Development and Domination: Indigenous Peoples of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos deals with prevailing development ideologies and their impacts on indigenous societies with a particular focus on Cambodia, Laos and the central highlands of Vietnam. It reinforces the idea that development, as it is conceptualised and implemented, radically underlines local communities’ ability to control the parameters of social and material changes. The more development projects choose new objectives and operating models, the more the rhetoric and practices remain the same.

One of the strengths of the presentations is to convincingly advocate for closer ethnographic understanding in order to make any sort of cross-cultural negotiations and mutual engagement meaningful. This imperative is known to some extent, but it needs to be implemented more vehemently to make it more persuasive. As a result, anthropology of development rather than development anthropology is proposed. The essential difference lies in the point of engagement. Development anthropology seeks to do development better by trying to mitigate the effects of top-down programmes and allow some breathing space for local people to express their input. Anthropology of development, on the other hand, questions the very operating premises of contemporary development. This point is very much in line with the intent of the current book, even if some of the authors opt to challenge this position, being convinced that it is not the best strategy to offer radical critiques that few people in the world of development want to listen to, and preferring to work within the world of development programmes and mutual engagement meaningful. This imperative is known to some extent, but it needs to be implemented more vehemently to make it more persuasive.

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