ECONSTOR
Make Your Publications Visible.

A Service of
ZBW
Leibniz-Informationszentrum Wirtschaft
Leibniz Information Centre for Economics

Pascallon, Pierre

Article — Digitized Version

The cultural dimension of development

Intereconomics

Suggested Citation: Pascallon, Pierre (1986) : The cultural dimension of development, Intereconomics, ISSN 0020-5346, Verlag Weltarchiv, Hamburg, Vol. 21, Iss. 1, pp. 38-45, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02925420

This Version is available at:
https://hdl.handle.net/10419/140011

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.

WWW.ECONSTOR.EU

Mitglied der Leibniz-Gemeinschaft

The Cultural Dimension of Development

by Pierre Pascallon, Clermont-Ferrand*

Development, both in its essential meaning and in its aims, is an inclusive, multidimensional phenomenon whose various aspects cannot be understood in isolation from each other. Economic development affects, and is affected by, culture. Our author discusses the significance of this fact for the countries of the Third World today.

In spite of the great headway that has been made conceptually, "the cultural dimension of development" is still an ambiguous term. The idea of a "cultural dimension of development" implies that development is first and foremost a matter of economics and that culture is just something added to this basically economic process. The "cultural dimension of development" thus distorts the real meaning of "culture" as well as that of "development".

The idea of culture cannot be limited to intellectual things like literature and the fine arts, which are a luxury reserved for the privileged few. We must get beyond this narrow, elitist idea of culture, which puts culture above and beyond the concerns of everyday life, "as if it were something superfluous to be carried, or an ornament to be shown off, in very select circles".[1] It must be made clear that culture is a comprehensive interpretation of nature, a whole system of understanding and changing the world. Culture comprises all the productive expressions of man, technological, economic, artistic and domestic. It implies a systematic relationship between every aspect of life as it is lived. This is precisely the concept of culture adopted by UNESCO: "(Culture) is a fundamental component of the vitality of any society; it is the sum total of a people's creative activities, its methods of production and of appropriation of material assets, its form of organization, its beliefs and sufferings, its work and its leisure, its dreams and its successes".[2]

As long as our understanding of development is limited to the idea of growth, we have not fully grasped its meaning, particularly if we think only in terms of economic growth, defined as the increase of goods and services made available to a given population over a given period of time. The idea of development requires that we take into consideration the combination of mental and social changes that enable a society to make a lasting cumulative increase in its actual and potential productivity. It requires, moreover, that account be taken of every aspect of human activity, together with the meaning people find in their whole social existence. Thus it can easily be seen that as soon as we look into it, development, both in its essential meaning and in its aims, is an inclusive, multidimensional phenomenon whose various aspects cannot be understood in isolation from each other.

If, then, culture in the broadest sense is a process of community identification, a particular way of living and producing, of being and willing to be, and if development is the overall aim of civilization for the complete and inclusive fulfilment of man, we could go one step farther and say that culture implies development just as development implies culture. Thus it is possible and indeed necessary to talk of a "cultural model of development".

But it is not enough to emphasize the relations and the overlap between economic and cultural development and to define development as "an organic process involving a number of constantly interacting and overlapping economic, scientific and technical, social and cultural factors".[3] In reality, economic development affects, and is affected by, culture: "The gods, the saints and the prophets are constantly intervening in the affairs of agricultural and industrial production".[4]

The "Western model of development" became current in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century. The basic content of this model was, quite

* University of Clermont.

[1] J. Ki-Zerbo: Culture et Développement, in: Conférences Publiques, Institut International d'Etudes Sociales, No. 8, Geneva 1976, p. 26.

[2] UNESCO: Thinking Ahead, Paris 1977, p. 20.

[3] UNESCO: International Thesaurus of Cultural Development, p. 25.

[4] P. Rossillon: Ils sont fous ces Romains, in: Le Monde, 20th March 1982.

simply, individualism. Individualism, it was stated, "has as its cardinal principle that all rights belong to the individual, that his independence is sacred, that man endued with the greatest possible freedom is the most perfect embodiment of civilized humanity".[5] It was this belief that triumphed in the work of the great British and French economists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, like Adam Smith, J. S. Mill and J. B. Say. It was certainly individualism that gave vitality to the economic system with its free enterprise and free competition, rational planning and profit maximization, as it developed in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. This was the time of the rise of Schumpeter's innovating entrepreneur and the decline of agricultural labour to a position of relative insignificance.

It is common knowledge that this Promethean and Faustian model of development which prevailed in the West, based as it was on economic efficiency and mobility, the ethic of work and thrift and the idea of the white man as conquering hero, was to overrun the world in the second half of the nineteenth century, subjecting the universe to its compulsory civilization.

Rostow's Deterministic Model

Can economic development be depicted as a steadily rising curve, and can each nation be placed at a given point on this curve at a given moment, to indicate the "degree" or "level" to which it has developed in terms of its Gross National Product, expecting to rise as time goes on? Is there a single logical process of economic development which every society must follow with only minor variations, whatever the resources are on which its economy is based, thus justifying the existence of only one theory of growth? Is there in fact a determinism of growth, with a necessary sequence of steps to industrialization?

Being committed to a deterministic theory of growth, economists believed that they could answer these questions in the affirmative. Even today, Rostow's model, which was more or less standard in 1960,[6] is the typical expression of the deterministic understanding of growth, and has even been elaborated and perfected since then.[7] Rostow's system of stages of growth posits a single linear and mechanistic system of economic development; it attempts to justify the view that there is only one kind of world and it must submit to the inexorable and unalterable course of universal history: there is but one road and every nation must follow it, if not immediately, very soon.

It is generally known that Rostow, who sees history as the history of industrial civilization, based on what might be referred to as the Promethean challenge, understands growth exclusively as passing from an agrarian to an industrial economy. From this he concludes that growth is essentially a phenomenon of industrialisation in which a society moves towards a situation of abundance predominantly in the form of services and consumer durables. The author informs us, in fact, that all societies must pass through an invariable set of stages: the traditional society, the pre-conditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity and the age of high mass consumption.[8]

The significance of this deterministic Rostovian system of stages of growth should not be under-estimated; it is founded on a rationalized faith in linear world development which is driven by technological and scientific progress alone. The following three points, all of which have economists supporting them, follow quite logically from Rostow's system:

☐ "Under-development" must be understood simply as "retarded" growth, a time-lag that is caused by the lack of one or more of the essential ingredients of production, such as skilled labour, the spirit of enterprise, capital, savings, etc. This situation of "under-development" must be corrected by making good the "deficiency", that is to say by creating the conditions necessary for take-off and then, of course, taking off, by setting in motion the "fundamental propensities".

☐ The same structural characteristics, and even the same development policies, are applicable to every country that is at the same level, or stage of economic growth: the same financial and monetary structures, the same structures for government spending and even the same fiscal structures, the same structures of foreign trade and balance of payments, the same resource shortages. If take-off is to happen, the theory of balanced growth must be strictly adhered to, together with its insistence on the need for investment in various sectors during the take-off period and the provision of minimal social capital. Then, at a later stage, after the setting up of minimal infrastructures and the first wave of industries, there appears to be further unbalanced growth.

☐ Finally, the idea of "converging" industrial systems at the same level can and should be admitted.

---

[5] M. Ansiaux: La théorie de l'individualisme, in: Revue d'Economie politique, 1896, p. 859.

[6] W. W. Rostow: The Stages of Economic Growth, Cambridge University Press, 1960.

[7] Cf. W. W. Rostow: World Economics, Macmillan, 1978.

[8] Ibid.

This deterministic Rostovian system claims not only to be a model of economic development but an organic and idealistic theory of History, Man and Nations. It tries to identify "growth in itself" and "industrial (and agricultural) production in itself", without relation to any particular structure, in other words, irrespective of the economic and social system concerned.[9]

"Growth in itself" in Rostow's system comes from the fact that economic structures are not defined theoretically, but only referred to statistically, so that the term "structure" is used simply to mean "composition".

The adaptability of structures increases empirically as their indices and relationships develop. Growth is measured by this process of development. Each of its stages is defined statistically by the kinds and amounts of activities going on. These are agricultural and mainly directed to foreign markets in the first stages, industrial and mainly based on domestic markets in the last stages.

In his treatment of "industrial (and agricultural) production in itself", Rostow describes accumulation simply in terms of machines, which have no bearing on the social situation. The author is eager to present industrial production simply as an index. The concept of industrialization here is a purely functional activity, and the production aspect of it a purely technological process. Similarly the formation of fixed capital is described as a merely technical process, in which capital is referred to as a "thing" and never as a social relationship.

In reality, however, there is no such thing as "growth *per se*"; growth as such is a mere abstraction. The growth of an economic and social system which determines the everyday life of every individual in all its dimensions cannot be turned into an abstraction. The "level" or "degree" of development that exists within the forces of production cannot be separated from the type of development that is taking place, which will vary according to the social relationships within which it is happening. Technology cannot be thought of as something "in itself"; it is not neutral; it is in fact the genetic code of society itself that gave birth to technology.

The fact that there is no growth except in terms of the economic, social and cultural system that constitutes its existence is what emerges most clearly from an analysis of the Rostovian system, which is really no more than a liberal capitalist theory inspired by the experience of western countries that have developed in this way. Rostow's model is no more than a theory of growth by capital, or rather a theory of growth based on the growth of capital. The author in fact maintains that the rate of productive investment is the fundamental criterion for passing from one stage to the next.

[9] Cf. Pierre Pascallon: Regards sur ce temps ou réflexions sur la croissance, Cujas 1977.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE HWWA-INSTITUT FÜR WIRTSCHAFTSFORSCHUNG-HAMBURG

Klaus Hasenbach-Jaenisch

STRATEGIEN DER GELDPOLITIK

– Eine Kritik der Geldmengensteuerung –

(MONETARY POLICY STRATEGIES

– A Criticism of Money Supply Control

Large octavo, 217 pages, 1985, price paperbound DM 48,– ISBN 3-87895-272-4

VERLAG WELTARCHIV GMBH – HAMBURG

In Rostow's analysis, growth depends on certain "fundamental propensities" and the "ability to seek out material advantages" and "accept the innovations" set in motion by the Schumpeterian private entrepreneur. The Rostovian view is based on an individualistic understanding of society. His approach does not take into account the class structure and social settings, only the individual authors of economic practices: consumers, entrepreneurs, owners of production factors, people who are only related to each other by exchange and who, by certain rules of rationality, are supposed to arrive at a situation of harmony and equilibrium.

The Euro-centrist character of this theory of growth is indeed obvious. Rostow was deeply inspired by the European experience of development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, although one might well question the concrete historical reality of some of the stages the author thought he could derive from the example of the countries on the old continent.

It is clear, then, that the Rostovian system, and therefore all the economic theories based on it, is merely an interpretation of western economic growth, and very far indeed from being a necessary and universal system.

The Deterministic Approach to Culture

There are certain similarities between the evolutionist approach to culture and the Rostovian approach to economics. Those who, like Spencer and Taylor, hold the evolutionist view of culture, maintain that, starting with the traditional or archaic situation, a culture must pass through a single, linear, predetermined, historical succession of stages, in order to arrive at a higher level. This higher level is modern industrial culture: productionist, technocratic, rational and efficient.

There are some who believe that the following conclusions may be drawn from this evolutionist theory of culture:

☐ The cultural "under-development" of certain countries that still have traditional or archaic cultures is to be understood merely as a "time-lag" by which certain societies have not yet attained the level of economically oriented rationality or been initiated into the spirit of organization.

☐ The cultural "development" of countries that are behind the times should be understood as a process of going through a necessary series of phases. It is possible, and indeed desirable, to help these countries that are behind to pass through the necessary stages and arrive at the level of modern culture, though this involves overcoming certain "blocks" they may have, such as religious and mental resistance, which can slow down the transition from one phase to the next; it involves planning the acculturation necessary for each stage along the way.

The idea of "acculturation", the ongoing process of structural change within a society, is presented here as a set of planned, regulated and adapted operations through which the people of a supposedly traditional culture can adopt the behaviour patterns and values of a more advanced culture.

There can be little doubt that within the idea of planned and controlled acculturation lies the assumption that certain cultural values, namely western ones, are superior. Here we are dealing with the idea that some countries are retarded, with a "pre-scientific" mentality, that is a static mental universe surrounded by rites, laws, taboos, respect for the past, generally relegating material matters to a position of secondary importance. By acculturation they can assimilate the value system which made it possible for the Western bourgeoisie in the era of its ascendancy to "do" the industrial revolution – namely by extending calculation to every dimension of life, learning how to get a good return on investment, professionalism, the work ethic and saving money.

Traditional Societies and Growth

After the Second World War the Western development model was implanted in numerous Third World countries under the guise of "growth". We remember the euphoria with which, in 1961, "the first decade of development" was launched within these nations. That growth fever known as "developmentalism" spread without interruption from the 1960s onwards into Africa, Latin America and Asia. The developing nations presented themselves with "development plans"; their governments proclaimed the growth of GNP as the object of all their concerns.

Growth was the god of neo-liberal ideology, despite the fact that this understanding of it served for a long time only to hide obvious class interests under the artificial modernity of this old ideal. In recent years the Third World countries have become aware of the fact that their "growth" was usually no more than a liberal "mimetic" growth, in which the ends proved to be no more justifiable than the means.

Traditional society is balanced and self-contained. Within it, "the traditional needs of a stable population are supplied by an unchanging technology and the extreme

refinement of human relationships compensates for the fragility of man's relationships with Nature".[10]

The primitive economy is not static, though the "circuit" which it follows appears not to be moving. It does not move towards evolution, its internal dynamic is only to conserve. Its needs are stable and it is allergic to productivity, so it only rarely builds up a surplus, and even when it does, this surplus is not invested but spent on various extras such as holy places, weddings and dowries, celebrations, offerings and sacrifices to ancestors. This approach to spending spreads out the wealth in a community and reinforces traditional structures, but prevents working capital from accumulating.

In communities where religion and family relationships are the main organizing principle in life, certain things, especially the most valuable, cannot normally be bought and sold. In this setting, social life is carried on within a spatial and economic framework that is fairly inconspicuous, sometimes quite hidden by religious ideology or social symbolism. Those who conduct economic and cultural transactions almost all know each other personally. The circulation of goods, services and people is regulated to a large extent by giving and returning gifts. Even the market-place serves as much as an occasion for human encounter as a place for the meeting of supply and demand. Because of the stability and deep cohesiveness that are constantly reinforced by rites and ceremonies, in such societies inequality is not necessarily felt as a source of suffering.

In recent years there has been increasingly acute awareness of the fact that "liberal" growth based on individual needs has wrecked the foundations of the primitive economies, replacing them in the Third World countries that have adopted this model with alien consumption patterns and value systems.

Some underdeveloped nations that have opted for the liberal model of growth have been observed to adopt foreign values, tastes and customs indiscriminately. Western consumerism has gradually pervaded even the remotest villages. As Joseph Ki-Zerbo observes, "each day we behold the steadily rising tide of goods and services offered to us, at the same time as we find ourselves being denuded of the art, the masks and the implements with which we used to beautify our lives. Africans are surrounded less and less by the fruit of their own work and creation".[11]

The penetration of western consumption patterns is seen in markets where the fact that everything is bought has made generosity irrevelant. The massive and profound eruption of European consumerism can be seen with almost dazzling clarity in the esthetic and clothing habits of young people. The same is often true of the intellectual, "installed in his consumer status, gaping, beaming, not to say bleating, at products from other places".[12]

Where the value of exchange is accepted and the capitalist market system has become a part of society, it can be seen more and more plainly that liberal growth based on the needs of individuals who can pay for them has brought the Third World countries that have accepted it the phenomena of blatant poverty and inequality characteristic of western industrial societies. The deeper modern influence has been, with its extroverted approach to growth, the more extensive has been the development of the typically modern phenomena of rural exodus, flight to the city, proletarization and vagrancy.

The Price of Liberal Growth

In traditional societies people live in direct relationship with nature. In these conditions work normally consists of a complete set of tasks. The division of labour is rudimentary. Most of the work in a given group, sometimes all of it, is devoted to producing goods and services that are directly consumed by the group itself. Thus the differentiation of tasks is minimal and elementary; it does not constitute a threat to homogeneity or social cohesion.

Apart from this, the idea of work is not autonomous. Work is tied to the totality of life, and the domains of work and ritual are not separated from each other. Furthermore, in traditional society, which is a society of rules and customs, marked by group solidarity, the individual is not an autonomous agent. He or she does not act as an individual but as a member of a group with a particular role to play within it. He or she is completely contained by a structure within which mutuality is more important than competition and economic factors play a less important part than factors of sociology, religion and magic. Rather than groups that are held together by economic interests, communities are based more on family and blood relationships. In fact it could be said that family prerogatives, politics and economics are inseparably a part of the same reality.

In this kind of system, where the whole organization of the society is aimed at maintaining ancestral customs

[10] R. Gendarme: La pauvreté des nations, Cujas 1963, p. 17.

[11] J. Ki-Zerbo, op. cit., p. 17.

[12] Ibid. p. 18.

and the community of family relationships, each person has a very clearly defined position in the community's economy. The individual is never abandoned, neither economically nor psychologically. Being identified with a patriarchal family or clan or caste, the individual feels, with good reason, that he or she is secure. The extreme coherence and consistency of the overall culture, the stubborn attachment to an unchanging order built on mutual support, and the resistance to the intrusion of dangerous innovations all contribute to the maintenance of a strongly organized hierarchical structure and a stable system.

Liberal growth based on the dictates of individual gain has annihilated the conditions of productive activity that prevailed in traditional societies. Whether it substitutes imports for local products or sets up production for export, the liberal approach to industrial growth in the Third World involves the continuous import of knowledge, skills and equipment that have been created in the developed nations ("transferred technology"). Science and technology, and consequently their transferral from the capitalist countries, are neither morally nor socially neutral. There is much more to technology than can be seen with the naked eye. A capitalist factory is not just an item of technology that can innocently be bought and set up in another country, but a "social mega-machine", to use Lewis Mumford's phrase, a matrix of social reproduction, in fact, which reflects the interests and ideologies of the system and society that gave birth to it and within which it was developed. The mimetic transferral of knowledge and know-how to the Third World creates, in the name of modernity, a culture to which people merely submit, and work that is fragmented, disjointed and alienating.

Liberal growth based on the constraints of individual profit has broken up the socio-cultural structures of traditional economies. A human being tends now to be defined no longer by the group but as a separate entity, regardless of his or her social context. Liberal economic expansion in fact involves "the recognition of individual accomplishments and the free exercise of various forms of individual autonomy".[13] It is "linked both as cause and as effect to the disappearance of the extended family system and loyalty, and the elimination of social systems based on regulations (on slavery, severance, caste, age, family, race), replacing them with systems based on contract and equal opportunity, a high degree of vertical mobility, the relinquishing of tribal bonds and the general reduction of rights accorded to social groups".[14]

[13] R. Barre: Structures sociales et croissance économique, in: Revue d'Economie politique, 1958, pp. 402 and 403.

Third World countries have had to internalize the values of the industrialized nations; Africans and Asians have been shaped by attitudes, ideas and problems that belong to other parts of the world. The eruption of industrial civilization can be seen within the very thought structures of primitive society. The rationality of commerce has scattered traditional values, replacing them with its own "mental apparatus" based on the individualism and utilitarianism of the Western model. All this points to the fact that "acculturation" has really been a "deculturation".[15] These upsets in motivation and behaviour, which ruin the arts and beliefs of whole societies, bring with them chaos and suffering.

Because they copied the Western model and believed in the myth of modernity, numerous Third World countries assess their experiment with mimetic development as a failure, leading only to dependency in every sphere: political, economic, financial, but above all cultural. Many Third World countries are discovering today with blood and tears (Iran for example) that they need to make a radical reappraisal of their approach to development.

The Quest for Specific Models of Cultural Development

In view of so much "mis-development", an anxious quest for specific models of cultural development is going on today. Each in its own way, every country is attempting to build a model for society and for the future, based on its own resources, both material and spiritual. "Peripheral" countries are seeking to create a development model which will find appropiate ways for the nation to take into account people in their totality, both socially and individually.

This other model for growth has two distinct but closely related characteristics: endogeneity and self-reliance.

The idea of endogeneity seems to have arisen from the need for a way to respond to and counterbalance the western understanding of development. It means that development can only flourish where it is rooted in the culture and tradition of each country, since it is an all-encompassing process "linked to each society's own values and calling for the active participation of individuals and groups who are both the authors and the beneficiaries of it".[16]

[14] A. Lewis: La théorie de la croissance économique, Payot 1963, p. 441.

[15] See M. Mead: Cultural Patterns and Technical Change, The New American Library, 1955.

[16] UNESCO: Report on the Medium Term Plan (Document 16 C/4).

The endogenous approach requires that "the socio-cultural matrix of the nationalities concerned"[17] be taken into account, as well as all the specific national conditions that relate to culture in the anthropological sense of that term: concepts, modes and styles of life, national value systems, modes of social organization etc. This approach is aimed at meeting the real needs of the people concerned; it is based on their own creative capacity, their own values and potentialities, their own language, in short it is based on what the people are, what they do and what they can do. It involves them in creating their own technology and integrating it with the cultural realities of their country.

The Director-General of UNESCO observed in 1978 that every endogenous development effort comes from the awareness of distinctive cultural values and the beginning of new initiative rooted in the affirmation of cultural identity. It is in these cultural values that the confidence and motivation necessary for the task of development take root.[18]

But genuine development can only happen where it is organically related to the preservation and promotion of cultural identity, as defined by the specific characteristics of each society. Furthermore, endogeneity is based on the unique conditions of each national entity, which means that development is, and has to be, an internal and self-reliant process.[19]

Every nation, therefore, has to depend above all on itself and on its own potential; its development must be based on the whole gamut of forces that exist or can be created inside the country. Thus the activity involved is internal: it is no longer a matter of submitting to market forces but rather of working with solidarity and interdependence. It is a dynamic that is set up by the interaction of all the existent and potential forces and resources in the nation, mobilized and validated locally in a process of accumulation that is now autonomous and self-reliant:

□ The sources of this accumulation are self-reliant, since it depends on internal resources and an internal market, acting in accordance with the behaviour of the national economy.

□ The forms of this accumulation are self-reliant because it is financed internally, by putting available internal surpluses to use and the technology used is adapted to the socio-economic situation it aims to change.

□ The effects of this accumulation are self-reliant because the structure of production is based on internal factors and therefore it is the country itself that is affected by it.

The real significance of this new model of development which we have attempted to outline now becomes apparent. The nations of the Third World talk about the need "to put traditional community wisdom back into a process of development and modernisation that would lead to genuine, culturally integrated participation".[20] In this one can clearly see the desire to take into account, in an anthropological way, and in accordance with the forms that exist in each country, "a development based on man" (UNESCO), on human fulfilment in all its dimensions.

The Problems Involved

It has been seen that there is no one royal road to development, but many forms and many ways of organizing human life, both individually and socially, in its continuous battle with nature. In fact, every culture, every people, every society must rediscover its own interior cosmology, must arrive at a coherent account of its being in the world, must be able to locate itself in a recognizable world and find for itself the organizing principle of its world. If all this is true, we have to face the question of what the relationship needs to be between all these different and specific cultural models for development. To acknowledge the plurality of development and the fact that each culture needs to safeguard its own uniqueness does not mean that we should advocate that they be isolated. It means rather that these complete cultural entities should form a dialogue and co-operate with each other, which immediately presents us with the difficult question of balance between the "internal" and the "external".

"To be human is to realise that one is Latin, African, Asian, very concretely, with differences of language, climate, terrain, culture, etc."[21] But it is not enough to recognize this extraordinarily rich diversity of cultures and life-styles; it must be accompanied by a willingness on all sides to be open to the other cultures of the region, the world and finally of all humanity. This view rejects

[17] Final report on the meeting of experts on the possibility of instituting popular participation in development with due consideration for its socio-political, economic and cultural context, Dakar, 10-14 Dec. 1979, p. 8.

[18] A. M. M'Bow, in: Préservation et épanouissement des valeurs culturelles, note to the Secretary-General, report submitted by the Director-General of UNESCO, Resolution 31/39, General Assembly of the United Nations (A/33/57), 6 Sept. 1978, Point 79 of the Agenda.

[19] See for example J. Galtung, P. O'Brien and R. Preiswerk: Self-Reliance: A Strategy for Development, London 1980.

[20] Final report on the meeting of experts . . ., op. cit., p. 8.

[21] A. Birou and P. M. Henry: Pour un autre développement, PUF, 1976, p. 311.

cultural isolationism as well as the chauvinistic vindication of national characteristics.

It is clear that isolationism in a world that has become "one big house" is impossible. Even if it were possible it would not be desirable: to turn in on oneself is in fact to condemn oneself to decay. So every culture has to open itself to the external world and co-operate with what is foreign to it. The idea of "endogenous" and "self-reliant" development has admittedly created some ambiguities in this matter. Endogeneity must in no way be thought of as an invitation to autarky, or the refusal to participate in scientific, technological or cultural exchanges with the outside world. As Djamchid Behnam points out, "When we talk of endogeneity we should not be understood as wanting to limit ourselves to the national culture or shut ourselves in an ivory tower and live in autarky. Endogenous development should not be seen as a mere return to origins but rather as a process based on national cultural values and open to the universal cultural and scientific heritage".[22]

Similarly the idea of self-reliant development does not imply a total rupture with the outside world. What it implies is depending above all on the potential and resources of the populations involved, and using appropriate technology in an effort to find locally everything that is needed for subsistence, without destroying traditions and customs in the process. But it is also certainly a process that involves exchange with other societies, for "it is only this dialogue that will allow humanity to raise itself a little higher towards what it is to become".[23]

National Heritage and Universal Culture

The need for co-operation and the difficult balance between national heritage and universal culture is certainly a question which every country needs to deal with through the patient and methodical search for a way to make the need for autonomous development compatible with the need for external co-operation. To put the question in the terms used by Janusz Ziolkowski, it is indeed a matter of knowing "the most appropriate ways and means of achieving cultural independence and autonomy without losing the advantages of scientific and technological progress, or of interdependence".[24]

In similar terms, Djamchid Behnam points out quite rightly that the essential question is not how to cut off the transfer of knowledge but how to act in such a way that every country in the world can benefit from scientific and technological progress and adapt their own institutions, at the same time as conserving them, to the constraints brought by knowledge from the outside.[25]

The transfer of technology, or more broadly, the transfer of knowledge, is a real necessity but should be considered only as a complement to the endogenous knowledge which is produced by scientific research activity. More precisely, the transfer of knowledge "is a matter of rational regulation, maintaining an equilibrium between the external and the internal, between the universal culture and the national heritage".[26] In fact the how and the why of technology and experimentation must be grasped in order to make an appropriate selection that blends with the internal dynamism of the people and culture concerned. For practical examples of this, one could look at the proposals made by I. Sachs[27] for a "compromise" between scientific self-sufficiency and the massive importation of science and technology with the renunciation of all self-help. Many people believe that Japan has been more successful than any other nation in making this synthesis between tradition and modernism and combining authentic culture with economic vitality.

Finally, it should be said that communication, and therefore co-operation between peoples with different value systems, is not easy. Collaboration between cultures, with cordial respect for each other, cannot happen without confrontation. As Jean William Lapierre quite rightly points out, "It is useless to think in terms of a world in which every culture could be preserved as it is, or a historical process in which they could all gently evolve without ever coming into confrontation with each other".[28] In the same way, Tahar Ben Jelloun stresses that the future of cultures will be a matter of encounter, cross-fertilization and sometimes shock and confrontation.[29] But it is in this very process of conflict and co-operation, struggle and competition, that the fundamental dialectic of humanity is to be found, a dialectic that is universal and unceasing.

---

[22] D. Behnam: Réflexions sur les dimensions culturelles du développement, UNESCO, Paris 1981, p. 26.

[23] J. Ki-Zerbo, op. cit., p. 33.

[24] J. Ziolkowski: The Cultural Dimension of Development, in: Cultures, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1979, pp. 22 and 23.

[25] D. Behnam, op. cit., p. 30.

[26] D. Behnam, op. cit., p. 26.

[27] Cf. I. Sachs: La découverte du Tiers-Monde, Flammarion 1971, pp. 243 ff.

[28] J. W. Lapierre: Le développement et la mort des cultures, in: Esprit, May 1970, p. 997.

[29] T. B. Jelloun: Les PMA (Les pays les moins aimés), in: Le Monde, 20 March 1982.