

A CULTURAL MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT

D. Paul Schafer

There are many different ways to perceive and define development. However, most would agree that development is concerned with human needs and their fulfillment in the final analysis.

Since people have a variety of needs that must be satisfied if they are to function effectively in society and survive - to breathe, bond, eat, love, create, procreate, recreate, work, and the like - this give rise to a complex set of social, economic, scientific, artistic, educational, recreational, spiritual, technological, political and environmental requirements. How these requirements are dealt in specific situations and particular parts of the world is what development in general - and the development of culture and cultures in particular - are all about.

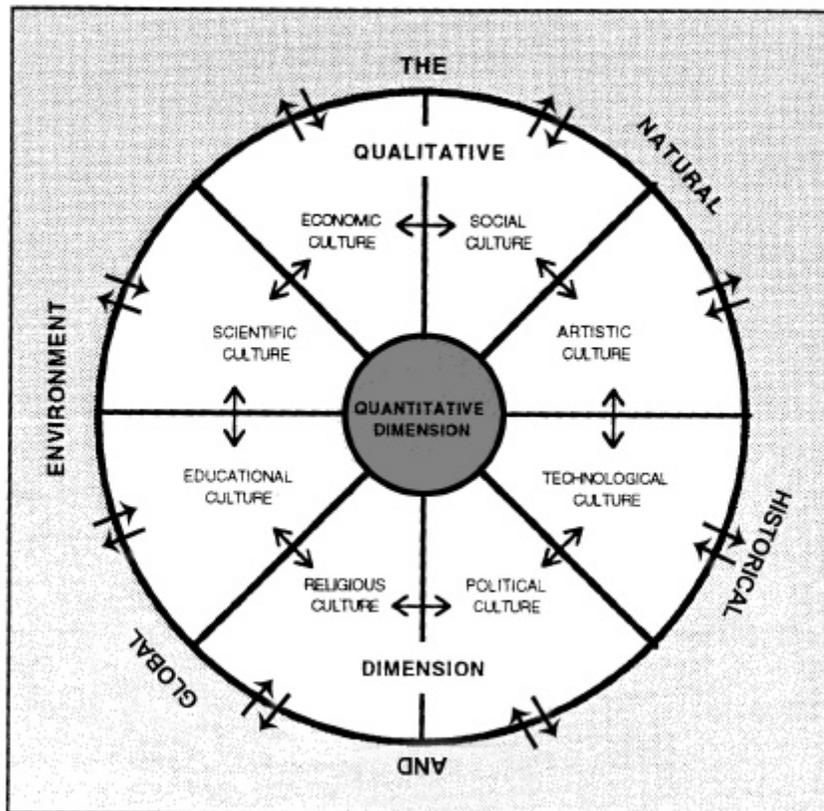
In order to address requirements as difficult and demanding as these, governments, corporations, foundations, and local, regional, national and international organizations use models of development - or have them in mind - when they make decisions about a variety of public and private matters. These models range all the way from general notions concerning the fulfillment of human needs to highly sophisticated devices to address the fulfillment of human needs in a systematic, sustained and coherent manner. This makes models of development extremely important in the overall scheme of things. They affect people's lives all the time, and at every conceivable level. It is not possible to make sensible and sustainable decisions about the fulfillment of human needs - or about developmental problems and prospects confronting people and countries at the municipal, regional, national or international level - without models of development. As a result, models of development have a very powerful impact on public and private policies, practices, and ways of life in all parts of the world.

If human needs and developmental requirements are to be dealt with effectively in the future, it will be necessary to evolve models of development that are equal to the task. These models must be capable of doing justice to all human needs and not just certain human needs. They must also be capable of coming to grips with the many different problems associated with people's needs, including the environmental situation, utilization of renewable and non-renewable resources, unequal distributions of wealth and income, poverty, pollution, unemployment, hunger, health care, education, the crisis of maldevelopment, the need for safety and security, and many others.

The model of development that is proposed to deal with these requirements is the cultural model of development. What makes this model so relevant to the world is the fact that governments, international organizations, and civil societies everywhere in the world are searching for a model of development that can deal effectively with the developmental needs and requirements of people and countries in all parts of the world.

While the graphic depiction of the cultural model of development to follow has been greatly simplified and stripped to its essence to facilitate analysis, it exposes the main features of the model and illustrates why it is so essential to take a cultural approach to development at this stage in human history.

THE CULTURAL MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT



It is clear from the model that the scope and subject matter of development are enormous when a cultural approach is taken to development. Not only is development concerned with all aspects and dimensions of life and living - the negative as well as the positive, the non-material as well as the material - but also it possesses a breadth, depth and complexity that goes far beyond other fields. This is due to its holistic nature and multidimensional character.

Taking a cultural approach to development also makes it possible to shine the spotlight on the development of culture in general and cultures in particular, regardless of whether they are cultures in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe, North America, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Australia, New Zealand, or elsewhere in the world.

The development of culture and specific cultures in the world is concerned with six fundamental matters when the cultural model of development is employed. These six matters are:

- *culture as a whole and cultures as wholes* (the complete circle);
- *the component parts of culture and cultures* (the various sectors - economic culture, social culture, artistic culture, technological culture, political culture and so forth - that comprise the complete circle);
- *the relationships between the component parts of culture and cultures* (the interactive arrows between the various sectors of the circle);
- *the relationships between the component parts of culture and cultures and culture as a whole and cultures as wholes* (the interactive process that occurs between the various sectors of the circle and the complete circle);
- *the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of culture and cultures* (the connection between the inner and outer components of the complete circle); and
- *the relationship between culture and cultures and the natural, historical and global environment* (the interactive arrows between the complete circle and the vast expanse beyond the complete circle).

It is important to discuss each of these six matters in turn, since this sheds a great deal of light on the way the development of culture and specific cultures in the world can be dealt with most effectively in the future.

The most important priority in the development of culture and cultures is to develop culture as a whole and cultures *as wholes*. To achieve this end, it is necessary to develop all the parts of culture and cultures and not just certain parts as emphasized earlier. Development in this sense is a comprehensive, integrated, inclusive and egalitarian activity, rather than a partial, piecemeal, exclusive and partisan activity.

It is important to emphasize that no activity is singled out for special attention in the cultural model. It is as essential to address people's social, educational, health, political, aesthetic and spiritual needs as it is to address their economic, business, industrial, commercial and technological needs. This confirms the conclusion arrived at earlier that people need stimulating educational opportunities, high-quality health services, viable artistic and spiritual amenities and stable political systems every bit as much as excellent economic, business, industrial, commercial and technological opportunities if they are to function effectively in society, live creative, constructive and fulfilling lives, and survive. Viewed from this perspective, economics is no longer *the* factor in development, but *a* factor in development along with everything else. It is not a case of developing economics and economies and then assuming this will automatically lead to the development of other activities through the "base-superstructure" process or "trickle-down" effect. Rather, it is a case of developing all activities, and developing many of them simultaneously rather than sequentially.

This is essential if development is to come to grips with the totality of people's needs and have a "human face." For development of artistic, social, spiritual, educational, and social activities *in conjunction with* economic, commercial, industrial and technological activities is required if "human-centered development" is to be achieved. The reason for this is not difficult to detect. The human element glows through every artistic, spiritual, educational and social act. Without this, people will always play second fiddle to products, profits and the marketplace. Moreover, it will not be possible to come to grips with the host of debilitating problems that confronts humanity today - unacceptable levels of pollution, poverty, starvation, famine, unemployment, hunger and homelessness, intolerable levels of malnutrition, exploitation of labour, particularly child labour, oppressive debts, and severe inequalities in income, wealth and resources. Dealing with these problems requires development that places a high priority on people and matters of human welfare and well-being, and not only on products, profits, capital accumulation, consumerism, technology and the marketplace.

While developing culture as a whole and cultures as wholes is the most important task in development when development is viewed from a cultural perspective, a very important aspect of this involves developing the component parts of culture and cultures *as parts in their own right*, but always bearing in

mind that they must be properly contexted in culture and cultures if they are to function effectively. This is why the component parts of culture and cultures are depicted in the model as the “economic *culture*,” “social *culture*,” “political *culture*,” “technological *culture*,” and the like, since they all share culture in common. These component parts can be further subdivided into additional parts depending on the amount of detail, specificity and analysis required. For example, the “technological *culture*” can be subdivided into scientific technology, artistic technology, industrial technology, transportation technology, and so forth.

The component parts of culture and cultures can be developed most effectively when they are developed in terms of the uniqueness, creativity, excellence, integrity, and diversity that is inherent in them. This is as true for the economic culture as it is for the artistic culture, political culture, social culture, technological culture, and all other component parts of culture and cultures. Given the highly specialized nature of the modern world, a great deal is known about these component parts and how to develop them most effectively, even if the financial, capital and human resources are not always available to achieve this.

While a great deal is known about the component parts of culture and cultures and how to develop them most effectively, far less is known about how to deal with the complex relationships that exist between and among the component parts of culture and cultures. What, for example, is the relationship between the economic culture and the social culture, and how can this relationship be dealt with most effectively in the future? Or to cite another example selected from many, what is the relationship between the technological culture and the spiritual culture? Specifically, how can technology be developed so that it impacts favourably rather than unfavourably on religion and spiritual affairs? As these two examples indicate, there is a complex constellation of relationships between the component parts of culture and cultures that must be dealt with effectively if culture and cultures are to be developed properly in the future. Understanding these relationships and coming to grips with them is looming larger and larger in the overall matrix of concerns that must be attended to if the development of culture and cultures is to be addressed effectively in the future.

Just as culture and cultures are concerned with the constellation of relationships that exists between the component parts of culture and cultures, so they are concerned with the constellation of relationships that exist between the component parts of culture and cultures and culture and cultures as wholes. Viewed from this perspective, culture and cultures provide the *context* or *container* within which the component parts of culture and cultures are situated. This makes it imperative to examine very carefully the dynamic interplay that is constantly going on between the component parts of culture and cultures and culture and cultures as wholes. How, for example, are changes that are taking

place in the economic culture and the political culture impacting on culture as a whole and cultures as wholes? And conversely, how are changes taking place in culture as a whole and cultures as wholes impacting on the economic culture and the political culture? Questions such as these are of crucial importance to people and countries in all parts of the world because a larger and larger price will be paid if these relationships are not understood and dealt with effectively in the future.

If focusing attention on the relationships that exist between the component parts of culture and cultures and culture as a whole and cultures as wholes is important, so is focusing attention on the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of culture and cultures. Of the two, it is the qualitative dimension that is the most difficult to deal with because it can't be touched, seen, handled or exchanged, and therefore is difficult to measure, define and pin down. Nevertheless, breaking culture and cultures down into quantitative and qualitative elements serves a very useful purpose. It focuses attention on the material and non-material dimensions of culture and cultures. This is surely one of the most crucial relationships in the development of culture and cultures of all, since it is intimately connected to the natural environment, consumption of the world's renewable and non-renewable resources, the rapid rate of population growth in absolute if not relative terms, and the finite carrying capacity of the earth.

It is obvious from the model that the larger the quantitative dimension of culture and cultures, the more pressure is exerted outward on the qualitative dimension and the natural, historical and global environment. Correspondingly, the smaller the quantitative dimension of culture and cultures, the less pressure is exerted outward on the qualitative dimension and the natural, historical and global environment. In effect, the more time, money, and energy are spent on the production, distribution and consumption of material goods and services, the more pressure is exerted on nature, the natural environment, renewable and non-renewable resources, and other species. In addition, the less time, money and energy are available for social interaction, spiritual renewal, friendship, human love, family, recreation, the arts, and many of the things that make life a richer, fuller and more meaningful affair. This situation demands utmost attention in the future because it is intimately connected to the state of the natural environment, the health, welfare and well-being of people and countries in all parts of the world, and the world system as a whole.

And this leads to the final and most important relationship in the cultural model of development, namely the relationship between culture and cultures and the natural, historical and global environment.

Just as culture and cultures provide the context or container within which the component parts of culture and cultures and the maze of relationships between

these components are situated, so the natural, historical and global environment provides the context or container within which culture and cultures are situated. Careful analysis of this relationship is of crucial importance to the development of culture and cultures in the future. History confirms that when culture and cultures are not positioned properly in the natural, historical and global environment, the consequences are devastating in terms of environmental exhaustion, cultural conflict and confrontation, and repetition of the mistakes of the past.

Viewed from this perspective, there may be nothing more important to the world of the future than situating culture in general - and African, Asian, Latin American, European, North American, the Middle Eastern, Caribbean, and other cultures in particular - effectively in the natural, historical and global environment. On the one hand, this means ensuring that culture and all the diverse cultures of the world are predicated on worldviews, values, beliefs, principles, policies and practices that ensure environmental sustainability, human welfare and well-being, and harmony between all people and countries of the world. On the other hand, it means ensuring that culture and all the diverse cultures of the world are based on understandings of the past that are as accurate, authentic, and impartial as possible.

Let us analyze these two remaining requirements of the cultural model of development in greater detail, since one is concerned with situating culture and cultures in space, and the other is concerned with situating culture and cultures in time.

As far as situating culture and cultures in space is concerned, it is imperative to examine the impact that culture and cultures have on the natural and global environment in great detail. This is represented in the model by the fact that all the various cultural activities in which people are engaged make demands on the natural and global environment and are constantly pressing outward on the natural and global environment in all directions. Rather than taking the natural and global environment as a given or taking it for granted the way the economic model of development does, the cultural model opens up a commanding place for the natural and global environment at the very core of the developmental process and every aspect of developmental activity.

Since all human activities are composed of material and non-material elements, it is essential to examine very carefully the '*material draws*' and '*ecological impacts*' that *different types of human activities* have on the natural and global environment. For example, many economic activities - particularly industrial, manufacturing, commercial, transportation and technological activities - draw and impact heavily on the natural and global environment because the material component of these activities is high and the potential for environmental and global damage is great. Conversely, many artistic, educational, social and

spiritual activities draw and impact lightly on the natural and global environment because the material component of these activities is low and the potential for environmental and global damage is significantly reduced. Apart from paints for the painter, books and computer equipment for the scholar, pulpits and religious venues for the imam, cantor and priest, and administrative amenities for the social worker - to cite only a few of the most obvious examples - artistic, educational, spiritual and social activities do not make excessive demands on the natural and global environment or contribute significantly to the pollution of the natural and global environment and excessive utilization of nature's precious resource legacy.

The implications of this for local, regional, national and international development in the future are clear and unequivocal. As world population increases and more pressure is exerted on the natural environment, scarce natural resources, future generations, other species, and the finite carrying capacity of the earth, a great deal more emphasis will have to be placed on activities that draw less on the natural and global environment and do as little environmental and global damage as possible. This is why Pitirim Sorokin contended that there was an urgent need to shift from "sensate cultures" to "ideational, idealistic and mixed cultures." He was aware that whereas sensate cultures put a great deal of stress on the natural and global environment and the finite carrying capacity of the earth because they are based on activities that are very physical, sensorial and material in nature, idealistic, ideational and mixed cultures put much less strain on the natural and global environment and the finite carrying capacity of the earth because they are based on activities that are primarily intellectual, emotional, spiritual, aesthetic, and non-material in nature. As a result, they strike a much better balance between the quantitative and qualitative or material and non-material dimensions of development.

This is evident as soon as attention is focused on the way human needs are dealt with in the cultural model compared to the economic model. In the economic model, human needs with a high degree of material input and output are promoted and given a very high priority because this produces higher levels of *material* living and more rapid rates of economic growth. This puts a great deal of strain on the natural and global environment, the resources of nature, and the finite carrying capacity of the earth because the material component of these needs is high and the potential for environmental and global damage is great. In the cultural model, the satisfaction of human needs is a much less dangerous and demanding affair since the emphasis is placed on achieving a judicious balance between the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of development and people's material and non-material needs.

If attention is focused on the ecological impacts and material draws that different kinds of human activities have on the natural and global environment in

the cultural model, attention is also focused on the dynamic interplay that is constantly going on between the natural and global environment and culture and cultures. This means that there is a reciprocal and interactive - rather than unilateral or unidimensional - relationship between the natural and global environment and culture and cultures which must to be taken into account in all future developmental planning and decision-making. This is as it should be. For just as culture and cultures affect the natural and global environment by constantly pressing outward, so the natural and global environment affects culture and cultures by constantly pressing inward.

There are many examples of this. The natural and global environment has a profound effect on economic, industrial, commercial and technological practices in all parts of the world, affecting not only their geographical location but also their form, content and character. It also has a profound effect on the arts, sciences, education and spirituality, affecting the way artists, scientists, educators and spiritual leaders see the world and create things in the world. Scientists, for example, are concerned with expanding knowledge and understanding of everything that exists in the natural and global environment, from the outer reaches of the cosmos, the universe and the world to the smallest forms of plant, animal and human life. And artists have been concerned with expanding human awareness of the natural and global environment for centuries, primarily by enhancing our appreciation of the beauty and grandeur of the natural and global environment. Nothing escapes the artist's eye or ear, from bubbling brooks, majestic mountains and ferocious seascapes to enchanting gardens, tranquil meadows, gently-rolling hills and valleys, and enticing landscapes.

Nor is this all. The natural and global environment has an uncanny way of striking back when it is exploited and abused by culture and cultures, as holes in the ozone layer, hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, droughts, global warming, and the collapse of cultures that have failed to take the natural and global environment fully and forcefully into account readily confirm. This means that the natural and global environment impacts on culture and cultures every bit as much as culture and cultures impact on the natural and global environment. There is a deep and inexorable connection between the two that must be taken into account in all future developmental planning and decision-making if sustainable development is to be achieved.

There is another dimension to situating culture and cultures properly in the natural and global environment that demands our attention. It concerns the way culture and cultures are positioned in the world.

As recent developments indicate - and indicate convincingly - every culture and civilization is situated in the world in a very specific way and interacts with

other cultures and civilizations in the world in a very particular way. As globalization increases and cultures and civilizations interact more frequently with one another and impact more frequently upon one another, a great deal of thought and attention will have to be given to how cultures and civilizations position themselves in the world and what threats and dangers this constitutes for other cultures and civilizations in the world. Without the creation of many more bonds, links, connections and bridges between the diverse cultures and civilizations of the world, conflict and confrontation will be inevitable and harmony and peace will not be achieved. This requires a dramatic increase in international cultural relations, as well as many more opportunities for intercultural communications and exchange between the diverse cultures and civilizations of the world. These are the real keys to solidarity, friendship and understanding in the future.

If culture and cultures must be situated properly in the natural and global environment, or space, they must also be situated properly in the historical environment, or time. The importance of this is apparent as soon as attention is focused on the enormous difficulties involved in situating culture and cultures properly in the historical environment, or time.

In terms of culture, this means protecting the legacy of artifacts, ideas, ideals, values, traditions, architectural monuments, and beliefs that has been built up over the centuries. This legacy provides people and countries in all parts of the world with the connections that are required to create a continuous bond between the past, the present and the future - and therefore past, present and future generations - as well as the means of differentiating between right and wrong, good and evil, valuable and valueless, and meaningful and meaningless. This is what makes protection of the cultural legacy of humankind from the ravages of time and pillages of people and countries so imperative. Without this, people and countries will be unable to learn from the past, maintain their distinctive identities and diversities, and preserve their cherished ways of life.

In terms of cultures, it means coming to grips with the cultural baggage that people and countries inherit from the past and pass on from one generation to the next and one century to the next. This is particularly important when this baggage is negative, since it creates numerous hostilities and resentments that stand in the way of achieving peace and harmony throughout the world. Viewed from this perspective, the truth and reconciliation initiatives instituted in recent years in particular parts of the world - such as the truth and reconciliation commission created by Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa - offer a ray of hope for the future. They indicate a willingness on the part of specific groups of people and particular countries - as well as institutions like the Vatican and the Roman Catholic Church - to admit the wrongs of the past and seek reconciliation and forgiveness in the present and the future.

What is true for the truth and reconciliation initiatives is equally true for many other contemporary developments which bear on the cultural baggage people and countries carry from generation to generation and century to century. Many countries in North, Central and South America, as well as Australia and New Zealand, are currently engaged in attempts to right the wrongs that have been done throughout history to the aboriginal peoples of the world. Whether it is the Maoris in New Zealand, the aboriginals in Australia, the First Nations in Canada, the native peoples in the United States, or the indigenous peoples of Mexico and Central and South America, efforts to resolve aboriginal and native land claims, provide greater control over the development of indigenous activities, preserve distinctive cultural traditions, identities and ways of life, and ensure self-government for aboriginal peoples represent valuable steps towards ensuring that cultures are properly situated in the historical environment or time. While much remains to be accomplished in this area, particularly among colonized and colonizing countries and the diverse cultures and civilizations of the world, much is presently being accomplished which should prove helpful as far as situating culture and cultures properly in the historical environment or time in the future.

This completes our analysis of the cultural model of development. It offers a ray of hope for the future because it provides the contextual, conceptual and practical framework that is required to make sensible and sustainable decisions about a variety of community, regional, national, international, and planetary matters in the future. It does so by incorporating the natural, historical and global environment fully and forcefully into the developmental equation, as well as recognizing that development is an interactive, egalitarian, inclusive and holistic activity rather than a unilateral, exclusive, partial and partisan activity. It also addresses two of the greatest shortcomings of existing models of development and the current age, namely failure to take the natural, historical and global environment into account in all developmental planning and decision-making, and treating development as a unilateral process involving an economic base and non-economic superstructure rather than an interactive process involving all sectors of society. This is imperative if the problems confronting humanity at present are to be overcome and a more fulfilling future is to be realized.