

Development: a challenge to power and politicians



good (peace), truth (knowledge) and liberty (justice)". Pursuit of these five universal values (which can mean different things to different cultures) consists in the *generation* (production, which is a differentiation process) and *distribution* (an integrative process) of culture, wealth, peace, knowledge and justice, which form the five broad functional divisions of society.

It is immediately apparent that the so-called First World has in the past concentrated almost exclusively on the generation of wealth, knowledge and freedom, whereby the economic and political dimensions have gained predominance over the others. From a systemic perspective, all these dimensions are equally important and influence each other mutually. The model underlying development in any particular society is the world-view and its organisational models in terms of which the nature of these processes are conceived, designed and regulated.

Increase in people's aspirations and abilities, as purposeful transformation (ie self-development), implies a learning and creative process, which in turn implies the freedom to learn, to choose legitimate goals and ideals (ie those which do not impinge on the freedom of others) and access to resources (choice) as well as the means for furthering competence in fulfilling these goals. Since one cannot learn for another, and development is a learning process, this means that there is only one form of development – self-development. This applies to individuals and nations.

The ability to develop oneself implies furthermore that one has choices, which in turn implies a context of justice within which choice can be exercised through empowerment and participation in the decision-making process. The role of government within such a conception is one of facilitator and guarantor of justice.

Since aspirations (desires, ideals) provide the motivational drive towards increased competence in fulfilling those needs and aspirations, national development requires an alignment of purpose – a shared vision of a desirable future in terms of which alignment of action can be achieved. This translates into a shared mission and commitment.

National development

Since systemic development entails the entire social system (five dimensions and all the subgroups of society) and its environment (including the global society and natural environment), the overall approach or strategy pursued would require an integrated policy direction pertaining to the whole system. This does *not* mean centralised control or decision-making. Functional alignment on a national scale is not necessarily in conflict with regional or local needs and aims, but means that the latter should contribute toward the overall development process in an appropriate manner, not working against the larger system of which it is a part. This would require ongoing debate and interaction between different levels and amongst different components of society, so that mutual understanding can lead to a shared development culture.

The systemic principle underlying the need for alignment emphasises that what occurs in any part of a system has consequences within other parts of the system as well. Thereby, "success" in one part or on one level, may intentionally or unintentionally (eg apartheid system) produce "failure" for others. No level, part or dimension of a social system ought to be changed, planned for or organised without consideration of systemic impact, and, therefore, without the active participation of those affected. This means, furthermore, that success must be seen as a function of the whole, and that no part, level or dimension ought to be developed at the expense of any other.

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destruction and pollution of the environment, an unprecedented population explosion, rapid urbanisation, social complexity, increasing conflict, etc, which have collectively impacted negatively on quality of life.

On a global level, the state of the environment has emerged as a universal concern and is likely to increase in intensity. No sustainable development is possible if we continue to exceed the carrying capacity of the earth, whether this pertains to population numbers or the scale of industrial activity. If one thing is clear, it is that we cannot continue with the same intensity and type of production processes initiated with the industrial revolution roughly 150 years ago. It also means that our modes of economic and social organisation will require transformation. However, it is not possible to discuss all these dimensions within the scope of this article.

Human and social development

Gharajedaghi defines development as "a purposeful transformation, learning and creative process whereby a given system increases its desire and ability to serve its members and its environment by constant pursuit of: beauty (culture), plenty (wealth),

Short-term planning should also be aligned with long-term planning, since decisions and actions not only affect other components of a system, but carry future consequences as long-term effects. The state of the environment illustrates this only too graphically. Through industrialisation, we not only consumed in 150 years what took millions of years to be formed, but did it at such a pace that the environment, which exists in specific natural cycles which cannot be speeded up like production processes, is unable to renew and regenerate itself. This has culminated in irreversible damage in many instances.

In short, the well-being and progress of any part of a total system is ultimately dependent on the well-being of all the other parts, ie the whole. Apartheid provides a political example which proves the same point. One group (whites) sought to achieve its development at the expense of others (people of colour), learning the hard way that in a multi-minded system, where people have the capacity to learn, choose and judge for themselves, such systemic injustice is ultimately self-defeating and morally unacceptable.

Since all levels, cultural/racial/language groups and communities within society share the same environmental and infrastructural context, along with its particular configuration of resources, opportunities and constraints, conflict over ends (aspirations/ideals) and means (access to the development of competence and resources) needs ongoing and satisfactory resolution if a positive developmental momentum is to be initiated and sustained. Since the aspirations of any particular group or sector have no logical or legitimate precedence over those of any other, the only *just* way in which to achieve alignment of ends and means, is through *interactive participation in choice (ie decision-making), responsibility (ie implementation) and accountability (ie evaluation)*. Political and administrative institutions which preclude participation and close off parts of the system, are conflict generating and constitute obstructions to development.

Participative development planning

The way to achieve this is through participative national development planning and a social systemic approach to national organisation or governance, a discussion which cannot be adequately addressed here.

The emphasis or focus of the participants in the political process would need to shift from the preoccupation with structure, to include that of function (the ends/goals pursued) and process (interpersonal and inter-group dynamics), all of which are addressed in a participative development planning process.



SA's development challenge

South Africa not only faces a legacy of national injustice, but our development challenge is compounded by the discrepancy and historical conflict between First World and Third World components of the society, as well as structural imbalance between urban and rural economies. We face, furthermore, the same challenge as the rest of the world, namely that of changing to a new form of organisation. Functional specialisation, top-down control and business and government organisations designed for no deviation (mechanistic/organismic forms of organisation), have to make way for interactive management where authority and responsibility are not separated through the way in which tasks and roles are designed (management and labour), but optimised together and coupled with accountability.

'The only just way in which to achieve alignment of ends and means is through interactive participation'

The rapidly changing social and economic environment within which organisations have to operate requires creativity, ongoing learning and multidimensionality of people, requirements which are obstructed within the current mode of organisation.

Within South Africa, development is not only a "problem" of some sectors of the population or some regions, but the shared responsibility and task of the entire country as well as the Southern African community of nations.

The business of any government – the totality of its activities and institutions – constitutes the process of societal develop-

ment whereby the actualisation of human potential is collectively pursued. As such, it is a striving, not merely for survival, which is a precondition for human development, but a striving for competence and excellence.

South Africa is part of a global community engaged in a specific type of economic and political game which provides a context within which we as a nation have to become competitive in an economically borderless world. The political requirement of that game is democratisation, though it seems unlikely that we can achieve that without addressing the economic dimensions simultaneously.

Government and business leaders alike need to address the environmental impact of economic activity. Any company or nation ignoring environmental performance is likely to be judged harshly by consumers and the outside world. Environmental accounting and auditing will therefore need to become part of a national development policy. This is likely to require ecobalance research and, on product level, research to determine raw material mixes with the least negative environmental impact.

Another key competitive challenge facing South Africa is that of making products that meet the test of international markets while raising the standard of living at home. This requires recognition of the primacy of knowledge as the new "capital". Economic development depends not only on natural resources but on the ability to create, access and operationalise knowledge through product and technological innovation. This challenge will have to be addressed in a new education system. So-called First and Third World components of our society alike are faced with this challenge.

Education and the ability to operationalise new knowledge represented the key factors



the Nedcor/Old Mutual scenarios have also indicated. It is doubtful whether we can even compete in the old form of manufacturing, ie the cost-plus situation South Africa and the US have fallen into despite being so-called "market economies". Within the cost-plus game, the value/price of any commodity or service is not determined by what customers are prepared to pay for it ("dollar vote"), but by the cost of labour plus material (which coincides with Marx's concept of value). When the latter goes up, the price goes up. Our level of inflation and spiralling food and other prices are adequate testimony to this phenomenon. We also spend more and more on education each year, without any perceptible improvement in output.

It is this game which Japan changed by target costing, whereby the product, work processes and task allocation are determined by customer requirements of price and delivery time. Companies that can reach those benchmarks within any industry are in business whereas those who cannot are out of the game. Whether the Japanese can sustain their level of growth is not the issue here. They effectively changed the way products and work are designed, and those benchmarks are operating globally today, which means South Africa would also have to meet them to be competitive. This whilst the state of our agricultural and rural development are such that the base upon which that competitiveness has to be achieved is itself cause for concern.

The negative disposition towards education amongst the youth today, due largely to politicisation of the educational system, does not augur well in this regard. Leaders will have to make a concerted effort to inculcate a culture of learning in South African society if we are ever to pull ourselves out of our current political and economic morass.

Unless the conflict within and among groups in South Africa can be overcome through the creation of a shared sense of purpose and commitment, no constitution, legal apparatus or police force could force people to co-operate in creating a new, developing society. Ideally, the initiation of participative planning (a redesign of the SA system) should have preceded the formal abolition of the existing order as the social and political cohesion required for national development is conspicuously absent in South Africa today.

The so-called negotiation process is a bargaining over political power and is not addressing the development needs of the country. These go far beyond the political dimension, as already indicated in the discussion on the nature of development.

Negotiation is based on an either/or assumption, which is a rule of logic projected onto a reality that simply does not conform to logic. It assumes that the relationship amongst parties, groups, communities, is that of win/lose, right/wrong, ie either one or the other is right and should therefore rule. The party political form of politics is predicated on this assumption, and representative democracy, its outcome, which may result in either the tyranny of the minority (as we have seen) or that of the majority. Systemic development requires participative democracy, which cannot be addressed here.

In systemic terms, the principle is held that for the whole system to win, no part of it must lose (both/and logic). Negotiation presupposes that you bargain with a view to getting as much for your party as you can (power, access, resources, whatever the case may be). This precludes co-operation amongst the bargaining parties, for by co-operating with others, you lose your own ability to get what you want. No amount of goodwill amongst the participants can overcome the conflict potential inherent to this form of interaction, for compromise is simply a relative form of the same game (win a little/lose a little).

The outcome of this dilemma is predictable, especially when parties have equal power to influence the process, whether through intimidation, strikes, the might of the police or economic clout. If you can't get what you want, you cease to play the game and endeavour to undermine opposing parties, thinking that their loss will automatically be translated into your gain (note the ANC's suspension of talks and unconditional demands for resumption of negotiations, the blame all parties lay on each other for violence, attempts to diminish or destroy the credibility of leaders of other parties, etc). Mass action is another effort to make the government lose, in the hope that the

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in Japan's meteoric development since World War II - despite resource poverty with regard to what was then considered key factors for economic growth (land, raw materials, minerals, etc). The Japanese, through sheer necessity, managed to redefine the rules of the game by making the development of human resources, and therefore knowledge, the key component of economic effectiveness. Hence also the world-wide management awareness of the need for individual and organisational learning and flexibility. It is doubtful whether the political leadership in South Africa is sufficiently aware of this challenge. It is not a question of working harder than other nations, but one of working smarter, a lesson the US is only slowly beginning to learn, let alone South Africa. The emphasis on training specialists rather than generalists is hampering progress in this regard.

Low-cost, high-quality manufacturing is the sector within which global competitiveness is being defined, and any national development strategy for South Africa would have to take cognisance of that challenge.

'It is doubtful whether the political leadership is sufficiently aware of this challenge'

The emphasis on knowledge as the new capital in the information age means that human resource development becomes the key area of organisational development whether this be in business or public sectors.

When the South African economic and education situation is viewed in the light of the above, the outlook is not encouraging, as

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ensuing harm to the economy would be translated into the ANC/Cosatu alliance's gain at the negotiation table.

Whatever the outcome of the process, it is South Africa and its people who lose. Negotiation means bargaining by parts of the system, for parts of the system and at the expense of other parts of the system. If no part can win outright, it seeks to prevent others from winning by making them lose, whereupon the latter retaliates in the same manner. This process translates into a lose/lose situation for the system as a whole, and that is the current state South Africa finds itself in. If lose/lose is possible, then so is win/win, but that would require a different form of interaction amongst participants in the process, ie a different game with different rules.

'Negotiation means bargaining by parts of the system, for parts of the system, at the expense of other parts of the system'

It is suggested here that neither the political, economic, nor the broader development challenges facing South Africa can be addressed through an either/or form of interaction. We need a process that focuses on what people want and not on eliminating what they don't want (which is usually the other parties). Such a process is one of interactive, participative national development planning, and should be conducted with the aid of facilitators who don't have a stake in the system short of seeing it succeed. Such a planning process would consist of formulating the properties South Africans want this society to have (politically, economically, socially, culturally, educationally, etc), and discovering/designing the means to achieve those ends.

Within such a development debate, the focus is not on opposing parties but a shared focus on the development challenges facing us all. It brings the values of all participating groups into the design process, creates commitment to a successful outcome and a co-operative form of interaction amongst the participants. Such a process need not be confined to the national level, but can proceed on all levels down to that of local communities, with horizontal

SOME people have argued that in order to reach the "right" answer, one has first to pose the right question. In the case of discussions about the future for Afrikaners in a changing South Africa it became apparent that for many, a preliminary issue had first to be resolved: which Afrikaners?

For anyone under the misapprehension that Afrikaners are an homogenous group, discussions among a host of leading Afrikaner academics, editors and politicians showed clearly that there is no single, neat definition as to who constitutes an Afrikaner.

To some it seemed that Afrikaner was synonymous with whites, to others it referred to those who cherished the Afrikaans language and culture but had no political or ideological implications. However, despite the efforts of historians and politicians on the platform — and notwithstanding lively participation from a thoughtful and critical audience — by the end of the day there was no clear consensus as to the direction for, nor the exact definition of, the Afrikaner.

This is not to suggest that the day's discussions were a failure. The questions that were raised, the answers that were suggested and even the failure to find common agreement were revealing in themselves.

In particular, the analysis of Afrikaners in the present and future by Idasa director of policy and planning, Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, and the responses to his paper by leading Afrikaans editors prompted heated debate.

Structuring his analysis around the "objective" and "subjective" reality of what it meant to be an Afrikaner, Slabbert suggested that these were changing as a result of changes in the political climate in South Africa.

He said while some Afrikaners might still

and vertical integration and co-ordination of such planning at the regional and national levels. It is not possible to outline the process in detail here, though the knowledge and expertise for conducting it is available.

The constitutional debate in South Africa is a debate about means, and is occurring around vague and implicit ends in the form of hidden agendas pertaining to the parties themselves and not to the development challenges facing the country. It is hard to imagine how the inherent conflict built into any negotiation process can be overcome until the focus of the debate is shifted to that of national development.

The notion that political parties and nations can go their own sweet way without considering their impact on others and the

insist that even to ask the question of what it meant to be an Afrikaner implied that you were not one, the reality was that changing socio-political circumstances had affected the way in which Afrikaners view themselves.

Slabbert said that the understanding of what it meant to be an Afrikaner under the P W Botha regime was very different to the

SUE VALENTINE reports on an Idasa seminar in Pretoria.

interpretation given to Afrikaner ideology and identity by De Klerk in the 1990s. A wide spectrum of Afrikaner identities existed in South Africa. On a continuum of Afrikaners ranging from exclusive to inclusive nationalism, were included those who were right-wing, racist and conservative as well as those who were liberals, radicals or even communists.

A major question, however, which could affect many Afrikaners' self-perception was, what might happen to the Afrikaner when s/he did not have exclusive control of political power?

Slabbert said he believed that all the signs showed that the centripetal forces were stronger than the centrifugal forces. There was a genuine search and desire to find unity in diversity and to recognise diversity in unity.

However, the manner in which Afrikaners abandoned their control of power was critical because it would determine what space would be created for different possible Afrikaner identities to develop in the future.

The editor of right-wing Afrikaans news-

environment, is beginning to seem pathological, and failure to develop a model of interaction based on inclusive logic can lead only to increased conflict. The formation of economic and housing forums is a clear indication that the political debate is not sufficient, yet the decisions and policies formulated on such forums have mutual implications and cannot be addressed in isolation.

Political negotiation is not our only option. Trying interactive national development planning is an idea whose time has come.

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