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Another conceptual crisis is emerging within the field of development and technical cooperation, prompting a most proficuous conjuncture to promote change within the related discursive formations. If we are to go beyond the recycling of theories and concepts, new formulations need to be based on a critique of the larger field of development activities.[1] After several decades of development, there is no room left for innocence. Inspired by Durkheim's (1968) well-known argument that religion is society worshipping itself, I understand development as economic expansion worshipping itself. That means we need to know the belief system underlying this devotion as well as the characteristics of the power field sustaining it.

Power, the central notion in this text, has many definitions. My own conception is based on a combination of three different sources. For Richard Adams (1967), power is the control that one party posseses over another party's environment. Of the several visions of Max Weber, I will retain that of power as the capacity to make people do things they do not want to do. Eric Wolf's (1999) notion of structural power underscores the capacity historical relationships and forces—especially those that define access to social labour—have to create and organize settings that constrain people's possibilities for action, and to specify the direction and distribution of energy flows. Power, thus, is about (a) to be the subject of one's own environment, to be able to control one's own destiny, i.e., the course of action or events that will keep one's life as it is or will modify it, or (b) to prevent people from becoming such empowered actors. Since development is always about transformation (Berman, 1987), and typically occurs through encounters between insiders and outsiders located in different power positions, ownership of development initiatives is anchored in and influenced by situations where power inequalities abound. The difficulty of implementing change within the development community is intimately related to the fact that it is a power field.

Development As a Power Field

Bourdieu (1986) defines a field as a set of relations and interrelations based on specific values and practices that operate in given contexts. A field is heterogeneous by definition; it is made up of different actors, institutions, discourses and forces in tension. Within a field, everything makes sense in relational terms by means of oppositions and distinctions. Strategies of cooperation or conflict among actors determine whether a particular doctrine is hegemonic, regardless of its successes or failures (Perrot et al., 1992, 202-4). The development field is constituted by such actors as those representing various segments of local populations (local elites and leaders of social movements, for instance); private entrepreneurs; officials and politicians at all levels of government;

[1] I share Rist's opinion that critique needs to be "understood in its Kantian sense of free and public examination rather than its ordinary sense of unfavourable judgement" (1997, 3).

personnel of national, international and transnational corporations (different kinds of contractors and consultants, for example); and staff of international development organizations (officers of multilateral agencies and regional banks, for instance). Institutions are also important members of this field; they include various types of governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), churches, unions, multilateral agencies, industrial entities and financial corporations.

The structure and dynamics of every development field are marked by different power capabilities and interests that are articulated through historical processes of networking. Development encompasses different political visions and positions ranging from an interest in accumulation of economic and political power to an emphasis on redistribution and equity. In consequence, power struggles are common among actors, within and across institutions. Differentiated power nodes operate within the web of relationships and are concretely expressed by the disparities existing between, say, the capabilities and actions of the World Bank and those of a small NGO in India. Barros (1996), in her study of environmental global movements and policies, coined the notion of "nuclear agents," those with more power to influence a field's configuration and tendencies (in her case, the United Nations, the World Bank and mainstream NGOs). The development field's most powerful actors and institutions are those alluded to by the label "development industry." They strive for the reproduction of the field as a whole, since their own interests are closely connected to the field's existence. The least powerful actors and institutions are local groupings disenfranchised by development initiatives. Those initiatives that destroy the relationships between indigenous peoples, their territory and culture—such as forced resettlements to build dams—provide the most obvious scenario of the vulnerability of local populations vis-à-vis "development."

The nature of the power distribution within the development field will depend on the processes through which networks are formed and on the chararacteristics of the resulting institutional interventions in the development drama.

Networking and Consortiation: The Making of Institutions

Networks related to economic expansion and growth are not new. Since the industrial revolution, they have operated in the construction of large-scale infrastructure projects (LSPs), such as canals, railroads, dams and other major works, the quintessential examples of "development projects."[2] LSPs have structural characteristics that allow them to be treated as "extreme expressions" of the development field: the size of the capital, territories and quantities of people they control; their great political power; the magnitude of their environmental and social impacts; the technological innovations they often cause; and the complexity of the networks they entail (Ribeiro, 1987). They put together impressive quantities of financial and industrial capital as well as state and technical elites and workers, fusing local, regional, national, international and transnational levels of integration.[3] As a form of production linked to the expansion

[2] My choice of focusing on large-scale projects is a methodological one. I am following Kroeber's (1955) idea of studying "the most extreme expressions" of a range of phenomena to better understand them. First military engineers and then civil engineers played a major role in the structuration of this field beginning in the 18th century (Ribeiro, 1987).

[3] Based on Steward (1972), I view levels of integration as a spectrum formed by local, regional, national, international and transnational levels, with different powers of structuration. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, I make the following equation: The local level corresponds to the location of our immediate phenomenological daily experiences, i.e., the set of loci where a person or group carries out regular daily activities, interacting with or being exposed to different social networks and institutions. The regional level corresponds to the political/cultural definition of a region within a nation, such as the South in the United

of economic systems, LSPs have connected relatively isolated areas to wider and more integrated market systems. Non-linear flows of labour, capital and information among such projects have happened on a global scale (Ribeiro, 1994 and 1995). Large-scale projects have relied on powerful institutions—such as governmental and multilateral organizations, engineering schools, banks and industrial corporations—that have played important roles in the political economy of the last two centuries. Many of these institutions have become centres for the diffusion of ideas on new and ever larger projects; of technological innovations; and of the categories, models and ideologies of industrial progress and expansion.

Why should we mind these historical connections? Precisely because the field of development is the heir of many of the beliefs and practices that have been generated and transmitted within the field of large-scale projects. It is not a coincidence that multilateral banks, for instance, before the reformist impact of the environmentalist movement, had large scale infrastructure projects as main items of their portfolio for many years. The circuits linking projects on national and global scales have made up a multilocated web through which information and people have circulated. Technical and managerial solutions have been exchanged and sometimes improved in projects presented as showcases for the implementation of new methods and technologies. Because of their huge environmental and social impacts, LSPs have vividly portrayed the unbalanced power relationships between local populations and developmentalist outsiders. These projects have also prompted an increase in the reaction capacity of local actors through social movements and NGOs. People have started to understand the inequalities inherent to this kind of economic expansion. Foreign capital, expatriate professionals and technicians have often taken the lion's share of the richness produced by such enterprises.

The connections among projects over time as well as the intergenerational continuity that exists within many of the professions involved in LSPs make us more aware of the need to trace similar connections and continuities in other core areas of the development field. The World Bank, the “Vatican of international development” (Rich 1994: 195), is a case in point. In its early years, it was the heir not only of many colonial discourses about what would be known as “Third World Countries,” but also of former personnel of disappearing colonial administrations (Kraske et al. 1996: 136). Knowledge about LSPs also allows to see development as a force of expansion historically intrinsic to globalization, and reveals such expansion as planned interventions that rely on the establishment of networks of engineers, technicians, politicians, lobbyists, public servants, and financial and industrial capitalists. Personal relationships are of utmost importance to navigate through the complex webs of interests existing in and around projects; they are also the foundations on which many networks, across and within professional categories, are based and through which brokerage occurs. These networks frequently join local, regional, national, international and transnational interests. They are perfect to invigorate the wider, more complex field of development because they allow for the establishment of different, often ad hoc coalitions between various actors in the field. To the extent that this flexibility permits pragmatic and sometimes heterodox alliances that can prove to be effective in many circumstances, it is also responsible for a certain lack of accountability.

In spite of their vital role in maintaining the synergy of the development field, networks are too fluid to provide the regularity, stability, rational planning and foresight

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States, or Galicia in Spain. The national, international and transnational levels refer to the existence of the nation-state, and to the different existing relationships within and without it.

needed for development interventions. Networking pragmatism, thus, is an effective instrument, reflected in the strong ability of networks to move from local to national, international and transnational scenarios; but it also engenders a relative loss of homogeneity among the resulting collective subjects, who often exist as target-oriented coalitions that are dismantled once the task is accomplished. This is why networks may be characterized as pragmatic, fragmented, disseminated, circumstancial and even volatile actors. Their strength comes from these characteristics and from a heterogeneity that enables them to match the fluidity of a changing political and economic field with more effectiveness than traditional actors, who are often bound by the need for internal ideological, organizational and political coherence and cohesiveness (with its consequent weight and institutional investment of energy). Such an apparent unity serves as an external identity that qualifies traditional actors as representative of a segment, a corporation or of precisely delimited interests. But the weakness of networks comes also from networking pragmatism; it hinders networks from becoming actors who could have a longer and stronger presence if they were consolidated into a more homogeneous and coherent subject with a shared programmatic objective.In consequence, networks are joined by other entities within the field of development.

When networks reach a point where they have well-defined, lasting interests and goals, they tend to become institutions based not only in personal relationships but also in bureaucratic rationales. Institutions are the crystallizations of networks that have clear-cut projects in sight and within the foreseeable future. "Institution-building" involves a great amount of technical cooperation and monitoring, and is a form of domesticating the unpredictable environments where "development" occurs.

Development institutions are bureaucracies of different size and complexity. As Max Weber (1977) has pointed out, bureacracies are a form of domination, of exerting power. The larger the development initiatives, the larger the bureaucracies related to them and the stronger their capacity to exert power, especially over institutions and actors operating at lower levels of integration. With their hierarchies, rules and reproductive needs, bureaucracies are machines of indifference (Herzfeld, 1992):

> Accountability, Weber tells us, is what bureaucracy is all about; and accountability is what many bureaucrats invest enormous amounts of efforts in short-circuiting or avoiding. A cynic might define power...as the right to be unaccountable (ibid., 122).

This “right to be unaccountable” has motivated many reactions and much opposition to development bureaucracies worldwide. Counterhegemonic networks, made up of NGOs, social movements, unions, churches, etc., have played fundamental roles in protecting the interests of local populations against the great quantity of power amassed by development institutions. Many of the now frequent criticisms development institutions themselves express about the nature of their operations have to be understood in light of the pressures and struggles of such counterhegemonic networks. The fact that bureaucrats or technocrats of development agencies critize their own modes of operation is not necessarily a contradiction, as it may seem in the first place. It is inherent to the rationale of bureaucracies to produce their own criticism, as a way of disseminating and naturalizing the very bureaucratic structure they seem to criticize and, sometimes, oppose (Herzfeld, 1992). In fact, and this is especially true in the history of development, the capacity to produce excuses for failures, to recycle formulations and

to create new panaceas is part of the "idioms of self-exoneration" (ibid., 46) in many institutions.[4]

Bureaucracies are also power fields. Criticism and opposition to mainstream policies are related to the power struggles that develop within and without institutions at certain junctures. The dispute within the World Bank over the Narmada River Basin Development Project in India is an example of the intricacies of such political struggles (Rich, 1994). Criticism, though, has limits. In spite of the efforts institutions make to censor their staff, sometimes staff make alliances with counterhegemonic networks at their own risk. The punishment for such heresies is often outright dismissal; the bureaucratic orthodoxy and theodicy needs to seem immaculate.

Max Weber (1977, 708) had already noticed the impossibility of a pure form of bureaucratic domination. Within the development field, personal relations are critical in such relevant moments as recruitment of new staff members and promotion of like-minded political allies. In fact, the prominence of "instrumental friendship," a major engine of networking, is so strong in large bureaucratic organizations that networks usually congeal into cliques within those settings (Wolf, 2001a [1966], 174 and ff.). Especially in situations of power imbalance, cliques have "important instrumental functions in rendering an unpredictable situation more predictable and in providing for mutual support against surprise upsets from within or without" (ibid., 179). Wolf concludes that "an interesting perspective" about large organizations "may be gained by looking upon them as organizations of supply for the cliques, rather than the other way round" (ibid.).

Institutions also become engaged in several networks within the field of development. They make up networks in complex historical and political processes. I named these processes consortiation, to call attention to their resulting entity: the consortium (Ribeiro, 1994). Institutions are the building blocks of consortia that, in turn, become new institutions that may become the units of new and more complex consortia. Consortiation is fundamental to understanding the development field, since it is the galvanizing process that transforms networks of institutions into consortia destined to fulfill delimited roles as defined by a given "project."[5] Consortiation is a political process, commanded by power groups that operate at upper levels of integration. It is a chainlike movement that—through the organization of new task-oriented economic and administrative entities—actually links, within a project, international, national, and regional institutions and capitals. It is a way to reinforce capitalist relationships in a pyramidal fashion, where upper levels hegemonize lower levels. The consortium is the concrete social, economic and political entity that articulates different power groups. The political-economic process of consortiation directly affects the potential of projects for development. Consortiation implies that projects reinforce competition and the concentration of capital and power among

[4] Building on Weber's concept of theodicy, a concept related to the various ways in which religious systems sought to interpret the apparent contradiction of evil persistence in a divinely ordered world, Herzfeld (1992, 7) proposes that "secular theodicy...provides people with social means of coping with disappointment. The fact that others do not always challenge even the most absurd attempts at explaining failure...[may be] the evidence of a very practical orientation, one that refuses to undermine the conventions of self-justification because virtually everyone...may need to draw on them in the course of a lifetime."

[5] The following arguments are based on my study of the construction of the Yacyretá dam (Ribeiro, 1994). Keeping the differences in mind, consortiation also happens in smaller projects and in those that are implemented in the name of "sustainable development" (Pareschi, 2001).

capitalist firms; it facilitates the process of capital and power concentration by eliminating weaker competitors and co-opting a few selected ones.

Consortiation involves a two-way process. On one hand, it allows selected smaller units to participate as junior partners in tasks larger than what their financial, technological and managerial capacities would allow. On the other hand, it is a way of facilitating the access of larger corporations to new and often protected or highly disputed markets. Through different discourses on a project's potential for regional and national development, the weakest partners in the associative chain legitimate their claims for larger participation. Regional development is thus a common argument among companies that operate at the local or regional level in competition with national or international corporations. By the same token, national development is the argument national corporations use to defend their interests over international and transnational capital. Given the two-way characteristic of consortiation, the discourses on regional and national development may be an argument that the strongest partners, that is, those representing larger capital or power concentrations, use to legitimate the need for the project. The eloquence of the development argument is evident when the co-optation of smaller unities down the scale is needed.

Consortia are a means corporations have to optimize the use of different networks that must be activated for reaching different economic and political goals. For instance, a consortium operating at the conjunction of the international and national systems, and formed by national and transnational power groups, may lobby both national and international-multilateral institutions. Forming a consortium always implies a negotiation, a process based not only on economic and managerial criteria. The intervention of powerful actors—the controllers or owners of state, national and transnational capital—generates a field of power negotiations that is eminently politically structured. Choosing national partners, for instance, is a strategic decision that takes into account that strong political support within the national state may be more valuable than financial or technical support. In fact, the definition of each partner's share in a contract is due at least as much to political articulations, networkings and lobbying as to the technical assessment of a partner's technical, production and financial capacity. Consortiation is, thus, at the same time, a tool for economic expansion and a means of establishing a political field where brokers of different networks establish their conditions for participating in actual projects. From the ground up, development is the ideology/utopia that cements the diverse stakeholders, networks and institutions.

Development: An Ideology and Utopia of Expansion

Ideologies and utopias are essentially related to power. They express disputes over interpretations of the past (ideology) or of the future (utopia), and struggle to institute hegemony by establishing certain retrospective or prospective visions as the truth, as the natural world order (Manheim, n.d.; Ricoeur, 1986). Since World War II, development as a system of beliefs has always been involved with particular readings of the past and formulations about the future on a global scale (Ribeiro, 1992). In his analysis of development, Escobar (1995) considers it as equivalent to colonial discourse. From a different angle, Gilbert Rist (1997, 218) treats development as a system of beliefs organically related to the worldwide expansion of integrated market systems, and as the "mobilizing slogan of a social movement that created messianic organizations and practices."

The end of the Soviet Union (1989-91) prompted striking rearrangements within the world system and opened the way for the consolidation of different ideologies and utopias of global reach. In the 1990s, two related discourses became hegemonic: sustainable development and globalization. Both seem to be reaching their limits as mobilizing slogans for the 21st century, opening a new round of ideological/utopian struggles and new opportunities for change. For radical or minor reforms of development and cooperation, a critical knowledge of development's value systems and grammar is as crucial as laying bare its structuration as a power field. The exposure of the obsolescence of hegemonic discourses is always necessary in order to go beyond them. What is at stake is whether social actors will accept new discourses on their fates.

Development is one of the most inclusive discourses in common sense and within the specialized literature. Its importance for the organization of social, political and economic relations has led anthropologists to consider it as "one of the basic ideas in modern West European culture" (Dahl and Hjort, 1984, 166), and "something of a secular religion," unquestioned, since "to oppose it is a heresy almost always severely punished" (Maybury-Lewis, 1990, 1). The scope and multiple facets of development are what allow its many appropriations and frequently divergent readings. The plasticity of development is central for the assurance of its continued viability; it is "always in the process of transforming itself, of fulfilling promises" (DSA, n.d., 4-5). The variation of the appropriations of the idea of development, as well as the attempts to reform it, are expressed in the numerous adjectives that are part of its history: industrial, capitalist, socialist, inward, outward, community, unequal, dependent, sustainable, human. These variations and tensions reflect not only the historical experiences accumulated by different power groups in their struggles for hegemony within the development field, but also diverse moments of integration of the world capitalist system.

Since the 19th century, and more so after World War II, the increased pace of integration of the world system has required ideologies and utopias that could make sense of the unequal positions within the system, and that could provide an explanation through which people placed in lower levels would believe that there is a solution for their "backward" situation. It is not by accident that development terminology has usually involved the use of metaphors that refer to space or order in a hierarchical way: developed/underdeveloped, advanced/backward, first world/third world, etc. This hierarchy is instrumental to the belief that there is a point that may be reached by following some kind of recipe kept by those nation-states that lead the "race" for a better future. By using the term "development," instead of accumulation or expansion, undesirable connotations are avoided: such as the difference of power between the units of the system (within or among nation-states) in economic, political and military terms; and the fact that development is "a simple expression of a pact between internal and external groups interested in accelerating accumulation" (Furtado, 1978, 77).

Development operates as a system of classification by establishing taxonomies of peoples, societies and regions. Edward Said (1994) and Arturo Escobar (1995) have shown the relationship between creating a geography, a world order and power. It may be said with Herzfeld (1992, 110) that "creating and maintaining a system of classification has always...characterized the exercise of power in human societies." Classifications often produce stereotypes useful to subject people through simplifications that justify indifference to heterogeneity. Stereotypes can hardly hide their power functions under the surface of the idiom of development and cooperation, the lexicon of which is full of dualisms that refer, in static or dynamic ways, to transient states or relationships of subordination (developed/underdeveloped; developing

countries; emergent markets; see Perrot et al., 1992, 189). Stereotypes may also become keywords – such as, aid, help, donors/recipients, donors/beneficiaries -- that clearly indicate, in not so subtle ways, the power imbalance between two sets of actors and legitimate the transformation of one set of them into objects of development initiatives.

Development's claim to inevitability is but another facet of its claim to universalism. The fact that development is part of a wider belief system marked by Western cultural matrices poses great limitations to its universalist claims, and is another reason why, in many non-Western contexts, local people are reluctant to become development subjects. It is hard to disagree that there is no universal method for achieving a "good life" (Rist, 1997, 241). Development's prehistory reflects such Western discursive matrices as the belief in progress (which can be traced back to ancient Greece: see Delvaille, 1969; Dodds, 1973) and others related to such important turning points as the Enlightenment—a crucial moment for the unfolding of the economic, political and social pacts of modernity and its associated ideologies and utopias (industrialism, secularism, rationalization and individualism, for instance). Leonard Binder (1986, 10-12) recognizes, in certain theories of development, an even narrower matrix: the image of the United States, "as some liberals would like us to be." More recently, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, sustainable development reverberated with notions of proper relationships between humankind and nature that were typical of Protestant, urban middle classes in countries such as Germany, England and the United States (Ribeiro, 1992).

In reality, development is another example of a globalizing discourse, similar to what Appadurai calls ideascapes—"elements of the Enlightenment worldview, which consists of a concatenation of ideas, terms and images, including 'freedom,' 'welfare,' 'rights,' 'sovereignty,' 'representation' and the master term 'democracy'" (1990, 9-10). In this connection, terms such as "ethnodevelopment," coined to refer to indigenous models of development or to alternative models that would respect local values and cultures, are oxymorons. They undoubtedly reflect legitimate aspirations, but are located on the fine and paradoxical line of accepting development as a universal category.[6]

I will briefly mention other anthropological issues that make development's pretension to universalism problematic. The first one is the existence of notions of time that are radically different (Lévi-Strauss, 1980). Development relies on a conception that envisages time as a linear sequence of stages endlessly advancing towards better moments. One implication of such a Western construct is that growth, transformation and accumulation become guiding principles of polities. But in many non-Western societies, time is understood as cycles of eternal recommencements, favoring the flourishing and consolidation of contemplation, adaptation and homeostasis as pillars of their cosmologies. Along the same line, we cannot underestimate the role of the control of time—particularly of the clock, the mother of mechanical complexity—in economic

[6] On ethnodevelopment, see Stavenhagen (1985) and Davis (1988), for instance. In the book *Autodesarrollo Indígena en las Américas* (IWGIA, 1989), ethnodevelopment was substituted for "indigenous self-development," apparently because the indigenous participants of the symposium organized by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs "did not like the concept of 'ethnodevelopment' and preferred to conceive of development as a type of self-determination" (IWGIA, 1989, 10). Critical anthropological readings of Western ideologies/utopias pose dilemmas that may hurt one's own political predilections. Accountability, for instance, is clearly not a universal category. In his cross-cultural study of bureaucracies, Herzfeld (1992, 47) concluded that "accountability is a socially produced, culturally saturated amalgam of ideas about person, presence, and polity.... (I)ts meanings are culturally specific, and its operation is constrained by the ways in which its operators and clients interpret its actions. Its management of personal or collective identity cannot break free of social experience."

development in the past centuries (Landes, 1983). Synchronicity and predictability are the basis of capitalist and industrial labour relations. Another major divide is the transformation of nature into a commodity, a historical process related to the unfolding of capitalism and modernity (Jameson, 1984) that seems to be reaching its climax with capital exploring the code of life (biotechnology) and virtuality (cyberspace and other technological forms of virtuality are more and more crucial to economic activities). Many of the impasses between developers and indigenous peoples have been based on this cosmological difference. What for some are mere resources, for others may be sacred places and elements.

Cultural shocks form the wider scenario where the issues of language and rationality are located. Language in general, and written language in particular, is a major barrier for communication within the development field. To cooperate, people need to understand, and communicative competence is not a resource equally distributed within development networks. Furthermore, linguistic competence, as Bourdieu noted (1983 [1977], 161 and ff.) cannot be separated from power analysis. Who speaks, to whom, through what media, and in what constructed circumstances are vital elements of any communication process. The relation between written language and power is even more evident, as writing is central to the development of states and to bureaucracies, making it possible, among other things, to present rules as impersonal artefacts (Goody, 1986). Herzfeld (1992, 19-20) links the idea of a perfectly context-free, abstract language and the Western model of rationality to a desire for transcendence that is typical of "Judeo-Christian and Indo-European concepts of the superiority of mind over matter." The "ability to represent some forms of language" as context-free is where "the exercise of power lies" (ibid., 119).

Illiteracy is a major barrier within the development field, especially for those projects defending local participation. Planning is the heart of the rational development initiative, and it relies on the establishment of written rules and instructions that need to be followed if efficiency, bureaucratic accountability and goals are to be attained. Projects are the artefacts that summarize the need for control over time, people and resources. Accounting, legal definitions, plans, rational goals and the use of technologies are highly dependent on sharing the same cultural horizon and on certain levels of education. Project failure is almost certain if developers are unable to make people in the field understand what a project is, and how to implement or use it. This historical and sociological predicament is the raison d'être of technical cooperation and of capacity development. It is also a main cause of processes such as the export of the intelligence of projects to foreign centres and brain drain—two perverse effects that reinforce structural inequalities among nation-states. Since culture and education are structural determinants of the lifeways of societies, and do not change at the pace that development projects require, expatriates or outsiders from other regions of a same country are often sent to compensate for local deficiencies. Their commitment to local life is temporary. They are often members of networks that reproduce themselves in national, international and transnational levels of integration.

It is true that transformation is the core of development as ideology and utopia, and that many times transformation is longed for by local people of different cultural backgrounds. Indeed, it is in the nature of some innovations to captivate people, since the changes they bring about may make their lives more comfortable, safer and healthier. The reasons why some people accept change while others don't are complex. But at least three points need to be made about transformations, change and technological innovations: (a) the nature of the transformation and of the context where

it will be introduced define whether change will be welcome or not; (b) transformations, change and technological innovations are cultural artefacts that always involve and affect power systems; and (c) they impact social, cultural and environmental systems in varying degrees (from sheer disaster to minor palatable changes). There is no doubt that some projects may enhance a community's access to modernity. But it is also true that "development" does not mean structural changes in power distribution, this being the source of much critique against it. Rist puts it straightforwardly: "Those in power have no interest in change (whatever they say to the contrary), and those who want change do not have the means to impose it" (1997, 243).

The Power Imbalance: Who Is the Subject of Development?

"Development dramas" are complex kinds of encounters that join local actors and institutions with outsiders. The fact that outsiders may pretend to plan a community's future is indicative of their differential power in the encounter. In such circumstances, a dichotomy is installed. On one hand, there are the goals and rationales of the planners; on the other hand, the destiny and culture of the communities. Before the existence of a development project, local people could hardly conceive that their fate was susceptible to being hijacked by an organized group of people. In reality, planning—i.e., determining ahead of time how a certain reality will be—implies the appropriation by outsiders of local populations' power over their own destiny. From being subjects of their own lives, people become objects of prescient technical elites.

Development creates two kinds of subjects, one active, the other passive. Passive-subjects are people transformed as objects of development mandates—forced resettlement represents the extreme case. Ownership will hardly occur, if at all. Local actors are frequently confronted with the odd options of either establishing patron-client relationships with developmentalist outsiders, or struggling to regain control over their lives and environments. In fact, such passive-subjects are prone to resist development, since they relate to its most authoritarian face. But development also creates active-subjects. The agents of development are local people who are likely to become allies of development initiatives because they can identify benefits and interests they have in common with outsiders. The existence of these two kinds of subjects shows that ownership of development initiatives depends heavily on two variables differently distributed within the development drama. One is access to power, to being able to control one's own environment and to avoid being the object of outsiders' will or of the imperatives of structural, faceless, expansionist forces. The other is access to knowledge and information that enables actors to understand what *is* happening and, more importantly, what *will* happen to them. Resistance or participation are the results of the ways these variables are combined. Self-confidence and ownership can thrive only where actors feel they have power over their environment.

There are two current modes of generating active/passive-subjects and of dealing with them. The top-down approach tends to create passive-subjects. This authoritarian mode is based on networks that co-opt local elites, establish no compensatory policies for those impacted by projects, and have no preoccupation with local models and cultures. The bottom-up approach intends to create active-subjects and is more ownership-friendly. This participatory mode turns out to be an attempt to compensate for the structural loss of power that characterizes the relations between local populations and outsiders when a project is initiated. Participation and partnership become buzzwords that cannot mask the fact that everyone in the development drama knows where ultimate decision-making power is located. It is true that this mode is more

sensitive to local cultures and models, including indigenous models of management (on the latter, see Marsden, 1994).

Both approaches usually share an instrumental notion of culture. Culture becomes a "managerial technology of intervention in reality" (Barbosa, 2001, 135). Such a functional notion conceives culture as a set of interrelated, adjusted, coherent behaviours and meanings that can be identified and valued in terms of their positive or negative impact on the attainment of goals. This notion of culture fits well within the development field, because it adjusts perfectly to the terminology and rationale of planners. But it misrepresents at least two major considerations about culture: (a) contradiction and incoherence are part of human experience; and (b) culture is embedded in and traversed by historically defined relations of power (therefore, cultural change always relates to power change).

Indeed, whatever the approach, top-down or bottom-up, local power and political systems will always be impacted by development interventions. Given the characteristics of the networking and consortiation processes typical of the development field, local power systems are modules of wider power circuitries that are ruled by upper-level institutions. As we know, transnational, international, national and regional institutions and actors tend to have more power within the networking/consortiation processes because they start with and can move more resources. The authoritarian top-down approach tends to reinforce existing political elites that acted as brokers in the past. It tends, thus, to reinforce previously existing differences in class, gender, age, race and ethnicity. In contrast, the bottom-up participatory approach tends to introduce new leadership, thereby creating new tensions within the pre-existing power and political systems.

Both approaches produce "brokers" (Wolf 2001b, [1956], 138), who usually amass a great quantity of power. Such middle-people connect the intersections of different levels of integration and serve the interests of the groups they intermediate between. But "they must also maintain a grip on...(the) tensions (between the groups they serve), lest conflict get out of hand and better mediators take their place (ibid.)." In consequence, gatekeepers proliferate within the development field and consume much of its resources. These mediators create power networks of their own (made up of NGOs, consultants, officers of multilateral agencies, union and social movement leaders, etc.) within which much of the technical cooperation actually happens. Brokers are necessary in any development field, because mediation is intrinsic to networking and consortiation processes. But to enhance cooperation, gatekeepers, i.e., brokers specialized in accumulating personal power, need to have their power regulated. Many of the results of development projects are related to the nature of the brokerage system and the power effects and distortions it may generate.

Programmatic Challenges

In this text, I presented the main limitations and pressures affecting technical cooperation and development. There are no easy solutions for the conflicts of power created by the development field. Only by changing the characteristics of the power distribution within this field will technical cooperation and development really change. This implies that all actors and institutions within the networks have to "do" politics consciously and constantly to keep their interests alive. The socialization of knowledge of risks and opportunities involving change brought by development is important to improve the quality of the information that actors handle in these political arenas. In consequence, networks need to be democratic assemblages of institutions and actors

with the real capacity to decide and intervene, especially if the outcome of such decision-making processes does not please the most powerful interests involved in a given project. To achieve these goals, public spheres to discuss and decide development issues need to be fostered, multiplied and made ever more inclusive. The diffusion of a democratic pedagogy should traverse the whole development field and its networks, from upper-level managers and state officials to grassroots leadership. The associative processes typical of the development field should be opened to participants in such ways as to equalize the power of actors operating at all levels of integration. These are major tasks for all interested in transparency, accountability and the strengthening of civil society. They will encounter much resistance among powerful actors interested in the status quo and among those for whom democracy is not a value.

To move forward in a globalized world, where multiculturalism is increasingly a transnational political issue, we must admit that development is not everyone's object of desire. Rather, much more open perspectives should be fostered, visions that are sensitive to different cultural and political contexts. Concomitantly with the redistribution of power within the development field, different principles and sensibilities need to be disseminated. Development cosmology and idioms have to be radically reformed. Development cannot insist on supposing that the West is universal. Technical cooperation cannot continue to use a language contaminated with metaphors of inequality and hierarchy. If local populations and institutions do not devise themselves as active-subjects of development, ownership will remain a problem, and technical cooperation will reinforce structural inequalities among nation-states.

Globalization processes, especially those related to the new technologies of communication, are promoting many changes in the relationships between local and global settings. The position of local subjects has evolved in ways that may shift the balance towards more participatory approaches within the development field. In spite of its unequal distribution, the Internet is enhancing the capacity for intervention among NGOs and social movements. This virtual public space is the techno-symbolic environment of the transnational virtual-imagined community, and a most useful tool to reinforce local voices and articulations of heterogeneous political actors in a transnational world (Ribeiro, 1998 and 2001).

On a more integrated planet, new challenges arise and call for cosmopolitan political and technical elites prone to accept the global development field as a heteroglossic community, where power imbalances need to be constantly negotiated in political and cultural terms. Conflict is the alternative to making heterogeneity a central value for promoting human conviviality, creativity and capacity of innovation.

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