The Cultural Turn in Development: Questions of Power

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After the cultural turn has upset most social sciences, it has finally come to economics and to the bundle of practices called development. Why is culture being introduced into development discourse? Western ethnocentrism as the *implicit* culture of developmentalism is no longer adequate in the age of 'polycentrism in a context of high interaction' or of globalisation. In relation to global concerns such as ecological questions the West is no longer a privileged interlocutor. The old paradigm of modernisation/westernisation is no longer valid not just on account of polycentrism but also in view of the questioning of modernity and the advent of the postmodern. Questioning western itineraries is now no longer an anti-imperialist preoccupation but a matter of soul-searching *in* the West. The waning of the great cold war ideologies has shifted the goal posts and ethnic and religious movements have emerged in their stead. Hence 'culture' has been taking on a novel prominence.

How is culture 'put into' development discourse? The present reproblematisation does not start from a blank slate but also recycles established discourses. The articulation of culture and development is both a renegade notion at odds with established practices and a new brick in the wall of clichés. Culture comes into development studies at a time of retreat from structural and macro approaches in development theory in favour of micro and actor-oriented approaches [*e.g., Long and Villarreal, 1993*]. If agency is prioritised over structure (such as the state, the national economy), the cultural worlds and maps of meaning of agents become a vital variable. The move away from structures to actors may be described, in part, as an informalisation of development and, in that context, culture tends to be viewed as the structure of the informal, so to speak. The crucial weakness of culture and development discourse, at any rate policy-oriented discourse, is that it misses the point that culture is an *arena of struggle*. Culture tends to be treated as if it is, or conforms to, a *structure*, analogous to the state or nation. It is seen as existing out there, as an ambience one can step in and out of, as a resource to be tapped, as national culture or, given the fragmentation of nations and retreat of states, as local culture. National culture is worth considering also for the sake of raising the question whether the present preoccupation with local culture risks

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repeating the same mistakes as national culture talk earlier. The key questions are questions of power: how is the relation between culture and power conceptualised in these different discourses? The final section returns to culture and development discourse, under the heading: add culture and stir.

NATIONAL CULTURE

The discourse of national culture carries instrumentalist overtones: culture as a device in nation-building. Following the tracks of decolonialisation and Third World nationalism, anti-colonialism involved a cultural argument all along. Thus Amilcar Cabral argued in 'National Liberation and Culture':

> A nation which frees itself from foreign rule will be only culturally free if ... it recaptures the commanding heights of its own culture, which receives sustenance from the living reality of its environment and equally rejects the harmful influences which any kind of subjection to foreign cultures involves. Thus one sees that if imperialist domination necessarily practices cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture (cited in Miller [*1990: 46*]).

The liberation movement, according to Cabral, must bring about 'a convergence' towards 'a single national culture', which itself is a step towards 'a universal culture' [*ibid.: 46*]. Fanon, likewise, devoted a chapter to 'national culture' in *The Wretched of the Earth* in which he outlined three phases in the cultural development of colonised peoples: (1) assimilation of the culture of the coloniser, (2) recollection of original cultural resources, but removed from the masses, and (3) combat, revolution and the formation of a national culture in which the artist 'rejoins the people'. More recent discussions of the role of cultural struggle in South Africa, Palestine and Northern Ireland show similar politicised discourses. In South Africa it prompted the slogan of 'cultural weapons' as Inkatha's response to the ANC's 'culture as a weapon'.

In post-colonial countries, calls for 'cultural protectionism' are not uncommon. In an African context, this is advanced as part of a wider programme. 'The New African Cultural Order would consist of researching and safeguarding the African personality and culture. This is a task for everyone of us, but it must be stimulated and coordinated by conscientious, capable and responsible African politicians' [*Gbotokuma, 1992: 28*].

In the Philippines, Renato Constantino [*1985: 48-9*] criticises the 'new cultured Filipinos' as 'a breed apart from the mass of Filipinos', 'a class without roots – adopted children of a foreign culture ... In the end, it is the people and their culture that will endure. National culture will be developed by and will emerge from the real people ...'

There are several strands in this discourse: the identification of cultural

identity with the nation; the subsumption of culture under a political agenda; the nomination of politicians as custodians of culture; a culture talk derived from other discourses – from politics of struggle, or from economics Soviet style as in the 'commanding heights'. Culture is denied autonomy and encapsulated within the political discourse of anti-colonialism equals nationalism. The same options which pertain to the post-colonial nation are extended to culture. Dependency theory – which serves, by and large, as the political economy of Third World nationalism – is stretched to apply to culture: protectionism, dissociation, endogenous development are prescribed for national culture as they have been for the national economy. What ensues is cultural dependency theory.

The national culture argument also structures the wider terrain. As Tomlinson [1991: 73] notes: ' ... a majority of the discourses of cultural imperialism, and certainly those with the most prominence – the UNESCO discourse, that thematised by the term "Americanisation", much of the talk of media imperialism – treat the issue as one of domination of national culture by national culture'.

UNESCO's institutional discourse follows the same nationalist tracks: 'National culture is the mould into which, by the very nature of UNESCO as an inter-national body, cultural identity tends to be squeezed.' [Tomlinson 1991: 72]. Another current in UNESCO discourse is towards pluralism and in this context cultural identity is discussed in terms of 'people' rather than 'nations'. However,

> [t]he UNESCO discourse cannot negotiate this complexity with any coherence. In its recommendations on the issue of cultural domination it urges member states to: ' ... strengthen national languages with a view to affirming cultural identity and helping it to recover its natural role which is that of expressing the different aspects of activity and life and thereby furthering national development' [Tomlinson, 1991: 72].

References to 'cultural democracy' [Makagiansar, 1985: 30] are not sufficiently clear to settle these issues. When virtually all the world's societies are multicultural in composition, equating cultural identity with national identity is a fallacy as is obvious, for instance, in the case of language as a centrepiece of cultural identity.

With respect to cultural imperialism the 'national' formulation breaks down in two ways as Tomlinson [1991: 74] points out: 'not only may there be difficulty in identifying a unified national cultural identity in the "invaded" country, but the same might be said of the putative "invader". What, then, is the "American way" that threatens global hegemony?'

'National culture' discourse displays a particular logic. In post-colonial countries, at least in the new nations among them, there has been a replication

of the process of nation-building in the West. In France, as the saying goes, it took 200 years to create 'Frenchmen'. In late nineteenth-century Europe, nation-building was in its most intense phase – by means of public education, the mass production of monuments and the large scale invention of traditions [*Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983*]. It concerns, in effect, a process of state-building through nation-building. In post-colonial countries the erection of prestige architecture has the function of creating markers for national consciousness and identity, in the process inviting genuflexes before the nation's leadership [*Schudson, 1994*]. This has also been a profoundly gendered process: the state (masculine) protects (nurtures, guides) national culture (feminine). Nationalism has been a profoundly masculinist discourse. The relationship between feminism and nationalism, West and South, has been fraught with ambivalence [*Kandyoti, 1991; Enloe, 1990*].

In western countries the project of nation-building involved intense strife because it intervened in the existing cultural division of labour along lines of region, religion, language, class, gender. The *Kulturkampf* in Germany is a case in point. What ensued was not cultural homogeneity but rather particular state-managed settlements. Dutch pillarisation, in force from 1917 into the 1960s, is a well-known instance. The construction of national identity, then, is a matter of cultural struggle – usually conducted along lines of language, religion, or region. The contemporary terminology for this kind of conflict is ethnicity.

National culture can serve as a first rate alibi domestically and internationally. Thus, culture has been working overtime in Japan:

> when 'culture' is used to explain Japan, statements such as 'we do this because it is our culture' (i.e. 'we do this because we do this') are not perceived as tautology but are believed to give a valid reason for accepting all manner of practices whose political nature has been lost sight of. Culture thus becomes an excuse for systematic exploitation, for legal abuses, for racketeering and for other forms of uncontrolled exercise of power. In the international realm, culture is made an excuse for not living up to agreements and responsibilities, and for not taking action in the face of pressure from trading partners [*Van Wolferen, 1990: 322*].

When several years ago the Dutch foreign minister protested against the execution of political prisoners in Indonesia after many years of imprisonment, his Indonesian counterpart pointed out that this was in character with Indonesian culture.

Accordingly, the subsumption of cultural identity under national identity is not an innocent move. Endorsing the myth of national culture and cultural unity, it glosses over the dark side of nationalism. The politics of nation-

building involve the marginalisation of aliens, suppression of minorities and indigenous peoples – a process sometimes captured under the heading of internal colonialism. While on the one hand national monuments are erected, on the other hand, outside the glare of the spotlights, aliens are expropriated, minorities constructed and refugees created. The harvest of this policy is the contemporary wave of ethnic mobilisation for, in virtually all cases of ethnogenesis, ethnopolitics and movements for regional autonomy or secession, the main catalyst is the imposition of monocultural control by the state. National culture serves as a code for state culture.

LOCAL CULTURE

National culture as the corollary of nation-building has been part of modernisation discourse. Current culture and development discourse is primarily concerned with local culture. In the terms of a recent discussion: 'The first cultural dimension of development is the local level'; national culture is next in the line of priorities, followed by the culture of the planners [*Kottak, 1985: 46*].

    Privileging local culture is interpellated with several arguments. In the strong version of this perspective the local is mentioned in one breath with the grassroots, indigenous, informal, micro. In some culture and development arguments [e.g. *Verhelst, 1990*] these are represented as the last frontier of cultural authenticity. The tendency is to view local culture in terms of prelapsarian purity and unity, homogenising the local community as the last stand of *Gemeinschaft*, in a manner reminiscent of the way ethnographers used to speak about 'their' villages, or their cultures, as cultural wholes or configurations. The local as a privileged site may imply an argument about how culture develops: organically, from below and within, by way of 'roots', according to a horticultural anthropology.

    Since this is the terrain of the return of anthropology, it is worth taking into account that 'Anthropological "culture" is not what it used to be' [*Clifford, 1992: 101*]. Clifford [*1992: 98*] elucidates: '(a)nthropologists, as Geertz has written, don't study villages, they study *in* villages. And increasingly, I might add, they don't study in villages either, but rather in hospitals, labs, urban neighborhoods, tourist hotels, the Getty Center.'

    In many post-colonial countries, the state and nation are to a significant extent a terrain constructed by colonial administrations. This is the irony of Cabral, Fanon and others: the trophy gained in the victory over colonialism, was colonialism's legacy. Secondly, it is the terrain of the post-colonial state, and as such the arena of multicultural strife. Local culture, likewise, is not an uncontaminated space but a field criss-crossed by traces of travellers, traders, missionaries, colonisers, anthropologists. This awareness is part of the ongoing

reorientation in ethnography. 'In much traditional ethnography ... the ethnographer has localized what is actually a regional/national/global nexus, relegating to the margins a "culture's" external relations and displacements' [Clifford,1992: 100]. Or, in the words of Gupta and Ferguson [1992], conventional anthropology allowed 'the power of topography to conceal successfully the topography of power'. Thus, according to James Boon, '[w]hat has come to be called Balinese culture is a multiply authored invention, a historical formation, an enactment, a political construct, a shifting paradox, an ongoing translation, an emblem, a trademark, a nonconsensual negotiation of contrastive identity, and more' (Boon [1990: ix], cited in Clifford [1992: 100]).

Accordingly, to situate the local is to view it in its multiple external connections, and next, to regard its performative, dramatic, contrastive character. The local as a *project* enacted in relation to the regional, national, global. Or, the local as strategy, device, ruse. Its 'truth', then, is not simply within but as much without: in the construction and negotiation of external boundaries. In a comparable fashion, the dynamics of ethnicity may be best approached not from within, by stepping into the intricacies of ethnic identification (and then trying to get out) but from without – in terms of postnationalism, retreat of the state, ideological erosion, world market fluctuations, the dialectics of globalisation and localisation [Nederveen Pieterse, 1993].

One option is to take stock of the traces of travellers and the role of strangers [e.g. Shack and Skinner, 1979]. Conventional wisdom has it that underneath a veneer of modernity lurks perennial African 'tribalism' – in line with an essentialist view of tribe as primordial group attachment; until it is found that the tribes have been in large measure colonial and missionary constructs [e.g. Vail, 1989]. Then, there is the anecdote

> ... about a prominent member of an East African tribe, a professional philosopher, who had an interest in reviving traditional practices. As it turned out, the old ways and customs had been discarded and forgotten even by the elders of his tribe. The main repository of knowledge about the past was located in ethnographies published in Europe and the United States. He realized he needed an anthropologist as a consultant. He had no difficulty finding someone to take the job [Shweder, 1993: 284].

This is by no means without precedent. Négritude, *Africanité* and Afrocentrism borrowed extensively from European or American ethnography. Marcus Garvey and Aimé Césaire derived their images of Africa from the German ethnographer Leo Frobenius; Senghor borrowed from Lévy Brühl; Melville Herskovitz's work went into the making of African-American 'roots' thinking. Ethnographers have generously fed this current, for instance,

Maquet's [*1972*] book on *Africanity* or, in a church context, Placide Tempels' work on *Bantu Philosophy*. (See the critique of Hountondji [*1991*].) The return of anthropology, then, may invite the return of anthropological myth. In the words of Roger Keesing [*1987: 168*], '(w)e anthropologists have a disciplinary vested interest in portraying other people's culturally constructed worlds as radically different from our own. We are dealers in exotica'.

Of course, recourse to 'tradition' is tenuous for other reasons. Thus, according to Kaarsholm [*1991: 4*], in an African context, what is at issue is 'a variety of often conflicting frameworks and discourses – African political, cultural and ethnic traditions, colonial and anticolonial traditions, traditions of government, the traditions of nationalism and of modern political and cultural institutions. They are all full of contradictions within themselves and do not represent unambiguous positions *vis-à-vis* development.'

Like national culture, local culture is a terrain of power with its own patterns of stratification, uneven distribution of cultural knowledge and boundaries separating insiders and outsiders – hierarchical or exclusionary politics in fine print. The dark side of local culture is local ethnocentrism or, in other words, ethnic fundamentalism. Certainly, local maps of meaning are of vital importance, but so is the awareness that '(c)ultures are webs of mystification as well as signification' [*Keesing, 1987: 161*]. Gender is part of local constructions.

> Consider a New Guinea culture that consigns women to lifelong jural minority under male control, defines their essential nature as polluting and polluted, extracts their labor in lifelong drudgery for the service of men, excludes them from ritual and political life, all as ordained in the eternal nature of the cosmos and the rules of the ancestors ... it is a smallish group of 'experts' in any generation who – at least for myth, ritual, and other realms of religion – play the major part in creating and changing the culture. The rules of the ancestors and gods seem in such cases to be quite literally man-made [*Keesing, 1987: 166*].

No wonder that amidst the upsurge of ethnic mobilisation women find themselves in a position of 'double jeopardy': under pressure from majority racism and minority sexism at the same time [e.g. *Wallace, 1992*].

As Van Nieuwenhuijze [*1983: 26*] remarked, westerners did not just venture out on a civilising mission but also in search of the golden fleece. In the epoch of Third Worldism, of Che Guevara and 'one, two, three Vietnams', Third World nationalism represented this golden fleece – national culture as the frontier of honour against imperialism, multinational capitalism and CocaColonisation. In the age of globalisation, local culture represents the treasure trove of the golden fleece, perhaps the world's last. The world's indigenous peoples, the last custodians of paradises lost elsewhere to late

capitalism, ecological devastation and McDonaldisation. With ecological pressures mounting worldwide, this ethos is gaining ground as if queueing up for the last exit.

In each case, the national and the local serve as a frontier against imperialism, capitalism, consumerism, developmentalism. The border of national culture, guarded by the post-colonial state and by dependency theory, did not hold. Culture and development discourse in its strong form pleads for an alternative development based on local culture. In the process it attempts to erect boundaries at a time of boundary crossing. It welcomes crossing disciplinary boundaries in order to strengthen the case for erecting cultural boundaries. As such it reflects a politics of nostalgia.

CULTURE/POWER

How is power theorised in these discourses? Two very distinct theories of power are at work. The national culture perspective tends to follow a deductivist approach in which culture is viewed as derived from macro-social powers. Thus, according to García Canclini [1992: 21], 'to analyse culture was equivalent to describing the manoeuvres of dominant forces', an approach that has been guilty of 'over-estimating the impact of the dominant on popular consciousness'.

In contrast, the local culture perspective follows an inductivist approach: 'the inductivists are those who confront the study of the popular by beginning with certain properties which they suppose to be intrinsic to the subordinate classes, or with their genius, or with a creativity that other sectors of the population have lost, or with oppositional power as the basis of their resistance' [ibid.: 20].

The inductivist approach has been influenced by anthropological culturalism and by populism. Its weaknesses are that it explains cultural difference but not inequality, decontextualises the local, and tends to equate 'popular culture' with 'tradition'. As different strands in this perspective García Canclini [ibid.: 27–30] identifies the biologico-telluric approach, which relies on 'innate forces' in people/nature relationships (see Blut und Boden, blood and soil) and a statist version which holds that the state gives expression to popular values, a view that leads us back to the national culture perspective.

Most relevant to culture and development discourse is yet another strand. In Latin America, 'given the crisis in the political apparatuses and the ideological models, a belief in the "natural purity" of the people as the sole recourse is re-emerging amongst "movements of the base", "alternatives" and groups emanating from the populist parties' [ibid.: 31]. It is this kind of perspective that informs the strong version of the local culture view along with much of the grassroots-oriented alternative development approach, at times

homogenising the subaltern, at other times ascribing a romantic role to grassroots intellectuals [e.g. *Escobar, 1992*].

Anthropological holism as an ethnographic rhetoric and hermeneutic strategy – one of the sources of inspiration of culture and development – is under attack for underestimating the unevenness of power and the role of elites within indigenous communities [*Thornton, 1988; Keesing, 1987*].

Too often power is viewed only as state power, or power exercised with sovereignty, whereas it is more appropriate to view power as a social relation diffused throughout all spaces. Although it is none the less true that differences in scope matter and that the power of a household head differs from that of the head of a multinational corporation. Another limitation is the tendency to think of power in terms of simple schemas, reducing the field of hegemony to a polarised contest between dominant and subaltern forces. Hegemony, however, may be better thought of as an ongoing jostle, ever in motion and requiring continuous effort. While the situation of polarisation between dominators and dominated is out-of-the-ordinary, it reigns political discourse as if it were routine and everyday. What *is* everyday are the little tactics of survival and subtle acts of subversion [*Scott, 1985; 1991*]. But even in polarised situations – such as the condition of *indigenes* in most of Latin America – it is important to monitor the actual transactions taking place and to probe into the nodal points of interaction. Patterns of exchange *between* classes and politics of patronage, collective and personal, may be more valid a perspective than the schema of resistance and politics of struggle.

One method to engage this perspective, as García Canclini [*1992: 41–4*] points out, is to examine consumption patterns in popular strata – without shifting to the rhetoric of *consumerism*. Commodity chains and exchange relations may reveal interclass exchange patterns and at the same time situate the local level in its wider networks [cf. *Appadurai, 1986*].

ADD CULTURE AND STIR

Culture has been part of development thinking all along, though not explicitly so. In the 1960s instilling achievement orientation was a development strategy geared to building entrepreneurial spirit, deriving from an American free enterprise culture of entrepreneurialism and the idea that attitudes matter. Growth oriented strategies have been based on the culture of economism. Structural Adjustment Programmes reflect a culture of economic globalism. These instances reflect different articulations of the ethnocentrism of western developmentalism [*Nederveen Pieterse, 1991*].

Culture and development (C&D) discourse is a significant improvement on this pattern of implicit cultural bias. Recognising development practices as culturally specific introduces an element of reflexivity, centred on culture. Of

course this forms part of a much broader tide of intercultural awareness. By and large the implication is to reconnect development with anthropology. Reconnect to the extent that in colonial times a nexus between efforts at economic development and anthropological research sometimes did exist. Presently this takes the form of an emerging field of development anthropo-logy [*Huizer, 1993; Rew, 1993*], notably in England, and *Entwicklungsethnologie* or development ethnology (as in the new journal under that name) in Germany, as a supplement to development sociology. *Entwicklungsethnologie* is concerned not only with the analysis of local settings but with 'the comprehension of the project itself as a problem of intercultural exchange and an arena of competing interests' [*Antweiler, 1993: 40*].

The concepts and methodological approaches of C&D incorporate conventional anthropological methods such as participant observation, tailored to the development culture of projects, along with a participatory or action component: Participatory Action Research, Rapid Rural Appraisal, Goal Oriented Project Planning, and beneficiary assessment of projects [*Salmen, 1987*]. These may or may not be combined with a critical attitude to development and a general context of 'emancipatory knowledge'.

While the cultural turn in development is a welcome turn, C&D also involves a number of problems and raises questions. C&D policy discourse leans towards simplifications and towards add culture and stir, or the failure to reproblematise development. General C&D discourse may be more sophisticated but limited in turn by tendencies toward the reification of culture and the reification of modernity. A more general question is turning towards applied anthropology when anthropology is in crisis.

Development policy discourse is where the cultural turn in development may be making its greatest impact. Here C&D serves as a logical follow-up to the earlier notion that development in order to be effective must be participatory (itself a successor to the previous top-down 'mobilisation' for development discourse). Sometimes this C&D policy talk is so superficial as to be meaningless as well as bogus and absurd. Thus the Dutch development co-operation policy document *A World of Difference* [*1991*] asserts that 'culture must be the basis of sustainable development', and development must be 'embedded in culture'.

Obviously any development strategy is 'based on culture', if only because it is not possible to operate outside culture, as long as we adopt the anthropological understanding of culture as all learned and shared behaviour and ideas. Viewing culture with a big C is another option – as in using popular theatre to popularise family planning or AIDS containment. But this is clearly too narrow a view. The normative statement that development must be 'embedded in culture' glosses over the character of development as a cultural performance in itself. Implicitly the reference is to the culture of 'others', of

the 'developing' entity, and in an opaque sort of way it is a statement about development as an engagement with cultural difference.

In development, culture is discussed primarily in relation to economic rather than political or social development, which reflects the order of priorities in development culture. Other discussions focus on culture in relation to development projects [e.g. *Crehan, 1991*]. Discussions focused on politics often take the form of arguments in favour of decentralisation and local government [e.g. *Mhlaba, 1991*]. Generally, however, C&D policy discourse tends to be a depoliticising vision because by inserting culture it takes the politics out of development, while taking the politics out of culture by assuming established cultural boundaries. C&D runs the risk of adding culture to the development repertoire like an additional coating or a local vaseline, without necessarily changing the development agenda itself.

'Add culture and stir', or the failure to reproblematise development is a prominent feature of C&D policy. The case for C&D is generally made in instrumental terms, as a means to explain project failure and improve on the success rate of projects. *The Economist* publishes a steady stream of advertisements for anthropologists to join regional development banks. This is practical from the point of view of the development machinery, questionable from the point of view of the ethics of anthropology, and business as usual for the recipients of development politics on the ground. This parallels the practice of 'business anthropology' or the use of anthropological insights and methods to facilitate doing business across cultures.

The point of C&D is, of course, to rethink and reproblematise development and the intercultural relations that are implicitly negotiated in development from the point of view of anthropology and cultural critique. For this to work out, what is required is a further development of C&D theory. It may be argued that the failure to reproblematise development is a function of the reification of modernity. The tendency toward the reification of modernity or underestimating the complexity of modernity follows from the habit of dichotomic thinking, which is as deeply entrenched among the critics of developmentalism as among its adherents. Simplistic schemas – tradition/modernity, premodern/ modern, South/North – implicitly cloud over theory. Modernity may be better conceived in the plural, as modernities and, in addition, in the context of processes of 'reworking modernity' [*Pred and Watts, 1992*].

A manifestation of the cul-de-sac of C&D theory is the current of *anti-development* thinking (post-development or 'beyond development', for example, Sachs [*1992*]). Obviously the rejectionist position is not the best platform for redefining development. It may, in effect, give free rein to business as usual. The Foucauldian approach of discourse analysis is long on history and short on future; strong on critique and weak on construction. It has room only for a reactive position of resistance rather than a pro-active

perspective of imagining and developing alternatives. This is a limitation of the Foucauldian approach in relation to development discourse, as it is in relation to other terrains.

On the other hand, in practice the agenda of C&D in many ways parallels that of *alternative development [Friedman, 1992]*. A singular difference is the priority given to culture and accordingly the key issue is how culture is conceptualised. The tendency toward the reification of culture is part of a tradition that is deeply entrenched within and outside anthropology of identifying culture with territorial units. National culture and local culture are obvious examples of this outlook. In C&D, practices are considered to be 'embedded' in a matrix of meaning and the tendency is to view this matrix as belonging to a social group and, second, to localise this group.

One of the ramifications of the local culture argument is *ethnodevelopment*, for which Stavenhagen *[1986]* made a case which has been taken up by Hettne *[1990]*. While this notion is understandable in its original context of internal colonialism, it is problematic in that it potentially parallels apartheid and 'separate development'. Taking the *ethnos* (people) as a starting point for development does not settle matters because it ignores the fundamental character of development as an *intercultural* transaction: ethnodevelopment means narrowing development to its endogenous dimension. In addition, ethnic culture is no more homogeneous than national culture for ethnic groups are crosscut by multiple differences along lines of gender, class, place, religion, ideology.

The Dutch development policy document *A World of Difference* avoids the national culture fallacy by identifying *communities* as the bearers of culture, within a general orientation of pluralism and fostering cultural difference. The latter is a welcome qualification in view of the limitations of the concept of community [e.g. *Young, 1990*].

The counter argument to the territorial reification of culture is that culture cannot be localised because it is not in itself a spatially bounded category. If culture is territorialised, as in national culture or local culture, the boundaries are, ultimately, *political* frontiers which require political analysis. Culture is intrinsically translocal because human learning is. At minimum, then, what is required is to differentiate between open and closed concepts of culture, between translocal and territorial notions of culture (discussed in Nederveen Pieterse *[1994]*).

One can also think in terms of historical *layers* of culture and intersecting *circles* of cultural influence. For instance in Pakistan, traces of a deep historical layer of the Indus Valley Mohenjodaro culture mix with the intersecting spheres of influence of Central Asian, Arab and Indic cultures, all leaving their imprint in language, technology, identity [*Junejo and Bughio, 1988*]. In addition, the distinct regional cultures of Baluchistan, Sind, the

Punjab and others are overlaid by, on the one hand, Islamic culture and, on the other, rural/urban and gender differences across the regions. Within urban culture we can further distinguish various occupational circles such as the cultures of the military, the bureaucracy, traders and so on. Somehow perched on top of this is 'national culture' [*Jalibi, 1984*]. In such a context, what is the statement that 'development must be based on culture' supposed to mean?

One way of thinking about this is in terms of cultural mixing and hybridity. From the point of view of any given place, cultures are hybrid: their wholeness consists in their being situationally relevant, strategic sets of improvisations borrowed from wherever [*Nederveen Pieterse, 1994*]. The localisation of culture can be questioned not only from the point of view of history but also of geography and the question of 'place'. What comes to mind is Deleuze and Guattari's argument of deterritorialisation and Harvey's work [*1993*] on the relationship between space and place: 'from space to place and back again'. Doreen Massey [*1993: 66*] argues for a 'global sense of place': 'a sense of place which is extra-verted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local'. *The Location of Culture* and rethinking the very meaning of boundaries, particularly in the age of cultural translation, is the keynote of Homi Bhabha's [*1994*] series of essays.

Several of these issues translate into a wider question. The issue is not simply to bring anthropology back into development, but what *kind* of anthropology: conventional anthropology or reflexive anthropology? C&D connects development and anthropology at a time when anthropology itself is in crisis. Part of this is the crisis of representation in anthropology and of the authority of the ethnographic text. In response, Marcus and Fisher [*1986*] propose 'the repatriation of anthropology as cultural critique'. This means in effect the merger of anthropology and cultural studies. The limitation of C&D is that in leaning towards applied anthropology it tends to ignore poststructuralist anthropology and its critical innovations, and in looking South to post-colonial countries it ignores the work done in cultural studies in postimperial countries.

Cultural studies involves different outlooks and concepts. For instance, as a concept *popular culture* is a notion more challenging and fruitful than local culture (or than national culture) because its hybrid and mélange character – mixing high and low culture, local and global cultural flows – is implied from the outset [e.g. *Rowe and Schelling, 1991*]. By using concepts such as these several of the unnecessary dichotomies which burden and constrain C&D can be overcome and reworked on a more subtle and more productive level of analysis and ultimately policy.

An element that tends to be relegated to the background in C&D literature is the engagement with capitalism, as if the shift towards a cultural definition

of problems is also a shift away from a political economy perspective. This is shortsighted because it glosses over the character of 'development' as a stand-in for and an attempt to manage and steer the spread of capitalist relations, and because it ignores a wide body of literature on the cultural dynamics of global capitalism and uneven development [e.g. *Pred and Watts, 1992; Taussig, 1980*].

The cultural turn in development is not without its ironies. The tables are being turned, as is altogether appropriate in a postimperial and postcolonial world in the throes of globalisation.

> Over the last few years, at various meetings of men and women and representatives of majority and minority groups from First and Third World countries, I have found that the indigenous 'voice' of the Third World is most likely to be voiced by a Westerner, while the voice of Western theory often comes straight out of Africa or Japan. The effect of all that intellectual place switching is to induce a sense of metaphysical jet lag across genders, cultures, and continents and to open up a conversation about the full range of interpretive possibilities for thinking about the significance of 'difference' [*Shweder, 1993: 282*].

Development is a cultural practice and in this respect development as a category is not different from culture, in that they are both elusive concepts. Defining them is as difficult as, to use a Spanish proverb, putting pants on an octopus. Development thinking, if considered carefully, is a series of improvisations and borrowings, zigzagging through time, itself a hybrid project intellectually and politically, and not quite the consistent edifice that both its adherents and opponents tend to claim. The transitions denoted under the heading of 'development' change along with the tides and currents of conventional wisdom [*Nederveen Pieterse, forthcoming*].

Development is intrinsically an intercultural transaction. In the latter part of the twentieth century, culture is the major marker of *difference*. It assumes the role religion performed in the Middle Ages, biology ('race') and time (evolution) in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and ideology in the first part of the twentieth century [cf. *Robertson, 1992: 98–9*]. As such culture has come to mean 'otherness'. Taken in this sense, the statement that culture is to be the basis of development, reads: the other (others, otherness) is to be the basis of development. Development politics, then, is a politics of difference, navigating and negotiating multicultural cohabition locally and globally. The differences at stake are multiple and of diverse kinds, not just between developed and developing zones and countries, but also within them and crosscutting the difference between developing/developed.

Conventional developmentalism could be viewed as a form of 'symbolic violence': 'the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity' [*Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 167*]. Understanding development

as a politics of difference is a step towards making development practice selfconcious with regard to its political and cultural bias, a step towards a practice of reflexive development.

C&D may offer relief from development steeped in Eurocentrism, occidental narcissism or trilateralist arrogance, but the remedy against the chauvinism of 'great traditions' is not to adopt the inverse missionary position and the chauvinism of 'little traditions'. C&D is not simply a matter of including culture but also of interrogating culture as a terrain of power, culture as ideology. *Anti-ethnocentrism,* as David Crocker *[1991]* points out, may ultimately be based on another partial, particularist perspective. This is a question that is not settled in C&D. The alternative advocated by Richard Rorty *[1991]* is *anti-anti-ethnocentrism,* or returning towards the historical tradition of one's own group as the basis for moral judgment. This is the position of what he terms postmodernist bourgeois liberalism. This tradition however can be interpreted in many ways. In the case of the United States it is read differently by Allan Bloom and Noam Chomsky, and on the basis of the tradition there is no way of deciding among these readings, precisely because the tradition is heterogeneous and mixed. What is needed is to find a sense of balance that does not yield to futures mapped from above nor to nostalgia for the rear exit, a new sense of balance between universalism and localism.

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