rates of depression and homicide, and youth are especially sensitive to perceived disparities (Wilkinson 2005).

In particular, the dual development model entails a specific view of the life course that links health, education, employment, partnering, parenting, and aging into the vision of personal and societal advancement. The transition from school–youth to work–adult marks a critical point in the chain of logic. At that juncture, the increased capacities of youth from outside-in social investments are expected to translate directly into inside-out returns in greater capabilities as adults who find work, create productivity and opportunity, and drive socioeconomic development. To succeed, this model depends on a connection between capacity and opportunity, or at least the potential for creating opportunity. And here is
where a gap, a moment of magical thinking appears in the logic of development policy: the gap is neatly captured in a formative document in sHD that articulates the belief that “economic growth is essential for human development” and protests “there is no automatic link between economic growth and human progress” (ul Haq 1990:42, 43). Magical thinking is reasoning based on the presumption of a causal relationship between an idea and real world outcomes or events (“if I offer a sacrifice the gods will send rain”). In this case, the slippage happens around how opportunity is produced: youth themselves represent potential, but the opportunity to realize the potential must be present in current conditions. Youth cannot spontaneously generate the opportunity structure to scaffold the leap into a bright future. From this vantage, the youth-to-adult transition looks more like a magical moment, an existential gap, rather than a smooth progression of cause and effect. As gaps in economic opportunity open within and between countries and the developmental logic fails, it is youth who are caught and who disproportionately suffer.

Twenty years after ul Haq’s critique of development policy and emergence of the capabilities approach, the pace of creative policy change struggles to keep up with global events. Insights from psychological anthropology about cultural models of the life course and production of value may help to invigorate and accelerate this urgent process with fresh ways to conceptualize, investigate, and promote development in all senses. A cultural analysis furthermore suggests why the gap in development theory and policy that ignores disjunctions between logics and realities may be particularly pernicious in the case of youth. In the following sections I trace how this happens, delineate the potentially catastrophic impact of these disjunctures on mental and physical health, and reveal in the process the urgent stakes for youth in a critical analysis of the social production of suffering.

**How to Get a Life: Cultural Models of the Life Course**

Visions of the life course embedded in dual development paradigms have interacted with fundamental cultural projects in largely fortuitous and unexamined ways. In particular, they encounter established cultural models about how the young are socialized and what goes into a well-lived life. A crucial task of culture is to support humans’ essential need to “get a life” in part by offering story lines, or articulated views of possible lives and the means to attain them. Psychological anthropology has shown that such distributed cultural resources include models and schemas with shared and individual, experience-based properties that generate meanings, motives, and action to make sense of experience, address challenges, and pursue goals (Strauss and Quinn 1997). On the one hand, cultural models act as cognitive frameworks that provide a basis for thought and action (Shore 1996) by recruiting cognitive resources such as schemas. Schemas are structured sets of representations about the material, social, and experiential world—what it is, how it works, who one is, how one should act, and what is good and desirable or not. Models and their informing schemas range in particularity from specific scripts (activity programs such as the restaurant script) to foundational metaphors (life as a journey, a battle, a ladder, or a cycle). Cultural models thereby constitute a dynamic cognitive space where persons actively recruit,
creatively combine, and selectively deploy cultural elements to interpret experience, make assessments and weigh possibilities, and inform action.

On the other hand, cultural models circulate “in the world”: experience-based and strategically enacted, they are manifestly “real” because they organize “the way the world works” (Garro 2000) and thus define social reality. Thus, cultural models of the lifecourse exert existential force by providing essential guides for realizing a life, including: a timeline of what should happen and when, hierarchies or priorities for social and material “goods” (status, children, enlightenment), degrees of normative flexibility in timeline and content, possible alternate life courses and their associated social (de)merits and consequences. Moreover, privileged models circulate outside the societies of origin, as in the case of globalized development policies, to shape actions and possibilities and compete with local models.

Surprisingly few studies examine cultural models of the life course or their variation within and among societies, and through time (Brown et al. 2009a). But ethnographic and historical evidence suggest their omnipresence, rich complexity, and dense imbrication with values, morals, and motives. As such, lifecourse models urgently need systematic consideration in developmental theory and practice.

**Great Smoky Mountains Study: Tracking Cultural Models of Life History**

In our collaborative project in an ongoing longitudinal population-based study of 1450 youth in western North Carolina we assayed the use of a cultural models approach to life history. This work, with Jane Costello and spearheaded by Ryan Brown, sought to link ethnographic measures of distributed cultural phenomena with epidemiological outcomes such as health, education, or demographics (Brown et al. 2009b). We found that youth in our pilot of 250 participants ages 18–25 readily articulated what they themselves regarded as an “average American” set of “goods” and milestones that comprise a normative life course and could swiftly extract a set of priorities that defined the core elements of a “good enough” life (Brown et al. 2006). The interview targeted “average American” ideals because we had discovered that these youth talked about shared culture more readily in terms of what they believed the “average” or “mainstream” American thinks than about a more local reference group. Cultural models of the life course proved to be important forces in the lives of these youth. The life history interview detected subcultural commonalities and differences between Cherokee and Anglo communities, was clearly linked to practices and behaviors such as timing of marriage and childbearing in the respective communities, and predicted psychological outcomes such as subjective social status (Brown et al. 2008, 2009a).

Three observations are salient for the present discussion. First, in the ethnographic process of deriving the structured life history interview, youth routinely nominated not only concrete events (get married) and material goals (own a house, financial security) but also goals for achieving social and spiritual goods (get respect, be a decent person) as well. Second, although clear patterns in youth understandings of distributed U.S. ideals, norms, and values for the
life course were apparent, they also manifested individual diversity in those understandings and particularly in the extent to which they shared what they perceived as the “average American” view. Such variation in personal life course priorities was closely tied to family, economic, and residential conditions such that neighborhood prevalence of poverty, rural residence, higher education, and working-class jobs strongly influenced personal priorities (Brown et al. 2009c). Third, far more youth rated obtaining a college degree as an essential life event (57 percent) than were likely to get it: based on Census counts, only 27 percent of persons aged 25 and older in the study area have a college degree.

The first observation, regarding the value of intangibles and social goods, points to a possible flaw in the prevailing logics of development that place economics at the center, and supports existing claims that an expanded capabilities-human capital approach may be more appropriate for achieving life improving development. The second, regarding individual variation, documents that culture is not a one size fits all affair; rather, it is deeply involved in negotiating and even producing the extensive diversities of its members. In this case, differences in personal life course priorities were tuned to differences in immediate conditions. Nevertheless, our own and others’ data on cultural consonance documents the impact of ability to meet perceived cultural norms about lifestyle and family on mental and physical health (Dressler et al. 2009; Dressler et al. 2007). The third observation highlights the potential impact on human welfare of inability to meet expectations for the cultural “goods” in life. Taken together, these findings underscore the significance of fit between discourses that produce and negotiate life course norms with the distribution of realistic possibilities.

**Youth to Adult Transition and the Shifting Priorities for Human Capital**

Positioned at a period of transitions, youth especially rely on the content and viability of life course cultural models to negotiate real-world vicissitudes and complexities in launching their own lives from parent and classroom, on to partner and workplace. As powerful and necessary tools for effective conduct of both the practical and meaningful aspects of life on a daily and aggregate basis, cultural models form the bedrock of youth progress, failure, or disillusion. In the previous two sections I have briefly discussed such models and how they work, but current processes of rapid social change and globalization further complicate the picture, particularly for youth. To use the language of economics and development policy, these changes alter the importance of different forms of available resources, or human capital, in terms of social (status, relationships, competence), embodied (skills and capacities), and material capital (wealth, physical resources).

Demographic transition research has scrutinized shifts in priorities for human capital formation because reproductive careers are undergoing widespread shifts and are closely tied to cultural models of the life course, particularly perceived opportunity structure (Caldwell 2006; Kaplan 1994). Societies arrange articulated means for formation and transmission of the various forms of human capital, and determine the relative importance of each for a viable life course. For instance, material wealth is relatively unimportant among many
hunter-gatherer groups, but embodied skills and social relationships are crucial to survival, leading to an emphasis on social and embodied capital (Bliege Bird and Bird 1997; Kaplan et al. 2000). Such capital is locally acquired through kin and residential groups, and becomes embodied in the course of physical, cognitive-emotional, and behavioral development. New forms of subsistence such as paid labor that rely on capital not readily transferred through kin and social groups lend themselves to formal schooling. Caldwell’s classic analysis of Nigerian families suggests that education disrupts the traditional reliance on social capital for the future welfare of offspring in favor of embodied capital acquired at the individual level through schooling, where schooling is the basis for future opportunities for the individual that kin do not control (reviewed in Caldwell 2006). The change alters the flow of resources in the family from child-to-parent to parent-to-child and also shifts the moral and material economy of the family toward the individual.

Rapid social transformation and globalization not only may alter the value of forms of human capital but also commonly perturb established patterns for their formation and transmission. Together, these forces combine to disrupt family and community contributions to and control over the future of youth. Rapidly evolving demands for different forms of embodied capital acquired through education further disrupt the buildup of various types of embodied capital and their relationship to material capital by altering the currencies of value. Thus, the value of embodied knowledge and skills held by parents and elders is discounted and the perceived value for youth is diminished by shifting workplace demands. Consequently, embodied and even material capital formation required for building the life course become increasingly outsourced from the family to education and on to workplace. As competition intensifies and expected levels or types of schooling-based embodied capital escalate, the value of existing adult capital slips. Ironically, then, life expectancy is being prolonged even as adult embodied capital senesces prematurely.

The movement of critical skills formation from family to school parallels a shift in production of opportunity structure from the personal (family and social networks) to the public arena (agencies, employers, states). The future of youth thereby increasingly depends on the ability of the public arena (be it government agencies or private businesses) to generate economic opportunity. Such dependence puts the future of youth at risk when opportunity is limited and under- or unemployment is widespread. Concomitantly, the cultural “goods” on which a life is founded shift the emphasis from social relationships, statuses, and networks to individual skills, knowledge, and capacities along with the networks they foster. In the terms of economics and demographics, the switch is one from reliance on social capital to formation of embodied capital (Caldwell 2006; Handwerker 1986).

Cultural Models and Cultural Creativity: Beyond Intentionality and Materialism

The picture of evolving cultural models of life history under escalating social change and globalization portrayed above is necessarily simplistic, and its neatness belies widespread
personal, local, social, and structural diversity. Moreover, the imposition of organized accounts of these dynamics may themselves be an unrealistic imposition on common realities. For example, in her study of young educated Cameroonian women, Johnson-Hanks (2005) observed the absence of goal-driven intentionality and a rational life plan under the conditions of everyday, continuous uncertainty, ambiguity, and inconsistency (economic vagaries, unreliable infrastructure, arbitrary impediments such as erratic paychecks, wayward buses, and roadblocks) in which they lived. These young women brought a stance that Johnson-Hanks calls “judicious opportunism” as they imagined the future in terms of action based on the unexpected turns that life brings up. Nevertheless, such opportunism manifests the application of cultural models that operate as a basis for identifying and weighing opportunities and building a life course in contingent, nonlinear, apparently nonintentional terms.

Arguably, an ability to accommodate diversity of persons and situations would be a valuable feature of cultural models of the life course in complex, globalized contemporary societies. Life course models that offer rich branching structures, continent pathways, and possibilities for creative recombination may enable better matching to life’s exigencies under these conditions. In such contexts, the seductive simplifications of the dual development model may be another aspect of its difficulties: by applying to all, it serves few. This may be especially true where future opportunities are few or uncertain, contrasted with conditions of opportunity and relative certainty. Rather than concluding that the health and education goals should be abandoned, this analysis suggests that the dual development model needs to be enriched by inclusion of goods other than the simply material and economic and of pathways that link social-moral development to societal development.

**Local Factors and Global Logics**

So far, this discussion has highlighted intersecting logics of “development” in global, structural, and economic terms. How differently these logics play out across specific places and times remains a critical question. The dominance of international and national policies and their control over resource distribution may too easily encourage the discounting of local cultural factors. Do such factors create alternate pathways for youth or mitigate the harshness of structural failures in education, opportunity, or welfare of youth, and if so, how? Answers to these questions will be useful for revising prevailing models of development, as illustrated in the following preliminary example.

**Youth, Life History, and the Social Production of Suffering: A Case Study in Nepal**

Perhaps no affliction manifests structural, cultural, and political failures more baldly than does war. Youth not uncommonly are caught up and actively drawn into armed combat, and public concerns over exploitation and the violation of their human rights have been paralleled by fears for the enduring damage, particularly psychosocial harm, that they may suffer (Wessels 2006). Less commonly considered but no less important, child soldiers risk
ruptures with normative lifecourse models that may derail their ability to recover after repatriation. Nepal experienced a ten-year war fought between the Communist Party–Maoists and the government that concluded with peace accords in late 2006. During the conflict, both sides forcibly or voluntarily recruited youth under age 18 to participate in armed and unarmed capacities. Led by Brandon Kohrt, a team of psychologists, psychiatrists, and anthropologists conducted a multisited cross-sectional study across Nepal in early 2007 to test the postconflict relationship of soldier status with mental health outcomes in matched pairs of returned former soldiers and never-conscripted peers (Kohrt et al. 2008).

Former soldiers manifested worse mental health status than their never-conscripted peers, a disparity that was greater among girls. Traumatic exposures explained the group difference for boys, much less so for girls. Former soldiers of the higher, Brahmin, caste, perversely fared worse than others, while family income and education reduced the impact on their mental health. The gender and caste effects likely are mediated by cultural factors affecting experience of ex-soldiers on return to the community, particularly factors that derail or facilitate normative progress on a shared cultural lifecourse model: Brahmin ex-soldiers, especially girls, fell under suspicion for violation of purity rules that brought family shame and social ostracism, eroded their marriageability, and thus blighted their prospects for a socially acceptable future. Income and education apparently buffer the impact of experiences during and after conflict by offering alternate routes for employment and bases for social standing. Our findings point to the importance of postconflict, culturally and socially mediated treatment for the mental health outcomes of former soldiers. The more that soldiering eroded community perceptions of a child’s future prospects, the greater the impact on the demobilized youth. This finding suggests an opening for strategic intervention: although it may be difficult to expunge child soldiering, it should be feasible to address the family and community-level factors that exacerbate or palliate youth suffering from war experience. On a contrastive note, we also found that continued association with an armed group actually was protective of mental health outcomes. This may be because such association provides alternate bases for identity, belonging, and perceived opportunity, further suggesting the power of youth needs for shared lifecourse models. Since the time of the study, continued shortcomings in governance of Nepal and the pervasive lack of economic opportunity have supported involvement of youth in rising political conflict.

This case exemplifies the importance of local conditions, including local structural violence, for determining the impact of larger social conditions such as violent conflict on youth. It furthermore illustrates the impact of youth and community perceptions of culturally viable lifecourse options on social relations and mental health. Finally, it suggests how anthropological theory can generate empirical insights with implications for policy and practice.

**Intangible “Goods” and the Logics of Development**

The limitations of outside-in–inside-out dual development theory have been recognized for some time but its logic remains pervasive in development practice and the public
imagination. As the inaugural Human Development Report of 1990 noted: “The basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. This may appear to be a simple truth. But it is often forgotten in the immediate concern with the accumulation of commodities and financial wealth” (ul Haq 1990:9). As cited in an earlier section, the report observed that “human progress,” or increased welfare, does not automatically follow from income growth. It went on to suggest that “the main preoccupation of development analysis should be how such a link can be created and reinforced” (ul Haq 1990:10), and noted the “frustrations” caused by failure to establish a balance between generation of human capabilities and opportunities to use them. The consequences of failure are much worse than frustration, risking the mental, social, and economic lives of youth and the future of society (United Nations 2005; World Bank 2006).

Yet forging a link between income and “progress” may not be the vital issue. The capabilities approach argues that expanding the income side of the equation to include other “goods” is crucial for formation of genuine opportunities suited to personal and social circumstances (Nussbaum 2011). This requires rewriting the outside-in side of the universal equation of development theory to include more variables than education and health. In cultural terms, this is tricky work: the process for deriving such an equation might be generalizable, but its contents likely are not. The capabilities approach has combined economics with political philosophy to attempt such an expansion by deriving generalized goods and rights (Nussbaum 2000; Sen 1999). Anthropological analysis could greatly strengthen these attempts by identifying, for instance, local cultural models and priorities, discourses of power and structural sources of inequity, and underlying assumptions of policymakers. The increasing emphasis on social investments in development discourse would benefit measurably from such inputs (World Bank 2006).

Noneconomic societal returns from education may offer leads to possible candidates for “goods” to include in development goals. Societal returns from education greatly exceed their purely economic benefits and have tangible individual salience as well. The systematic effects of maternal education on fertility behavior and child survival exemplify this point. Research by LeVine and colleagues (LeVine et al. 2001) suggests that schooling mediates social change by affecting maternal outlooks and fostering skills such as mastery of academic registers used by bureaucracy. Such noneconomic effects help to explain the impact on fertility reduction and infant and maternal mortality, and indicate that child health and education operate through noneconomic pathways. Indeed, recent analyses of data from 175 countries found that average years of women’s schooling in each country independently predicted child survival above and beyond effects of gross domestic product and HIV prevalence (Gakidou et al. 2010).

Hence, education might better be portrayed in development policy as a means to a means (skills or capabilities that foster health and resilience), rather than simply as a means to an end (income). Emerging multisector initiatives in developed and developing countries aim to foster youth development through participation, experiential learning, activism, and leadership (see examples in Patel et al. 2007b). Thus, development agendas for education
might be adjusted to embrace skills cultivation beyond merely formal content. The case of maternal education illustrates the potential for synergy among research, theory, and policy in development, and the particular contributions that psychological anthropology can make to asking new questions and identifying actual pathways to valued outcomes (child survival in this instance).

In sum, the logical flaws of development theory and their human consequences might constructively be addressed through application of existing anthropological methods and theories to revise assumptions about the nature and goals for “development” and the means to promote them.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Multiple lines of evidence document convergent challenges for youth in education, livelihood, emotional security, and violence, and reveal the unintended role of development theory in the uncertainties and difficulties they face. The logics of “development” that link outside-in investments in individual human development to the inside-out returns in socioeconomic development require revision. The educational and health initiatives for human development have achieved results on a global scale that include worldwide school enrollments at 67.5 percent of all age-appropriate children, literacy rates of 83.9 percent among adults over age 15, and a life expectancy of 67.5 years by 2007 (Klugman 2009). Balanced against such global achievements are individual and group disparities in these advances that both produce youth suffering and erode the viability of the human development model as a whole. Even more importantly, the social-economic side of development logic demonstrably does not necessarily mesh with the human development side of the dual development model: emerging capacities of youth often are not met by structures of opportunity and demand. Such gaps reveal fallible assumptions in the inside-out–outside-in “logic” of the dual development model that rest on unreliable cause–effect relationships. Unfortunately, many youth will suffer the consequences of incomplete or inadequate models of development that project and prepare them for a future that will not happen, and not for the future that does.

The unrecognized cultural stakes in the logic of development pertain to its basis in a model of the life course and the powerful cultural changes that occur when foundational models are transformed. This logic requires a reorientation of the actions and expectations of youth, parents, and communities to share a life course model that involves a package of care and education requiring reprioritization and reallocation of social and material resources toward the projected future. The power of this cultural model is manifested in the global record of achievement. But that achievement also rests on shifts in the value, production, and transmission of various forms of human capital that outsource education, health, and employment to public structures such as governments or corporations. Thence, individual lives become vulnerable to the vicissitudes of such public structures and the policies that shape them. Recognition of the relationship between “development” theory and a cultural model of the life course clarifies and highlights internalization of models by individuals and
accounts for the devastating impact when the model fails. The inability to achieve shared cultural norms of lifestyle and family, or diminished cultural consonance, has been directly linked to eroded mental and physical health.

During a period of dynamic globalized transformations, youth experience may be likened to that of pioneers, migrants, or shock troops landing on the uncharted beaches of tomorrow. The quality and outcomes of their experience depend on their embodied and material resources as well as the social conditions for future growth and resilience, and lack or inequity in those resources forms the basis for suffering and disparity. All these are grounded in cultural models that inform human experience and behavior: thus, a cultural analysis is crucial to the re-vision of policy and action to promote fair and sustainable development in all senses.

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