

THE POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: GIVENS IN  
THE QUEST FOR A PARADIGM

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ABSTRACT

Looking back, it is apparent that the late fifties of this century were vintage years in a time of faith in modernization - developing "them" (in the Third World) to look like "us" (in the First World) - as the basic paradigm for development. The success of the Marshall Plan in the re-development of Europe inspired the conclusion by the West that what was needed to "develop" Africa, Asia and Latin America was foreign aid, technical expertise and revamped administrative systems in Third World countries, which had to see to the diffusion of technical know-how as well as to the assimilation of this external input by these countries.

It soon became apparent that "development" is a weasel word: That it means various things to various cultures, and, as a result of this, that technical successes were outweighed by social costs. The awareness that fundamental values have a determining effect on the perception as to the nature of "the good life", has caused a change of paradigm. The main question became: "Development for what?" - not any longer whether certain values inhibit "development", but whether "development" is in line with fundamental values within the target community.

In this article the author traces the development of the two basic developmental paradigms ("modernization" and "dependency"), their manifestation within the Southern African region and the need for the further unfolding of "development through authenticity" as a third paradigm if real development is to be achieved.

## INTRODUCTORY

When Alice in Wonderland asks the cat which direction she should take, he very sensibly tells her that that will depend on where she wants to go...

The concept "development" has much the same impact. It is not free from values, and thus means different things in terms of different "isms", while various academic disciplines also maintain their own angles of vision and their own emphases. Even deep into the Third Decade of Development of the United Nations the truth of Lucy Mair's statement remains incontrovertible: "Development is a weasel word" (1975:607). This is not to say that no success has been achieved in the course of the past fifty years - roughly the period during which increasing efforts have gone into the development of the Third World. The concept has been refined and gained clarity of perspective as a result of re-interpretations. But should it be reasoned that conceptual clarity and uniformity is only a *prima facie* proof and that the final proof is to be found in the successful application, then the result has been disappointing and it should be assumed that the real hard word is still ahead. Technological successes there have been, but the record states that these have been achieved at tremendous social cost. In fact, already before and during the Second Decade of Development it was stated, in statements like Arusha, Cocoyoc, the IFIAS statement of 1975 and Marrakesh (1977) that the conventional approaches to development had failed (Galtung, et al., 1980:387-421). Statements such as the following underline the degree of failure: "Our first concern is to redefine the whole purpose of development. This should not be to develop things, but to develop man, "and"... after thirty years of aid and resource transfers of all types, hunger, unemployment and hopelessness are still the lot of most peoples of the world" (Galtung, et al., 1980:405 and 412).

Southern Africa as region may be relatively better off than some other regions in the Third World, but here too the developmental paradigm is in a state of crisis. Here too the Kuhnian "syndrome" is visible: the continuation of assumptions, concepts, theories and prescriptions of the

basic paradigm - in the midst of an increase in problems and anomalies which cannot be solved by the paradigms.

Because so many dimensions are involved in the politics of development of Southern Africa, the field is almost impossible to survey. The question as to who decides about the what and how of "development" can become a mechanical empirical exercise if it is not seen within wider contexts. Accordingly, in this paper a compromise is entered into between space, extent or range and area of concentration: firstly, a brief survey of the two basic developmental paradigms; secondly the milieu within which paradigm application takes place; thirdly, something about frameworks in South and Southern Africa and finally a number of remarks will be made about fundamental values as a possible point of departure for the reflection about the developmental paradigm.

#### DEVELOPMENTAL PARADIGMS

In recapitulation: a paradigm can be regarded as consisting of fundamental assumptions which its adherents make with regard to the reality within which they find themselves. Only should a change occur in the fundamental assumptions or views of reality, does the paradigm change. Kuhn, read in conjunction with Stegmüller and Vasquez indicates, however, that three concentric circles have to be distinguished in relation to the paradigm: a core structure, paradigm formulation and paradigm application (Van Niekerk, 1987:17 et seq.). This implies that adjustments and changes in formulation and application do not necessarily indicate a change in the core structure.

Looking back, and seen against the background of positivism, which culminated in Behavioralism (cf. De Coning, 1987:200) and the subsequent post-Behavioralism, various shifts in approaches and placing of accents could be discerned in the Western developmental paradigm ("modernization"): from growth to employment, distribution of income, basic needs and "self-reliance". Inspired by the Marshall Plan, the American "Point Four Programme" of 1949, the Colombo Plan of the fifties and "Alliance

for Progress" in the sixties, the initial trend towards grand theories can be understood all too well. The initial period was characterized by the faith that the key to large-scale elevation of the Third World lay in "... foreign aid, with the necessary transfer of economic and technical expertise, instrumentalized through a revamped administrative system" (Dwivendi & Nef, 1982:60).

A developmentally-directed administration would deal with the diffusion of technical expertise, and also see to the assimilation of this externally introduced facet through and within target communities. Such a developmentally directed administration would not only effect social change and modernization (in accordance with the Western model), but would also serve as a stabilizer to prevent revolutionary change.

The paradigm therefore accepted in essence that the problem lay on the periphery: in fact, that the periphery was the problem; that the centre held (or was) the solution, and that this was to be found in "development", which was seen as congruent with "modernization". And through that the interests of the centre would of course also be served. Thus the establishment of (modern) institutions became the developmental policy of the sixties (Honadle, 1982:175).

Since then the emphases have shifted at an astonishing tempo within this paradigmatic framework, and many methods, techniques and approaches such as the Critical Path Method (CPM), Red Book, Program Implementation Management (PIM), Integrated Project Planning and Management Cycle (IPPMC), PERT. etc. emerged. The programme approach was crowded out by the project approach; integrated rural development was specially stressed: "small" became beautiful - and gradually the awareness dawned that "growth" had the dynamic yet undesirable effect that it rendered the rich even richer and the poor even poorer; that implementation was the essential stumbling block because the successful implementation of Western techniques and methods depended on supportive community values; that target communities do not react differently because of irrationality but often precisely because of rationality, and that they dispose of indigenous technical knowledge and skills of which the Western planners do not dispose.

The growing awareness that different lifeviews and different fundamental values are rooted deeply and are crucial for perceptions about the nature of the "good life" meant the end of "grand theories" of development. This was strongly aided by post-Behavioralism with its placing of accents on ethical considerations: not any longer is it a question to what extent given values promote or impede development, but whether development is good or bad for the target community's perception of the "good life". The crucial question therefore now becomes: Why development? The basic motive is no longer political, economic or technological, but moral in nature.

In this way community involvement and participation as approach came strongly to the fore. This certainly implies a stronger stress on the "development from below" approach, and therefore "as many decision-makers at the local level as possible" (Stevens, 1978:5). New appreciation came to be expressed for cultural variety and values: "Conventional approaches to development have failed ... they have betrayed their promise ... [they have] violated the first principle of human dignity, namely that human beings as well as their culture need to be treated by others with due respect ... Most agents of development, however, have treated persons and cultures as mere instruments of economic growth or as variables to be manipulated to reach changed targets" (Galtung, et al., 1980:412).

A second (and opposing) basic paradigm was established by the dependency theorists of the structuralist school (Vorster, 1986:53). The origin of this lay, amongst others, in the dependencia literature striving to explain under-development in Latin America: under-development (in some parts of the world) is seen as the direct result of development (in other parts of world). The same would also be true of intra-state (or community) relations. Therefore development (in the original meaning) is seen as a morally reprehensible concept: it aids the developed world to the further detriment of the under-developed world. Thence the demand for "liberation" in contrast to "development"; the demolition of factories and of bridgeheads between centre and periphery as a prerequisite for "development". In reality one here finds a strong inclination towards Marxist and neo-Marxist points of departure in terms of the class struggle and the revolutionary approach. The relation First World/Third

World, as well as that between the RSA and the neighbouring states is, in the nature of things, very compatible with this paradigm. The theory also constitutes an attractive framework for a Marxist vision on and an explication of inequalities in the RSA (cf. Vorster, 1986:81 et seq.).

Within the context of Southern Africa these two basic paradigms are still at war with each other - both often veiled by their own semantic convolutions. The Arusha declaration with its socialistic bias is essentially an effort to halt capitalist "exploitation". Elsewhere the struggle is also raging against multi-national corporations which are seen as the tentacles of the octopus while "scientific socialism" often serves as the Trojan horse for structural imperialism, which has its centre in Moscow. What one would like to say with this is that the Western modernization paradigm, under the guise of "development", and the Marxist-Socialist paradigm, concealed by the banner of "liberation", "self-determination", "development", "self-reliance" and "peaceful co-existence" have the basic objective of promoting self-interest by promotion of the order which is regarded as the ideal or the desired one. Thus the paradigms are competitive, and a debate between its exponents gains a circular nature because each exponent uses its own points of departure to justify it.

The political system (state) as a legitimate allocator of authoritative values of necessity plays a cardinal role in the decision about the nature and the application of the developmental paradigm. Struggle for control of the state apparatus is therefore axiomatic between groupings with different perceptions of the "good life", and the developmental route leading to it. And in this regard the very well-known statement by Max Weber to the effect that the behaviour of states are determined by interests and not by ideas, is still valid.

Should one look in this light at the two basic developmental paradigms, one could advance the statement that the adjustments and appendages of the paradigms do not essentially change their core structures. Self-interest and its promotion through the achievement of power and influence as well as the maintenance of these remains unaltered. Against this background a few more pertinent references will be made to the milieu within which the politics of development is conducted in Southern Africa.

## THE MILIEU

In the external milieu three forces are of interest, viz. the East (and especially the USSR), the West, and the rest of the African continent. Each of these exerts a specific influence on the politics of development within the Southern African region.

As far as the USSR is concerned: Because of the systemic conflict with the USA, the fact of the inbuilt expansionism of Marxist-Leninism, and continuation of the policy to gain control over the world without firing a shot, the policy of "hitching a ride" is being maintained. This implies that community conflicts are fanned, one of the parties supported, and in this way (hopefully) a periphery is created. In the Gorbachev era support is given to the "liberation movements" (which ideally have internal flanks through which developmental objectives of governments can be vetoed). At the same time the Breshnev doctrine of "what we have we keep" is also maintained. By means of propaganda, a special semantic code and the use (and abuse) of fronts the "alternative developmental paradigm" is promoted and then with the RSA as the main target.

The West acknowledges and accepts an economic and strategic interest in Southern Africa and indeed desires that the region should gain greater stability through mutual inter-state co-operation. The internal policy of the RSA (thus also its developmental objectives) is unacceptable for other states in the region, while the continuation of White rule is seen by the West as the cause of the radicalising of black resistance. Thus: the perception is that the longer White rule lasts, the greater the probability that it will eventually be overthrown by radical powers (with the aid of Moscow), and the greater the possibility that Moscow, by means of the SACP, will gain control of the resources of South Africa. The quicker the transition to Black government, the greater the chances that the change will be moderate, and so serve Western interests. This is the cause of Western obstruction of the separate developmental politics, non-acknowledgement of the TBVC states, support to Black unions as political pressure factors, trade and other boycotts against the RSA and aid to frontline states who are badly affected by the boycott actions against South Africa.

Accordingly, the RSA as regional superpower is being forced by means of boycotts by the West and subversion by the East towards a scaling down and adjustment of certain objectives in internal and regional developmental politics.

The policy and objectives of the West as well as the East with regard to Southern Africa (South Africa in particular) are determined to a large extent by the viewpoints of Africa in this regard. And the demands of Africa can be summed up in one sentence: "Decolonizing" of South West Africa/Namibia and the replacement of the present White government by a Black government over (geographical) South Africa as it was before 26 October 1976 - the date on which Transkei was given independence. In the meantime South Africa is seen as a living symbol of the colonial experience of Africa and a reinforcer of the subsequent frustrating ambivalence with regard to the West.

The development objectives demanded from without for South Africa thus not only tend to exercise a veto effect to within, and to stimulate internal counter-currents, but also exerts an effect on a deploying process of social mobilization and the dynamics typical to a racially stratified situation.

The effect of social mobilization involves the erosion of older relations and the grouping of people in new secular relations, organizations and behavioral patterns; changes in political culture; political activism and the setting of political demands; increasing pressure on the government for the rendering of services; changing self-perceptions, etc. This also implies an increase in psychosocial tension, a distrust in whatever is stated by the government as objectives, and an increase in anomic violence. These forces drive the traditionally subservient population stratum through various phases in the swing from complementary schismo-genesis to symmetrical schismo-genesis - a process characterised by polarization and which often culminates in an acceptance of the philosophy of violence as the guiding principle (cf. Maritz, 1986:30-33).

These forces from within and without South Africa (and often in combination with each other) have already introduced a very wide spectrum of political groupings, each with its own developmental objectives. Should



the products of the "traditional" developmental paradigm of the government be added, we already have to do with a dangerously large variety of groupings within and without the system, while there are also various internal groups with outward flanks (AZAPO-PAC and UDF-ANC). The diversity of paradigms, perspectives and perceptions of the "good life" (as an objective for development) can be understood if at all if black-radical-left (for example, PAC/AZAPO) as opposed to White-radical-right (the BBB or more "moderate", the AWB) are juxtaposed. It can be accepted without doubt that compromise and consensus between these groupings about the nature of desirable developmental objectives and the route by which these have to be attained are not possible. More: That the government of the day will increasingly evoke violence and terror should more favourable circumstances be created for negotiation with extremist Black groups.

That in the process a shift of energy took place towards the security structures of the government apparatus which culminates in the State Security Council, and that these structures have also begun to play a role in decision-making about the politics of development in South and Southern Africa can be understood. The irony is, however, that precisely as a result of the clash of paradigms in the region "progress" for the one is "regression" for the other.

#### FRAMEWORKS

It is a fairly general view that the RSA holds the key to the progression or regression of the region. Because of its position as core/centre of economic, technological, military and other capabilities and expertise it can also play a most powerful developmental role. On the other hand it also has the ability to turn the region into scorched earth. In its turn, once again the internal policy of the country and the way in which the problem of relationships between population groups is handled, constitutes the core of the South African (and therefore regional) problems.

The nature and content of the "traditional" official South African paradigmatic core structure, as well as its application since 1948, are well known. The anomalies which since the late sixties have emerged because of and its adjustments in formulations and applications since then are also known - events which have led to two splinterings from the National Party (1969 and 1982), while the shifts in the election of 6 May 1987 are also not without significance in this regard. From some sources it is now said that there is no longer a coherent ideological blueprint (core structure) while others feel that this still exists, but has been obscured, while still others see the present stand as only a modernization of the traditional paradigm. It has already been remarked that the present dilemma of (especially) the Afrikaner consists in the response to the question of power-sharing, while still retaining control. In power is situated, after all, the positivizing force of paradigms.

The "group approach" and "group acknowledgement" (race or ethnic) is an essential trait of the traditional paradigm. The application of this in Black rural areas led to state formation, the establishment of uplifting administrative structures and purposeful efforts towards activation of economic activities as a part of nation building on an ethnic basis. Physical room for realisation of cultural diversity, however limited, was created in this way. Gradually two categories of these state orders came into being, viz. the TBVC countries and the self-governing national states. In this way decision-making structures were created within which there is room for the expression of cultural values within the reality of a structure. What is a bone of contention is the extent of the resources for which and with regard to which decisions are made through these structures. It emerges from the reasoning that, in order to accept independence, it amounts for some leaders to a sacrifice of birthright of ethnic groups for the proverbial mess of potage.

The involvement of group members living outside these areas has proved to be unsuccessful. To the extent that emphasis came to be put more strongly on ethnicity with a view to their inclusion, to that same extent did they deny ethnicity as a formal ordering factor (especially in urban areas) because it was perceived to be a mechanism by which the urban population could be politically manipulated. At the same time it should be conceded that the political (and demographic) pivot is shifting to the

urban areas. Together with this came the insistence by black communities in urban areas on participation in decision-making at the central level.

Viewed in the perspective of the regional setup (characterized by a clash between economic and politico-ideological forces), the wide spectrum of standpoints, sociological, historical, cultural and geo-political givens, the nature of the distribution of the population, differences in development, etc. there is a society here which cannot really be accommodated within a simple structure. And should the present structures not be able (any longer) to cope with the internal South African conflict, one could accept in advance that no existing external model would be able to cope with the difficulties just like that. The population composition and the distribution of the population render an application of the Swiss canton system impracticable; partition will, for a variety of reasons, not be applicable, and the already propagated confederation idea is rejected out of hand because it is perceived as building on the products of "apartheid". The process of radicalization has also succeeded in reflecting discredit on the concept of federalism, while the existence of a tricameral parliament with certain consociative practices has also cast a doubt on this method or form of government.

Universal franchise in a unitary dispensation with protection of minority rights has at times been made much of. Guaranteed individual rights, it is reasoned, imply guaranteed group rights because it is the inalienable right of an individual to realise himself fully within group context. The first problem with this model resides in the question as to who guarantees the guarantee. The second problem is situated in the content given to the concept by a regime. Normally a distinction is made between Public Law and Private Law as legal spheres. A distinction is also made between Civil Private Law (individual rights) and non-Civil Private Law which consists of the juridical situation of the non-state forms of life (such as the family, cultural organization or the church). Depending on the ideology and the political culture of a regime, these frontiers can be breached or denied. Should they be respected, and the legal content of what we understand under individual rights is maintained, then it also protects the non-Civil Private legal sphere. Should a different content be given to the protection of individual rights, then there is no guarantee. Fundamental values through which and according to which state

structures manifest developmental perceptions, are therefore a key factor in the determination and legitimising of developmental objectives.

In the light of the above it should be accepted that the nature of the South African accommodation structure will be relatively determining for development in South Africa and Southern Africa. Flexible structures will promote it; rigid and constricting structures can let the region explode into revolutionary anarchy. Should it be desired that development be promoted, then the structure will have to make provision for confederalism (for the TBVC states), federalism (the national states) and unitarism with strong consociational practices. Adjustments of frontiers, decentralization and local autonomy would likely be part of the order - as well as the termination of white dominance as part of the core paradigm.

Negotiation (with the characteristics of the scaling down of demands and shifting of minimum conditions as fears are allayed) of necessity constitutes the prerequisite for the finding of a model which will comply with the conditions for development, viz. room for the maintenance of identity, acknowledgement of cultural diversity, community involvement and "development from below".

#### FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

Reference was repeatedly made in the above to fundamental values which constitute an essential ecological factor within any developmental context. These values are not only relevant in the planning, executing and continuing of projects, but are equally important in organization and ordering in the widest sense. This determines the nature of the perception of "the good life", and thus the way to the improvement of quality of life. The insistence on acknowledgement of cultural diversity, identity, community involvement and "development from below" is essentially a reference to the demand for more room for the recognition of existing values in the developmental process and boil down to the same as Almond's plea for the "historical cure" (cf De Coning, 1987:204).

It has only been fairly recently that the realization has dawned that these values have more weight than Western organizational and management principles. It is not a question that the values need to be changed to adjust to Western management principles, but the other way round: Because Western management principles are the product of centuries of experimentation within a specific cultural milieu and are thus the product of specific fundamental values, a different culture with different values also demands different principles and practices. Management principles and practices should therefore adjust to fundamental values. This precisely has caused the Japanese, "... despite their 'immoral, irrational, dishonest, evasive, inefficient and indecisive' ways" to go from strength to strength (Mendoza, 1977:62), and to be economically overtaking the USA, with its arsenal of "more efficient" management principles.

In two very readable essays Mendoza (1977:61 et seq.) and Moris (1977:73 et seq.) deal with the transferability of Western management concepts and programmes to Asia and Africa respectively. Although not new, both come to the conclusion that given crucial values infiltrate edifying structures and ultimately determine the way in which these function. There is a vast difference between Africa and Japan, however: In Japan the "home" is traditionally the basic collectivity of values in juridical, economic, social and political sense, and serves as model for the wider relations which culminate in the comprehensive state. In the case of Africa an attempt is made to follow Western management methods, yet without the Western tradition and within a value-alien community. The result is a practically inexhaustable list of "irrational weaknesses." In the case of Japan fundamental values - amongst others, communal or collective responsibility - have been embedded in the management and production process, and there is correspondence between values and structures; in Africa the style of administration is neither Western nor a reflection of the personal cultural heritage: "fundamental values ... render ineffective many externally induced managerial innovations" (Moris, 1977:83). This is also of course true for development in South Africa and Southern Africa.

The historical norm of continuity demands that development should take place on and from the own fundamental value roots. Whoever postulates this, however, is regarded with a great deal of mistrust because it is

then read as a plea for the continuation of the status quo, an effort to reserve the "wonder world" of being "modern" for the "exploitative" First World, and to cement the Third World firmly in the present frustrating position of economic and military feebleness. The blinding effect of acculturative dynamics, and flowing from that, the quest for a dignified identity are probably responsible for this immature attitude.

At the same time there are signs, however, that the truth of the fundamental value-statement is increasingly being understood. Only two examples need to be quoted, viz. values as articulated by the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, and the various utterances of African Socialism in which fundamental values are built on and involved, and through which all spheres of life are touched upon.

From this flows an already stated truth, viz. that one society or cultural unit cannot develop another. One can help, however, to create the conditions and circumstances for the realisation of the developmental objectives of the other. The first step would be, however, to identify fundamental values and to formulate objectives in terms of these. Together with this, it has to be understood that decision-making structures, administrative methods, management techniques and modes of production are only means to an end in development - viz. a realisation of "the good life". For the promotion of this the existing South African and Southern African diversity-in-unity should be accepted: that people are not only similar or only different, but both similar and different. In this light one should fearlessly look at fundamental values in all societal spheres: individualism as opposed to communalism; the degree of "totality" as opposed to the degree of "compartmentalization" with which the individual is regarded and wants to be treated; the nature of socio-ecological norms, codes and conventions; perceptions of "right" and "wrong", "good" and "bad"; view of life and the world; criteria for hierarchical ordering, etc. It would firstly demand an awareness that there are stereotypes and that these colour reality. Existing paradigms will continually have to be questioned in the course of this process.

Thus: still in the mode of reform, but with the maintenance of order, the politics of development will have to be conducted as an alternative to the politics of revolution in South Africa and Southern Africa.

## IN CONCLUSION

Southern Africa is at present the arena for warring developmental paradigms. There are especially variants of the two prototypes from, respectively, the East and the West. Because each paradigm sets its own (clashing) objectives and is supported in its implementation by the various centra, the region is subject not only to conflict but also to confusion. A third basic paradigm, viz. that of "developing through authenticity" (or the "historical cure") is seemingly germinating in Southern Africa, but the historical heritage and the emotional experience of it on the one hand, and the play of contemporary powers on the other hand, prevent it from coming to fruition more quickly. Reactions to the modernization paradigm have already, however, uncovered essential traits of it, viz. the maintenance of cultural integrity, identity, community involvement, and development from below.

That South Africa has a special role to play in the deployment of this growing paradigm within the regional context is accepted. In fact, elements of the South African core structure show similarity with this incipient approach to reality. At the same time, however, South Africa is in the problematic situation that its core structure has already been brought into such discredit as a result of the (archaic) racial elements contained in it that the country would first have to rid itself of these elements before being able to play its true role as an African state - and be acknowledged for it. This essentially implies an acceptance of a new core structure.

In terms of "development through authenticity" the RSA would therefore first have to set its own house in order. The encouraging aspect of this paradigm is that whoever accepts it as paradigm, also accepts that which is primary for White Africans, viz. room within the state apparatus for the realisation of cultural integrity and identity - in contrast with the old, discredited and non-representative label of racial superiority.

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