WHEN DEVELOPMENT MEETS CULTURE AND CONFLICT: THE CHALLENGES AND PARADOXES OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

ADRIANA SALCEDO

Abstract

This essay examines the nexus between development, culture and conflict. It finds that development is not so much a well-intentioned process to raise the well-being of poor people. Rather, it is the product of a political agenda that has transformed itself over time yet continues to be characterised by insufficient attention to the goals, cultural values and agency of those for whom development support is intended. The result is that development, even when well intentioned, can contribute to increased conflict. This paper finds that some of the approaches used in effective conflict resolution could usefully be incorporated into development theory and practice.

Introduction

This essay explores the nexus between three key dynamics that characterise the contemporary world: development, culture and conflict. It is an attempt to understand the different crossroads at which these elements have converged and the implications for the people that encounter them in their everyday discourses and practices.

Power and relationships are at the core of development. First, this article analyses the emergence of the development paradigm in the course of four moments over time, and its political, cultural, economic implications in places where it is implemented. Second, it draws attention to the emergence of Development with a big 'D' and the political project implicit in its origins, its re-definition over time and rethinking the way it is implemented. Third, the article examines different ways in which development is related to culture and conflict, from the formulation of policies to their implementation in the field, and the feasibility of a 'do no harm' policy is considered. Finally, the interweaving of the development and security agendas is discussed before different options are presented for integrating conflict resolution with development, so as to transform it in ways that value culture and reduce conflict.

Four 'moments' where development, culture and conflict meet

Four different 'moments' can be identified in which development has met culture and conflict over time. The first is the emergence of development, which also must be understood as a part of the broader historical reality of colonialism. The earliest damage from development in the ex-colonies was the result of a model of 'development' that benefited the colonial powers themselves. It was based on the massive extraction of natural resources (diamonds, gold, rubber, etc.) without fair compensation, the arbitrary division of populations, political and ethnic favouritism, the imposition of external institutions (such as slavery or martial rule) among others that promoted social divisions, undermined local institutions and destroyed

81

the social foundations in most of the colonised lands. This was the common social scenario for many newly independent countries in Asia and Africa by the early 1960s.

A second moment in which development meets culture and conflict is through development aid or 'Development' with a big 'D' (Hart 2001), as is nicely summarised in President Truman's words in his inaugural address of 1949, which invited America to launch a mission to save the world:

> We must embark on a bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. The old imperialism – exploitation for foreign profit – has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a programme of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealing (Sachs 1991:275).

This model implicitly assumed linear progress for all countries, to be achieved through 'scientific' means and rational behaviour linked to entrepreneurship and capitalist development. These postulates, which emerged from American cultural realities, did not recognise the local social and cultural dynamics of the societies that they intended to support. This new paradigm ultimately gave birth to the Bretton Woods institutions as well as the United Nations, and to practices and discourses that encounter conflict and culture at every step. From the formulation of policies to their power structures and implementation in the field, we could cite hundreds of examples that illustrate this dissonance.

According to Sachs (1992), this is the moment in which 'underdevelopment' was invented. Development with 'D' was created both as a palliative to assuage the discontent left by colonialism, but also with a genuine mission to address perceived underdevelopment. However, Development also quickly became part of a political strategy within Cold War dynamics, with each side seeking allies via donor aid. Development assistance swelled due to a geo-political conflict that had nothing to do with reducing poverty and became caught up in proxy wars fought in places such as Nicaragua, Angola and Afghanistan.

The third moment in which development encounters culture and conflict is in the emergence of more subtle forms of neo-colonialism after World War 2, such as selective trade liberalisation and unequal access to international markets or intellectual property. Agricultural subsidies, trade barriers to imports of textiles, sugar or peanuts, and steeper tariffs on finished products (e.g. furniture and shoes) than on raw materials (e.g. timber and leather), have all constituted deep sources of grievances among poorer countries that are forced to compete in a global system that enhances inequality (Stiglitz 2006). This neo-colonialism proceeds even as Development is promoted in poor countries. Therefore, what Stiglitz (2006) refers to as 'the levelling of the playing field', i.e. achieving fairer access for poor countries to international markets, might be a successful strategy for conflict prevention in what is seen in neo-colonial terms as the 'ungovernable periphery'.

Finally, the fourth moment in which development encounters conflict and culture is through new forms of colonialism within the broader context of modernity. The expansion of Western intellectual and cultural domination also touches Development through the definition of standards of what is meant by 'developed', who decides the indicators to measure 'development' and the design of universal recipes to achieve this desirable, quasi-magical state.[1] With this brief overview of the different moments in which development, culture and conflict meet, it is crucial to begin with a review of the conceptualisation of what Development with a big 'D' is about.

The Origins and (Re-)definitions of Development

The emergence of development aid or 'Development' – understood as a constellation of ideas and practices as described by Hart (2001) and undertaken via multilateral and bilateral donor programmes – has multiple political and strategic implications. Escobar (1995:3) – presents some colourful examples of the philosophy that inspired the emergence of the still dominant development paradigm at its origins, for instance:

> There is a sense in which rapid economic progress is impossible without painful adjustments. Ancient philosophies have to be scrapped; old institutions have to be disintegrated; bonds of caste, creed and race have to burst; and a large number of persons who cannot keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated. Very few communities are willing to pay the full price of economic progress (United Nations 1951).

From this perspective, a community's economic progress depends on its willingness to completely remodel its social, political and cultural structures, towards a model regarded as the prototype of prosperity. Behind this well-intentioned thinking, an external definition of development has dominated Development since its origins, one that permeates its mechanisms and institutions. Development as a paradigm and a practice has relied on a liberal Western system of knowledge that prioritises free markets and democratic values, consistently marginalising and disqualifying non-Western perspectives that are not aligned with these cultural values (Escobar 1995). Even though this cultural bias has resulted in conflict, the theory and practice of development have yet to be challenged thoroughly. Some of these challenges are presented in the following sections.

The emergence of development aid can be located in the establishment of an international financial architecture comprising the Bretton Woods institutions, regional development banks, bilateral donor agencies and a system for global governance within the United Nations following World War 2. Since then, these institutions have determined the parameters by which foreign aid is delivered to the so-called 'Third World'.[2]

Defining 'Development' continues to be an exceptionally complicated task, since no official definition was provided when the Bretton Woods institutions were established. At first, development agencies interpreted development in terms of economic growth (measured by growth in GDP), leaving aside other important dimensions (cultural, political, social, etc.). Access to savings and investment were considered key prerequisites for achieving development, and in the early decades after World War 2, the state was considered an essential actor in promoting growth through investment in infrastructure, agriculture (especially irrigation systems), major industries and utilities, and human capital. Donors channelled vast sums of money through state programmes so that 'underdeveloped' countries could 'catch up' with developed countries more quickly than if investment were left only to the private sector.

Defining 'Development' continues to be an exceptionally complicated task, since no official definition was provided when the Bretton Woods institutions were established.

Paradoxically, this equation of development with economic growth was associated with greater inequality, higher underemployment in so-called informal sectors, bloated public sectors and indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, among other effects (Easterly 2006), leading donor countries to review their strategies. Economic growth alone is

insufficient to ensure a productive future for a country, since in many places the returns of a wealthy economy have not been widely shared (Stiglitz 2006:46), deepening inequality and, as a corollary of this, conflict.

A new development paradigm was trumpeted in the early 1980s that prioritised deregulation and liberalisation of markets. Oversized state agencies and programmes had to undergo 'structural adjustment' and give way to the market. The neo-liberal support for markets did not take into account market failures due to monopolies and unequal access to information, which were much more common in poorer countries than in 'developed' ones with stronger formal institutions. The competitive, 'arm's length' market relationships promoted in the neo-liberal model clashed with the cultural values of strong family and clan relationships in many cultures. Structural adjustment programmes did not take into full account local power structures, leading to budget cuts in pro-poor programmes while expenditures on subsidies for more powerful groups were often maintained. Market liberalisation was often selective and favoured local elites. Even in international markets, when interest rates rose sharply in the early 1980s, highly indebted poor countries had to choose between paying debts to powerful, multinational commercial banks and health care for their citizens (Black 1999). Many African and Latin American economies suffered dramatic shocks in the early waves of liberalisation and social conflict was an obvious corollary.

> **The competitive, 'arm's length' market relationships promoted in the neo-liberal model clashed with the cultural values of strong family and clan relationships in many cultures.**

By the 1990s, the United Nations Development Programme decided to redefine the notion of development towards a more comprehensive approach that considers that 'human development is the end – economic growth a means' (UNDP 1996). This new notion introduces a more holistic vision that puts 'human choices and capabilities' at the centre of the development process and promotes a more humanistic vision of development than the mere accumulation of physical and financial assets. In the words of Amartya Sen (1999), it is about 'advancing the richness of human life, rather than the richness of the economy in which human beings live, which is only a part of it.' Development, as defined below, implies a significant shift in the traditional paradigm in vogue until the 1990s:

> Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. Enlarging people's choices is achieved by expanding human capabilities ... At all levels of development the three essential capabilities for human development are for people to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable and to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living … But the realm of human development goes further: essential areas of choice, highly valued by people, range from political, economic and social opportunities for being creative and productive to enjoying self-respect, empowerment and a sense of belonging to a community (UNDP 1990:10).

This broad definition of what being 'developed' means is based on Sen's ideas of 'development as freedom', as having the capabilities and entitlements not only to meet one's essential needs, but also to fulfil one's potential. This finds expression, for example, in the use of broader definitions of poverty based not simply on income but also on 'unmet basic needs', as well as in a broader measure of well-being than GNP, namely the UN's Human Development Index.

This shift in viewpoint represents an important albeit partial shift in development focus. It is partial in the sense that the other missing element, discussed below, is local ownership

and voice in determining development goals and paths, as well as consideration of the relative importance of community well-being versus individual realisation in different cultures. Understanding 'development as freedom' means to believe in Sen's basic postulate that development should not be considered as the 'end game' but rather as the 'principal means' to achievement of one's own capabilities. Removing the different sources of 'unfreedom' (from poverty to tyranny, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance) and returning a pivotal role to human agency are critical to achieving ownership over decisions and responsibility over actions.

> **Removing the different sources of 'unfreedom' and returning a pivotal role to human agency are critical to achieving ownership over decisions and responsibility over actions.**

Important efforts have been made to strengthen the above approach by taking into account social groups that coexist with markets and interact with different levels of government. In 1999, the World Bank commissioned a series of 'consultations with the poor', led by Deepa Narayan, as part of a participatory research process designed to incorporate the 'voices of the poor' (Narayan *et al* 1999) into the development agenda. Some interesting findings emerged and 'community-driven development' became a new trend within the World Bank and other development agencies such as the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the European Union and USAID. The impact of the World Bank's projects is hard to tell and could be an interesting and important project for a future study.

'Community-driven development' or 'grassroots development' surfaced during the last two decades with a focus on social capital.[3] It challenged existing power structures by promoting voice and providing resources to those in the community who had previously not been considered agents of change – rural women, for instance. Several examples of successful community-based initiatives have emerged, including grassroots finance inspired by the well-known micro-credit initiative of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. At the same time, the subversion of communal and intra-household power arrangements and cultural practices by development programmes also generated some conflicts for the newly empowered in the short run. An example is an increase in domestic violence in the case of women in Bangladesh as men attempted to seize the resources to which women had recently gained access and to re-establish hierarchies that had long prevailed in the culture (Hossain 2002:79-82).

So far, decision making in the hands of the community has proved to be relatively successful. It creates a new set of relationships, practices and discourses that turn the passive 'recipients' of aid into active 'agents of change' (Daubon 2007a; Black 1999). However, community-driven development models that prioritise community goals still require significant refinement. There is the danger of replicating such development programmes without culturally sensitive adjustments. Listening to local actors and recognising them as valid interlocutors, producers of meaning and knowledge that are able to resist, adapt to or subvert the dominant knowledge, so that any programme is culturally sensitive and consistent with local visions of development, are essential. This, as Warren *et al* (2001:23) recognise, requires 'a paradigm shift in public policy discourse from a view of poor people as the passive object of social policy to a view of them as equal participants and leaders in policy making and implementation'.

This overview of the different approaches that development assistance has promoted over almost six decades indicates how much experimentation has been done to find the right recipe for 'progress'. Stiglitz (2006:48) summarises the transition through the different stages of development towards what he calls 'a more comprehensive approach'. He refers to the

emergence of an approach that does not prioritise a single aspect (namely capital, markets or governance) but rather a set of features involving the 'right combination' to transform a given country on its own development path. The newer paths of Development, as promoted by Sen, or by Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank, point towards a more holistic understanding of societies and a recognition that accumulation of assets is insufficient to enrich people's lives. Daubon introduces a conception of development that highlights

> dynamic systems of relationships that survive over time without major transformation. They have the capacity to deal internally with their tensions and to absorb and respond to external stimuli to a considerable extent … Underdevelopment may then be seen as a community system trapped in a stable, low-level equilibrium (2007b:6).

This introduces two new important components to be analysed in close relation to culture and conflict. First, systems of relationships and norms embody 'social capital', i.e. a collective asset that allows community members to achieve common goals, build trust, share information, manage risk and conflict, and identify opportunities.[4] These sets of networks 'within, between and beyond communities' (Woolcock 2001:11) are embedded in broader institutional contexts and have the capacity to influence the life of these communities.

The more controversial component of Daubon's definition is the need for external 'agitators' (e.g. development workers) to provoke some sort of 'disequilibrium' that encourages the communities to move beyond their lethargic state and produce change. Daubon's reliance on external agitators implies that any intervention in the development field will not only affect the relationships and distribution of power within and between communities, but is explicitly intended to do so (Daubon 2007a). A critique of this view is that if we see the social system as truly dynamic and responsive to stimuli, then there will invariably be parts of the system that will be able to negotiate their circumstances for better or worse within these altering power arrangements, and this must be considered, drawing, for example, on De Certeau's concept of counter-power.[5] The difficulty with development agencies acting as 'agitators' to break poverty traps is that the biases of the external agitator will influence the agitation, and can easily cause more conflict. Communities have the capacity to appropriate, resist or transform external knowledge, discourses and practices, and to generate their own change from within. In this sense, individual agency combined with appropriate relationships can constitute essential assets for communities to negotiate their way through the unpredictable paths of modernity.

Communities have the capacity to appropriate, resist or transform external knowledge, discourses and practices, and to generate their own change from within.

Rethinking Development

From this brief overview of the main moments in which development has encountered conflict and culture, and of the evolution of development itself as a paradigm and as a practice, it is clear that development must continue to be re-conceptualised. Stiglitz's statement that development is about 'transforming the lives of people, not just transforming economies' (2006:51), nicely summarises the tension between the early stages of development in the first few decades after World War 2 – when donor institutions and their policies focused on GDP growth or infrastructure – and the new perspectives that have emerged during the last two decades and that have introduced new variables (such as participation, governance and the strength of institutions) as key components of development strategies. However, the struggle of the fourth moment persists: there is a continuing tension around who defines development

and how it should be measured, what values should be emphasised and what processes should be undertaken to ensure voice and agency for appropriate actors. Indeed, Jeffrey Sachs's ideas about fighting poverty in developing countries through recipes to promote economic growth are emblematic of the way in which elements of the second moment continue to survive to this day (Sachs 2005), while the delays in completing the Doha round of negotiations of the World Trade Organisation evince the persistence of the strong interests that underpinned the third moment.

If we buy into the notion of poverty *á la* Sachs, we might be tempted to think that the persistence of 'underdevelopment in the Third World' is simply a reflection of the inadequate volume of resources that developed countries have contributed to reducing it. Moreover, it implies the acceptance of an 'expert design approach' in which tried and tested programmes are simply replicated across 'underdeveloped' countries. This approach has arguably not worked for the last sixty years. As Easterly observes,

> rather than too little, far too much has been spent on development, given the results achieved, and, second, because professed experts like Sachs really don't know how to end poverty… the West has spent $2.3 trillion on foreign aid over the last five decades and still had not managed to get twelve-cent medicines to children to prevent half of all malaria deaths (2006:4).

It is not a matter, then, of how much foreign aid has been invested in the developing world, but rather about indistinctly applied, and often mandated, 'recipes' and 'ingredients' that do not match the cultural values, priorities and expectations of local communities. The majority of 'expert-design' approaches were born of a westernised paradigm of what development should be: they began with the promotion of infrastructure and economic growth; later, they shifted radically to the promotion of free markets and democratic institutions as the trademarks of development. While these approaches had their merits, they fell short because they did not build ownership and incorporate feedback from local actors (or 'beneficiaries', as they are considered by the donors), because the 'poor', as Breslin (2007) mentions, were 'distant and unidentified' and only considered in statistical terms. Even more disturbing is that the same perspectives were applied in interventions in conflict areas around the world without paying any attention to the voices of people who are experiencing protracted and violent conflict.[6] This cultural insensitivity sometimes brings even more conflict, for example when post-conflict aid (even for such practical reasons as easier access) is concentrated in areas dominated by one (former) party to a conflict, creating resentment in areas controlled by other parties.

It is not a matter of how much foreign aid has been invested in the developing world, but rather about indistinctly applied, and often mandated, 'recipes' and 'ingredients' that do not match the cultural values, priorities and expectations of local communities.

Top-down approaches have had several important consequences. The first one is that they produced unsustainable economic growth that was neither broad-based nor poverty-reducing, but rather concentrated benefits in few hands and increased inequality. The clear consequences of this were local struggles to control resources, fissures in social relationships and the emergence of new grievances. Another consequence was the spread of the idea of 'poor people' as 'beneficiaries' of development instead of as 'subjects' or main actors of their own development path, thereby undermining opportunities for development to be based on the voices, local knowledge, capabilities, interests and concerns of those who are supposed to benefit. Third, these approaches employed the wrong type of professional. As Easterly (2006:6) mentions, it is necessary to replace 'planners' with 'searchers'; while 'a planner' believes

outsiders know enough to impose solutions, a 'searcher' believes only insiders have enough knowledge to find solutions, and that solutions must be homegrown.

Reconceptualising development requires a switch to include the 'voices of the poor' and accountability for the projects and services they receive, and to engage local actors in devising development strategies. Local actors therefore should be seen as owners of the process and promoters of accountability among service providers, donors, local and national authorities and policy-makers. Valid roles for foreign aid in this context should be focused on facilitating this. Specifically, international actors can facilitate the exchange of knowledge; promote local capacity building to better negotiate spaces of power and to build linkages with the national level; strengthen institutions and grassroots organisations; promote transparency and accountability; and include community members in planning, implementing and evaluating their initiatives. Perhaps the key role for development agencies is therefore to be a trusted source of broader information, a provider of resources that are aligned with local priorities, and a vehicle for forming informed individuals and communities who can hold their governments and international donors accountable for their actions. As we will see below, this is as true for economic development assistance as it is for humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding interventions.

> Reconceptualising development requires a switch to include the 'voices of the poor' and accountability for the projects and services they receive, and to engage local actors in devising development strategies.

The paradoxes of Development described above have also permeated humanitarian aid, peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding efforts. International organisations that work in areas of conflict have often replicated the 'top-down' approach in order to implement programmes to overcome violence without paying enough attention to the particular cultural context and the underlying causes of conflict. Ironically, this leads to major misunderstandings and more conflicts. Even worse, their programmes often have been used as means of political expansionism. Terry (2002:51) studies in depth the role played by humanitarian projects in the promotion of a particular agenda. For instance, she mentions the use of food programmes to influence local populations, such as Food for Peace, which was created not only to reduce hunger but also to increase U.S. influence abroad. Probably the biggest paradox between conflict and development is analysed by Paris (2004) when he argues that the implementation of the liberalisation process (market + democracy) in post-conflict settings (such as Rwanda, Angola and Liberia) contributed to recreate the very sources of the prior conflict instead of bringing relief to these places.

The Feasiblity of 'Do No Harm': Cultural Considerations

An important rule that should guide development interventions is 'do no harm', yet this rule is feasible in practice only if development is not westernised but rather culturally sensitive and informed by careful cultural mappings. The rule was suggested by Anderson (1999) to address the need for aid workers to recognise their power and their limitations in conflict settings. In a study of the different ways in which humanitarian aid has proved to be harmful (for example, benefiting specific groups over others, legitimising war-related individuals, or generating competition for resources or dependency), Anderson offers a protocol to guide future interventions in an attempt to reduce the negative impacts of aid in conflictive areas.

Harm is often done unconsciously via a culturally insensitive homogenisation of the 'needs' of people worldwide. Political economists and other professionals who have presumed to define the 'basic needs of the poor' have not realised the universalism implicit in this concept.

The formulation of a set of 'basic needs' to be fulfilled through development assistance is by itself a cultural construct driven by the cultural and political framework in which they emerged. As Escobar (2005:8) writes, there is a clear difference between satisfying material needs through a capitalist economy and doing so through non-capitalist practices and institutions, as has been done by the majority of communities in history. The Burtonian concept of 'basic human needs' in the field of conflict resolution similarly rests on universalism, leaving aside any cultural considerations in its understanding (Burton 1979; 1990). In the same vein, homogenous legal standards such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have entailed conflicts in their application, silenced multiple voices and assumed *a priori* knowledge by 'experts' of people's rights. This approach can also be found in certain conflict resolution practices, i.e. where experienced mediators assume that their extensive knowledge of techniques and processes is essential to achieve the resolution of a conflict.

To do no harm, development initiatives must redefine what 'being poor' means, and to define needs using a bottom-up perspective. We can start by understanding development through the lens of the people that development claims to help, and their vision of the world. The first step is to recognise that there is a diversity of knowledge, practices and discourses on what being 'developed' means. For instance, if I understand development in terms of aspirations and manage to fulfil them, then I will consider myself as developed, even if I have not fulfilled the 'basic needs' criteria established by development specialists. Prioritising factors such as identity, a non-accumulative economy in harmony with nature or the defence of cultural rights and traditions does not make one 'less developed' than others who emphasise the importance of material accumulation. Without a comprehensive understanding of local realities, engagement of local actors and respect for their cultural perspectives, preferences and alternative views about themselves and their surroundings, it is difficult to imagine that development initiatives will not do harm to the communities and contexts where they are implemented (even where protocols to regulate the programmes are considered).

> **To do no harm, development initiatives must redefine what 'being poor' means, and to define needs using a bottom-up perspective.**

This focus on local actors does not disregard hierarchical or asymmetric power arrangements; rather, it highlights the need for a thoughtful cultural mapping that reveals their dynamic, heterogeneous and complex nature. Such a cultural mapping exercise is not straightforward. First, we must acknowledge that there may be multiple, diverse and contradictory realities. Second, that it may be challenging to identify who is in charge of the production, reproduction and dissemination of an agreed 'cultural' understanding. Third, as Avruch (2003:363) notes, the role and degree of influence of culture need to be carefully balanced when intervening in the field, since culture can readily be either underestimated or overestimated ('Type I and Type II errors'). In the field of conflict resolution, for example, scholars and practitioners for many years underestimated the role of culture in its interventions causing even more conflict. On the other hand, overestimating the role of culture could lead to justification of injustices and prolonging of conflict, e.g. the treatment of women in many societies. Therefore, there is a need for a serious and more balanced consideration of culture when designing development interventions and when dealing with conflict.

Contemporary Challenges: Development, Culture and Conflict in a Post-9/11 World

The Development agenda has been co-opted not only to serve a neocolonial economic agenda, as argued above, but also a neocolonial security agenda. This impulse has only been strengthened since 9/11, leading moreover to the incorporation of a conflict component

within the development agenda. This section discusses criticisms of this approach to conflict and development, notably by Duffield (2001), and draws on these criticisms as a starting point to present several important ways in which conflict resolution practitioners can contribute to development at the macro and micro levels in ways that can promote sustainable peace. The current relationship between security and development is highlighted in the words of Kofi Annan:

> In an increasingly interconnected world, progress in the areas of development, security and human rights must go hand in hand. There will be no development without security and no security without development (Annan 2005).

Conflict and security are important parts of the Development discourse today. According to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNPO 2008), this is largely due to the assumption that improving living conditions in developing countries will increase global security. In particular, developed countries fear the emergence of terrorism and conflict as a direct consequence of poverty and inequality in the developing world.

According to Duffield (2001), the discourse on human insecurity seeks to universalise the security dimensions of instability by assigning to the West the responsibility to intervene and manage insecurity at the international level. 'Western interventionist frameworks' can be understood 'as techniques of stabilisation, containment and counter-insurgency in the post-colonial world', where violent conflicts are seen as 'symptoms of local failures' rather that new social formations adapted for survival at the margins of the global economy, and therefore suitable to 'behavioural and attitudinal change' (2001:100). Duffield presents a radical critique of how Development has been co-opted into a global security regime that uses conflict resolution and social reconstruction, as well as international military aid, to transform target societies in the image of the interveners in order to pacify the unruly periphery (Duffield 2001:98; Ramsbotham 2005:90). The invasion of Iraq clearly illustrates this point.

Consideration of Duffield's critique is a starting point for thinking of the different ways in which a 'conflict component' has been incorporated into the development agenda (where the boundaries between conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and increasing welfare have become increasingly blurred and not necessary linear). His criticisms lead to the following reflections. First and most ambitious is the need for a change in the international system of governance, i.e. decisions about who, when and where to intervene, and the need for a shift in the international system of governance towards one that is more democratic and pluralistic. Second, this institutional shift will entail the need to deal with the problem of present-day humanitarian interventions that encounter the 'paradox of national sovereignty' and the illusion of 'neutrality' in humanitarian interventions. There is a theoretical gap in the field of conflict resolution regarding the evaluation of peacebuilding initiatives and their linkages with development. Paffenholz *et al* (2005:5) have already identified this as a critical issue that needs to be considered by conflict practitioners. Third, there is a need for more reflective and flexible conflict resolution practices that look beyond 'micro techniques' towards achieving broader transformation of conflicts in a sustainable way. This is a major contribution that a conflict resolution perspective could bring to the development agenda, which needs a better understanding of groups, cultures and interests on all sides. Moreover, the introduction of a more humanistic dimension in the development field is imperative to promote mutual learning and better understanding of human relations and practices, and the contexts in which

There is a need for more reflective and flexible conflict resolution practices that look beyond 'micro techniques' towards achieving broader transformation of conflicts in a sustainable way.

they are born. Conflict resolution must be the key that increases tolerance for diversity, promotes equality and works towards reconciliation. After all, as Azar insightfully mentioned, 'peace is development in the broadest sense of the term' (Ramsbotham *et al* 2005:91).

The Potential Role of Conflict Resolution in Strengthening Development

The practice of conflict resolution within the development field should be extremely careful in not reproducing what Lederach (1995) refers to as 'a prescriptive approach' to conflict, i.e. that the specialised knowledge of the trainer (who defines the participants' needs, models and techniques) is transferable and universal. Lederach's approach to conflict resolution is based on an 'elicitive perspective' that privileges the local resources and knowledge of people trapped in conflict (1995:55). This does not mean Lederach discards the prescriptive model, but rather he views it as complementary to the insights that emerge from indigenous and local perspectives. The implications of these ideas in the development field are interesting, since many development practitioners seem to have arrived at the same conclusion through methodologies that favour 'grassroots' or 'community-driven' development instead of more 'prescriptive' programmes.

Development practitioners should interpret their work as a 'sustained dialogue' between their agencies and the communities they are supposed to help. Development should not be a process of one-way transfers but rather must imply mutual learning and accountability in both directions (Chambers 2004).

Conflict resolution practitioners rely on holistic approaches to restoring relationships within and among communities, and these skills and experiences could be embodied in a more humanistic vision of Development. In analysing communities as dynamic systems, it is essential to understand the energy that binds them into networks of solidarity, cooperation or redistribution. This energy is necessary both for peacebuilding and for development, since they are intertwined.

Hirschman's concept of 'social energy' quoted by Daubon (2007b:6) shows how communities come together in mutual support, but also how collective action becomes their motor for social change.[7] There is, therefore, a need to match the grassroots observation and support in rebuilding the 'web of relationships' that Lederach (2005) proposes for peace practitioners in a similar redefinition of the development paradigm, building on the community-driven approaches that promote voice and empowerment to scale up in states and economies. Participatory planning and budgeting based on local priorities and values is the first step towards the development equivalent of 'the moral imagination', i.e. 'the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world, yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist' (Lederach 2005:ix).

Final Considerations

Rethinking development implies recreating all its components (economic, political, physical, natural, human and social capital) with full awareness not just of each actor's point of view, but also more fully of the context from which those views emerge, which we can refer to as their 'contextual standpoint' or culture. Knowledge is grounded in the historical, social, political, economic and cultural context in which it is developed. It is not abstract or without roots; on the contrary, it responds to all the aspects of the reality from which it

emerges (Walsh 2002), which accounts for its importance when creating a vision of others or designing policies. Context-based knowledge leads to the construction of differentiated conceptions, discourses and concrete practices that are based on a cultural understanding. This reality must lead to a reflection about the 'geopolitics of knowledge', because even though proponents often regard their development and conflict paradigms as universally applicable, these are enunciated from a given historically and culturally determined standpoint, and respond to the social context that gave rise to them. Many universally espoused paradigms therefore run into difficulties when they are inserted into local dynamics that are different from those in which they were born. The failure or inapplicability of these policies is due to the lack of recognition or (implicit or explicit) ignorance of differentiated realities and cultures. Global thinking on poverty and conflict need not correspond to local reflections: thinking about poverty and conflict locally implies forging a more immediate and tangible vision that corresponds with local experiences.

> **Thinking about poverty and conflict locally implies forging a more immediate and tangible vision that corresponds with local experiences.**

The clash of visions between globally promoted concepts (e.g. free markets) and local values (e.g. should water have a price?) can lead to significant conflicts in lieu of development. Re-casting the language and rules of the game between development agencies and communities is indispensable to 'combat poverty' or 'promote global security' effectively. Such a re-casting will not come a moment too soon, for the world is crossing the doorstep of the fifth moment of encounters between development, conflict and culture. That fifth moment is the era of recognition of climate change as a man-made phenomenon and a potentially catastrophic consequence of industrialisation by richer countries. This moment will bring conflicts not only over resources but also over identity and purpose, between those who equate development with growth (as in the United States and China), those who use broader concepts of development (as in parts of Europe) and the indigenous 'cosmo-vision' of man as a part of nature and not its master. The fifth moment will be one of the most challenging in the field of conflict resolution. The lessons of the four earlier moments of encounter between development, culture and conflict provide the beginnings of a path, traced in 'the moral imagination', to working through the emerging challenges in this new moment.

ADRIANA SALCEDO holds a masters in conflict resolution from Simon Bolivar Andean University, Quito-Ecuador, and is a PhD student at the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia. She is an Ecuadorian anthropologist who has focused on ethnic, social and environmental conflicts in the Amazon basin, the Galapagos Islands and the Andean region in the past eight years. Her research examines interrelations between humanitarian interventions and internationalism among organisations that work with refugees and displaced populations along the Colombian-Ecuadorian border.

Endnotes

[1] Several alternative studies challenging the common assumption that 'being developed' means economic growth and improvements in material living conditions have been carried out in the last decade. One example is reflected in the interesting data presented by the World Values Survey, which tries to demonstrate that despite economic growth and other changes, the general public in various societies have not gotten any happier. See www.worldvaluessurvey.org

[2] The 'First' (industrialised countries), 'Second' (communist states within the influence of the former Soviet Union) and 'Third' ('underdeveloped' countries) worlds were some of the discursive products that emerged after the World War 2. However, with the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a

new global order, the need arose for a redefinition on the boundaries between states located in the 'centre', 'periphery' and in the 'middle'. Such a need led to the popular use of the dichotomy between 'developed' countries and 'developing' countries. For a complete discussion of the formation of these categories, see Gardner & Lewis 1996:12-20.

[3] According to Putman (1995:67), social capital is defined as 'the features of social organisation, such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit'. Another author who offers a definition of social capital is Woolcock, who states that social capital refers 'to norms and networks that facilitate collective action' (2001:9).

[4] This idea does not exclude the notion that social capital can also be a liability for certain groups (i.e. gangs, violent sects, etc). For an in-depth examination, see Woolcock (2001:4-6) and Warren *et al* (2001:7).

[5] Michel De Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (2002) mentions the subtle tactics of resistance and private practices that make living a subversive art – the ways in which people re-appropriate relationships, language, power, etc. in everyday situations and turn them into strategies and tactics to oppose the hegemonic power.

[6] Dennis C. Jett (2000) presents a comparative study of peacekeeping interventions in Angola and Mozambique and the factors that influenced their failure and success, respectively.

[7] Daubon, R. (2007a) presents an interesting study that proposes investment in civic capacities – rather that simply funding development projects – as the key to social transformation.

References

Anderson, M. 1999, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Annan, K. 2005, 'United Nations Secretary General's Report to the UN Millennium +5 Summit', September; available at www.un-ngls.org, accessed 5 January.

Avruch, K. 2003, 'Type I and Type II Errors in Culturally Sensitive Conflict Resolution Practice' in *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 20:3:351-371.

Avruch, K. & Black, P. 1987, 'A Generic Theory of Conflict Resolution: A Critique' in *Negotiation Journal*, January, Harvard University.

Black, J. 1999, *Development in Theory and Practice – Paradigms and Paradoxes*, Boulder: Westview.

Breslin, P. 2007, 'What Sachs Lacks' in *Grassroots Development, Journal of the Inter-American Foundation* 28:1:62.

Burton, J. 1979, *Deviance, Terrorism and War: The Process of Solving Unsolved Social and Political Problems*, New York: St. Martin's Press; 1990, *Conflict: Human Needs Theory*, New York: St Martin's Press.

Chambers, R. 2004, 'Ideas for Development: Reflecting Forwards', Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, England.

Daubon, R. 2007a, 'A Civil Investing Strategy for Putting Communities in Charge', Kettering Foundation, Washington, DC; 2007b, 'Beyond the Box: Re-thinking Development Assistance', working paper, Kettering Foundation, Dayton OH.

De Certeau, M. 2002, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, California: University of California Press.

Duffield, M. 2001, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*, London: Zed Books.

Easterly, W. 2006, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, London: Pluto Press.

Escobar, A. 1995, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press; 2005, 'El "Postdesarrollo" como Concepto y Practica Social' in Mato, D. ed., *Políticas de Economía, Ambiente y Sociedad en Tiempos de Globalización*, Caracas: Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Sociales, Universidad Central de Venezuela:17-31.

Gardner, K. & Lewis, D. 1996, *Anthropology, Development and the Post-modern Challenge*, London: Pluto Press.

Hart, G. 2001, 'Development Critiques in the Nineties: Cul de Sac and Promising Paths' in *Progress in Human Geography* 25:4:649-658.

Hossain, F. 2002, 'Small Loans, Big Claims' in *Foreign Policy* 132:79-82.

Jett, D. 2000, *Why Peacekeeping Fails*. New York: St Martin's Press.

Lederach, J. 1995, *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures*, New York: Syracuse University Press; 2005, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*, Oxford: OUP.

Narayan, D., Patel, R., Schaff, K., Rademacher, A. & Koch, S. 1999, *Voices Of The Poor, Can Anyone Hear Us?*, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Paffenholz, T., Abu-Nimer, M. & McCandless, E. 2005, 'Peacebuilding and Development: Integrated Approaches to Evaluation' in *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 2:2:1-5.

Paris, R. 2004, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Putman, R. 1995, 'Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital' in *Journal of Democracy* 6:65-78.

Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T. & Miall, H. 2005, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Sachs, J. 2005, *The End of Poverty: Economics Possibilities for the Future*, New York: Penguin Press.

Sachs, W. 1991 ed., *The Development Dictionary – A Guide to Knowledge as Power.* London: Zed Books.

Sen, A. 1999, *Development as Freedom*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Stiglitz, J. 2006, *Making Globalisation Work*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Terry, F. 2002, *Condemned to Repeat: The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*, New York: Cornell University Press.

United Nations 1951, *Measures of Economic Development of Underdeveloped Countries*, New York: Department of Social and Economic Affairs.

UNPO (United Nations Peacekeeping Operations) 2008, 'Principles and Guidelines', UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, New York.

UNDP (United National Development Programme) 1990, *Human Development Report*, New York: OUP.

Walsh, C. 2002, 'Las Geopolíticas del Conocimiento y Colonialidad del Poder', interview with Walter Mignolo in Walsh, C., Schiwy, F. & Castro-Gomez, S. eds, *Indisciplinar las Ciencias Sociales. Geopolíticas del Conocimiento y Colonialidad del Poder: Perspectivas desde lo Andino*, Quito: UASB/ Abya Yala.

Warren, M., Thompson, P. & Saegert, S. 2001, The Role of Social Capital in Combating Poverty in Saegert, S., Thompson P. & Warren, M. eds, *Social Capital and Poor Communities*, New York. Russell Sage Foundation:1-28.

Woolcock, M. 2001, 'The Place of Social Capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcomes'; available at www.oecd.org/dataoecd/5/13/1824913.pdf, accessed on 3 January 2008.