Microsoft Word - Human Scale development-Max-Neef.doc

Siri Darshan Kaur
HUMAN SCALE DEVELOPMENT
CONCEPTION, APPLICATION AND FURTHER REFLECTIONS

Manfred A. Max-Neef

with contributions from
Antonio Elizalde
Martin Hopenhayn

HUMAN SCALE DEVELOPMENT
CONCEPTION, APPLICATION AND
FURTHER REFLECTIONS
Manfred A. Max-Neef

With contributions from

Antonio Elizalde

Martin Hopenhayn

Foreword by Sven Hamrell

Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

The Apex Press

New York and London


CONTENTS

Part One of this book was published under the title, Desarrollo a Escala Humana: una opción para el futuro, by the Dag Hammarskyöld Foundation, Uppsala, Sweden.

Foreword by Sven Hamrell, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

vii

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
Preface

About the Contributors

Max-Neef, Manfred A.

Human scale development: conception, application and further

PA RT ONE: HUMA N SCALE DEV ELOPMENT

reflections / by Manfred Max-Neef, with contributions from Antonio
Elizalde, Martin Hopenhayn ; foreword by Sven Hamrell.

1. Re-reading the Latin American Situation: Crisis

"Part One of this book was published in Spanish as a special issue of
and Perplexity, Manfred Max-Neef,

Development Dialogue in 1986 under the title, Desarrollo a escala

Antonio Elizalde and Martin Hopenhayn

humana: una opción para el futuro"—P. xii.
A Crisis of Proposals and a Crisis of Utopias


Limitations to Our Development

4

1. Latin America—Economic policy. 2. Economic development. I.

Objectives of Human Scale Development

8

Elizalde, Antonio. II. Hopenhayn, Martin. III. Title.

HC125.M347 1991

2. Development and Human Needs, Manfred Max-Neef,

338.98—dc20

91-12713

Antonio Elizalde and Martin Hopenhayn

13

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Reflections on a New Perspective

13

Argumentation

23

Max-Neef, Manfred A.
Foundations for a Possible Systematization

29

Human scale development: conception, application and further

A Note on Methodology

39

reflections.

Options That Determine Development Styles

47

I. Title

745.2


Antonio Elizalde and Martin Hopenhayn

55

Toward a Self-reliant Development

55

On the Invisible World

65

On Micro-organizations

71
4. The Unresolved Problem of Micro-macro Articulation,

*Manfred Max-Neef*

87

**FOREWORD**

Seeking Solutions

87

The Problem of Aggregation

88

Articulation and Sense of Direction of the System 91

The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation has since the publication of

**PA RT TWO: FIRST STEPS INTO FURTHER REFLECTIONS**

the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report, *What Now: Another Develop-

ment*, concentrated heavily on the sectorial aspects of the alternative

5. About the Pruning of Language (and Other
development strategies advocated in this seminal document. A long
Unusual Exercises) for the Understanding of Social

series of seminars has been organized under the Foundation's auspice Improvement, Manfred Max-Neef

93

or in cooperation with like-minded organizations to test the applicability of the ideas of Another Development—need-oriented, self-reliant, en-

The Problem

93
dogenous,
ecologically sound
and based on structural

Manifestations of the Problem

94

Searching for Answers

99
transformations—in areas such as rural development, health,

Conclusion

103 education, science and technology (especially plant genetic resources and biotechnology), international monetary policy, information and communication, and participation.

An interesting and unusual example of this is the Latin American Insight project on Human Scale Development, the objective of which was lay a foundation for future action programs by analyzing the concepts of Some Solutions?
human needs, scale and efficiency and by focusing on unemployment and local development financing, that is, concepts and problems

Future Scenarios

that had not been penetrated in depth in What Now. This project was undertaken in 1985 and 1986; it was organized by the Development Alternatives Centre (CEPAUR) in Chile and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Sweden, and was directed by Manfred Max-Neef. Ever since the results of the project were published in a Spanish edition of Development Dialogue in 1986, under the title of Desarrollo a Escala Hu mana: una opción para el futuro, it has attracted needs, it is a challenging new contribution to development philosophy. wide attention in Latin America. And it is probably not an exaggeration to say that it is perhaps one of the most photocopied documents of its kind, having found its way to the most unexpected work and an extension of that work into what the author calls "Further and remote places. According to records kept at CEPAUR, close to Reflections." It should merit the attention of the international develop-

fifty seminars, symposia and workshops have been held on the basis
ment community as should the action programs now being worked of the report in different parts of the continent, many of them out by different grassroots organizations and by CEPAUR. Many of spontaneously organized by interested bodies without assist ance them, including CEPAUR, also deserve being financially assisted. It from CEPAUR. Thus, "Human Scale Development" has become an is, therefore, sad to note that so far almost no such support has been important topic of the development discussion in South and Central America.

forthcoming; development agencies still seem to prefer to lose their But there are also more concrete examples of the impact of the funds in conventional failures rather than having to justify their use in report on policymakers at the national and local
levels.

unconventional successes.

Governmental bodies in Colombia, Venezuela and Argentina have taken a keen interest in the ideas advanced. In Argentina, for instance, the National Mental Health Program is being adapted to accord with the ideas set out in the report, and in the Argentine province of Mendoza, communities, schools and hospitals are applying the principles and methodology of Human Scale.
More significant, however, is the extent to which social movements and grassroots organizations have been inspired by the report, and this despite its, in pan, highly theoretical character it has, in fact, been popularized by grassroots organizations through posters and even through comic book style publications aimed at non-academic readers. Further evidence of this interest are the hundreds of letters received by CEPAUR and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, requesting not only additional copies of the report and copies of the project papers, but also assistance in the organization of seminars and workshops as well as practical and financial assistance in the implementation of Human Scale Development programs.

One can speculate about the reasons for this unexpectedly positive response, but one of them is probably that Human Scale Development, with its strong emphasis on the role of human creativity in development, has provided a conceptual framework which seems
to show a way out of the sterile confrontation between traditional developmentalism and neo-liberal monetarism. Based on the principle that "the purpose of the economy is to serve the people, and not the people to serve the economy" and on a sophisticated but unavoidably controversial in-depth analysis of the nature of human

**PREFACE**

The essays contained in Part One of this book crystallize the work, essentially transdisciplinary in nature, carried out in various countries in Latin America by a team of researchers. It was prepared over a period of eighteen months with the collaboration of professionals from Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Canada and Sweden. Their expertise covered such academic disciplines as economics, sociology, psychiatry, philosophy, political science,
geography, anthropology, journalism, engineering and law. The participants constituted a stable core group that guaranteed continuity in the processes of collective investigation and reflection inherent in the project. From the beginning, close working relations were established, thus nurturing an intense intellectual exchange. The participants gathered together three workshops during the project, which was conducive to a profound reflection on various aspects of the development problematique. In addition, special guests were invited to each of the three workshops and enriched the quality of the debate.

The proceedings of each of the workshops and the working papers produced by the participants form the basis of this book. The final compiling and editing was the responsibility of the CEPAUR staff, whose challenge was to integrate in a coherent manner the diverse inputs rather than just reflect the particular opinion of each of the participants. The document produced on the basis of the three workshops was then discussed at a final evaluation seminar at the Dag Hammarskjöld Centre.

_xii_

_Human Scale Development_

_Pre face_
The conception presented in this book is a contribution to development philosophy. As such, it offers suggestions, while remaining open to further elaboration.

Both of these additions to the present book represent, if not finished products, at least paths into new and open fields of research and reflection. They underscore the elusive and never-ending search for final answers in the quest for human betterment through development.

This project was the result of the joint efforts of the Development Alternatives Centre (CEPAUR) in Chile and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Sweden. It grew out of the need to place the Dag Hammarskjöld Report of 1975, entitled *What Now: Another*...
*Development*, in the Latin American context, giving special governmental organization of international scope, dedicated, through consideration to the myriad changes that have occurred in the last research of a transdisciplinary nature and action projects, to the decade. The text that follows aspires to have as interlocutors persons reorientation of development by stimulating forms of local self-reliance, involved in regional and local development, planning, politics, satisfying fundamental human needs and, in a more general sense, to academic disciplines concerned with development and, most importantly, those dedicated to the humanization of a world in crisis. Thus, the ideas presented here are an attempt to integrate fines of research, reflection and action that substantially contribute to the Manfred Max-Neef
construction of a new paradigm of development, less mechanistic and
more humane.

Part One of this book was published in Spanish as a special issue
of Development Dialogue in 1986 under the title Desarrollo a Escala
Humana: una opción para el futuro. That version was then translated
into English by Joey Edwardh and Manfred Max-Neef and appeared in
1988 as another special issue of Development Dialogue.

A new section, "A Note on Methodology," has been added to this
book version, as have the final two chapters which constitute Part Two
of the book.

The first of these new chapters is an expanded version of an essay
on "The Pruning of Language," which was published in 1988 in
modified form in Development, the journal of the Society for Interna-
tional Development. The second chapter is an edited version of the

* The project team wishes to express its gratitude to the functionaries and
academics of the University of La Serena in Chile, the Federal University of
Pernambuco, Brazil, and the Foundation for Development of the XII
Region, Chile, for their enthusiastic support for an efficient execution of the
various regional seminars held throughout the duration of this project.
Without the intellectual and material support of these institutions, the
successful completion of this project would not have been possible.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS
PART ONE: HUMAN SCALE

DEVELOPMENT

Manfred Max-Neef, Chilean economist, is the founder and Executive Director of the Development Alternatives Centre—CEPAUR—in Chile. During the early 1960s he taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and later served at FAO and ILO as general economist and 1.
as project director, respectively. He is the Rector of the Universidad Bolivariana, a member of the Club of Rome and the author of *From the Outside Looking In: Experiences in Barefoot Economics*. In 1983 he

RE-READING THE

received the Right Livelihood Award, frequently described as the Alternative Nobel Prize, at a ceremony in the Swedish Parliament.

LATIN AMERICAN SITUATION:

CRISIS AND PERPLEXITY

Antonio Elizalde, Chilean sociologist, is the Deputy Director of CEPAUR, Secretary-General of the Universidad Bolivariana and Professor of Development Theories at the Diego Portales University in Santiago. He was formerly an expert with UNICEF and Director of
Manfred Max-Neef, Antonio Elizalde

Regional Planning in Southern Chile before the dictatorship.

and Martin Hopenhayn

Martin Hopenhayn, a U.S.-born philosopher of Argentinean parents, taught in the School of Economics of the University of Chile and worked as a Research Fellow in CEPAUR. A prolific and talented young writer of essays and aphorisms, he presently serves as an expert for

A Crisis of Proposals

the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago.

and a Crisis of Utopias

In 1987 the three co-authors shared the National Prize for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights awarded by Editorial Emisión of Chile. Nowadays, it is almost commonplace to state that Latin America is in a state of crisis. The descriptions and interpretations of this crisis are many; hence, the diagnosis of the disease is seemingly complete. Due to the complexity of the symptoms that we are faced with, no consensus as to the treatment has been generated. Perplexity, the outcome of a situation for which we cannot recognize a precedent, has kept us in a deadend alley and barred the road to imaginative, novel and bold solutions.
However,

intuition suggests that the convencional and tradicional

2

*Human Scale Development*

*Re-reading the Latin American Situation:*

3

*Crisis and Perplexity*

prescriptions, regardless of whoever may have proposed them, will not and meet their well-known debt-servicing obligations to the creditor work. Nonetheless, there is a kind of paralyzing fear inhibiting the countries of the industrialized world. In the face of this uncertain com-design of radically different approaches that could eventually eman-
bination of circumstances, which is more awesome than gratifying, the cipate us from this state of confusion.

answe rs and que st s for alterna tive s to autho rita rianism , to

This fear is quite understandable. It is not easy to put aside theoreti-
neoliberalism, to developmentalism* and to populism become bogged
cal and ideological constructions along with their corresponding strat-
down in ill-considered reactions and short-term programs.
egies for action that over the years has been the basis not only of
We have dubbed this situation the "crisis of utopia" because in our beliefs, explanations and hopes but also of passions. But the fact is that opinion its most serious manifestation seems to lie in the fact that we the extent of this crisis seems to go far beyond our capacity to assimilate it are losing, if we have not lost already, our capacity to dream. We are fully, understand it and, hence, internalize it. This crisis is not just struggling in an exhausting insomnia which impairs the lucidity so economic, nor just social, cultural or political. On the contrary, it is the desperately needed to cope with our problems forcefully and imagina-convergence of all these, which, added together, become an entirety ex-tively. Instead, we have become drowsy managers of a crisis which we ceeding the sum of its parts.

feel is impossible to solve by our own means. This drowsiness, a product At a political level, the crisis becomes very acute owing to the in-of the crisis of utopia, takes many forms: a sense of defeat, a loss of efficiency of the existing representative political mechanisms in coping will, an over-excessive individualism, fear, anxiety, cynicism and with the actions of the financial power elite, the increasing inter-demobilization.

nationalization of political decisions and the lack of control of the
The issues and causes of the past, for which we fought—success-
citizenry over public bureaucracies. The increase in technological con-
fully or unsuccessfully—seem today to be shrouded in mist. Our
trol over society, the arms race and the lack of a deep-rooted democratic
reasons become diffuse, and those of us who still retain a will to strug-
culture in Latin American societies also contributes to the configura-
gle end up, without realizing it, fighting causes that do not correspond to
the real development issues at stake. Thus, our first desperate effort is
to come to terms with ourselves and in so doing persuade ourselves
At a social level, the increasing fragmentation of socio-cultural
that the best development that we can expect—over and above any of
identities, the lack of integration and communication between social
the conventional indicators that often instilled an inferiority complex in
movements and the increasing impoverishment and marginalization of
us—would be the development of countries and cultures capable of
the masses have made the conflicts within the societies unmanageable
being coherent with themselves.

as well as rendering constructive responses to such conflicts impossible.
The proposal contained in this book does not purport to be a solu-
At an economic level, the system of domination is undergoing transition to our crisis. It is, nonetheless, an option. It is an alternative stemming from a long process of collective thinking by a group of Latin Americans who were supported in their reflections by a handful of friends from Sweden and Canada. In this book, we share our revitalized capacity to dream.

These complex and interacting forces place Third World countries in a position of enormous disadvantage. They are forced, with the com-
"desarrollismo." It refers to the development philosophy promoted mainly by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) during the 1950s and 1960s. 

changes on the patterns of production and consumption.

We have chosen "developmentalism" as the best translation for the Spanish.
Human Scale Development

Re-reading the Latin American Situation:

5

Crisis and Perplexity

Limitations to Our Development

During the 1950s and 1960s, it made perfect sense to speak of an ECLA current of thought or of a philosophy of the IDB. A creative ef-

If we restrict our analysis to the economic components of the crisis fervescence dominated these times. The positions of these organiza-

and observe their historical behavior in the economic and development tions generated debate and for the first time the centers of power in the policies implemented in Latin America over the last four decades, we North argued back, if defensively. In the decade of the 1970s, this crea-

observe a clear pendular process. The periods of expansion tive energy was slowly contained. The Latin American international eventually generate financial and monetary imbalances re sulting in agencies began to lose their original identity. Neo-liberal monetarism, stabilizing responses which, in turn, ultimately bring about high social which had already made its sporadic incursions—without managing to
costs leading to further expansion.

impose its character beyond the periods of stability in the economic

In this pendular tendency, we can identify clearly the two great
cycle—began to break forth with all its vigor.

economic factions which have been predominant in the Latin American

Obviously, the failure of developmentalism cannot be ascribed
certainty: developmentalism and neo-liberal monetarism. For different
either to a lack of ideas or to a dearth of creativity. Much to the con-
reasons, neither orientation accomplished its original objectives.

However, not everything is negative in a failure so it is well worth
ture have been colossal. Its failure was due to (a) its inability to control
devoting some careful thought to the manner in which each of these two
monetary and financial imbalances; (b) the productive structure—par-
perspectives have marked the economic and socio-political history of
ticularly industry—that it generated placing great emphasis on the con-
the region.

centration of resources; and (c) the fact that its approach to
development was predominantly economic, thus neglecting other social

Frustrations
Developmentalism and Monetarism.

and political processes that emerged with increasing strength and Developmentalism was a deeply mobilizing experience. It was a relevance, especially after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. generator of ideas and of currents of thought. During its period of The history of monetarist neo-liberalism is quite different. If predominance a number of important institutions were created: the developmentalism was a generator of thought, monetarism has been a United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), the concocter of prescriptions; at least this is true of the way in which it has Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Latin American manifested itself in our countries. Within our context, it is not possible Free Trade Association (LAFTA), the Andean Pact and important to detect in a clearcut way a neo-liberal thought or philosophy as such. regional initiatives such as the Alliance for Progress. Within the This is not because this current of thought lacks foundations; it is only different nation states many initiatives were encouraged, including necessary to read the Austrian economists to understand this. The
planning agencies, various kinds of development organizations, problem arises from praxis where this perspective has been applied policies that nurtured industrialization, banking reforms, improvement dogmatically and without sensitivity to the Latin American context.
of statistical systems, people's movements and varied attempts at
Unlike developmentalism, monetarist neo-liberalism has had structural reforms. Also, during this period emerged the first strong calamitous results over a shorter time period. In Latin America, it arguments and theses advocating the need to protect our exports has been sustained by dictatorial or pseudo-democratic regimes. affected by an ongoing deterioration of the terms of trade.
There is evidence enough that the pressure generated by the social
Finally, it was those Latin American economists, a scribining to costs of this model can only be kept under control by repression.
developmentalism, who became the determinant actors in the setting up
Monetarist neo-liberalism resembles a Phoenician collapse that of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNC-leaves nothing after it but a tremendous void, the positive appearance TAD).
(in some cases like Chile) of conventional economic indicators
notwithstanding.

6

_Human Scale Development_

_Re-reading the Latin American Situation:_

7

_Crisis ami Perplexity_

regardless of ethical considerations as to this solution, is clearly

No doubt, monetarist neo-liberalism should have been applied

unpayable and may increase our poverty and deplete our resources to

more congruently with the wealth of thought of its creators—especially

structurally irreversible limits.

the Austrians—but its failure in the Latin American context would have

There are also those who envisage the possibility of revitalizing

been unavoidable. This is true for at least three reasons. First, it is able

schemes that were attractive in the past by amending some mistakes.

to

encourage economic growth, but it is not a generator of

Others, including the authors of this book, perceive an immense void

"development" in the widest sense of the word. Second, its assumptions

where there is room to design radical alternatives. The second position
of economic rationality are profoundly mechanistic and therefore cannot be adapted to the conditions of poor countries, where it is impossible to but also on an awareness that serious errors could be made if uproot poverty through the liberalization of a market from which the poor conventional solutions are applied to overcome this crisis.

are excluded. Third, in restricted and oligopolistic markets, where the economic power groups are not confronted with forces able to check In creating the future, there is either the risk of making errors of their behavior, economic activity is very speculative, resulting in a perception, or of making errors of action. Concerning perception, two concentration of resources that is socially unbearable.

serious mistakes are often made. The first is to believe that the Latin American crisis can be ascribed principally to an external crisis. The second, stemming from the first, is to assume that our depression is just some elements, although with different intensity. Both have been af-

a passing historical circumstance. Although it is true that external con-
fected by mechanistic tendencies and have generated economies based
ditions do considerably influence dependent and vulnerable economies
on concentration. From the point of view of neo-liberalism, growth is an end in itself and concentration is accepted as a natural consequence. Like ours, it is, nonetheless, also probable that a recovery of the capitalistic economy in the North will not affect significantly our own recovery. As the neo-liberalism does not see any seed whatsoever to check growth, while it would be a delusion to base a strategy for future development on developmentalism acknowledges that there are limitations to growth. As the following paragraphs illustrate, the reason lies in our possible errors of action. However, it fails to control it. The denouement of this story spanning forty years suggest that the bulk of primary products will be affected, for different reasons, by unfavorable terms of trade. Moreover, others are already being replaced by more efficient substitutes. Another strategy based on

Reactions to Frustrations. There are different reactions to the the diversification of exports, that is, of manufactured goods, would in-
current situation. There are those, for instance, who hold that the 
evitably come up against the protectionist policies of the powers in the 
disaster has not taken place after all. They make their point by stating 
North. Also, to assume a type of development that is nurtured by 
that over the last two and a half decades income levels have more than 
external' contributions of capital is ruled out altogether due to the serious 
doubled, that there has been a remarkable economic growth in most of 
and insoluble condition of indebtedness in which we are forced to live. 
the region and exports have multiplied. All of this is true. There are, 
From what has been argued, it follows that our situation is not the 
however, those who unveil the other face of reality: that poverty is 
result of a historical accident. In our opinion, the future lies in mustering 
increasing in the popular sectors; that more than one-third of the 
all our energy to design imaginative but viable alternatives. The 
economically active population struggles between unemployment and 
conditions for these alternatives seem to be quite clear. If the two 
underemployment; that social deficits such as inadequate housing 
schools of economic thought which have prevailed in the Latin 
have escalated; and, finally, that the existence of a foreign debt which, 
American setting have not been able to satisfy the legitimate needs of
the Latin American masses, a new perspective is called for which aims

8

Human Scale Development

Re-reading the Latin American Situation:

9

Crisis and Perplexity

at an adequate satisfaction of human needs. Furthermore, if future
analysis of the models of the states in the region, it seems important,
development cannot be sustained through the expansion of exports or
however, to point out the historical inability of these states to create
through substantial injections of foreign capital, an alternative develop-
spaces for popular participation. The conditions that led to inde-
ment must generate a capacity for greater self-reliance.
pendence and the creation of national states in Latin America were fol-
lowed by development processes which were promoted and controlled
by the national oligarchies. In the realm of the political, these new states

Objectives of Human Scale Development

appeared as liberal democracies, while in the realm of the economic,
their aim was capitalist development and integration into foreign

This book proposes an orientation which would enable us to create
markets. These democracies excluded the popular masses from political participation conditions for a new praxis based on Human Scale Development. Such exclusion of the popular masses from political life, hence, depriving them of channels for social participation and development is focused and based on the satisfaction of fundamental needs. The crisis of the oligarchic state was triggered by the restricted access to political power.

human needs, on the generation of growing levels of self-reliance, and The crisis of the oligarchic state was triggered by the restricted access to political power. The policies of populism paved the way for the construction of organic articulations of people with nature and the social, of planning with autonomy and of civil society with the purpose of which was to combine increased popular participation with the formulation of homogeneous national projects geared to rapid modernization. The policies of populism paved the way for which support Human Scale Development. However, these pillars must new forms of
political representation—universal suffrage—and be sustained on a solid foundation which is the creation of those condi-mechanisms for sectoral representation. As a form of government, the tions where people are the protagonists in their future. If people are to main contribution of populism was to recognize social groups which, be the main actors in Human Scale Development, both the diversity as until then, had been excluded from political activity. Since the state itself well as the autonomy of the spaces in which they act must be respected. assumed responsibility for the integration of new actors in development, Attaining the transformation of an object-person into a subject-person this resulted in a considerable increase in its regulating function. Greater in the process of development is, among other things, a problem of political participation of sectors incorporated into the sociopolitical scale. There is no possibility for the active participation of people in involved redistributive policies managed by the state. gigantic sy stem s which a re hiera chically org anized and where The populist state was strong enough to gain legitimacy in the eyes decisions flow from the top down to the bottom.
of the traditional oligarchy. However, it was compelled to consolidate homogeneous national projects under pressure from such internal for-

The State and Social Participation in Latin America. Human

ces as powerful economic interest groups and from such external for-

Scale Development assumes a direct and participatory democracy. This ces as imperialist policies imposed by the rich countries. These form of democracy nurtures those conditions that will help to transform homogeneous projects were unable to reflect the heterogeneous nature the traditional, semi-paternalistic role of the Latin American state into of the sectors and communities which make up civil society. Hence, so-
a role of encouraging creative solutions flowing from the bottom up-
cial participation and popular action were undermined by the wards. This is more consistent with the real expectations of the people.

authoritarianism inherent in the "single project," and by bureaucratic

Although we do not claim to offer a historical and sociological

and paternalistic mechanisms which strengthened vertical social rela-
tions and the concentration of power.

* By "articulation" we mean the construction of coherent and consistent

The tension between homogeneous national projects and the diver-
relations of balanced interdependence among given elements.

10

**Human Scale Development**

**Re-reading the Latin American Situation:**

11

**Crisis and Perplexity**

sity of social actors demanding a role as protagonists in their future is economic development more equitably. Hence, it is essential to prevent repeated in the number of progressive regimes to be found in the region. the increasing atomization of social movements, cultural identities and These regimes did not seek legitimacy through political democracy communities. To articulate these movements, identities, strategies and which makes them different from the populism constituted by universal social demands in global proposals is not possible through the programs suffrage—but via popular support obtained through the expansion of of homogenization that have characterized the Latin American politi- social benefits and through making corporate-type trade unions cal tradition. New institutional mechanisms capable of reconciling par-believe that they were in control of many of the functions of the state. ticipation with heterogeneity are required on the part of the state. Also
required are more active forms of representation and greater trans-
In the last two decades, regimes based on authoritarianism and neo-
lucency in the practices of the public sector.
liberal monetarism have dominated the Southern Cone of Latin
It is not the purpose of this document to propose a state model that
America. In these states, political power is buttressed by the physical
promotes Human Scale Development. Rather, our emphasis is on em-
and psychological repression of the civil populations. Moreover, the
policies implemented have meant the systematic decimation of the
powering civil society to nurture this form of development. This is not to
socio-economic benefits which wide sectors had attained under the
minimize the importance of the state but to develop further the potential
protection of the populist or progressive regimes. It is in these repres-
role of social actors, of social participation and of local communities.
sive regimes that those processes of social participation and popular
Our preoccupation is a "social democracy" (or rather a "democracy of
protagonism have been arrested. It is precisely within these regimes and
day-to-day living"), which does not imply a lack of concern for "political in
conjunction with the acute economic crisis that the democratic
democracy" but a firm belief that only through rediscovering the
opposition is reassessing the need to establish an order based on politi-
"molecular" composition of the social fabric (micro-organizations, local democracy with real social participation. spaces, human scale relations) is a political order founded on a democratic culture possible. We believe that in order to avoid the We wish to emphasize at this point the democratic nature of the al- atomization and the exclusion of people—be it in political, social or ternative proposed. Instead of relying on stereotyped ideological op- cultural terms—it is absolutely necessary to generate new ways of tions, this book advocates the need to develop processes of economic conceiving and practicing politics. Thus, this book attempts to open up and political decentralization, strengthen genuine democratic institu- a space for critical reflection on the way we live and, more importantly, tions and encourage increasing autonomy in the emerging social move- on the urgent need to develop a new political praxis.

The creation of a political order that can represent the needs and in-

**Fads and Biases in Development Discourse.** Beyond the limited terests of a heterogeneous people is a challenge to both the state and synthesis provided in the preceding sections, our shared thinking has civil society. The most pressing question, not only for a democratic state
enabled us to reach some conclusions about the pressing need to modify but also for a society based on a democratic culture, is how to respect substantially our concepts and approaches to development.

and encourage diversity rather than control it. In this regard, develop-

We live and work within a historical age which ignores the sub-his-

ment must nurture local spaces, facilitate micro-organizations and sup-
tory that makes it possible. Hence, on a day-to-day basis we observe port the multiplicity of cultural matrixes comprising civil society. This

the serious discrepancies that exist between the rhetoric and actions of type of development must rediscover, consolidate and integrate the political leaders and the expectations and ambitions of the popular sec-
diverse collective identities that make up the social body.

tors. We seek to justify our actions in the thoughts ascribed to the defunct Processes which nurture diversity and increase social participation

hero of the day. We do this without even realizing the wisdom of the and control over the environment are decisive in the articulation of men and the women who raise the corn, and in sharing it with those who projects to expand national autonomy and to distribute the fruits of

12
Human Scale Development

share their misery, manage to survive—not because of what we have done, but despite of what we have not done.

We live and work within models of society that overlook the growing complexity of the real society in which we are immersed. Therefore, we watch the feverish and obsessive doings of the technocrats who design solutions before having identified where the real problems lie. We seek the justification of the models in the models themselves, so that when the solutions fail, it is not due to a failure of the model but to entrapments set up by reality. That reality, the presence of which is strongly felt, is not perceived as a challenge to be faced, but rather as a problem to be brought under control by re-applying the model with greater tenacity.

We live and work according to the tenets of our formally acquired knowledge. Thus, we see in so many leaders a pathological fear of people’s action and of freedom. The people are to be helped and
Manfred Max-Neef, Antonio Elizalde

guided by those who arrogantly ignore what the people need and

and Martin Hopenhayn

what they want. Thus, programs are designed to develop "awareness,"
because for some odd reason it is assumed that those who suffer
are not aware of the reasons for their suffering.
We live and work to construct an order, without understanding

Reflections on a New Perspective

what can be ordered or what we are putting in order. We constantly
witness an obsession with form, which allows us to conceal our

Is There Anything to Be Added

unconscious fear about the uncertainties underlying the problems
at stake. We confuse law with justice and regulations with

to That Already Stated?

efficiency. We identify generosity with charity and participation with
favors granted from the top. We use words without living up to their
The literature on human needs is vast and in many cases
content and we eventually come up with caricatures instead of
has contributed substantially to our understanding of this issue.
consistent contexts within which to sustain the construction of our
It has influenced the fields of philosophy and psychology and individual and collective life projects. has become a focus of attention in the political, economic and social disciplines in general. In recent years, international agencies, concerned with promoting development, have adopted have developed is not a model. It is an open option which is justified as their criterion for action the satisfaction of so-called basic needs. In 1975, the Dag Hammarskjöld Report, *What Now: Another Development*, established such an aim as one of the There is nothing in it that advocates a final solution, since we are fully aware that human beings and their surroundings are part of a pillars of a new type of development to be established urgently permanent flow which cannot be arrested by rigid and static models.

14

*Human Scale Development*

*Development and Human Needs*
in order to overcome the degrading state of impoverishment that holds
the majority of the inhabitants of the Third World in its clutches.
Nowadays, it is accepted almost as commonplace that development and
**The Need for Transdisciplinary Approaches.** The purpose of
human needs are irreducible components of a single equation. However,
this section is to make a theory of human needs understandable and
within this perspective there is still much to be done.
operational for development. This effort is not grounded in any
First, this new approach, interweaving development and human
particular field of study, as the new reality and the new challenges
needs, must go far beyond a simple makeshift rehashing of a paradigm
inevitably compel us to adopt transdisciplinary approaches.* Evidence
in a state of crisis. From the very outset, it involves creating conditions
for this orientation is provided by the fact that we are rarely analyzing
for a new way of conceptualizing development. It mean a substantial
a specific problem but instead a web of complex issues that cannot be
modification of the prevailing perceptions about strategies for develop-
resolved through the application of conventional policies founded
ment. For instance, no "New International Economic Order" can be upon reductionist disciplines.

relevant if it is not supported by the structural reformulation of a com-

In much the same way that a disease is a medical problem, and that pact network of "New Local Economic Orders."

the same disease having become an epidemic transcends the field of
Likewise, it means acknowledging that the social and economic medicine, our present challenge lies not only in how to deal with theories, which have sustained and directed the processes of problems, but also in how to cope with the tremendous magnitude of development, are not only incomplete but also inadequate. It entails the problems.

Their growing magnitude and complexity is becoming aware that new and more disquieting frustrations will
transforming problisciplinary contours into problem complexes of a
dominate our increasingly heterogeneous and interdependent world if
diffuse transdisciplinary character. In the throes of the terror of the
development models, based on mechanistic theories and misleading
French Revolution, Marquis de Sade uttered in dismay: "There is no
aggregate indicators, are applied.
longer any beautiful individual death." In an analogous way, in the
Human Scale Development, geared to meeting human needs, re-
midst of the present reality that overpowers us we can exclaim: "There
quires a new approach to understanding reality. It compels us to per-
is no longer any beautiful specific problem."
ceive and asse ss the world, that is, people and their processes in a
Only a transdisciplinary approach allows us to understand, for ex-
manner which differs completely from the conventional one. Likewise, a
ample, how politics, economics and health have converged. Thus, we
ty of human needs for development must be understood precisely
discover an increasing number of cases where poor health is the out-
in those terms—as a theory for development.*
come of unsound politics and bad economics. If economics policies
In much the same way that a geologist in examining a stone will
designed by economists, affect, which they do, the whole of society, see attributes other than those perceived by an architect, human needs are discerned differently, according to the ideological and disciplinary lens of the viewer. This is not to suggest that we should come up with new forms of reductionism; on the contrary, the different

* Transdisciplinarity is an approach that, in an attempt to gain greater perceptions and understandings are interwoven facets of the human understanding, reaches beyond the fields outlined by strict disciplines. needs issue. What is at stake here is a question of form and of

While the language of one discipline may suffice to describe something emphasis. The challenge to all of us is to internalize an approach to (an isolated element, for instance), an interdisciplinary effort may be necessary to explain something (a relation between elements). By the same development based on human needs which, once understood, will

* We use here the notion of theory as a deductive process evolving from a set experience.

of postulates.
economists can no longer claim that they are solely concerned with the altogether. A clear distinction between both concepts is necessary, as economics field. Such a stance would be unethical, sine it would mean will be shown later, for epistemological as well as methodological avoiding the moral responsibility for the consequences of an action. reasons.

We face bewildering situations where we understand less and less. If Human needs must be understood as a system: that is, all human we do not devote considerably more energy and imagination to needs are interrelated and interactive. With the sole exception of the designing significant and consistent transdisciplinary approaches, our need of subsistence, that is, to remain alive, no hierarchies exist within societies will continue to disintegrate. We live in a period of transition, the system. On the contrary, simultaneities, complementarities and which means that paradigm shifts are not only necessary but indispen-trade-offs are characteristics of the process of needs satisfaction.
As the literature in this area demonstrates, human needs can be satisfied according to many criteria. We have organized human needs into two categories: existential and axiological, which we have combined and displayed in a matrix. (See Table 1, page 32.) This Development is about people and not about objects. This is the basic allows us to demonstrate the interaction of, on the one hand, the postulate of Human Scale Development.

needs of Being, Having, Doing and Interacting; and, on the other hand, the needs of Subsistence, Protection, Affection, Understanding, participation, Idleness, Creation, Identity and Freedom.* The acceptance of this postulate—whether on intuitive, ethical or rational grounds—leads to the following fundamental question: How can we determine whether one development process is better than another?

From the classification proposed, it follows that, food and shelter, In the traditional paradigm, we have indicators such as the gross for example, must not be seen as needs but as satisfiers of the national product (GNP) that is in a way an indicator of the quantitative fundamental need for Subsistence. In much the same way, education
growth of objects. Now we need an indicator about the qualitative (either formal or informal), study, investigation, early stimulation and growth of people. What should that be? Let us answer the question meditation are satisfiers of the need for Understanding. The curative thus: best developmental processes will be those which allow the systems, preventive systems and health schemes in general are greatest improvement in people's quality of life. The next question is: satisfiers of the need for Protection.

What determines people's quality of life? Quality of life depends on the There is no one-to-one correspondence between needs and possibilities people have to adequately satisfy their fundamental human satisfiers. A satisfier may contribute simultaneously to the satisfaction needs. A third question therefore arises: What are those fundamental of different needs or, conversely, a need may require various satisfiers human needs, and/or who decides what they are? These questions need in order to be met. Not even these relations are fixed. They may vary to be examined before any answers can be suggested.

according to time, place and circumstance. For example, a mother breastfeeding her baby is simultaneously satisfying the infant's needs

Needs and satisfiers. It is traditionally believed that human
for Subsistence, Protection, Affection and Identity. The situation is ob-
need s tend to be infinite, that they change all the time, that they are
different in each culture or environment and that they are different in
each historical period. It is suggested here that such assumptions are
inaccurate, since they are the product of a conceptual shortcoming.

* Although in Judeo-Christian culture, we have been told that "idleness is
the mother of A prevalent shortcoming in the existing literature and
discussions

all v ices," we strongly believe that it carries many virtues. In fact, Idleness
and about human needs is that the fundamental difference between needs

Creation seem to be inseparable if the former is understood as "the state of
mind and spirit that is inviting to the muses." A brilliant argumentation
about and satisfiers of those needs is either not made explicit or is
overlooked the subject may be found in Bertrand Russell's In Praise of
Idleness. In any case, idleness is not laziness.

18

Human Scale Development

Development and Human Needs

19

viously different if the baby is fed in a more mechanical fashion.
oppression, exploitative relations with the natural environment, etc.);
Having established a difference between the concepts of needs and
of understanding (due to poor quality of education); of participation
satisfiers it is possible to state two additional postulates. First: Fun-
damental human needs are finite, few and classifiable. Second: Fun-
(due to marginalization and discrimination of women, children and
minorities); and of identity (due to imposition of alien values upon local
fundamental human needs (such as those contained in the system proposed)
and regional cultures, forced migration, political exile, etc.). But pover-
ties are not only poverties. Much more than that, each poverty generates
both over time and through cultures, is the way or the mean by which the
pathologies. This is the crux of our discourse.

needs are satisfied. (See Argumentation, pages 23-28.)

Each economic, social and political sy stem adopt s different

Economics and Pathologies

methods for the satisfaction of the same fundamental human needs. In
every system, they are satisfied (or not satisfied) through the generation
The great majority of economic analysts would agree that rising un-
(or non-generation) of different types of satisfiers. We may go as far as
employment everywhere and Third World international indebtedness
to say that one of the aspects that define a culture is its choice of
rank as the two most important economic problems of today’s world. In
satisfiers. Whether a person belongs to a consumerist or to an ascetic
the case of Latin America, hyperinflation should be added.
society, his/her fundamental human needs are the same. What changes
is his/her choice of the quantity and quality of satisfiers. In short: What is

**Unemployment.** Unemployment is a problem that has always
culturally determined are not the fundamental human needs, but the
existed in industrial civilization to a greater or lesser degree, but
satisfiers for those needs. Cultural change is, among other things, the
because it has become a structural component of the world economic
consequence of dropping traditional satisfiers for the purpose of adopting
system as we know it, everything seems to indicate that we are now
new or different ones.

facing a new type of unemployment that is here to stay. It is known that
It must be added that each need can be satisfied at different levels
a person suffering from extended unemployment goes through an
and with different intensities. Furthermore, needs are satisfied within
emotional “rollercoaster experience” which involves at least four
three contexts: (a) with regard to oneself (*Eigenwelt*); (b) with regard to
phases: (a) shock, (b) optimism, (c) pessimism and (d) fatalism. The
the social group (*Mitwelt*); and (c) with regard to the environment
last phase represents the transition from frustration to stagnation and *(Umwelt)*. The quality and intensity, not only of the levels but also of from there to a final state of apathy, where the person reaches his/her contexts, will depend on time, place and circumstances.

lowest level of self-esteem. It is quite evident that extended unemployment will totally upset a person's fundamental needs 

**Poverty and Poverties.** The proposed perspective allows for a re-

system. Due to subsistence problems, the person will feel increasingly interpretation of the concept of poverty. The traditional concept of unprotected, crisis in the family and guilt feelings may destroy poverty is limited and restricted, since it refers exclusively to the affections, lack of participation will give way to feelings of isolation and predicaments of people who may be classified below a certain income marginalization and declining self-esteem may very well generate an threshold. This concept is strictly economistic. It is suggested here that identity crisis.

we should speak not of poverty but of poverties. In fact, any fundamental

Extended unemployment generates pathologies. But, given the human need that is not adequately satisfied reveals a human poverty.

present circumstances of generalized economic crisis, we must no
Some examples are as follows: poverty of subsistence (due to longer think of pathologies as affecting individuals. We must necessarily insufficient income, food, shelter, etc.); of protection (due to bad health recognize the existence of collective pathologies of frustration, for sy stems, violence, arms race, etc.); of affection (due to authoritarianism, which traditional treatments have been inefficient.

Although unemployment is caused by economic processes, once it has reached critical proportions, both in quantity and duration, there is capable of overcoming an inflationary crisis are almost impossible to no economic treatment capable of solving the problematique. It has be- generate.

come an issue of transdisciplinary proportions that still remains to be The issue of hyperinflation has economic, social and psychological understood and constructed. This, in terms of a program for the future, component. The new concept of inertial inflation acknowledges that represents the first challenge.
inflation, in part, feeds on itself. That is to say, inflationary expectations condition the behavior of individuals in such a way that the inflationary

**External Debt.** The external debt of the Third World is also responsible for another set of collective pathologies. Very simply, the soundness of the international banking system is maintained at the expense of the health and well-being of Third World peoples. As John Gummer, President of the British Conservative Party, commented in 1985 in *The Guardian:* "The United States imports the savings of the rest of the world and exports inflation. This is a serious problem." Due to prevailing circumstances the debtor countries must initiate an era based on the necessary self-criticism in order to recognize these maladies and politics of hardship so as to maximize their revenues through exports. anticipate their detection. This implies, of course, the willingness to
This occurs unavoidably at the expense of the irreversible depredation of many natural resources and the increasing impoverishment of people. The purpose of the economy is to serve the people, and not the people to serve the economy.

This process of impoverishment does not vary with the ups and downs of the market for it is structural in nature. To ascertain the nature of the terrible collective pathologies, which are arising in the poor countries, is the second challenge.

Politics and Pathologies

as a consequence of this aberrant situation, is the second challenge. Persecutions that arise from political, religious and other forms of intolerance are as old as humanity. However, the "achievement" of our hyperinflation is a phenomenon that goes far beyond the economic field and affects all aspects of society. During the last few years, countries, according to such incredibly schizophrenic generalizations about "the enemy" that we are heading straight toward omnicide, that is, the psychologically and socially by a currency in which their users have little
destruction of us all.

confidence. Over and above the economic consequences of daily 
devaluation (financial speculation, a chronic decrease in productive in-
Fear. Such political schizophrenia is not only to be found at the level 
estments and a systematic deterioration of real wages), constant infla-
of global confrontations between the big powers; it also has its 
tion, with annual rates of three or even four digits, erodes a people 's 
counterparts (mirror images) at many national levels. They are all 
faith in their country and gives rise to a deep uncertainty about the fu-
accountable for the great increase in collective pathologies of fear: 
ture. Concern for the "health" of a currency generates collective feel-
We suggest four categories of collective pathologies of fear or-
ings of growing pessimism in relation to the country, the state and the 
ganized according to their origin: (a ) those caused by semantic 
future of each individual. This acute deterioration in confidence, along 
confusion due to ideological manipulation; (b ) those that 
with a sense of uncertainty and scepticism create a phenomenon 
spiring from violence; (c) those caused by isolation, exile or 
which is difficult to reverse and an environment where innovative 
marginalization; and (d) those that come from the frustration of 

Alternatives

life projects. Most certainly, there are others but these seem to be enough by Gay off example

22

Human Scale Development

Development and Human Needs

23

Euphemisms. The discourse of power are full of euphemisms.

4.

The understanding of these collective pathologies requires Words no longer fit with facts. Annihilators are called nuclear arms, as if transdisciplinary research and action.

they were simply a more powerful version of conventional arms. We are "the free world", a world full of examples of the most obscene in-

The fourth challenge is to develop a fruitful dialogue in pursuit of a equities and violations of human rights. In the name of the people, constructive interpretation of the issues and solutions raised in this sy stems are created where people must simply comply obediently with book. New collective pathologies will be generated within the short and the dictums of an "almighty state." Peaceful protest marchers are
long term if we maintain traditional and orthodox approaches. There is severely punished and imprisoned for public disorder and subversion, no sense in healing an individual who is then expected to go back and while state terrorism is accepted as law and order. Examples could fill live in a sick environment.

many pages. The end result is that people cease to understand and, as Every discipline, in becoming increasingly reductionist and tech-
a consequence, either turn into cynics or melt into impotent, perplexed nocratic, has given way to a process of dehumanization. To humanize and alienated masses.

ourselves again from within our own disciplines is the great challenge. Only such an effort can build the foundations for a fruitful transdiscipli-

Violence, Marginalization and Exile. Violence directly upsets the nary endeavor that may truly contribute to the solution of the real need for Protection, thus inducing intense anxiety. Isolation, mar-
problematique affecting our world today. ginalization and political exile destroy people's identity and break up A sense of re sponsibility for the future of humanity along with families, destroying natural affection and creating guilt feelings which transdisciplinary action is crucial. This may be our only defense. If we
are often accompanied by suicidal fantasies or attempts. The frustration
do not take up the challenges, we will all be accomplices in creating
of life projects by political intolerance systematically erodes the crea-
and maintaining sick societies.
tive capacity of people, leading them slowly from active resentment
into apathy and loss of self-esteem.
Our third challenge consists of recognizing and assessing those col-
lective pathologies generated by diverse socio-political sy stems. Every
sy stem creates in its own way obstacles to the satisfaction of one or

Argumentation

more needs, such as Understanding, Protection, Identity, Affection,
Creation and Freedom.

Human Needs: Deprivation and Potential

Summary

A development policy aimed at the satisfaction of fundamental
human needs goes beyond the conventional economic rationale
The main conclusions we can raw are:
because it applies to the human being as a whole. The relations
established between needs and their satisfiers make it possible to
1. Any fundamental human need not adequately satisfied generates
develop a philosophy and a policy for development which are
genuinely humanistic.

2. Up to the present we have developed treatments for individual
The very essence of human beings is expressed palpably through
and small group pathologies.
needs in their twofold character: as deprivation and as potential.

3. Today, we are faced with a dramatic increase in collective
Understood as more than mere survival, needs bring
pathologies for which treatments have proved
out the constant tension between depravation and potential that is
so peculiar to human

24

_Human Scale Development_

_Development and Human Needs_

25

Needs, narrowly conceived as deprivation, are often restricted to
and change.

that which is merely physiological and as such the sensation that "some-
For example, food is a satisfier of the need for Protection in much
thing which is lacking is acutely felt." However, to the degree that needs
the same way that a family structure might be. Likewise, a political
engage, motivate and mobilize people, they are a potential and even-
order may be a satisfier of the need for Participation. The same
tually may become a resource. The need to participate is a potential for
satisfier can actualize different needs in different cultures and in
participation, just as the need for affection is a potential for affection.
different time periods.

To approach the human being through needs enables us to build a bridge
The reason that a satisfier may have diverse effects in various con-
between a philosophical anthropology and a political option; this ap-
text s i s due to the breadth o f the good s generated , how they a re
pears to have been the motivation behind the intellectual efforts of, for
generated and, how consumption is organized. Understood as objects
element, Karl Marx and Abraham Maslow. To understand human
or artifacts which make it possible to increase or decrease the
beings in terms of needs, that is, conceived as deprivation and poten-
efficiency of a satisfier, goods have become determinant elements
tial, will prevent any reduction of the human being into a category of a
within
industrial civilization.

In industrial capitalism, the restricted existence. Moreover, if needs are conceptualized in this way, production of economic goods along with the system of allocating it is inappropriate to speak of their being "satisfied" or "fulfilled." They them has conditioned the type of satisfiers that predominate.

reflect a dialectic process in as much as they are in constant movement. While a satisfier is in an ultimate sense the way in which a need is Hence, it may be better to speak of realizing, experiencing or actualize-expressed, goods are in a strict sense the means by which individuals ing needs through time and space.

will empower the satisfiers to meet their needs. When, however, the form of production and consumption of goods makes goods an end in Human Needs and Society themselves, then the alleged satisfaction of a need impairs its capacity to create potential. This, in turn, leads to an alienated society engaged If we wish to define and assess an environment in the light of human
in a senseless productivity race. Life, then, is placed at the service of needs, it is not sufficient to understand the opportunities that exist for artifacts, rather than artifacts at the service of life. The question of the groups or individuals to actualize their needs. It is necessary to analyze quality of life is overshadowed by our obsession to increase productivity. How accessible, creative or flexible is that environment? Within this perspective, the construction of a human economy poses an important theoretical challenge, namely, to understand fully the structures that affect their opportunities. The most important question is how far people are able to influence the dialectic between needs, satisfiers and economic goods. This is necessary in order to conceive forms of economic organization in which the prevailing mode that a culture or a society ascribes to needs. Satisfiers empower satisfiers to meet fully and consistently fundamental human needs.

Satisfiers and Economic Goods. It is the satisfiers which define the goods are not the available economic goods. They are related instead to every-

This situation compels us to rethink the social context of human
thing which, by virtue of representing forms of Being, Having, Doing
needs in a radically different way from the manner in which it has better
and Interacting, contributes to the actualization of human needs. (See
approached by social planners and designers of policies for develop-
page 30.) Satisfiers may include, among other things, forms of organiza-
ment. It is not only a question of having to relate needs to goods and
ation, political structures, social practices, subjective conditions, values
se rvice s, but al so to
relate them
to
social p racti ce s, of
and norms, spaces, contexts, modes, types of behavior and attitudes,
organizat ion, political model s and value s. All of the se ha ve an
al I of which are in a permanent state of tension between consolidation
impact on th e ways in which needs are expressed.

26

_Human Scale Development_

_Development and Human Needs_

27

In a critical theory of society, it is not sufficient to specify the
social character of subjectivity. It is not impossible to advance judgments
predominant satisfiers and economic goods produced within that
about the subjective. Yet, there is a great fear of the consequences of
society. They must be understood as products which are the result of
such a reflection. Economic theory is a clear example of this. From the
historical factors and, consequently, liable to change. Thus, it is
neo-classical economists to the monetarists, the notion of preferences is
necessary to retrace the process of reflection and creation that conditions
used to avoid the issue of needs. This perspective reveals an acute
the interaction between needs, satisfiers and economic goods.
reluctance to discuss the subjective-universal. This is particularly true if it
is a question of taking a stand in favor of a free market economy.

The Vindication of Subjectivity

Preferences belong to the realm of the subjective-particular and
therefore are not a threat to the assumptions that underlie the rationale
To assume a direct relation between needs and economic goods has
of the market. Whereas to speak of fundamental human needs compels
allowed us to develop a discipline of economics that presumes itself to be
us to focus our attention from the outset on the subjective universal,
objective. This could be seen as a mechanistic discipline in which the
which renders any mechanistic approach sterile.

central tenet implies that needs manifest themselves through
The way in which needs are expressed through satisfiers varies according to historical period and culture. The social and economic relations, defined by historical and cultural circumstances, are concerned economic analysis involves vindicating the world of the "subjective" over both with the subjective and the objective. Hence, satisfiers are what render needs historical and cultural, and economic goods are their and above mere preferences for objects and artifacts.

*render needs historical and cultural, and economic goods are their*

We can explain how needs are met—our own and those of others in *material manifestation.*

our milieu, family, friends, members of the community, cultural groups, the economic system, the socio-political system, the nation and so forth.

**Human Needs: Time and Rhythms**

We can try to understand how satisfiers and predominant economic goods are related in our environment to the manner in which we emotionally express our needs. We can detect how satisfiers and the with absolute certainty that the fundamental human needs are historically
availability of goods constrain, distort or enhance the quality of our lives. and culturally constant. However, there is nothing that prevents us from On this basis, we can think of viable ways to organize and distribute the speaking of their socio-universal character because people everywhere satisfiers and goods so that they nurture the process of actualizing want to satisfy their needs. In reflecting on the nine fundamental needs needs and reduce the possibilities of frustration.

proposed in this book, common sense, along with some socio-cultural The ways in which we experience our needs, hence the quality of our sensitivity, surely points to the fact that the needs for Subsistence, lives is, ultimately, subjective. It would seem, then, that only universalizing Protection, Affection, Understanding, Participation, Idleness and Creation judgment could be deemed arbitrary. An objection to this statement could have existed since the origins of "homo habilis" and, undoubtedly, since well arise from the ranks of positivism. The identification which positivism the appearance of "homo sapiens."
establishes between the subjective and the particular, although it reveals Probably at a later stage of evolution the need for Identity appeared the historical failure of absolute idealism, is a sword of Damocles for the and, at a much later date, the need for Freedom. In much the same
social sciences. When the object of study is the relation between human way, it is likely that in the future the need for transcendence, which beings and society, the universality of the subjective cannot be ignored. is not included in our proposal as we do not yet consider it universal. Any attempt to observe the life of human beings must recognize the will become as universal as the (other needs. If seems
Men, to
as assume that fundamental human needs change with the pace of

28

_Human Scale Development_

_Development and Human Needs_

29
evolution, that is to say, at a very slow rate. Therefore,

_Foundations for a Possible Systematization_
fundamental human needs are not only universal, but are also entwined with the evolution of the species. They follow a single

_Classification of Human Needs_

track.

Satisfiers behave in two ways: they are modified according to the
rhythm of history and vary according to

culture and

We have emphasized that what we require is a needs theory for
circumstance.

development. This poses the problem of constructing a taxonomy of

Economic goods (artifacts, technologies) behave in three

fundamental human needs which may serve as an instrument for both
different ways: they are modified according to episodic rhythms

policy and action. Undoubtedly, there are many ways in which needs may
(vogues, fashions) and diversify according to cultures and, within
be classified. Hence, any categorization must be regarded as provisional

those cultures, according to social strata.

and subject to modification as new evidence arises and calls for change s.

In summary, perhaps we may say that fundamental human

For the purpo se s of development, a multi-dimensional taxonomy

needs are essential attributes related to human evolution; satisfiers

which establishes a clear-cut difference between needs and satisfiers is a

are forms of Being, Having, Doing and Interacting related to

useful and feasible tool. Unfortunately, in formulating such a classification,

structures, and economic goods are objects related to particular
we lay ourselves open to the charge of arbitrariness. But, considering that historical moments.

the task is absolutely necessary, we can minimize the risks if we abide by Evolutionary, structural and episodic changes take place at the following conditions:

different paces and in different rhythms. The movement of history

1. The classification must be understandable. The needs listed must be places the human being in an increasingly unrhythmical and unsynchronized domain in which human concerns are neglected readily recognizable and identifiable as one's own.

more and more. In the present moment, this situation has become

2. The classification must combine scope with specificity. It must arrive extreme.

at a limited number of needs which can be clearly yet simply labeled The speed of production and the diversification of objects have but, at the same time, be comprehensive enough to incorporate any be-come ends in themselves and as such are no longer able to fundamental felt need.

satisfy any need whatsoever. People have grown more dependent

3. The classification must be operational. For every existing or on this system of production but, at the same time, more alienated
conceivable satisfier, one or more of the needs stated must cap from it.

pear as a target-need of the satisfier; the classification should allow
It is only in some of the regions marginalized by the crisis, and for an analysis of the relationship between needs and the ways in
in those groups which defy the prevailing styles of development, which they are satisfied.

that autonomous processes are generated in which satisfiers and

4. The classification must be critical. It is not sufficient for the

economic goods become subordinated once again
to the
categorization to relate satisfiers to needs. It is essential to detect actualization of human needs. It is in these sectors that we can find needs for which no desirable satisfier exists. Also, it is to examples of synergic types of behavior which offer a potential identify and restrain those satisfiers that inhibit the actualization of response to the crisis that looms over us. These autonomous
needs.

processes, which are well worth studying and understanding, are 5. The classification must be propositional. To the extent that it is discussed in Chapter 3.
critical and capable of detecting inadequacies in the relation between the existing satisfiers and the fulfillment of needs, classification should serve as a trigger mechanism to work out

30

Huma n Scale Development

Development and Human Needs

31

an alternative order capable of generating and encouraging individuals or groups from diverse cultures and in different historical satisfiers for the needs of every man and woman as integral moments, might vary considerably.
beings. It should also replace non-inclusive satisfiers by others
An examination of the different squares in the matrix with their of a more comprehensive nature, thus attempting to actualize possible satisfiers demonstrates clearly that many of the satisfiers can several needs.
give rise to different economic goods. If we take, for instance, square 15, showing different ways of Doing to actualize the need for

The categorization suggested represents one option. It is related to Understanding on page 32, we see that it includes such satisfiers as development and we consider it operational for development.

investigating,

studying,

experimenting,

educating,

analyzing,

Nonetheless, it must be regarded as an open proposal on which meditating and interpreting. These satisfiers give rise to economic improvements must be made.

goods, depending on the culture and the resources, such as books, laboratory instruments, tools, computers and other artifacts. The

**Needs, Satisfiers and Economic Goods**

function of these goods is to empower the *Doing of Understanding*. We have already stated that within the context of our proposal,
Examples of Satisfiers and Their Attributes

needs not only indicate deprivations but also, and at the same time, individual and collective human potential. On the other hand, The matrix presented is only an example and in no way exhausts satisfiers are individual or collective forms of Being, Having, Doing the number of possible satisfiers. Because satisfiers have various and Interacting in order to actualize needs. Finally, economic goods characteristics, we suggest for analytical purposes five types that may are objects or artifacts which affect the efficiency of a satisfier, thus be identified, namely: (a) violators or destroyers, (b) pseudo-satisfiers, altering the threshold of actualization of a need, either in a positive or (c) inhibiting satisfiers, (d) singular satisfiers and (e) synergic satisfiers. negative sense.

(See Tables 2 through 6.)

A Matrix of Needs and Satisfiers. The interrelationship between

Destroyers. Violators or destroyers are elements of a paradoxical needs, satisfiers and economic goods is permanent and dynamic. A nature. When applied with the intention of satisfying a given need, dialectic relationship exists among them. If economic goods are capable not only do they annihilate the possibility of its satisfaction over time,
of affecting the efficiency of the satisfiers, the latter will be determinant but they also impair the adequate satisfaction of other needs. These in generating and creating the former. Through this reciprocal causaparadoxical satisfiers seem to be related particularly to the need for tion, they become both pan and definition of a culture which, in turn, Protection. This need may bring about aberrant human behavior to the delimits the style of development.

extent that its non-satisfaction is associated with fear. The special at-
As Table 1 indicates below on pages 32-33, satisfiers can be or-
tribute of these violators is that they are invariably imposed on people. ganized within the grids of a matrix which, on the one hand, classifies (Table 2.) needs according to the existential categories of Being, Having, Doing and Interacting and, on the other hand, according to the axiological

**Pseudo-satisfiers.**

P seudo-sati sfiers are elements that categories of Subsistence, Protection, Affection, Understanding, Par-
generate a false sense of satisfaction of a given need. Although not participation, Idleness, Creation, Identity and Freedom. This matrix is endowed with them aggressiveness of violators or destroyers, they neither normative nor conclusive. It merely gives an example of possible types of satisfiers. In fact, this matrix of satisfiers, if completed by satisfying the need they were originally aimed at fulfilling. Their main attribute is that they are generally induced through propaganda, advertising or other means of persuasion. (Table 3.)

32

*Human Scale Development*

*Development and Human Needs*

33

Table 1: MATRIX OF NEEDS AND SATISFIERS*

Needs according to existential categories

to existential

Table 1 - continued

categories

Needs

BEING
HAVING

DOING

INTERACTING

Needs according

ac cording

to existential

to axiologic al

c ategorie s

c ategories

Needs .

BEING

HAVING

DOING

INTERACTING

SUBSISTENCE

ac c ording

1/

2/

3/

4/
to ax iologic al

Physical health, Food, shelter, Feed, procreate, Living environment -
categories

mental

health,

work

rest, work

ment, social se -
equilibrium,
tting

IDENTITY

29/

30/

31/

32/

sense of humor,

Sense of belonging - Symbolic,

lan- Commit oneself,

Social myths,
adaptability

ing, consistency, guage,

religion, integrate oneself, every day settings,

differentiation, habits, customs,

confront, decide

settings which one

**PROTECTION**

5/

6/

7/

8/

self-esteem, as-

reference groups, on, get to know

belongs to, matu-

Care, adaptability-

insurance systems-

Coope rate, pre-

Living space, so-

serti veness
sexualit y, valu es, oneself, recog -
 ration stages
 tability, autonomía, tems, sa vings,
 vent ,
 ptan, ta ke cial envi ronme nt,
 norms,
 historical nize o nesetf , ac-
e q u i t e r t u m, social securitía, care of, cure, help dwelling
 memor y, wo r k
 tualize oneself,
 solidarit y
 health síast ems,
 grow
 r i gh ts ,
 family,
 wor k

 FREEDOM

 33/
 34/
 35/
Autonomía, self-equal rights
Dissent, choose,
Temporal/spatial

**AFFECTION**

9/
10/
11/
12/
esteem, d ete r-
be different from, plasticity
Self-esteem,
Friendships,
Make love,
Privacy, intimacy,
mination,
pas-
run risks, develop
soli da ri ty,
re-
family,
partner - caress, express
home, space of
assertiveness, ceremony
awareness, community
spectate, tolerance,
ships,
relation - emotions, share, togetherness
consciousness, open-minded
mitigate oneself, disorganization,
generosity,
refs with nature, cake care of, cut
dedication, boldness
beauty
aspect, participate, appreciate
tension, rebellious
determination, tolerance

ness, togetherness
sensuality,
sense of humor

'The column of BE|NG registers *at ributes* personal or collective, that are expressed as nouns. The

**UNDER-**

13/

14/

15/

16/

column of HAVING registers *institutions, norms, mechanisms, tools* (not in a material sense), *laws*, etc.

**STANDING**

Crit ica l

con-

L i t e r a t u r e ,

investigate ,

Settings of fo rma -

science, recep -

that can be expressed in one or more words. The column of DO|NG registers *actions*, personal or teachers, met h-study,
experiential interaction, tiveness, collective, that can be expressed as verbs. The column of INTERACTING registers locations and od, educational ment, educate, schools, university, astonish-

milius

polices, cons, anaizes, cities, academies,

(as times and spaces). ht stands for the Spanish ESTAR or the German BEFOUNDEN, in rhoment, dis -

munication poli -

meditate

groups,

com-
sense of time and space. Since there is no corresponding word in English, INT ERACT ING was chosen as discipline, intuition, cies

munities, fa mily

faut de mieux.

ration ality

**PARTICIPATION**

17/

18/

19/

20/

A d a p t a b i l i t í a , Rights,

respon - Become

af-

Settings of pa r-

**Table 2: VIOLATORS OR DESTROYERS***

recepti veness,

sibilities, duties, f ili at ed ,

coop-

ticipative i nte rac-

solidaritía , witling- privile ges, w or k

erate , p ropose ,
tion,

parties, as-

Supposed Satsfier

Need to Be Sup-

Needs, the Satisfactton of Which it impairs

ness, dete rmina -

share,

dissent,

sociations, chur -

posedhy Satisfied

tion,

dedication,

obeía,

i nt e ra ct , ches, commun -

respect, passion,

agree on, exp ress i ti es , neighbo r-

Arms race

Protection

Subsistence, Affection, Participation

sense of hu mor
opinions
hoods, family
Exile
Protection
Affection, Participation, Identity, Freedom

**IDLENESS**

21/

22/

23/

24/

National Security
Protection
Subsistence, Identity, Affection, Understanding,
Curiositá, recep - G am es , spec- D a y d r e a m ,
Privacy, intimacy,
Doctrine
Participation, Freedom
tiveness,
im-
tacles, clubs, par- brood , d ream,
spaces of close-agination,
reck-ti es, peace of
recall old times,
ness, free time,
Censorship
Protection
Understanding, Participation, Mimosa,
tessness, sense
mind
give waí to fan-
surroundings,
Creation, identity, Freedom
of humor, fantasies, remem-
landscapes.
quility, sensuality
Bureaucracy
Protection
Understanding, Affection, Participation,
ber, relax, have
fun, play
Creation, Identity, Freedom

**CREATION**

Authoritarianism

Protection

Affection, Understanding, Participation,

25/

26/

27/

28/

Creation, Identity, Freedom

Passion, desire -

Abilities,

skills, work,

invent, productive and

intuition, method, work

build, design, feedback settings,
tion,
compose, inter-
workshops, cul-

* Violators or destructors are elements of a paradoxical effect. Applied
under the pretext of satisfying imagination

pret

ural groups, audi-

a given need, they not only annihilate the possibility of its satisfaction, but
also render the adequate

ences, spaces for

satisfaction of other needs impossible. They seem to be especially related
to the need for protection.

boldness, ration

expression,

tem-

ality,

autonomy,

poral freedom

inventiveness,
Inhibiting Satisfiers. Inhibiting satisfiers are those that generally oversatisfy a given need, therefore seriously curtailing the possibility of satisfying other needs. With some exceptions, they share the attribute of originating in deep-rooted customs, habits and rituals. (Table 4.)

Mechanistic medicine ("A pill for every ill")

Protection

Singular Satisfiers. Singular satisfiers are those that satisfy one particular need. In regard to the satisfaction of other needs, they are neutral. They are characteristic of plan and programs of assistance, cooperation and participation.
development. These satisfiers are similar in that they are institutionalized;

Stereotypes

Understanding

that is, their origins are in institutions of the state, of the private sector or of

Aggregate economic indicators

Understanding

the voluntary or non-governmental sector. (Table 5.)

Cultural control

Creation

Prostitution

Affection

Status symbols

Identity

Synergic Satisfiers. Synergic satisfiers are those that satisfy a

Obsessive productivity with a bias to efficiency

Subsistence

given need, simultaneously stimulating and contributing to the

Indoctrination

Understanding

fulfillment of other needs. They share the attribute of being anti-

Charity
Subsistence

authoritarian in the sense that they constitute a reversal of

Fashions and fads

identity

predominant values, such as competition and coerciveness. (Table 6.)

*Pseudo-satisfiers are elements that stimulate a false sensation of satisfying a given need. Although they lack the aggressiveness of violators, they may on occasion annul in the medium term the pos-Exogenous and Endogenous Satisfiers. The first four

sibility of satisfying the need they were originally aimed at.

categories of satisfiers are exogenous to civil society as they are usually imposed, induced, ritualized or institutionalized. In this sense, they are satisfiers which have been traditionally generated

Table 4: INHIBITING SATISFIERS*

at the fop and advocated for all. On the other hand, endogenous satisfiers derive from liberating processes which are the outcome

Satisfier

Need

Needs, the Satisfaction of Which Te Inhibited

of acts of volition generated by the community at the grassroots
level. It is this that makes them antiauthoritarian, even though in 
Paternalism
Protection
Understanding, Participation, Freedom, Identity
some cases they may originate in processes promoted by the 
Overprotective family
Protection
Affection, Understanding, Participation, Identity,
state.
Identity, Freedom
Taylorist-type of
Subsistence
Understanding, Participation, Creation, Identity,
One of the important aims of Human Scale Development is to 
production
Freedom
affect change in the nature of the Latin American State. It should 
Authoritarian classroom
Understanding
Participation, Creation, Identity, Freedom
move from its traditional role as a generator of satisfiers, which are Messianism
Identity
Protection, Understanding, Participation,
exogenous to civil society, to a stimulator and creator of processes (Milleniatism)
Freedom
Unlimited permissiveness
Freedom
Protection, Affection, Identity, Participation
arising
from
the
bottom
upwards.
Particularly,
given
the
Obsessive economic
Freedom
Subsistence, Protection, Affection,
tremendously restrictive
conditions which the
current crisis
competitiveness
Participation, idleness
imposes on us, an increase in the levels of local, regional and
Commercial television
Leisure
Understanding, Creation, Identity
national Self-reliance should deemed a priority. This objective can
* Inhibiting satisfiers are those that by the way they satisfy (actually
oversatisfy) a given need serious-be met through the generation of synergic
processes that all
ly impair the possibility of satisfying other needs.

36

*Huma n Scale Devel opme nt

Development and Human Needs

37

Table 5: SINGULAR SATISFIERS*
levels of society. Chapter 3 of this book is concerned with how such
processes can be unleashed.

Satisfier

Need that It Satisfies

The fact that several of the satisfiers offered as examples do not ap-

 Programs to provide food and housing

 Subsistence

 pear in the matrix is due to the fact that the tables are more specific. It

 Curative medicine

 Subsistence

 must be borne in mind that the matrix is merely illustrative and not nor-

 Insurance systems

 Protection

 mative.

 Professionat armies

 Protection

 Battot

 Participation

 Sports spectactes

 Leisure
**Applications of the Matrix**

Nationatity

Identity

Guided tours

Leisure

The schema proposed can be used for purposes of diagnosis, planning, assessment and evaluation. The matrix of needs and satisfiers may serve, at a preliminary stage, as a participative exercise of self-diagnosis. *Singutar satisfiers are those that aim at the satisfaction of a single need and are, therefore, neutral nosis for groups located within a local space.* Through a process of regular dialogue—preferably with the presence of a facilitator acting as a catalyzing element—the group may gradually begin to characterize itself by filling in the corresponding squares.

The outcome of the exercise will enable the group to become aware of both its deprivations and potentialities. After diagnosing its current

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: SYNERGIC SATISFIERS*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>of both its deprivations and potentialities. After diagnosing its current</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reality, it may repeat the exercise in propositional terms: that is, iden-

**Satisfier**

**Need**

**Needs, the Satisfaction**

**of Which it Stimulates**

tifying which satisfiers would be required to fully meet the fundamental

Breast-feeding

Subsistence

Protection, Affection, Identity

needs of the group. As the satisfiers are selected with increasing

Self-managed production

Subsistence

Understanding, Participation, Creation,

levels of specificity, they should be discussed critically by the group in

Identity, Freedom

terms of their characteristics and attributes, in order to determine if they

Poputar education

Understanding

Protection, Participation, Creation, Identity,

Freedom
are—or should be—generated exogenously or endogenously by the Democratic community
Participation
Protection, Affection, Leisure, Creation, community itself. Such an analysis will demonstrate the potential organizations
Identity, Freedom
Barefoot medicine
Protection
Subsistence, Understanding, Participation
capacity for local self-reliance. The same analysis of proposed
Barefoot banking
Protection
Subsistence, Participation, Creation, Freedom
salisfienrs will enable the group to asse ss not only whether their posi
Democratic trade unions
Protection
Understanding, Participation, Identity
tive effects are singular or synergic, but also whether the negative
Direct democracy
Participation
Protection, Understanding, Identity, Freedom
effects are violators, inhibiting satisfiers or pseudo-satisfiers. The next
Educational games
Leisure
Understanding, Creation
stage of reflection of the group is to determine whether access exist s
Self-managed house-
Subsistence
Understanding, Participation
to the necessary economic goods and material resources.
buitding programs
Preventive medicine
Protection
Understanding, Participation, Subsistence
The proposed exercise has a twofold value. First, it makes it pos-
Meditation
Understanding
Leisure, Creation, identity
sible to identify at a local level a strategy for development aimed at the
Cultural television actualization of human needs. Second, it is an educational, creative and Leisure Understanding participatory exercise that brings about a state of deep critical

*Synergic satisfiers are those that by the way they satisfy a given need, stimulate and contribute to awareness: that is to Say, the method is in itself a generator of the simultaneous satisfaction of other needs.

synergic effects. (More about this in the following section.)

38

_Human Scale Development_

_Development and Human Needs_

39

The technique described is not restricted only to an analysis of

We should not blind ourselve s, however, to the fact that unity does local spaces. It i s like wise applicable at regional and national not mean uniformity. There may exi st a sounde r foundation for levels. In local space s, it can be a b road-ba sed participation real unity when a wealth of cultural potential arises freely and proce ss whe re tho se rep re senting the inte re st of the economic,
creatively, nurtured by opportunities, the technical back-up and political and social domains of the community may express their support for their development.

ideas.

At a regional level!, the exercise should be undertaken by a carefully chosen team that not only represents the different domains of endeavor, but also by virtue of its representative nature combines both public and private interests. At the

**A Note on Methodology**

national level, it is essential that the task should be approached in a transdisciplinary manner because of the complexity of the

**The Effort to Understand**

issues.

Since the publication in 1986 of the Spanish version of *Articulating and Regaining Diversity*. In this way, an *Human Scale Development*, considerable experience has been accumulated about the utilization of the matrix of needs and

the national
make it imperative to develop suitable satisfiers (outlined the preceding section) for analytical purposes, methodologies which allow us to reconcile harmoniously the views, expectations and proposals arising from the different developed so far has shown that it allows for the achievement of in-space. In the third part of this book, proposals are made to this depth insight into key problems that impede the actualization of end.

fundamental human needs in the society, community or institution

Development geared to the satisfaction of fundamental needs cannot, by definition, be structured from the top being studied.

Starting from
the
assumption
the
author
has developed
downwards. It cannot be imposed either by law or by decree.
elsewhere (see Chapter 5, About the Pruning of Language), it can
It can only emanate directly from the actions, expectations and
be said that we know how to describe, and that we have learned
creative and critical awareness of the protagonist's selves.
to explain. However, what we often overlook is the fact that describing
Instead of being the traditional objects of development, people
and explaining do not amount to understanding. The methodology
must take a leading role in development. The anti-authoritarian
developed so far may probably allow for that additional step into
nature of Human Scale Development does not involve making
greater awareness.
the conflict between state and civil society more acute. On the
For
a
simple yet comprehensive presentation of the contrary, it attempts to prove, through the method proposed, that methodology, we shall follow the steps of an imaginary two-day state can assume a role which encourages synergic workshop attended by fifty people. The purpose of the exercise processes at the local, regional and national levels is to allow participants to reflect on the reality of their society at We believe that regaining diversity is the best way to encourage large in the light of Human Scale Development theory, in order to the creative and synergic potential which exists in every society design ways of overcoming or coping with the most important problems Therefore, it seems advisable and consistent to accept the detected.
coexistence of different styles of regional development within the same country, in stead of insisting that "national style s"

**Phase One**. The group is divided into five sub-groups of ten people. (Experience has shown that ten seems to be an optimal size instrumental in increasing the affluence of some regions at the expense of the impoverishment of others. These national styles

should prevail, when these have so far proved to be people. (Experience has shown that ten seems to be an optimal size instrumental in increasing the affluence of some regions at the for the purpose. ) The proposed task for each group is to construct the matrix containing the
are conceived mostly in order of strengthen or preserve national affecting their society –that is, all those "destroyers" that impede the

**Human Scale Development**

**Development and Human Needs**

actualization of the fundamental human needs. For the purpose, all

**Phase Three.** During the evening, a group of volunteers is requested to groups receive thirty-six self-adhesive pads, numbered from 1 to 36, consolidate the five matrixes into one. The practical way of doing this is each representing a blank grid of the matrix to be filled in.

take all five number 1 grids, eliminate all repetitions and synonyms and produce only one grid representative of the whole. The same is done with Phase Two. For the first two hours, the groups are requested to con-
all the other grids until a single matrix is produced, representing the centrate on filling in the grids corresponding to the column of Being; perceptions of all fifty participants. The matrix is drawn on a large chart that is, grids 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, 29 and 33. Each point entered in the
(say, 120 by 80 cms) and placed on the wall so that on the following
grid must be the result of group discussion. It is stressed by the semi-
morning it can be examined by the participants.

The coordinator that the column headed Being registers attributes, per-
sonal or collective (negative, in this case), that are expressed as nouns.

**Phase Four.** In the next session, the participants are divided into nine
For example, in grid 17, Participation, negative elements could be:
grids; one for each fundamental human need. The matrix is cut with
authoritarianism, discrimination, indifference, etc.

scissors into nine strips so that each group receives one part. It should be
Once the two hours are completed, all pads are collected and pinned
clear that each strip represents one need with its four grids filled in with the
on the wall, thus representing five columns of Being, at a sufficient
negative satisfiers.

distance from one another to allow space for the other three columns to
The group is asked to start a discussion in order to select from each’ of
be produced in order to complete five matrixes.
the four grids the one element they consider to be the most important and
The next two hours are devoted to filling in the grids of the column
decisive. In other words, that destroyer must be selected that carries the
Having. Participants are reminded that the column Having registered greatest weight in the lot. In exceptional cases, two can be selected from institutions, norms, mechanisms, tools (not in a material sense), laws, etc. that can be expressed in one or more words. Again, examples that debate and discussion. This phase should take as long as it requires. have shown up are: national security doctrine, repressive institutions, discriminatory education laws and so on. Once the time is completed, **Phase Five.** Each group delivers the list of the four to eight negative the pads are again collected and placed on the wall next to each of the satisfiers selected. The list is now written into a new blank matrix, will be corresponding previous five columns. identified as the synthesis matrix. It represents the picture of the most A break of three hours is taken, and the participants gather again in negative elements affecting that society, community or institution (as the afternoon. A long break is important because, if properly carried out, perceived by the participants) inasmuch as the actualization of fundamental the exercise is very intense and demanding. human needs is concerned. It represents the paramount challenges that The next two hours are devoted in an analogous manner to the
must be tackled. Therefore, the discussion and interpretation of the column Doing. It is stressed that the column Doing registers actions, synthesis matrix must be carried out in a plenary session.

personal or collective, that are expressed as verbs. As a mere illustration, examples could be discriminate, oppress, impose, censure.

**Phase Six.** If time allows, or if the coordinator is able to establish a long-term relationship with the participants, an additional exercise is highly advisable. Employing exactly the same procedure as for the construction of the negative matrix, the participants are asked to produce the matrix of their Utopia; that is, how their society ought to be for them to fee! really satisfied. When carrying out this part of the exercise, the negative matrix should not be in the hands of the participants, since

42

_Human Scale Development_ 43

_Development and Human Needs_ 43
they might simply be tempted to fin in the new one just with the opposites—perhaps impossible—to say. But in any case, what appears to be of the earlier one.

probable, is that the "disease' the patient is suffering from is fear. Therefore, if the remedies prescribed concentrate exclusively on the **Phase Seven.** Once the second exercise is completed, the participants attempt to cure violence, one may be applying an inadequate or in-

are confronted in a plenary session with both synthesis matrixes: the complete prescription for the wrong "disease." The result may be that negative and the positive. What follows is a discussion about the bridging the patient gets worse.

from one to the other. Here again small groups can be organized, the idea 

The final asse ssment of the participants was that the methodology—being a sort of game where the winning group finds the most synergic regardless of whether it did or did not reveal *new* truths - allowed for "bridging" satisfiers. In fact, the discussion will inevitably consist of the discovery of unexpec ted facet s of a problem, thu s increasing selecting satisfiers. Hence, each one that is proposed or suggested must awareness about what was relevant.

be jointly analyzed in order to establish its characteristics. Is it en-
dogenous or must it come from outside the community? Is it singular,
Further Examples

linear or synergetic? Such a participatory discussion can turn out to be rich and stimulating and in itself represents an experience with synergetic effects.

Since the Colombian experience, many additional seminars have been carried out both in Northern as well as in Third World countries. Although much more work has to be completed in order to confine some probable tendencies, it is already clear that unsuspected yet significant findings will come to light. One of the most interesting may be the fact that no correlation seems to exist between achieved levels of economic growth and relative happiness of the people concerned. The other aspect
academics from all over the country as participants. After reflecting on the
can easily be seen through the sheer quantity of elements included grid

that comes into light is the poverties (as defined in Human Scale
destructive
elements affecting
Colombian
society, and
going
Development theory) that exist in every society.

through the successive phases previously described, they selected from
Without going into any analysis, the examples that follow are quite
the matrix of synthesis the following list of components as the most sig-
dramatic in themselves. Table 7 (pages 44-46) is the consolidated

significant: Aggressiveness, Indifference, Obedience, Censorship, Accept-
negative matrix representing British society, as interpreted by a
tance, Apathy, Dependence, Alienation, Neutrality (internal),
group of some forty socially concerned business people and activists. It
Uprooting, Ideological manipulation and Repressive institutions.
This list determined the following analysis and conclusions. If one
that the exercise stimulate participants to overcome any form of
asks for a description of Colombian society, the reply may well give an
modesty or shyness. In fact, our observations have shown that at Some
image of a society suffering from a high degree of violence. If one asks for
point during the exercise, the urge to unearth truly and honestly (no matter
explanations, one may be given a profile of all the different groups that are
how painful it may be) what is ailing in one's society is highly testified.
in conflict and, hence, determine that violence. But, if we look at the above
Table 8 (page 47) is the synthesis matrix of the previous one, and
list, which is the product of an intense process of introspective analysis, we
shows, to say the feast, a society that fans to communicate
perceive something quite interesting and probably unexpected. There is
Table 9 (page 48) is the synthesis matrix of an experience with
violence—a great deal of violence — in Colombian society, but the deep
particip ant s simila r
to
th o se
in
the
B ri ti sh
e xample , bu t
underlying problem, as revealed by the list, was deemed to be *Fear.*

Whether that fear is the result of violence or its cause (or both) is difficult to get the feeling that one is facing a society of lonely people.

44

*Huma n Scale Devel opme nt*

*Development and Human Needs*

45

*BEING*

*HAVING*

*DOING*

*INTERACTING*

Table 7: CONSOLIDATED NEGATIVE MATRIX (GREAT BRITAIN)

*UNDER-*

Bigotry,

secre-*Pres s / m ed i a ,*

I n te hlec tu ali ze, *Distancing f rom*

*STANDING*

tiveness, "clever-*education s y s-

manipulate, o ve r- *Natu re, e ducation*
BEING
HAVING
DOING
INTERACTING
ness," u nrece p-
tem,achieve veme nt plan, complicate , structu res
re-
SUBSISTENCE
tiveness, apat hy, orient ation, politi- o ve r s i m p l i f y,
move d f rom e n-
S e l f i s h n e s s ,
Maln ourishm ent, P oll u t e s t a t e , Disharmo ny with
prejudice, willful cal dogmatism,
ove remp hasize
viro nment ,
fast
w a s te f ul ne ss ,
homelessness,
degra de, specu -
natur e, g ree n-
ignorance, fear

gainlessness,
technology, abdication of change,
disconnectivity, illness,
ill-health, underdevelopment, monopolization, house effect, poverty,
insularity, re-specialization,
cente, devaluation, imbalance, employment, advertisement, close
pollution, housing
serve,
selfishness,
the Church, Ten
intuition, activity in
addictiveness,
detention and activity in
addictiveness,
monetarism, over-off, ignorance, over-development,
ness,
e li tism , Com mand m ents, person ali ze, mis- h ibits
integration,
self-indulge nce,
reproduction, pol - eat, g rab, tal k to congestion, sep a-competiti veness, B r itis h
institu-
inform,
use jar - incompatibility of
insatiability, pas- lution, econ omic
avoid
doing,
ration
xe n o p h o b i a ,
tions, self-censor- gon, con funso, d e- language s ystems
sivity, acquisitive- policy, inequalit y, h o a rd in g,
dis-
from the la nd,
g o a l - c e n t r e d - ship, condition -
value oneself, fil- within
the social

ess, greed, ego-consumerism,
criminate in trade, destruction of

ness, insecurity, ing, prejudice, interesting,

getting

environment

tism, confusion,

unsustainability,

adult rate food

wildlife

habitat,

greed, distrust, formation over -
emotionally

anxiety,

stress, centralization, hy-
degraded environment -
cynicism, author-load, dogmatism flooded,
senti-

regression, demographic

perurbanization
ment, overplan-
itarianism, sub-
mentalize, ignore,
pendence, pow-
health policy, so-
tural designs, sys-
service, caste
act without com-
erlessness
cial acceptance of
temic waste
labeling
passion, deny
inequality

PARTICIPATION

PROTECTION

Inhibition, isola-
III-health, British Divide,
not tol-
Elitist clubs, over-
Fear, nationalism, Totalitarianism,
Destro y, poison,

Military bases,

tion, snobbish-
electoral system, erate, exclude,

professionalization

hostility,

par - armament, exploit, absolute degradation of the

ness, coercion,

class

system,

withdraw, censor, of sports, unsafe

anoia, secret- Official Secrets reports, enigmatic, un-
apathy, egoism, centralization, void

impose participation, transport, lack of

ness,

possesses-

Act, Censorship, destroy

other
safe streets,

un-

facelessness,

ernment, representation, conceal, communal spaces,
siveness, nationalism,
species,
dislocation,
sale

transport,
laziness, deceived,

spatial discrimination,
self-destruction, profiteering

cate,

impose,

badly designed

mindedness, cracy, food aid,

patronize,

re-
tion, p rivat e owner -
tiveness, agg res- bu re a u c r a c y,
control, dictate ,
housing, spa tial
agreement, emo- monopolios, sec - press the vote,
ship of space, f rag
siveness, p acerâ - arm y,
prope rt y
f ig ht ,
ar ming,
d is c ri mi n at io n ,
tionality, ration - ret
societies,
re lin quish
res-
mentation of hous
nalism,
selfish- "cur ati vo medi -
dange rous d ri-
ove rcro wding,
alism,
collec-
professional as-
ponsibilities, opt ing, conu rbatio ns,
ness,
unpre -
cine,"
housing ving, pollute , neg - balanced de mo-
tivism, ignorance, sociations and
out, control, dis- centrali zation
dictability,
dog- policy an d ma r-
lect, o ver pro tect
graphic
distribu -
ill it e rac y, stu-
bodies, bu rea u-
trust,
withhold,
matism, dep end - ket, social accep-
tion, lack of

pity, cynicism, crats,

experts,

desire to know

ency,

racism,

tance of violence,

secure common

ine experience,

everything going

discrimination

elitism,

intro- discrimination,

spaces,

intellectualism,

laws, mental in-

on

ation, prejudice, van-

urbani zation
complacency, institutions, welfare
subservience, dalism
dishonesty, state, growing
greed, indiffer-
defensiveness,
power of govern-
ence, competence, hierarchical
tiveness, vulnerability,
structures, out-
ability
pragmatism, dated
social numbness
norms, social ine-
quality, prejudice

**AFFECTION**

Rationality,

Education sys-
Separate, isolate, Isolation in crowd-
cynicism, super-
tem, organize -
neglect,
dom-
edness,

loss of

**IDLENESS**

Hyperactivity, Unemployment,

To win, to run

Congestion, co r-
ficality, fear, nar-
tion, media, fami - inate,

destroy,
feeling
of per -

apathy, utilitarianism

marathon, rush

porous, greed for

Cissor, aggression

breakdown, taken for granted, manlessness, design

rianism, addiction

sports, work around, try to get space,

British sensiveness, jealousy

generation gap, abuse, rush, in -

problems, over -

ness, nervousness, ethic, criminality, results, overplan
weather, package
ousy, overprotection, pornography, habit,
morality, crowded schedules,

ness, inflexibility, Victorian values, timetables,
to holidays, overweeness, alien sexism, put a price on
rules, visual
lonesomeness,
der-junk entertainment -
judge
and
re-
crowded schedules -
tion, possessiveness, turning affections, trade in affections, pollution,
pression, egoism, mental, Calvinism, press, work too
rules,
temporal
ness,
English- tion finto a com-
fection, devalue,
ove rcrow ding,
competitiveness, television, fami ly/ hard,
business, paranoia, lack of
ness,
insecurit y, modity, comme r- fail to comm uni-
spatial pa ranoia,
s c h e d u l i s m ,
paren ts, te ach-
focus outside our- spaces te be idle,
permissive ness,
cialization, break- cate
break-up o f family
fatigue,
stress, ers, consumer-
selves,
ignore
environme nt no t
promiscuity,
up of extended

e n v i r o n m e n t,

Calvinism, pro-

ism, advertising, what is going on

adapted to climate,

loneliness,

dis- family, commercial-

warp ed time pri-

d u c t i v e n e s s ,

telephone, obti-

inside us, act from lack of quietness

trust,

inhibition, collective

of

orities,

climate,

guilt, confusion, gations, work,

conditioning and

and private space

reserve shyness, caring, automatic
lack of time,
unimaginative -
hostile environment
habit, to burn out
arrogance,
tion, computer ri-
lack of
ness, exploitation
ment w age ry
frigidity,
intellec- zation
qualitative space
tion, repression,
tuality, numbness
greed,
epibres
simia, directivity
ness,
loar, in-
security,
### Table 8: NEGATIVE SYNTHESIS MATRIX, (GREAT BRITAIN)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEING</th>
<th>HAVING</th>
<th>DOING</th>
<th>INTERACTING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Time pressure,
- **Creation**
  - re- Oppression, cen - Commercialize,
  - serve,
fear, dull-sorship,

indus-
devale

local

lack of space,

ness, boredom,

trialization, mass creativity,

bias

conc
to

run

ll-ed

conformity, work-production,

di-creativo minds to environment,

**SUBSISTENCE**

Self-indulgence

Unsustainability

Pollute

Disharmony with

a holic ism,
ap- vision of labour, industrial needs, from nature, tamed
n
ture
athy, a nomie, fo r- adve rtising
in- idolize, feti shize, environment, no
malism,
institu- dustry,
largo-
destroy, discour-
place for create d
tionalism,
inade- scale production, age, institutional- things,
no com-
quacy, satu ration, etiquette, media, i ze,
put down
munity
space,
Profiteering,
pro-
Degradation of en -
stubbornness,
specialization,
others,
judge,
warped sense of

**PROTECTION**

Self-destructive -

Exploit

ness

judice

environment

willfulness,
fear, examination sys - make compa r-

appropriate time

accrue

tem, the military, isons, moralize, use, no access to

seriousness, left- illness,

didactic focus on ends

communal facility

bread

nature of educa-
rather
than
ties, poor rhythms
Break-up of family
repressiveness,
tional
system,
means,
deny
in creativit y,
no
environment,

AFFECTION
Family
break-
Rationality, alien-
indifference, self-
Devalue
education
for
left/right balance
time
to review,
down
ation
warped
time
denial, numbness mass production,
overcrowding,
priorities
school systems,
speed required to
predominance of
produce, lack of
Fast
pace
of
material objec-
group creativit y
chango
incom-
tives

**UNDER-**

patibility

of lan-

**IDENTITY**

Power lessness,

Caste system, so- ro search for uni- Com muting, pub

Prejudice

Gaialessness

Abdicate

**STANDING**

guage systems

fear, chau vinism, cial rules, class queness,

ritual- c ul t u re ,

over -

within

social

insecurity, elitism, structure,

media, ize, become ob -
crowding,
regi-
environme nt
fatigue
nation- fashions,
gala- sessed, repress,
mentation,
de-
alism,
saturation, lessness, separate- isolate
oneself, graded
environ -
insignificance,
tion, role conflict, conform, collude
ment, closed fami-

**PARTICIPATION**

Centralized go v-
Give up respon -
Lack of communal
ration al ism,
irrelevance,
in- to maintain status ly systems
Apathy
ergment
sibilities
spaces
centralism,
col- d us t rial i za tio n,
quo, institutional-
lectivism,
agism, the sheer numb er ize people, wear a
sexism, racism,
of people, depe r-
uniform, hile and
lack
of self-es-
sonalization, loss suppress,
sur-
teem,
posses- of
community,
render to others'

**IDLENESS**

Rush around, ig-

siveness,

alien- material po vert y
e x p e c t a t i o n s ,

Guilt

Junk,

entertain -

Congestion

nore what is going
tion,

conformity, statistics, precon- adopt positions,

ment

on inside us

r o o t l e s s n e s s
c e p t i o n s ,

pre- refuse to know

neurosis, aggres- judices, ridicule, oneself,
deny
siveness,
im- stereotype, mon -
connection with
balance
ey, po wer, adve r- others and th e en-

CREATION
Predominance of
tising
vironment
Inhibition
material
objec- Commercialize,
Distance from all
discourage
natura

FREEDOM
Constraint,
op- De p r i v a t i o n ,
To polarize
de- Lack of space, 40-
tives
pression, acquisi- pove rty, censor-
cision-making,
hour wo r k wee k,
ti ven ess ,
pas- ship,
i Iln ess , distrust, repress, laws
regulating
Refuse to know
sivity,
totalitar-
British
electoral rob, de value fea r, opening
hours,
one self, denying
Degrade e nvi ron
i a nis m,
ignor-
system, unequal
self-deception,
threatening
en-
IDENTITY
Fear,
rootless-
Gaialessness
our connection
ness
ment
ance, rationalism, representation,
with others and
abdicate respon-
vironments, do-
the environment
fear, obedience,
machismo, insubility,
corrupt, ministration
by
resourceless
tice of judicialsys-
control through

cultural environment,
civility, tem, individual- money

and/or

ment to lack in
cowardice

ism,
censorship, power, act from

poverty, lack

of rights to centralization,

habit, conform,

legislate

**FREEDOM**

Fear

Deprivation

Devalue

Creation of poor
Whitehall, class
mon spaces, ra-
quality spaces
system, unem-
tional
frontiers,
ployment, Official
overcrowding,
Secrets
Act,
creation of poor
mortgages, pen-
quality space,
sions,
social
majority
rights
versus
norms,
stereo-
individual freedom
types, p rejudices

48

_Human Scale Development_

_Development and Human Needs_

49

The next three tables represent Latin American cases. Table 10

**Table 9: NEGATIVE SYNTHESIS MATRIX (SWEDEN)**

(page 50) is the synthesis matrix of a Bolivian experience carried out

**BEING**

**HAVING**

**DOING**

**INTERACTING**

with representatives of some forty-five non-governmental organizations working at grassroots levels, especially with peasant communities.

**SUBSISTENCE**

Meaningless-

Big scale society

Self-destroy

Environment ex-
Tables 11 and 12 (pages 51-52) correspond to a complete exercise, carried out in its seven phases in the Municipality of La Paz in the Province of Mendoza, Argentina. It is the poorest municipality of the province, and the exercise was conducted by two hundred citizens. Table 11 is the negative synthesis matrix, and Table 12 is the desired synthesis matrix. It is interesting to note that the contents of the last matrix have little to do with what is generally assumed to be of paramount importance in conventional development criteria. Here we have

**PROTECTION**

Fear, anonymity

Centralisation

Avoid

11 is the negative synthesis matrix, and Table 12 is the desired synthesis matrix. It is interesting to note that the contents of the last matrix have little to do with what is generally assumed to be of paramount importance in conventional development criteria. Here we have

**AFFECTION**

Fear of closeness Mass society

Avoid contact
Dehumanized architecture
some food for thought!

Options That Determine

*UNDER-*
Prejudice
Fragmentation
To stress
Isolation

*STANDING*

Development Styles

Human Needs: From the Linear

*PARTICIPATION*
Powerlessness
Vast scaleness,
Subordinate
Isolation

expert rule
to the Systemic Approach

Fundamental human needs must be understood as a system, the
IDLENESS

Worry, fill up time
Lack of self-con-
Protestant work
Lack of time
dynamics of which do not obey hierarchical linearities. This means that
fidence
with "important"
ethic
things
on the one hand, no need is more important per se than any other; and
that on the other hand, there is no fixed order of precedence in the ac-
Lack of traditional
tualization of needs (that need B, for instance, can only be met alter

CREATION

"Who-are -you -to- Mass conformity

Ov e restimate
expressions, vast

 tec h n o c r a t i c

need A has been satisfied). Simultaneities, complementarities and trade-
tell-me" attitude
tinking
distances between
offs are characteristic of the system's behavior. There are, however,
home and places
limits to this generalization. A pre-systemic threshold must be recog-
nized, below which a feeling of deprivation may be so severe that the

**IDENTITY**

Lack
of

con-
Decisions made
Official lies
Decide against
fidence,
false-
far from people
urge to satisfy the given need may paralyze and overshadow any other convictions
ness
affected
Impulse or alternative.
The case of subsistence may serve to illustrate this clearly.

**FREEDOM**

Conformity with
Security-orienta-
Bureaucracy

Obey, over -regu -

When the possibilities of satisfying this need are severely

city and housing

tion

late

planning

impaired, all other needs remain blocked and a single and intense drive prevails. But such a situation does not hold true only in the case

50

*Human Scale Development*

*Development and Human Needs*

51

Table 10: NEGATIVE SYNTHESIS MATRIX (BOLIVIA)

Table 11: NEGATIVE SYNTHESIS MATRIX (Mendoza, ARGENTINA)

*BEING*

*HAVING*

*DOING*

*INTERACTING*
BEING
HAVING
DOIN
INTERACTING
Lack of infrastructure,
SUBSISTENCE
Ignorance
Corruption
Exploit
ture, poor demo-
SUBSISTENCE
Dependence
Unemployment
Depend
Destruction of the
graphic distribution
environment
Spatial discrimina-
Inadequate social
PROTECTION
Insecurity
Institutional
Discriminate

**PROTECTION**
Paternalism
Depend
Isolation
arbitrariness

tion
security

S e par a ti on
of
Lack of positi ve
D e cei ve
and G e o g r a p h i ca l
families
duo to

**AFFECTION**
Insecurity
Loss of moral
isolation,
split

**AFFECTION**

Selfishness
attitudes toward
Criticize
values
cheat
families
fellow-creatures
seasonal working
schedules

**UNDER-**

Inadequate
demonstrations,

**UNDER-**

Obsolete education
Marginate, dog-
milieus,
lack of
Incommunica-
Accept, pseudo-
Ignorance
graphical distribu-

**STANDING**
tional system
matize
communication

**STANDING**
tion, mediocrity
Authoritarianism
inform
systems
tion
Centralization, no
Lack of infrastruc-

**PARTICIPATION**
Discrimination
respect for hu-
Prejudice
**PARTICIPATION**

Ignorance

Ignorance about

Depend

Isolation

ture

rights and duties

man rights

Lack of s timulating

Deorientation ,

Lack of adequate

Lack of time for

**IDLENESS**

Manipulate

**IDLENESS**

Lack of interest

Lack of leisure

Devalue

repression

educational sys-
oneself due to sure means
milieus, crowded
tems
vival efforts
ness
Lack of adequate
Isolation, crowded-

CREATION
Alienation
Education based

CREATION
Conformism
Mediocrity
Destroy
on memorizing
Underestimate
milieus
ness
Lack of integra-
Lack of per-

**IDENTITY**
Domination
Indoctrinate
Irrational
urban

**IDENTITY**
False prejudices
Divide
Isolation
tion policies
growth
sonality
Lack of con-
Milieus of dopond

**FREEDOM**
Authoritarianism Injustice
Dominate

Dependence

**FREEDOM**

Dependence

sciousness about

Divide, speculate

true liberties

ence

of subsistence. It is equally relevant to other needs. Suffice it to say,

Need s will be interpreted exclusively as deprivations and, at best,

that total lack of affection, or the loss of identity, may lead people to

the satisifiers that the system may gene rate will co rre spond to

extremes of self-destruction.

tho se identified in thi s boo k a s singular. Last, but not least, linear

The choice of whether to follow the assumptions of linearity or the

assumptions will stimulate accumulation regardless of people's

sy stemic assumptions is such an important one that it will determine the

human development. Paradoxically, this option result s in a

resulting style of development.

If linearity is favored, the development strategy will most probably
circular cumulative causation (in the sense of Myrdal) and thus establish its priorities according to the observed poverty of the poor remain poor as much as their dependence on e x-subsistence. Programs of social assistance will be implemented as a systemically generated satisfiers increases.

If one opts for the systemic assumptions, the development strategy...
HAVING
DOING
INTERACTING
BEING
HAVING
DOING
INTERACTING
Lack of infrastructure,

SUBSISTENCE
Ignorance
Corruption
Exploit
ture, poor demo-

SUBSISTENCE
Dependence
Unemployment
Depend
Destruction of the
graphic distribution
environment
Spatial discrimination

Inadequate social

**PROTECTION**

Insecurity

Institucional ar-

Discriminate

**PROTECTION**

Paternalism

Depend

Isolation

bitrariness

tion

security

S e p a r a t i o n

of

Lack of positive

D e c e i v e

and G e o g r a p h i c a l

families

duo to
**AFFECTION**

Insecurity

Loss of moral isolation, split

**AFFECTION**

Selfishness

attitudes toward Criticize

values

cheat

families

fellow-creatures

seasonal working

schedules

**INADEQUATE**

Inadequate demo-

**UNDER-**

Obsolete educa-

Marginate, dog-
milieus,
lack of

UNDER-
Incommunica-
Accept, pseudo-
Ignorance
graphical distribu-

STANDING
tional system
matize
communication

STANDING
tion, mediocrity
Authoritarianism
inform
systems
tion
Centralization, no
Lack of infrastruc-

PARTICIPATION
Discrimination
respect for human rights
Prejudice

**PARTICIPATION**

Ignorance
Ignorance about human rights
Dependence
Isolation

Lack of stimulating Deorientation,
Lack of adequate time for

**IDLENESS**

Manipulate

**IDLENESS**

Lack of interest
Lack of leisure
Devalue
repression
educational sys-
one oneself due to sur-
means
milieus, crowded
tems
vival efforts
ness
Lack of adequate
Isolation, crowded-

CREATION
Alienation

Education based

CREATION
Conformism
Mediocrity
Destroy
on memorizing
Underestimate
milieus
ness
Lack of integration
Lack
of
per-
IDENTITY
Domination
Indoctrinate
Irrational
urban
IDENTITY
False prejudices
Divide
Isolation
tion policies
growth
sonality
Lack
of con-
Milieus of dopond

**FREEDOM**

Authoritarianism Injustice

Dominate

Dependence

**FREEDOM**

Dependence

sciousness about

Divide, speculate

tue liberties

ence

of subsistence. It is equally relevant to other needs. Suffice it to say, Need s will be interpreted exclusively as deprivations and, at best, that total lack of affection, or the loss of identity, may lead people to the satisfiers that the system may gene rate will co rre spond to extremes of self-destruction.

tho se identified in thi s boo k a s singular. Last, but not least, linear The choice of whether to follow the assumptions of linearity or the assumptions will stimulate accumulation regardless of people's sys stemic assumptions is such an important one that it will determine the
human development. Paradoxically, this option results in a resulting style of development.

If linearity is favored, the development strategy will most probably circular cumulative causation (in the sense of Myrdal) and thus establish its priorities according to the observed poverty of the poor remain poor as their dependence on ex-subsistence. Programs of social assistance will be implemented as a ogenously generated satisfiers increases.

means of tackling poverty as it is conventionally understood.

If one opts for the systemic assumptions, the development strategy

52

Huma n Scale Devel opme nt

Development and Human Needs

53
From Efficiency to Synergy

**BEING**

**HAVING**

**DOING**

**INTERACTING**

To interpret development as proposed here implies a change in the prevailing economic rationale. It compels us, among other things, to undertake a critical and rigorous revision of the concept of efficiency. This concept is often associated with notions such as the maximization of productivity and of profits, the ambiguity of both terms notwithstanding.
**PROTECTION**

Personality

Respect for family Conscientize

Integration

If we stretch economic criteria to the most alienated extreme of instrumental reasoning, productivity appears quite inefficient. In fact, by overemphasizing the need for Subsistence, it sacrifices other needs and

C r i t i c i z e

con- Spaces of encounter

**AFFECTION**

Capacity to give

Solidarity

structively

so ends up threatening Subsistence itself.

of oneself

The dominant development discourses also associate efficiency with the conversion of labor into capital, with the formalization of

**UNDER-**

Harmony, dia-
Value virtues of
Non-discriminatory
Perseverance
economic activities, the indiscriminate absorption of the newest tech-

**STANDING**

logue,
critical
others
conscience
communication

tologies and, of course, the maximization of growth rates. In the eyes
of many, development consists of achieving the material living stand-

**PARTICIPATION**

Initiative, humility
rights
Dialogue

versities
ards of the most industrialized countries in order for people to have ac-
cess to a growing array of goods (artifacts) which become increasingly more diversified.

Willingness, orig-

**IDLENESS**

Imagination

Recreate

Places of encounter

inarity

It may be asked to what extent such attempts at emulation make any sense at all. First, there is no evidence that people in those countries experience their needs in an integrated manner. Second, in the rich Stimulating milieus

**CREATION**

Imagination

Originality

Work

of production

countries, the abundance of goods and economic resources has not proved to be a sufficient condition for solving the problem of alienation.

Human Scale Development does not exclude conventional goals,
Integrated per-
Take responsi-
Feel part of social

**IDENTITY**

Authenticity
sonalities
bility
system

such as economic growth, so that all persons may have access to re-
quired goods and services. However, the difference with respect to the
prevailing development styles lies in considering the aims of develop-

**FREEDOM**

Respect

Responsibility

Take conscience

Adequate milieus

ment not only as points of arrival, but as components of the process it-
self. In other words, fundamental human needs can and must be realized

*from the outset and throughout the entire process of development.* In
will favor endogenously generated synergic satisfiers. Needs will be
understood simultaneously as deprivations and potentials, thus allowing for the elimination of the vicious circle of poverty.

In this manner, the realization of needs becomes, instead of a goal, the motor of development itself. This is possible only if the development strategy proves to be capable of stimulating the permanent generation of synergic satisfiers.

It follows from the above that the way in which needs are understood, and the role and attributes ascribed to the possible satisfiers, are absolutely definitive in determining a development strategy.

To integrate the harmonious realization of human needs into the process of development gives everyone the possibility of experiencing that development from its very outset. This may give origin to a healthy, self-reliant and participative development, capable of creating the foundations for a social order within which economic growth, solidarity and the growth of all men and women as whole persons can be reconciled.

Development capable of combining synergy with efficiency may not be enough to fully attain that which is desired, but it is surely sufficient
3.

to persuade people that the undesirable is not always unavoidable.

DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-RELIANCE

*Manfred Max-Neef, Antonio Elizalde*

*and Martin Hopenhayn*

**Toward a Self-reliant Development**

**On Multiple Dependencies**

Up to the present, the efforts to establish a New International Economic Order and a new international division of labor have been unable to alleviate the economic, financial, technological and cultural relationships of dependence of Third World countries on industrialized nations. The increasing power wielded by financial capital has restricted further the capacity and the right of debtor countries to determine their own destiny. In this regard, the adjustment policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund on Latin American governments, applying for loans to maintain their disproportionate debt service payments, reflects the power of the international banking system to undermine the sovereignty of poor countries.

The patterns of consumption, exported by the affluent countries and
imposed upon Third World countries, subject the latter to relationships of economic growth, cultural patterns, incorporation of technologies, options exchange that make dependence more acute, perpetuate their internal for consumption, exchange relationships and ways of solving social imbalances and threaten their cultural identity. It is the industrial countries conflicts.

The acceptance of such demands not only nurtures that not only control a substantial part of global industrial production, but dependencies, but also reinforces them. We are caught in a vicious circle also produce and market the new "breakthrough" technologies. They are within which little or nothing can be accomplished in terms of satisfying the
also responsible for propagating the message that such technologies along most vital needs of the great masses in Third World countries. Under such conditions, it would be more accurate to speak of "antidevelopment" seeking to improve the welfare of its members.
countries, rather than of developing countries.
The dependence on such patterns of consumption is encouraged from within Third World countries by power groups that reap the benefits derived from marketing them. This has contributed significantly to the indebtedness up for the economies of the periphery. On the contrary, it is a question of de of Latin American countries. According to estimates made by the economist fining a self-reliant development strategy and, from this perspective; look Jacobo Schatan,1 between 1978 and 1981 the amount of non-essential for possible support from the New International Economic Order which imports rose to $14 billion in Mexico, to $10 billion in Brazil and to $5 billion in can help to promote these objectives. For example, it is not a question of Chile. For example, luxury imports accounted for a per capita expenditure maximizing exports in terms of the demands from the center, and then
of $79 in Brazil, $200 in Mexico and soared to $513 in Chile. India, however,

wondering how to utilize export revenues. Instead, we should begin by
only imposed luxury goods to the value of $5 per capita, and it is no mere
regulating the flow of exports and decreasing the flow of imports, as is
coincidence that its foreign debt is much lower than that of Latin American
consistent with more endogenous and self-reliant development.
countries.
In much the same way as we have coped with an interrelationship of
To break away from imitative consumption patterns not only frees us from
domains of dependence (financial, technological, cultural and political), we
the spell of cultural dependence, but also creates the conditions for a more
are paralyzed by an accumulation of spaces of dependence (local,
efficient use of the resources generated in the periphery. It further lessens
regional, national and international). Economic concentration along with
the negative impact of protectionist policies that industrial countries put
into
the
centralization
of political
decisions generates and
reinforces practice to shelter their own products. The various forms of dependence dependencies among these different levels. Poor countries are subjected reinforce one another. The different domains of dependence—economic, to the will of the rich countries; and within poor countries the same pattern financial, technological, cultural and political—cannot be viewed in isolation
exists, where local and regional realities seem doomed to subordinate their from one another, since the power of one is derived from the support it development to the decisions of centralized political and economic receives from the other domains.
interests.
It is because of these multiple dependencies that development geared toward self-reliance and the satisfaction of human needs is inhibited. The **Self-reliance at the Center of Development**
satisfaction of such fundamental human needs as Subsistence, Protection, Participation, Creation, Identity and Freedom is restricted by the demands Dependent relations from the international space to the local spaces, and which the international centers of power,
from the technological to the cultural domain, generate and reinforce
either explicitly or implicitly, impose upon the countries in processes of dominance that frustrate the satisfaction of human needs.

It is only by generating self-reliance, where people assume the periphery. This is apparent in matters of political models, guidelines for leading role in different domains and spaces, Matis 58

HUMAN SCALE DEVELOPMENT

Development and Self-reliance

59

possible to promote development processes with synergic effects that satisfy fundamental human needs.

In Mexico, according to information provided by the Xochicalli Foundation,

it is estimated that 19,000k/cal. are used in order to put 2,200k/cal. of food on the table. Furthermore, the amount of energy consumed in transporting and in no way as an isolationist tendency on the part of nations, regions, foodstuffs in Mexico is almost equal to the total energy required by the
local communities or cultures. Interdependence without authoritarian primary sector for food production. The fact that such situations are relationship is able to combine the objectives of economic growth, considered to be positive is undoubtedly a conceptual aberration. social justice, personal development and freedom in much the same way Since Human Scale Development is concerned mainly with the full-that a harmonious combination of such objectives can achieve both the fulfillment of fundamental human needs of present as well as future collective and individual satisfaction of the different fundamental human generations, it advocates a concept of development which is essentially needs.

ecological. This implies, on the one hand, creating indicators capable of Understood as a process capable of promoting participation in discriminating between what is positive and what is negative and, on the decision-making, social creativity, political self-determination, a fair other hand, designing and using technologies that can be adapted to a truly distribution of wealth and tolerance for the diversity of identities, self-eco-humanist process of development and thus ensure the conservation reliance becomes a turning point in the articulation of human beings with of natural resources for the future.
nature and technology, of the personal with the social, of the micro with the macro, of autonomy with planning and of civil society with the state.

**Articulation Between the Personal and the Social.** The prevailing political models and development styles have been unable to make compatible personal development and social development. The exercise of behavior generated by an anthropocentric cosmology that places human power, especially when inspired by restrictive ideologies, tends to either lose beings above nature is consistent with the traditional styles of development. Hence, the economistic view of development, measured by to the archetype of the individual. In fact, there are many models that means of such aggregate indicators as the GNP, indiscriminately postpone social development in the name of consumer sovereignty, while regards as positive any processes where market transactions take place, overlooking the fact that reducing a person to the mere category of a regardless of whether they are productive, unproductive or destructive. As consumer also impairs the possibilities of personal development. an example, it is in this way that the indiscriminate depredation of natural Social and personal development are inseparable. Therefore, it would
resources makes the GNP grow, as in the case of a sick population when be unreasonable to expect that one of them may automatically be the it increases its consumption of pharmaceuticals or use of hospital consequence of the other. A healthy society should advocate above all facilities.

the development of every person and of the whole person.

Seemingly, modern technologies may often be deceptive. A remarkable Traditionally, it has been thought that owing to scarce resources, we example is that of the North American farming system, acknowledged for are obliged to choose between personal and social development its great efficiency. Highly mechanized and benefiting from subsidized strategies rather than adopt comprehensive policies. Undoubtedly, such petroleum, it is an extraordinarily inefficient system when measured in thinking arise s f rom a conventional conception of efficiency. If, terms of the amount of energy used to yield a set amount of kilo/calories. however, we consider conventional resources along with non-conventional Nonetheless, when measured in monetary terms, it con-tributes to the resources with their synergic potential (see On Resources, page 76), we growth of the GNP. These examples also hold true for the countries of the realize that comprehensive policies are viable, and that only by
Third World, very much under the "spell" of the latest technologies. Combining, personal and social development is it possible to achieve a healthy society comprised of healthy individuals.

If self-reliant processes at the global and local levels do not complement each other, the most likely consequence will be the co-development may be achieved through increasing levels of self-opting of the micro by the macro. Complementary relationships reliance. At a personal level, self-reliance stimulates our sense of identity, our creative capacity, our self-confidence and our need for freedom. Spaces, may facilitate the mutual empowering of processes of

At the social level, self-reliance strengthens the capacity for subsistence, socio-cultural identity, political autonomy and economic self-reliance. (See pages 85-86.)
dogenous cultural identity and develops the capacity to generate greater spaces of collective freedom. The necessary combination of both the **Articulation Between Planning and Autonomy.** To achieve personal and the social in Human Scale Development compels us, then, increasing levels of political autonomy and economic self-reliance in to encourage self-reliance at the different levels: individual, local, local spaces, it is necessary to promote processes with such regional and national. objectives. This poses a central challenge for Human Scale Development: *to reconcile external promotion with internal initiatives.* **Articulation Between the Micro and the Macro.** The spontaneous activity of local groups or of isolated individuals Relationships of dependence flow from the top downwards—from the macro to the cannot have any real impact if not nurtured and empowered through micro, from the international level to the local level, from the social
the action of planners and politicians. What is needed is global planning for greater local autonomy. This planning should be capable domain to the individual domain. Relationships of self-reliance, on the of mobilizing existing groups and communities, to transform their contrary, have greater synergic and multiplying effects when they flow survival strategies into life) options that are organically articulated as from the bottom upwards; that is to say, to the extent that local self-political and social projects throughout the national space.

reliance stimulates regional self-reliance, which in turn fosters national self-reliance. This does not mean that policies at the macro level are

**Articulation Between the State and Civil Society.** To transform intrinsically unable to communicate self-reliance to micro-social levels, dependence into autonomy requires deep structural changes in the but it does imply that two challenges must be met. The first involves relationship between the state and civil society. These changes seek minimizing the risk of reproducing vertical relationships in the name of not only to create and reinforce self-reliance, but also to solve the regional and local self-reliance. The second means self-reliant conflicts and contradictions that may arise in the process of processe s originating from micro-spaces should be less bureaucratic,
generating increasing self-reliance. The interconnection between more democratic and more efficient in combining personal growth with multiple dependencies (from the international to the local, from the social development. It is precisely these social and physical spaces--technological to the sociocultural) can only be confronted through family, group, community and local—which have a distinct human social mobilization geared to the consolidation of self-reliance and scale dimension; that is, a scale where the social does not annul the through a deep respect for the diversity of cultures, forms of individual; rather the individual may empower the social. In Human Scale organization and uses of local space. Furthermore, self-reliance Development, these spaces are fundamental to the generation of increases critical awareness. This means that more people will synergic satisfiers.

assume their role as social protagonists and, as such, this increasing It is not our intention to suggest that self-reliance is achieved simply participation must be harmonized within an organic whole.

by social and economic interaction in small physical spaces. Such an As long as economic and social organizations remains framed assumption would do nothing but replicate a mechanistic perception
within a pyramidal political logic, it will be extremely difficult locate and which has already been very harmful in terms of development diversify resources in a way that comes to terms with the structural policies.

62

*Human Scale Development*

*Development and Self-reliance*

63

heterogeneity of the Latin American population. For this reason, it is

**Spaces and Actors.** In local spaces, which are more human in scale, necessary to counterbalance the state’s logic of power with the it is easier to generate initiatives in self-reliance that could be potential demands for political autonomy that arise from civil society—from the alternatives to pyramidal structures of power. It is in human scale spaces people and their organizations. It is through effective experiences of that personal and social development can reinforce each other.

self-reliance that it will be possible to overcome the prejudice that ef-

Therefore, there is no dependence which can be done away with efficiency necessarily goes hand in hand with centralized decision-

effectively until we rediscover and then nurture the initiatives of social
making.
organizations at the grassroots level. The role of the state and of public
To deny the role of the state and of public policies in the execution
policies is to identify these embryonic initiatives, reinforce them and
of planning and resource allocation is not realistic. On the other hand,
help them to multiply. Besides, it is within local spaces that people act
the surrender of social and productive organizations, generated by civil
to satisfy their fundamental human needs.
society, to a "macrocephalic" state would corrupt the process of
Alternative policies central to Human Scale Development are
developing self-reliance.
needed in order to empower social actors to initiate autonomous, self-
Encouraging self-reliance in many spaces means considering
sustaining and harmonious development in the different domains. This
development not as an expression of a predominant class or of a single
does not imply, of course, that Human Scale Development is solely
political project controlled by the state, but as the outcome of a diver-
concerned with small social and physical spaces. The impact of the
sity of individual and collective projects capable of empowering one
international recession on Latin American countries and the structural
another. In order to guarantee such processes, the state must assume imbalances of peripheral capitalism make it obvious that development the critical role of opening up spaces for the participation of different in local spaces is inadequate unless it is complemented by global social actors. In this manner, the reproduction of mechanisms of policies to alleviate the precarious conditions of the dispossessed exploitation and coercion are controlled, thus guarding against the masses. However, such policies must include in their agenda the consolidation of harmful projects acting to inhibit the diversity that allocation of resources capable of stimulating self-reliance within local needs to be strengthened and reinforced.

spaces.

**Empowering Groups and Social Actors**

**Self-reliance Versus Instrumentalization.** Self-reliance presents a contrast to the uniformity of behavior among social sectors and actors. In contrast with the prevailing economic rationale, Human Scale that is conventionally expected. People are no longer just instruments Development—focused on encouraging self-reliance within the dif-for the efficient accumulation of capital. In the Third World, the price ferent spaces and domains—does not consider accumulation as an
raid for capital accumulation and efficiency is dependence. Yet, de-
end in itself, or as a panacea that cures all the ills of Third World
pendence inhibits the satisfaction of fundamental human needs and,
countries. Although it in no sense minimizes the importance of
therefore, is a price which should not be tolerated. It means that the dis-
generating surpluses, its emphasis is on the consolidation of groups,
possessed masses are manipulated in relation to the demands made
communities and organizations capable of forging self-reliance.
by the great centers of economic power and that heterogeneous
Through its expansion and articulation from the micro-spaces to
forms of culture, production and organization are considered mere
national settings, economic accumulation can eventually help lo
stumbling blocks to growth.
progressively satisfy the fundamental human needs of people. The
An economic rationale is needed that does not ascribe importance to
capacity of the different groups and individuals to decide how to use
indiscriminate accumulation nor to the mere improvement of conven-
and allocate their own resources will ensure a use of surpluses that is
neither discriminatory nor restrictive.
**Human Scale Development**

**Development and Self-reliance**

65

tional economic indicators irrelevant to the well-being of people, nor to partners so that forms of solidarity prevail over blind competition. principles of efficiency unrelated to the satisfaction of human needs. This Self-reliant development permits a more complete and harmonious rationale is aimed at enhancing people's quality of life and is satisfaction of the system of fundamental human needs. By lessening sustained by respect for diversity along with a refusal to turn some economic dependence, subsistence is safeguarded, since economic people into instruments of others and some countries into fluctuations (recessions, depressions) cause greater damage when a instruments of others.

center-periphery structure prevails. Furthermore, it fosters participation and creativity. It stimulates and reinforces cultural identity through an

**The Logic of Economics Versus the Ethics of Well-being.** It is increase in self-confidence. Finally, communities achieve a better unnecessary to counter a logic of economics, which has inherited the understanding of technologies and productive processes when they are
instrumental reasoning that permeates modern culture with an ethics of capable of self-management.

*wel-being*. The fetishism of numbers must be replaced by the development of people. The state's vertical management and the exploitation of some groups by others must give way to a social will encouraging participation, autonomy and the equitable distribution of resources.

**On the Invisible World**

It is absolutely necessary to do away with a priori categories and assumptions which, thus far, have not been questioned at the levels of

**The Invisible World and Its Potential**

macro-economics and macro-politics. A commitment to Human Scale Development makes it necessary to encourage individuals to assume respect, the central question for Human Scale Development is: What society or as redeemers of contemporary history. If we have devoted an important part of this book to these protagonists, it has been with the nurture self-reliance in individuals and in micro-spaces?
purpose of emphasizing what is ignored in a great part of the literature
Self-reliance involves a kind of regeneration or revitalization emanating
on development, namely, all the "sub-history" of everyday life where
from one's own efforts, capabilities and resources. Strategically, it means
productive practices are linked closely to collective survival strategies,
that what can be produced (or worked out) at local levels is what should be
cultural identities and popular memory. Fully aware of all the economic
produced (or worked out) at local levels. The same principle holds true at
and cultural limitations of the invisible world, we think, however, that
the regional and national levels.
such a world contains and generates connections between economic
practices, social organizations and cultural features which cannot be

**Opting for Self-reliance.** Self-reliance changes the way in which people
disregarded in any discussion concerned with endogenous develop-
perceive their own potential and capabilities. Often their sense of value
ment. Finally, our emphasis on the invisible world and its micro
and self-worth has been denigrated as a result of center periphery
organizations a l so con fo rm s to the ne ed to complem ent o the r
relations. The reduction of economic dependence, one of the objectives of
perspectives emphasizing development from the bottom upwards in
self-reliant development, is not expected to be a substitute for trade or order to acknowledge as relevant what traditionally has been seen as exchange. These will always be necessary as certain goods or services marginal. Moreover, we are interested in efforts to understand the cannot be generated or provided al a local, regional or na-
dynamics of othe r emerging protagonist s, su ch a s youth g roup s, tional level. Thus, self-reliance must of necessity acquire a collective women's organizations , trade unions , entrepreneurs , indigenous nature. It must become a process of interdependence among, equal

66

*Human Scale Development*

*Development and Self-reliance*

67
groups, and so forth. We do not wish to contribute to an idealization of of their solidarity to other sectors of society. For the latter to happen, it the popular sectors. We simply intend to recognize their value and will be necessary to decentralize decisions, to increase access to potential as social actors who can help create a participatory and resources and to promote popular participation.
decentralized form of democracy—the practice of democracy at a
This does not mean that a self-reliant development policy should concern itself exclusively with the internal reinforcement of the invisible human scale. The economic crisis dominating Latin America expresses itself in sectors. Such a thesis would be partial and reductionist. What is at stake many different ways. One of the most significant manifestations of this is to liberate the wealth of social creativity, of solidarity and of self-situation has been the sustained expansion of the invisible sectors over managing initiatives which the invisible world has spawned in order to the last few years. In countries with high unemployment levels, the con-survive in a restrictive environment. These initiatives, through more tingent of the active population that holds non-salaried jobs is of such a generally applied policies, will challenge the logic of indiscriminate magnitude that there is no longer any sense in considering it as a competition and dependence.

residual sector of society. By a strange kind of dialectic, these sectors manifest themselves both as an extreme expression of the crisis and as **The Need for Horizontal Networks.** The invisible actors should or-a possible means of emerging from it. Because they lack opportunities ganize horizontal networks, undertake mutually supportive action, ar-
in the formal market, unemployed workers and their families generate
ticulate individual and group practices and thus develop shared projects.
alternative forms of productive organization and of work in general,
In this way, they will be able to do away with the fragmentation which
thus giving rise to an extraordinary diversity of survival strategies. The
presently threatens their existence. National projects that include these
invisible sectors are marked by precarious living and working
sectors in decision-making and planning can minimize the effects of
conditions, the consequences of a permanent lack of security imposed
exogenous pressures and strengthen the endogenous potential.
by the competitive market that creates disadvantages for these sectors
where productivity is low. All this is aggravated by the fact that the

**The Invisible World and the**

invisible world becomes very useful to a capitalism which is unable to

**Latin American Crisis**

generate sufficient jobs in the formal economy.

An unmistakable feature of Latin America's development is the in-

**Strengthening Micro-organizations.** As a potential means of solv-
ability of the formal economic sector to absorb the steady increase in
ing the crisis, the invisible world creates through survival strategies a
the economically active population. It generates a surplus labor force
myriad of community organizations as well as productive microcomprised of the unemployed and the underemployed, who insert themorganizations. In this sub-world, the ethics of solidarity that have
selves in the labor market through a variety of low income-generating evolved from within are an indispensable resource for survival in the self-employment schemes, that is, survival trades. This heterogeneous milieu where a dominant logic of competition prevails. In this way, an sector of society has spawned a multiplicity of organizations where the endogenous force of solidarity confronts permanently the exogenous non institutionalized productive units is predominant. All these forces of competition. In this confrontation, there are two diametrically heterogeneous activities take place outside the formal productive opposed perspectives: (1) that the exogenous pressures may weaken these organizations to the point where they will be dissolved through "inertia" or incorporated into the competitive rationale of the dominant Individuals and families, organized in small economic units that fill the system; or (2) that these organizations will gain strength thus attaining empty spaces of the system and undertake economic activities
increasing degrees of self-reliance and ultimately transferring the
spurned by the modem capitalistic sector, make up a significant part of the
vitality
labor force in almost all I in American countries. The participation of

70

Human Scale Development

Development and Self-reliance

71

whether organized on an individual or on a social basis. Although
people, but also insure that it is relevant to their interests. This type
these organizations are embryonic in character, it is necessary
of data must be generated through participatory practices and widely
to
investigate
and
to
verify if they genuinely represent
accepted community self-diagnosis techniques.
alternativa forms pertinent a new style of development. Such
It might be appropriate to encourage the creation of idea banks
an evaluation would involve studying the multiplicity of national levels and then connect them throughout rationales that underlie these organizations. But if theoretical investigation is to be translated into political change, it is also on grassroots initiatives aimed at local self-reliance. They would necessary to identify those new social protagonists that are also collect information on the use of non-conventional emerging from within the invisible world and are potential agents.
re sources (see On Re sources, page 76), and on technologies of change. A comprehensive study of both rationales and of public policies conducive to the promotion of the ideas of social protagonists would help to pave the way for new forms of Human Scale Development.

It is advisable to modify the educational curricula in the centers of organization capable of changing social reality.

This investigation would in no way diminish the historical role of higher learning so that they systematically consider the capital as the
majo s
i n st rumen t
of
e conomi c
development
altern a ti ve s,
es pec i fi c al l y
t he i r
mo de rni za tion in the region, nor the role of the state as an
e p i st e mo lo gi c al,
pro po si t io nal
a nd
me thodolo gical
instigator of capitalist initiatives. Capital and the state are far
a spe ct s. The t raining o f re sea rche rs is es se ntial to generate
too important in our count ries to be o ve rlooked. To ignore them
information crucial to Human Scal Development, and also
may lea l to serious errors of analysis and the implementation of
coun tera ct the t y ranny of reduc tionist ideologies and the
erroneous development policies and actions.
unilaterally adopted views on the topic of development.

**Self-reliance and Production of Knowledge. Human**

It is important to improve the quality of adult education as well.

**Scale Development** calls for a restructuring of the way we

as the work of development promoters and activists so that it

pursue knowledge in order to create critical awareness throughout

may be consistent with the objectives of community participation,

society. The cognitive instruments needed to counteract the multiple

self-reliance and the satisfaction of fundamental human needs.

forms of dependence

Moreover, post-graduate programs in teaching and research

should be encouraged to emphasize the systematic order of the

must be made accessible to all. Such a task requires that the

problem that

arise

in

connection

with

the

quest
for new ideas confront the dominant ones in the spaces where public development alternatives in our countries. Finally, it is ad-
policies are constructed.

Therefore, it is necessary to visible to organize a network of closely linked research and coordinate action in order to guarantee that ideas are training centers in order to create a system of permanent understood and discussed in all those domains and settings feedback that may contribute to the design of a new development
promoting people-centered development.
paradigm.
We require research leading to the creation of databases capable of measuring and evaluating what is relevant to Human Scale Development. It is, therefore, advisable to modify the statistical and qualitative systems of information in such a way that they reflect the structural heterogeneity and cultural specificities of the different regions and, above all, the potential that underlies this diversity.

Micro-organizations in the Invisible Sectors
It is necessary to encourage popular participation in the production of relevant information. This will require, on the one hand, redesigning our research methodologies and practices in the world is the wide spectrum of micro-enterprises and other small
such a way that they not only make information available to the

72

_Human Scale Development_

_Development and Self-reliance_

73

economic organizations which operate in the empty spaces left by the
avoid dependence on a few buyers (especially middlemen), access to
capitalist market. The
rationale that characterizes these micro-
credit and the like. These constraints, which determine whether micro-
organizations may be determined by such factors as the need to
organizations are able to reproduce themselves, may be overcome with
survive in a situation of acute crisis, the lack of opportunities offered
the help of assistance programs sponsored by public or private agen-
by the modern market economy or a conscious decision to adopt an
cies. A new concept of economic and social resource management (see
alternative to employment in the formal sector of an economy
On Resources below), along with an alternative view of the process of
governed by its own internal discipline, hierarchy and tradition. The
development, makes it possible to minimize the dependent, unstable
rationale governing micro-organizations is based only partially on the and random character of the micro-organizations of societies which, capitalist principle of accumulation through profit. like those of Latin America, show a great structural heterogeneity. In the absence of a new vision, the life span of most of the economic

Heterogeneity of Micro-organizations. Often these economic micro-micro-organizations will be short and they will be characterized by organizations are subordinated to modem capitalism. Nonetheless, limited periods of accumulation followed by frustrated attempts at their diversity, together with their alternative rationale, distinguishes growth. Although it seems paradoxical, these experiences, inherent in them from the enterpris es of the modem sector that operates on the invisible world, represent a potential alternative to the scourge of capitalist principles in increasingly oligopolistic markets. Some studies unemployment. Since the modem sectors of the economy will not be have indicated that the structures through which these micro-organiza-able to solve the negative effects of the crisis by themselves, the need tions operate generate low productivity and low incomes. This renders to support and stimulate these micro-organizations becomes obvious. the jobs performed in such non-institutionalized sectors unattractive ex-
cept to the poorly qualified, and to those who for other reasons (the

**Micro-organizations and Macro-policies.** In order to secure the
development and the continuity of these organizations, the role of the
handicapped, migrants, women, etc.) have limited access to the formal
labor market. There are instances, however, where micro-organizations
state becomes fundamental. The state can undermine their existence
have emerged as deliberate alternatives to salaried employment, or as
either by neglect or by the repression of social movements which,
a defense mechanism against an environment that is socially and politi-
originating within the micro-organizations, tend lo form alliances with
cally hostile. In such cases, the prevailing motivation might be solidarity
other sectors of civil society in the struggle to regain the power con-
expressed through a new social experience—that is, work as a creative
centrated in the state. Therefore, to promote micro-organizations, em-
endeavor and not just as a survival strategy. The heterogeneity of the
phasis must be given to structural changes and to an organic articulation
sector is multi-dimensional; there is a great diversity of activities per-
between the micro and macro levels of society. The socio-political and
formed, of methods of marketing goods and services and of ways of or-
economic impact of the micro-organizations comprising the invisible
ganizing work (individual micro-units, cooperatives, family enterprises world will depend on their capacity to relate to the whole of the society. and so on).

Furthermore, their eventual influence will also depend on whether they Lack of Stability of Micro-organizations. Another feature of micro-limit themselves to organizing survival strategies or, whether in organizations is their instability demonstrated by their high birth and addition and by means of these strategies, they become the embryos death rates. Such organizations face serious difficulties in surviving of an alternative form of development.

due to such factors as the size of the market, location, structure of costs, opportunities for entering into a competitive market, the potential for diversifying sources of inputs and raw materials, the capacity to

74

Human Scale Development

Development and Self-reliance

75

Limitations and Potentials of

must acknowledge, however, that absolute self-reliance is utopian.
What is both desirable and possible is the achievement of increasing degrees of self-reliance. In other words, self-reliance will be determined by the way in which the micro-organizations relate to other broader sense, with only the invisible world, and even more so with a social actors and organizations. Since self-reliance is forged through these connections, it must be understood as a process defined by a sub-division of these, which we call economic micro-organizations. We should, however, try to identify within these units the embryos of different forms of social organization of production and work, which could be incorporated into new styles of development.

One of the manifestations of the economic and social crisis affecting the countries of the region is the problem of the invisible...
sense that these micro-organizations are the embryos of Human Scale world. Hence, they play a critical role in the search for policies and Development. They represent a potential for the transformation of programs to overcome the crisis. Even though alternatives to the exist-economic and social relationships basic to the construction of a ing order may have their origins in some micro-social spaces of the in-democratic culture.

visible world (anti-authoritarian spaces which combine an economy, a All this must, of course, go hand in hand with the availability of culture and a political will), their transformation into viable alternatives resources that lead to the generation of economic surpluses and thus affecting the global situation will depend on the identification of, and allow for the reproduction and growth of these organizations. support for, those protagonists and those social organizations capable of putting their vision into practice.

**Challenges for the State.** A permanent threat to micro-organizations Therefore, the question of invisibility has to be included in the wishing to attain greater levels of self-reliance and autonomy are the problematique of the transition to new forms of social organization. In cooptive strategies of the state, political parties and other institutions
this regard, we must not overlook the fact that certain experiences as-
which operate according to a logic of power. Economic micro-organi-
sociated with the invisible world are proving to be perfectly capable of
tions and social movements in general are frequently neutralized by a
surviving the crisis from which they originated in the first place.
political landscape dominated by pyramidal structures in which strug-
Whatever the structure that defines the invisible world, the political
gles for hegemony are constantly taking place.
 bearing of these on the rest of society will also depend on the
The problem of cooptation is critical in shaping the articulations
creativity of the persons involved. In other words, in order to foster
between local organizations and global processes. Cooptation is
structural changes, it is necessary to separate within the invisible world
achieved through the identification and political manipulation of the so-
the mere mechanisms of resistance to the crisis from mechanisms which
social actors. This invariably leads not only to a loss of their identity, but
are motivated by a search for greater autonomy. The latter may even-
also to actions that ultimately defeat their endogenous objectives.
tually contribute to a more lasting structure and inspire the creation of
Within these dynamics, the system of relations established between the
new development strategies.

micro-organizations and the macro-structures of power eventually result in micro-organizations losing control over their own resources

**Self-reliance as a Socio-economic Process.** The degree of self-reliance that popular organizations may reach in their operation and their own destiny.

The direction of these articulations depends to a great extent on the ideology of the state. Within the context of authoritarian and anti-authoritarian political processes, public resources are distributed with strings attached. They are aimed at inducing the recipient communities to adopt particular types of behavior or perform actions which the state considers convenient for the established social and political order. In

When analyzing a productive unit in order to evaluate its efficiency
the case of a merely representative democracy, the allocation of public and its method of organization, the orthodox paradigm of economic resources occurs within policies of social reform integral to an ideologi-
theory, based on the concept of production functions, advocates that the cal perspective which also conditions the functioning of micro-or-
flow of production during a given period of time depends (among other ganizations and of social movements, thus undermining their capacity things) on the stock of capital and on the use of a certain amount of for autonomy and self-reliance. However, it is obvious that a repre-
work, both combined in a given proportion. From this it follows that sentative democracy presents more favorable conditions for the co-
both work and capital are mere factors of production, that is to say, in-
existence of multiple socio-cultural identities than authoritarianism puts for the productive process. Within such a perspective nothing, in does. In any case, democratic political activity, together with an a formal sense, makes a machine different from human work, which is economic system that allocates resources according to the real needs purchased in the market just as other goods are since it has a price of the different social groups, are indispensable requirements for the (wages) and is subject to the free play of supply and demand.
propagation of Human Scale Development.

Economic theory's primitive interpretation of work and capital as homogeneous was superseded by the so-called "Controversy of Capital" or "Cambridge Controversy." The idea of homogeneity was transcended by the "Theory of Human Capital." Yet, in the new version, human work appears restricted to the process of accruing Resources for Self-reliance capital through investments in education and training. Apart from being objectionable on ethical grounds, this theory contains a conceptual sophism by virtue of which the workers appear, to a certain extent, as capitalists. In implementing concrete policies aimed at Human Scale Development in Latin America, a decisive step is the strengthening of local or- ganizations that operate with an anti-authoritarian rationale (solidary, synergic, participatory) and increasing self-reliance. If such "organizational embryos" can be strengthened, it will be possible to lessen the risk of cooptation of the micro by the macro, and increase the per-
pels us to consider. Work constitutes much more than a factor of meability of the macro by the micro. A policy that promotes resources production: it fosters creativity, mobilizes social energy, preserves for local development (which implies decentralization and participa-
communal identity, deploys solidarity and utilizes organizational tion) and from the local organizations is the cornerstone of structural experience and popular knowledge for the satisfaction of individual transformation "from the bottom upwards."
and collective needs. Work has, then, a qualitative dimension which To this end, it is necessary to examine the problem of resources cannot be accounted for either by instrumental models of analysis or within small economic organizations, to evaluate critically the conven-
by economic manipulations of production functions.
tional concepts of resources, to seek alternative ways of mobilizing Within the framework of the current crisis, the qualitative dimen-
financial resources and, above all, to consider the importance of sion of work becomes all the more evident in those activities that are nonconventional resources for local development and, in particular, undertaken by many micro-organizations. They are intangible elements 1101 measurable or definable in units comparable with
for the development of small economic organizations.

those used for the

78

*Human Scale Development*

*Development and Self-reliance*

79

conventional factors of production. Linked to a broader concept of house-building projects, organic farming in small family plots, cooking work, these resources have a decisive role in compensating the scarcity of capital with qualitative elements for the increase of productivity. Understanding as a force which mobilizes social potentialities, work, more than just a resource, is a generator of resources.

**Beyond Economic Resources.**

The resources that
such movements and organizations avail themselves of is not limited to A reconceptualization of resources—work included—is both those that are conventionally understood as economic resources. necessary and viable. It enables us to overcome one-dimensional views, While the latter are restricted to work with its different characteristics, as which tend to subordinate development to the exclusive logic of capital, other possible resources are: 

tal. 
The new concepts to which we have made reference, and the choice of alternatives for generating resources, require two fundamental aspects to be considered. Both will be examined in the following sec-tions. The first is related to non-conventional resources, and the second 
2. Organizational know-how and managerial ability; 
tions. The first is related to non-conventional resources, and the second 
3. Popular creativity; 
to financial alternatives for local development. 
4. Solidarity and ability to provide mutual aid;
5. Expertise and training provided by supporting agencies;

**Non-conventional Resources**

6. Dedication and commitment from internal and external agents.

Non-conventional resources are important not only for the survival of social movements in different countries of Latin America. We find examples in the Popular Economic Organizations in Chile (PEO), in micro-organizations, but also for the constitution and development of conventional from non-conventional resources. While the former are depleted when used, the latter are lost only to the extent to which they are not used. For instance, power that is relinquished is power that is the grassroots Christian communities of Brazil, in the organizations of lost, money that is given is money we no longer have, whereas solidarity squatter settlements in Peru, in youth and women's movements, native that is shared with others is solidarity that grows, knowledge that is peoples associations, ecological groups and so forth.

transmitted is knowledge that expands itself.

Analogous organizations exist in all the countries of the region, and Non-conventional resources enable development to take place that are made up of people who have decided to muster their energies to
goes far beyond the notion of accumulation (while including it), since it share the task of satisfying their fundamental needs through the construction of collective life projects.

There are many cases of micro-organizations that are created not as a turn, the potentiality of the resources themselves. Another distinctive trait of these resources (and one which reverses the usual)

only to overcome the absence of work opportunities in the more modem economistic perspectives) is that unlike conventional economic sectors of the economy, but also to come up with deliberate alternatives resources, which are characterized by scarcity, non-conventional both to alienation and to the hierarchical organization of work dictated resources are plentiful. They also have a tremendous capacity to by capitalism, in factories, offices and in other organized services. A preserve and transform social energy for processes of deep change.
good number of these organizations devote themselves to economic activities which guarantee their self-reproduction, while also promoting Complementarity of Conv entional and Non-conv entional social, cultural and recreational activities. Production and marketing of Resources.
The use of non-conventional resources, such as goods and services is complemented with such activities as communal

80

*Human Scale Development*

*Development and Self-reliance*

81

those listed above, not only stimulate self-reliance, but also insure a advance along the lines of:
better performance of conventional resources, especially of capital. This is illustrated by the experience of many local projects undertaken in Latin America with the support of international organizations. Unfortunately, a great number of projects, which have all the necessary financial support, vanish into thin air because of their inability to manage the available resources in a new way. to motivate people and to arouse the endogenous potential of the 2. Identifying and broadening those social spaces which contain a groups that they intend to benefit. Hence, any conventional resource greater potential in terms of non-conventional resources. which is not supported in the community by a "will to be" and a "will to 3. Identifying and motivating social actors capable of using these do"—that is to say, by the emergence of non-conventional resources resources for structural changes conducive to Human Scale which the community decides to mobilize—will end up collapsing. Development.
This reconceptualization of resources not only widens the options that are possible in matters of policies and planning; it also underlines

**Alternatives for Local Financing**

the fact that the main agent of transformation is the capacity of the human being to activate his or her sensitivity, imagination, volition and

The conventional financial system has neither adjusted itself to intellectual talent in an effort that extends itself from personal development to promote local development, nor provided any support to alternative experiences of social development thereby generating a process of integration periences of economic organization. This is part of a political context of the individual and the collective. It is precisely this synergic capacity of that needs to be critically reviewed. This review is all the more important when we become aware of the economic crisis which the countries Human Scale Development. And it is because of their historical and cultural dimension that a policy of using non-conventional resources is problems of internal imbalances and external indebtedness were under- much more than an economic policy.

mined by irresponsible lending by the international system of private
finance, the powerful economic groups and the state. Far from helping

Non-conventional Resources and Social Democracy.

our countries to develop, these processes precipitated a profound

These economic and social crisis which has no precedent in the history of Latin
resources will be important instruments for transformation when they
America. A fact that should not be overlooked is that channeling huge
are rooted in the communities and "stored" in their historical and cul-
funds to both the powerful economic groups and the state reinforced a
tural tradition. It is the community which can enhance these resources
crisis which further impoverished all those sectors that have tradition-
and make the use of them viable because they are inherent in it. Thus,
ally been excluded, in social, economic and political terms, from the

the strengthening of community participation and of self-reliance.

One of the main problems in relation to local financing is the ab-
To the non-conventional resources mentioned, we may add other normal enlargement and centralization of the state in Latin America. analogous ones that flow from historical-anthropological contexts as More resources would be available to promote self-reliance of local well as the social structures that include social networks, collective spaces in many countries of the region if tax, monetary and financial memory, cultural identity and world views. reforms were undertaken. This would allow public and private resour-

Any alternative that aims to achieve Human Scale Development ces to be related more directly to local needs and to the less favored will necessarily entail a policy of activating non-conventional resour-
groups in the population. The discussion about decentralization ces. This forces us to meet a great ideological challenge, namely, to versus centralization than acquires great significance for Human

82

*Human Scale Development*

*Development and Self-reliance*

83

Scale Development. In this manner, the role of the state is redefined a mechanism which is generally connected with some official financial
as an allocator of resources to favor development geared to
institutions. Its objective is that of allocating resources to activities
strengthening local spaces.

undertaken by local groups which otherwise would have no access

The financial institutions that may be concerned with local financ-
to funding from any other banking institution, either public or private.

ing of Human Scale Development must state goals and forms of

The system has many variations but, in general, it operates through the
operation going far beyond conventional principles. In the first place,
identification of investment opportunities carried out by especially
these

institutions must promote

local

creativity and

support

trained people who live within the community. Such agents choose
community initiatives that are organized through solidary, horizontal
activities according to their suitability to local conditions and their
and equitable relationships. Second, they must encourage the
potential for development. In these cases, support is adapted to the
greatest possible circulation of money at the local level. This means real possibilities of the local project, instead of the project having to attract locally generated surpluses and making them circulate as adapt itself to exigencies of the financial market.

many times as possible within the local space, thus increasing the Local financing also requires that the funding institution itself (or multiplier effect of a given level of deposits and savings. Third, these any other public or private agency) should provide, if necessary, institutions must adjust themselves so that the savers, or the technical support to organize and undertake projects which will avail generators of surpluses, may decide on the use of their resources, themselves of the economic opportunities to be found in the local space. thus allowing for a greater transparency in the relationship between This requirement should not be understood as a formal one, but as an saver and investor that may, in turn, promote greater participation in instrument to enable the viability of the effort to be assessed and to activities devoted to making development alternatives in the local improve external support.

space more viable. Fourth, these financial institutions must be In the case of the Grameen Bank Project in Bangladesh, the loans
managed in a cooperative way by people in the community itself, generated savings, which is fairly unusual. What usually happens is the which means that the management should also be local in origin. opposite, namely, that savings generate credit. The relation between Finally, if the local financial institution is to gain credibility, it must be savings and loans has been the subject of new proposals in recent protected against any potential liquidity crisis. This protection could reports. It has been advocated—in the light of the problems Paced be provided by an organization such as a Central Bank or any other by the the poorer communities see king alternative forms of sound public banking agency.

development that the mobilization of savings, combined with loans at In terms of the above, it is necessary that the banking system in the local level, is one of the most important means to promote the Latin America should adopt a new orientation which may broaden its
development of the community. On the other hand, there are
concept of funding. In this way, it could overcome restrictive practices,
experiences that show that the informal sector has a great potential for
doing away with the conservative barriers which demand guarantees
generating savings and that this potential has scarcely been explored.
in property or collateral as an indispensable condition of any
The savings institutions in the local spaces emerge, then, as important
loans granted.

agencies for the support of alternative experiences, particularly if
Without reducing their autonomy, local banks should also be re-
they are cooperative and restrict themselves to small geographical
lated to the national and international financial systems. With regard to
spaces, thus taking up the role of popular banks. In order to give
the latter, one could think of creating a Latin American regional bank,
greater consistency to local development, these institutions must also:
the primary function of which would be to support local financing. Such a
(1) have a decentralized structure; (2) relate, in the closest possible
bank, regional in character, could be conceived as a cooperative in-
way, the generation of savings to local credit needs; and (3) overcome
stitution composed of local banks.
or find alternative ways of usual demands of guarantees for granting
Another form of local financing is barefoot banking. This is credit.

84

*Human Scale Development*

*Development and Self-reliance*

85

**Recapitulation**

**Autonomy and Macro-policies**

**Challenges and Alternatives**

It is essential to design policies to support the development of the Human Scale Development, geared to the satisfaction of human invisible sectors by means of training programs, credit and technical needs, attains through self-reliance its true and irreducible value. At a assistance to small producers, favoring in particular those micro-or-practical level, opting for this kind of development requires as an initial ganizations that are capable of deciding on and managing their projects impulse a policy for mobilizing civil society. In order to promote by themselves in a collective and solidary manner.

structural changes, the mobilization must meet two challenges. First, it
Likewise, training programs, credit and technical assistance must
must stimulate the use of non-conventional resources in setting up col-
have the fundamental objective of increasing the capacity of micro-or-
lective life projects aimed at achieving self-reliance and the actualiza-
ganizations and community groups to exercise control over the goods
tion of human needs. Second, it must support and strengthen local
and services required to reduce poverty, enhance the quality of life and
development initiatives so that their influence overcomes spatial limita-
prove habitat and environment, thus stimulating self-reliance in the
tions and contributes to the construction of a new hegemony in the na-
communities, municipalities and regions.
tional domain. If the different local micro-spatial practice s a re to
It would also be appropriate to encourage the application of
become a new social reality, they must be articulated within a project
development strategies which acknowledge and respect the diversity of
that calls for global development. Hence, the decisive political impor-
realities and of forms of organization that characterize Latin America
tance of the micro-macro articulation. The fundamental issue is to
at the local, regional and national levels and thus transform diversity
enable people from their many small and heterogeneous spaces to set
into a promoter of development. This must involve a systematic effort up, sustain and develop their own projects.

to deconcentrate political power so that it can be exercised in a more egalitarian way in the different domains of society, thus ensuring

**Challenges Within the Political Sphere.** The existing adequate consideration of local and regional interests. political structures are faced with the challenge of recognizing and

Finally, there is an urgent need to research ways of fundamentally regaining the wealth of dynamism contained in the social movements of restructuring the financial and banking systems within our countries in the invisible world in order to integrate them as significant, rather than such a way that they contribute to development not only in global terms, residual, protagonists in a new project for society. In the present but also specifically in the regional, municipal and community spaces, circumstances, owing to such factors as economic and social giving special emphasis to the potential for self-reliance in local or-marginalization and the inefficiency of conventional political practices, ganizations. In this connection, we must consider the creation of local we witness with increasing frequency responses of social struggle banks (not branches of national banks) that stimulate community
which do not match the traditional patterns of political activity. A savings and the circulation of surpluses inside the communities which willingness to set up groups and organizations with informal non-generate them.

bureaucratic structures, to participate in collective forms of decision-making and to be pragmatic, rather than ideological, in setting objectives are all traits which political institutions seeking to redefine themselves should take into account.

Such a redefinition compels these institutions to develop mechanisms for sharing in decision-making, to combine ideological and strategical requirements with those of a more practical and ethical nature and to

86

*Human Scale Development*

engage in a revitalized dialogue expressed in terms of needs *felt* and *mobilized* by the communities themselves.

**Articulation Without Cooptation.** A critical problem is that of the size of an organization, since this is not unrelated to the system of values that can be generated within it. Smaller organizations have the scope to develop internal horizontal relationships of greater solidarity and less constrained by ideology. However, they lack the capacity to
promote global alternatives. Within this context, the central problem

4.

for the development alternative we seek is how to build up the
movement but avoid bureaucratization or, to put it another way, how

THE UNRESOLVED PROBLEM OF

to

achieve

articulation without cooptation. This challenge is

unresolved, and can only be solved through the interaction between

MICRO-MACRO ARTICULATION

social theory and praxis. If the problem is not dealt with, Human Scale Development will be restricted to a mechanism that favors people in

the micro-social spaces, thus perpetuating in the larger spaces an

order that excludes the mass of the people and, eventually, reduces

Manfred Max-Neef

this alternative to a mere idea which cannot be put into practice more widely.

Only a development style that aims to satisfy human needs can take

up the postponed challenge to stimulate the growth of all men and

Seeking Solutions
women, and of their entire personalities. Only increasing self-reliance in the different spaces and domains can give root to such development on the Latin American continent. Only absolute respect within economic theory and in development policies as well. Indeed, a for the diversity of the many worlds that make up the wide world of satisfactory solution is still a long way off. It is therefore legitimate to Latin America will ensure that autonomous development is not wonder whether it is in fact a real problem and, if so, whether it has a restricted to the realm of utopia. Only the articulation of these solution. In considering this question, it is important to be aware that the diversities in a democratic project committed to deconcentration and history of economic theory has itself been a history of options rather than decentralization of political power can release the combined energies solutions.

needed to bring about development that is truly designed for human beings.

**The Ebb and Flow of Economic Theory.** The first "world view" of economics as a discipline as such—mercantilism—was a macro-economic view. The aftermath of the crisis of mercantilism determined
NOTE


88

*Human Scale Development*

The Unresolved Problem of Micro-macro Articulation

89

them being in the main determined by diverging criteria as to the no-
different from those of individuals. With the revival of "homo economicus," who acts rationally by resorting to the most efficient visaged economics as macro-economics, and gave rise, among means to attain his goals, it is concluded that the new economic theory many other contributions which are difficult to discard, to be notion of should restrict itself specifically to the only real and concrete level, that is, aggregate indicators.

the micro-economic level.
Post-Keynesians, neo-Keynesians and present-day monetarists,

On the other hand, we come upon arguments that warrant the ex-
nonetheless matter how much they endeavor to rid themselves of their
istence of both levels as real entities. Such arguments stem from
immediate past, are still dwelling in the macro-economic abode that
paradoxical findings sustained both in empirical evidence as well as in
Keynes erected. But the very crisis itself once again restates the
mathematical demonstrations. In this sense, examples are offered to
dilemma:

Is
economics
mainly
micro-economics
or
macro-
show that what each individual pursues as the best for himself can, at
economics? In all likelihood, an answer does not exist. It is quite
the aggregate level, rests in a situation that nobody desires. From such
possible that alter nearly 400 years we may well conclude that the
evidence it is concluded that individual decisions cannot be aggregated
problem lies not in the fact that we have not found an answer, but that
with the purpose of constructing a meaningful totality. Over and beyond a
we have been unable to pose the question properly.
given critical threshold, the aggregate consequences may eventually
The theories, policies, strategies and development styles that
fully negate the individual intentions.
sprouted in the aftermath of the Second World War have been

**A Dialectic Interpretation.** Without purporting to come up with an
influenced or even determined by the prevailing economic theory. If it
eclectic solution, it is necessary to acknowledge, in our opinion, that
has been macro-economic in scope, development has also been
there exist sound and persuasive elements in the two arguments that we
understood as macro-development, and the preferred indicators for
have chosen as extreme examples. It seems sensible to admit, on the
development have been the aggregate indicators of Keynesian
one hand, that observable and understandable behavior does in fact
macro-economics.
The
problem
of
micro-macro articulation, occur at the level of the individual, that is to say, at the micro-level. In unresolved by economic theory, has therefore not met with a visible much the same way, we would have to accept the factual existence of solution in development processes either. macro-situations, which does not mean, however, that it is possible to speak of macro-behavior.

**The Problem of Aggregation**

A more suitable approach might be to suggest a dialectic interaction between macro-states and individual behaviors in such a way that even the bewilderment which characterizes the current situation be-though they exert a reciprocal influence on each other, neither can be comes overt in the somewhat extreme debates and stands taken on predicted mechanically merely by observing its counterpart. In other the different approaches. On the one hand, the economists from the word s, what we advocate is that a given macro-state (political, neoAustrian School, committed to "methodological individualism," economic, environmental, etc.) should exert an influence on individual bold that every type of behavior can only be understood in individual behavior, and that the latter, in turn, should bring about changes in
terms and that, consequently, there are no collective entities, such as macro-states. Since human systems are not mechanical, the non-linear communities, societies and governments, the attributes of which are interactions between the micro-elements of a system may give rise to various macro-states which reflect the interactions at the micro-level.

The impossibility of making mechanical predictions about

* The neo-classicist's work with macro-concepts which however, are human systems compels us to devote energy to dealing with such based on rather naive postulates.

notions

90

**Human Scale Development**

The Unresolved Problem of Micro-macro Articulation

91

instability, chance, uncertainty, choice, thresholds of different types

Articulation,

Protagonists

and

An articulated
and catastrophes.

society does not arise mechanically; it is constructed. It can only be constructed when people act as protagonists, and this can only take place in human scale spaces, where the person has a and the macro an indissoluble relationship, it is nonetheless true real presence and is not reduced to a statistical abstraction. The conclusion that even though there exist between the micro only take place in human scale spaces, where the person has a and the macro an indissoluble relationship, it is nonetheless true real presence and is not reduced to a statistical abstraction. The that it in no way involves an articulation.* Thus, we are confronted process must be organized from the bottom upwards, but with two fundamental questions: (a) what would the micro-macro promoted by people who have made the conscious decision to act synergically. The program is not simple, but however complex it may be we envisage no alternative.

Micro-macro Articulation. By articulation we mean, in this case, what has been suggested becomes possible when a social c a s e, that global
processes and self-reliant micro-spatial system capable of developing its capacity for adaptation is processes complement each other effectively without there being constructed:

a system in which innovation, novelty and 

*a cooptation of the micro by the macro*. This vertical complementarity qualitative change are organic, even though the se may be is also seen in conjunction with a horizontal complementarity unforeseeable and unpredictable. In this sen se, it is necessary between the various micro spaces so that processes of socio-
to kcep in mind that the capacity for adaptation of a sy stem is
cultural identity, political autonomy and economic self-reliance are inversely proportional to the degree of rigidity of its structure. enabled to empower and reinforce each other.

These rigidities should be understood either as fossilized hierarchies, marked social inequalities, authoritarianism or bureaucratic.

The above is by no means a definition. We are fully aware that it is, rather, a picture of "what ought to be." In this sense, it does not insert bureaucratic.

Therefore, real "protagonism" and interdependence, built from the grassroots upwards to its representation the situation of observable Latin American reality.

Furthermore, on the basis of accumulated evidence, we can only superstructure, represented the only possibility of preserving a flexible structure capable of adapting.

conclude that true micro-macro articulation is not possible within the
economic systems that currently predominate in our countries. This conclusion is somewhat drastic, but we consider it very difficult to confute.

Articulation and Sense of Direction

Any possible articulation goes far beyond the causalities and mechanistic assumptions underlying both economic theory and the development strategies applied.
so far. It necessarily and inevitably involve a deep transformation in the The Latin American panorama reveals a set of deeply disarticulated modos of social behavior and interaction. It requires, in practice, socioeties. Even in past periods, in which countries displayed and the tranformation of the person-object into a person-subject sustained high rates of growth of their GNP, the disarticulation and, in theoretical terms, that the competitive rationale of remained unsolved. However, the most sustained of all rates of maximizing be replaced by the solidary rationale of optimizing. In growth is the poverties (as defined within this book) within which other words, that the "horno economicus" he replaced by the the great majority of Latin Americans struggle.
"horno synergicus."
Many reasons have been offered to account for this dramatic contradiction. It is not our aim to refute any of these arguments. We only wish to add another argument, which has so far received very little attention. We state it in terms of a hypothesis: every a priori direction imposed upon a disarticulated socio-economic system
Every articulation among elements is a relation, but not every relation is further inhibits its possibilities of articulation. Stated in other words: it is an articulation. See footnote in Chapter 1, page 8.

92

*Human Scale Development*

not the *imposed* direction which will achieve articulation, but, on the contrary, it will be articulation that determines the most desirable direction.

**PART TWO: FIRST STEPS INTO**

If the current conditions are taken into account, there is hardly any sense in "forcing" the direction of a system. The priority is clear. What is required is to channel all efforts into bringing the parts of the system together into a coherent articulated whole. Only an articulated system can aspire to be a healthy system. And only a healthy system can aspire to self-reliance, to meeting the needs and fulfilling the potential of people.

**ABOUT THE PRUNING OF LANGUAGE**

*(AND OTHER UNUSUAL EXERCISES)*

**FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF**
SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT*

Manfred Max-Neef

The Problem

While trying to interpret the megacrisis that has taken over our present world, we suffer from a sort of generalized confusion in our approach to understanding. This means that there is no way of breaking the code of the crisis if we are not able to adequately codify our own form of understanding. Although we know how to describe and how to explain, we seem to overlook the fact that describing plus explaining does not amount to understanding.

* An earlier version of this chapter was published under the title of "The Pruning of Language" in Development, 1988: 2/3, the journal of the Society for International Development.

Human Scale Development

About the Pruning of Language

because there is something wrong with power?" Today, more than ever The former have to do with knowledge, which is the stuff of before in this century, this question demands an answer, and the answer science, while the latter has to do with meaning, the stuff of
consists of deciding whether or not we are willing to substitute authority for enlightenment. The result of this confusion is that at this stage of power, and thus re-invent true democracy again. Authority as defined here history, we know a lot but understand very little.

can only function at the Human Scale.

In the midst of the New International Economic Disorder that has brought about the inequity as well as the iniquity of Third World indeb-

**Manifestations of the Problem**

tedness, many countries are again concerned with the problem of who should have control of the banking system—the state, the private sector or The confusion in our approach to understanding reveals itself in at a combination of both. This is, of course, an important matter. However, least three ways: (a) our involvement with options of secondary we should ask: Are so many national finances in disarray be-cause there is relevance, (b) the utilization of simplistic theories for the interpretation of something wrong with those who *control* the banking system, or is there social complexity, and (c) the impoverishment of our language. something wrong with the banking system itself? Although this question may justify a whole treatise, we recall here just a few financial debacles

**Options of Secondary Relevance**
characteristic of our present times.
From the production of goods and services, the dynamic edge of
We fight for options. However, when after opting, things do not
economic activity has shifted to paper transactions and speculation.
work out the way we expected, it may be due to the fact that the chosen
Futu re ma rke t s and spec ulation have beg un cont rolling real
option was, without our being aware of it, of secondary relevance. This
producers and consumers such as the poor, and women, tribals
means that there must be (and we must look for it) an underlying op-
and peasants in the Third World, dispensing with them if they do
tion of primary relevance that has to be tackled first. A few illustrations
not
may clarify the point.
into the market transactions of artificially created prices. Instead of a
Obsessed as we seem to be with power, we always believe that
sustainable reproduction of wealth, the global economic system, led
by commercial capitalism, has started to focus on instant wealth crea-
things will change (for the better, of course) once "we" are in power
tion through speculation at the cost of the future—and of the poor.
(whoever that "we" may be—ourselves or those who represent our feel-
The decade of 1973-1982 has seen the escalation of capital flow from transnational banks and financial institutions to the Third World. This naive. If we look back in time, we will realize that at this stage all sorts of powers, or combinations of powers, have already been in power. Yet, debt crisis. And this borrowing was induced to recycle the huge amounts of liquidity that the financial system of the North had built up and could not absorb. The Third World became an important source for investment at high profitability: profits of the seven big-power notwithstanding. The preoccupation as to who should be in gest U.S. banks rocketed from 22 percent in 1970 to 55 percent in 1981, and to a record 60 percent in the following year. The South was caught in a debt trap, borrowing merely to pay interests on earlier loans. 1
person (or group) that has the force, and contrast it with *authority*—
understood as the capacity of influence exercised by the person (or
In older days, economic growth came from production, while today
group) to whom legitimacy is granted because of recognized
wealth is created from unproductive economic fictions. Not more than 5
capacities and qualities—we may pose our question thus: "Are things
percent of commodity transactions on future markets turn into actual
going wrong because it is the wrong group that is in power, or are
exchange of goods. It goes without saying that it is high time that
things going wrong.
such a system undergoes a radical reconceptualization, fitting the
demands

96

*Human Scale Development*

*About the Running of Language*

97

and exigencies of our world's present reality.

Quite apart from the caricatures we may devise, the serious fact
For a long time, one of the most pressing options in Latin America
remains that while our societies have become increasingly complex, our
has been that of dictatorship or political democracy. It would seem out-
theories of society, whether social or economic, have become increas-
rageous to say that this is not a highly relevant option. Its importance
ingly simplistic. This is dangerous, because we know that the
notwithstanding, a still more important option should be brought to the
parameters of a system can only be controlled from a system of higher
fore. We may phrase it thus: "Are the Latin American societies going
complexity. In other words, through simplistic theories and models we
to consolidate an authoritarian (and often repressive) culture, or are they
cannot expect to understand the behavior of the type of social systems of
capable of constructing a democratic culture, that is, a democracy of
which we are members in our world today. There are many examples of
everyday life?" In other words, a democracy that begins in the
this, and a few should suffice here.

household and extends itself to the school, to the working place, to the

First of all is the disproportionate importance granted to economics,
church, to the trade union, to the political party; all conceived as par-
artificially disassociating it from other human disciplines such as politic s.
ticipatory institutions, yet organized in a rigidly hierarchical and

In fact, politics today seem primarily concerned with economic
authoritarian manner. This consideration is most certainly of primary
problems. Summits are mainly economic summits, and macroeconomics
relevance, because no political democracy can expect to last if it is con-
seems to be the cathedral of modern mythology. There no longer appears
structed upon the foundations of an authoritarian culture. It will col-
to be any significant problems of humanity that remain outside the realm
lapse sooner or later, as we have so often witnessed. Dictatorships in
of macro-economic manipulation. Yet
we
seem
to
forget
what
Latin America, even in places like Uruguay and Chile, should not be
macroeconomics is all about and, more than that, what recent history can
dismissed as historical accidents affecting societies of long-standing
tell us. Quoted below is a dramatic statement by the distinguished
democratic traditions. The truth of the matter is that dictatorships are in
economist Jane Jacobs:
many respects periodical exacerbations of underlying authoritarian cul-
Macro-economics—large-scale economies—is the branch of learning entrusted with the theory and practice of understanding and fostering national and international economies. It is a

**Social Complexity and Simplistic Theories**

shambles. lis undoing was the good fortune of having been believed in and accepted in a big way. We think of the experiments A simplistic mind is a mind full of answers. It is also a mind that of partial physicists and space explorers as being extraordinarily seldom realizes the simple fact that answers must be preceded by expensive, and so they are. But the costs are nothing compared pertinent questions. The person with a simplistic mind looks for with the incomprehensively huge resources that banks, industries, inspiration and knowledge in simplistic theories, mainly in those that governments and international institutions like the World Bank, the confirm his or her preconceptions. Furthermore, he or she tends to be International Monetary Fund and the United Nations have poured very active. Hence, we are talking about someone who can be very into tests of macro-economic theory. Never has a science, or supposed science, been so generously indulged. And never have
dangerous indeed.

experiments left in their wakes more wreckage, unpleasant

I have found many development experts in my life—having myself surprises, blasted hopes and confusion, to the point that the been one for many years—with a very simplistic mind and a very ac-
question seriously arises whether the wreckage is repairable; if it tive personality. If I were to depict the archetype of such an expert in a is, certainly not with more of the same.2 comic strip, presented would be a man with a somewhat perplexed ex-
The belief in the efficiency of certain macro-economic models is so pression in his face, carrying a fat attache case full of answers, while intense, that one often wonders whether they have not become pan of a actively looking for the problems to fit the answers.

new form of religion. As a matter of fact, we can witness over and again that when an economic policy based on a closer macro - economic model fails to deliver, the reaction of the economic establishment behind

Human Scale Development

About the P runing of La nguage
that policy will be such that one can only reach the conclusion that while something like stagflation could only be discovered and so acquire the model is always right, it is reality that plays foul tricks. Hence, the legitimate existence if, and only if, it appeared in the North. The fact model not only remains, but is reapplied with greater vigor. that it was to be found everywhere in the South simply went The fascination with macro-economic models is partially due to the unnoticed. After all, a poor country that is expensive for its own fact that all their components are measurable. This is important because inhabitants is normally dismissed as very inexpensive by all its Northern for a simplistic mind, all that is important is precisely that which can be visitors. Cases like this—and there are many more—should invite measured. Therefore, one should no longer be surprised that there are deep critical reflection.

so many economists around who, instead of finding satisfaction in being more or less correct in their predictions, prefer being wrong with high

**Impoverishment of Our Language**

precision.

Another manifestation of simplism is what I should like to call

One of the consequences of the type of simplism described so far
"Northern thinking for Southern action." If as a Latin American
is, of course, the impoverishment of our language and, in particular, of
an economist I wish to become an expert in Latin American development
the development language. While being the product of a culture, a lan-
problems, it is necessary to study in the United States or in Europe to
guage is also a generator of culture. Hence, if the language is poor, the
be respectable in the eyes of both my Southern and Northern colleagues.
culture is poor. By the same token, if the development language is poor,
It goes without saying that this is not only dangerous but absurd. In fact, it
development itself will be poor. Overestimated yet nonsensical in-
has led to a systematic inability on the part of such "appropriately"
dicators (about which so much as been written) are just one example of
educated economists to interpret their own reality. Just one example:
dominant components of the development language. Another example
In all economic theories, beginning with Cantillon and Adam Smith
is the fragmentation of people and societies as a result of the semantics
and continuing with Ricardo, Marx and all the way through Keynes and
of reductionist and mechanistic thinking.
Phillips (with his beautiful curves), something identified in the modern
The interesting thing about an impoverished language is that, con-
jargon as stagflation (inflation with growing unemployment) simply
trary to what might appear as obvious; it is not a language that requires
could not occur. It did not fit any respectable economic theory practiced at
more words and concepts. What characterizes a poor language is that it
the time of the phenomenon's appearance. Yet, at the end of the 1960s, it
has too many words behind which—knowingly or unknowingly—we
became quite clear that suddenly in the United States inflation was no
hide our ignorance.

longer trading off against drops in unemployment. The initial reaction of
In endeavoring to enrich a language, the challenge consists of
most economists was that what seemed to be happening was actually
finding the key words that exist behind those voids of ignorance.
not happening. Surely all would return to normal if thresholds were
readjusted. But reality was stubborn, and the growing evidences had to

Searching for Answers

be accepted as a turning point in economics—actually the end of
Keynesianism followed by the disastrous emergence of the Fried-
As a mental exercise, an adequate pruning of key words should be
manian monetarists.
the answer to an impoverished language. The principle behind the act
Now, if we just attempt to be simplistic, we may describe stagflation as a situation characterized by high and rising prices together with insufficient jobs. This is surprising, because that is precisely one of the characteristics that has prevailed in more countries. With Northern thinking (and with the kind of by Southern economists as well), chosen words will force us inevitably into higher degrees of clarity,

100

Human Scale Development

About the Pruning of Language

101

The answer to the dangers emanating from the utilization of simplistic theories consists of devising methods which, either through our direct participation or through our committed intellectual involve-
ment will allow us to actually become part of, or really to feel identified self-sufficiency, nor autarchy or isolationism. Trade and other with, that which we intend to understand. No understanding is forms of exchange should by all means take place, the only possible if we detach ourselves from the object of our intended under-precaution being that they do not do so at the expense of the standing. Detachment can only generate knowledge, not understanding. peoples' security and well-being, as is the case when socio-The possibilities of improving our choice of options, our capacity to economic strategies are arranged according to the simplistic and fluently distinguish between those of primary and secondary fallacious belief that all will be better off once the GNP grows relevance, will greatly depend on the quality of the solutions we may sufficiently.
give to the other two problems: language and simplism. Hence, let us 2. Consistency, meaning that the system's chosen form of re-examine the suggested answers in action.
production leads to no self-destructive contradictions. Going back to the pre-pruned language for the purpose of illustration, a

On Pruning
good example of a self-destructive contradiction is economic growth at the expense of environmental degradation or resources depletion. Self-destructive contradictions can also arise in …

In order to play my game—because a mental game is what it is—I chose to prune from my language the following words: development, the political and cultural spheres. A consistent system, as economic growth, efficiency and productivity. In addition to these described here, is essentially a synergic system.

words, such conventional economic indicators as Gross National Product and its offspring were also pruned. A fundamental question learned from experience—its own and those of others. As a concern, immediately: "Without these words, can I make judgments about sequence, the system may allow its members to make relevant social improvement, or must I suffer in perpetual silence?" What follows is the result of my personal experience in answering the challenge.

authoritarian structure, where information flows only in one direction from the top downwards. It requires a participatory
my society?" In the past, an answer, such as "sustained growth, higher structure where feedback is not inhibited. A decidable system, productivity and increased efficiency as a means to the achievement of as described here, is essentially a direct democracy, where diver-ever higher stages of development so that all the people can satisfy their sity in all its forms and manifestations is not only protected but basic needs," would have sounded nice and be acceptable. Now, stimulated.
such a statement becomes perfectly meaningless. It finally became clear to me that any social system's fundamental aim should be the The pruning of language opens possibilities for the design of new achievement of coherence; that is, of coherence with itself, meaning in and relevant indicators of social improvement. Indicators of complete-turn that it should not become a caricature of some other system. ness, of consistency and of decidability may lead, without falling into Furthermore, a coherent system should fulfill at least three attributes the mathematical shortcomings of aggregate global indicators, to the that will be identified as Completeness, Consistency and Decidability. eventual emergence of some sort of meaningful "Global Coherence" notions. A program (in the scientific sense of the word) is open for
1. Completeness, meaning that the system strives to organize itself in exploration. A way that allows for its reproduction in an increasingly self-

**Human Scale Development**

**About the Running of Language**

**On Interpretation**

search.

An isolated element (object) "a" can be described but cannot be explained. A relation between elements through a given operator "*" that makes the relation possible, for example, "a * b" can both be described and explained. Now, as mentioned in the opening remarks of this chapter, cultural research, it should. There are methods of mental integration, although in the case of social, economic and often and explained. Now, as mentioned in the opening remarks of this chapter, describing plus explaining does not amount to understanding. The in the system "a * b" can only be understood from a system of higher com-
abstract fields of research, but it is not the purpose of this chapter to
plexity. This means that in the case of human systems (or sub-systems),
describe such methods. In any case, it should be added that if we
as is our concern here, only when I increase the complexity of a system
had more "barefoot" economists and sociologists around, we might
(or sub-system) by becoming part of it—"Y * (a * b)"—can I begin to
begin
understand it.
to witness some improvements in the results of economic and social
Although the formulations of the previous paragraph may seem
policies.
obscure to some, they illustrate (perhaps in an oversimplified manner)
what we have in mind. The idea can, however, be expressed in more
colloquial terms. Suppose that you have studied everything there is

Conclusion

-from the anthropological, cultural, psychological, biological and
biochemical points of view—about the phenomenon of love. You are
Having carried out the exercise of pruning and becoming aware of
an erudite. You know everything that can be known about love, but you
the limits of knowledge on the one hand, and of the differences between
will never understand love unless you fall in love. This principle is valid for
knowledge and understanding on the other, there is no harm in going
all human systems, although it is almost always overlooked. In fact,
back to my old words, even to my old language. If I do so now (and it
social and economic research seldom goes beyond describing and
would be foolish if I did not), both the words as well as the language to
explaining. Take the case of poverty, for instance. I dare say that if we
which they conform will no longer be masks behind which ignorance
have so far been unable to eradicate poverty, it is because we know too
remains hidden but will become fertile spaces for the permanent
much about it, without understanding the essence of its existence as well
progress toward intellectual wholeness.
as the mechanisms of its origins.
The last statement leads me to an additional reflection. Problem
solving belongs to the realm of knowledge and requires fragmented

NOTES

thinking. In the realm of understanding, problem posing and problem
solving do not make sense since we deal with transformations that start
with, and within, ourselves. It is no longer the "we are here, and the poor are there, and we have to do something about it, so let us devise a strategy that may solve the problem." It is rather the "we are part of something that has to be transformed because it is wrong, and, since I share the responsibility for what is wrong, there is nothing that can stop Human Scale Development, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, me from starting the process by transforming myself." Even if I am a researcher, I must learn to integrate myself with the object of my re-

4. The Development Alternatives Centre (CEPAUR) in Chile, headed by the author, is presently engaged in research along such fines.

6.

A STUPID WAY OF LIFE*

*Manfred Max-Neef

Insight

Since childhood, I have been concerned with what I considered to
be a very important question: "What makes human beings unique? Is there some human attribute that no other animal shares with us?" The first answer received was that human beings have a soul, and animals have not. Since I loved, and still love, animals, it sounded a bit strange and painful. Furthermore, if God was so just and generous—which I still believed in those days—he would not make such a discrimination. So, I was not convinced.

A few years later, under the influence of early teachers, I was led to conclude that we were the only intelligent beings, with animals having only instincts. It did not take too long to realize that I was on the wrong track again. Thanks to the contributions made by ethology, we know now that animals also have intelligence. And so I pondered, until one day I finally thought I had it— humans are the only beings capable

* Adapted from The Schumacher Memorial Lecture, Bristol, England, October 8, 1989.
in order to modernize and expand agricultural production; or witnessed of humor. Again I was disappointed by a study demonstrating that even the colossal World Bank-financed transmigration program in Indonesia, birds make jokes and "laugh" at each other. I had almost decided to give which eradicated millions of people and transported them from one end up, having become a university student in the meantime, when I men-of the country to the other in the name of development; or whether it tioned my frustration to my father. He simply looked at me and said: was that Thailand's development authorities were very proud to an- "Why don't you try stupidity?" Although shocked at first, the years have nounce that day that in the north, which was still heavily forested, passed, and I would like to announce that, unless someone else can several hundreds of villages were going to be destroyed with the people claim legitimate precedence, I am very proud of probably being the reinstalled in fourteen urban centers "with all the amenities they would founder of a new and very important discipline—the discipline of require for a developed society"—all reflected the same kind of stupidology. I hold, thus, the strong opinion that stupidity is a unique stupidity.

trait of human beings. No other beings are stupid except us!
So I realized that stupidity is a cosmically democratic force. It con-

Of course, such statements may sound a bit strange, even whimsi-
taminates everyone beyond race, creed and ideology. No one is safe.
cal, at first. But in the winter term of 1975, I gave a course in Wellesley
And whether in the North, the South, the West or the East, we commit
College, Massachusetts, open also to students of MIT, the title of which
the same stupidities over and again. Something happens to render us
was "Inquiry into the-Nature and Causes of Human Stupidity." It was, as
immune to experience.
you can imagine, a very well-attended course. People thought that is was
Not all seemed dark, however. In the midst of my crisis, I realized
going to be fun, which in fact the first two sessions were. During the
that other trends were taking place, and that there were also positive
third session, participants began looking a bit more serious and by the
signs. Actually, in the end, it all amounted to a sensation that I was wit-
fourth, there were already long faces. And as the course went on, we all
nessing the last 100 meters of a ten-kilometer race between two irrecon-
discovered that it was a damn serious subject.
cilable forces, and that one of them would win by just the tip of a nose,
meaning that it might turn into the most important "tip of the nose" in
Crisis

human history.

Two forces, two paradigms, two utopias, if you wish, brilliantly described in Vandana Shiva's book *Staying Alive*,2 that bring about a

Now why do I mention this? Well, I am a person who travels a great schizophrenic world. Every person concerned cannot possibly avoid deal, perhaps too much. And so last June and July, I completed my third falling into a schizophrenic state. This is our reality and we cannot fool voyage around the world in twenty months. It turned out to be a very ourselves. So the question is how do we face a situation like this? How special experience with something happening to me that never hap-
do we interpret it? Or, how is it that we have fallen into a situation like pened before while in Bangkok—the capital of one of my favorite Asian this since I honestly believe that the world has not always been countries. The first morning I awoke to a state of great depression, as if schizophrenic?

I was facing a deep existential crisis. The sensation was, if it can be

The final outcome of my crisis was relatively positive. A few days expressed in words: "I have seen too much. I don't want any more of later I found myself on a beautiful Polynesian island with my wife the
it. I am fed up!" It was a dreadful, terrifying feeling, and I asked myself:
perfect place to fall in love with life again. Imagine walking into the
"Why am I feeling this?" The answer came in the form of the sudden
crystal clear sea water of a magnificent coral red' and the fish coming
comprehension that what grows the fastest—that what is diffused the
up to eat from your hand. It was marvelous and I began to recover,
and so I could continue my reflections under more auspicious
widest and with the greatest efficiency, velocity and acceleration in the
world today—is human stupidity. Whether I experienced the finalization
circumstances.
of a plan to bulldoze away thousands of rural villages in Rumania

108

Human Scale Development

A Stupid Way of Life

109

It always happens that one receives help from friends, not only
1920s, it was not until the 1950s that it became fashionable. Now the
friends one has met personally, but friends one has made through books.
language of development was not the consequence of a crisis; it was
On this occasion, it was Ludwig Wittgenstein who came to my aid. I
quite the opposite. It was a language that responded to the enthusiasm focused again on the problem of language. Language is not only the ex-generated by the spectacular economic reconstruction of post-war pression of a culture, but it also generates culture. If the language is Europe. It was an optimistic language based on the strong belief that we poor, the culture is poor. But the point is that we are also trapped by lan-

guage. Language is a form of imprisonment. The way in which we use Remember some of its cliches: rapid industrialization, modernization, words or concepts influences and sometimes even determines not only urbanization, big push, take-off, self-sustained growth, etc. It delivered our behavior but our perceptions as well. Every generation, as pointed many important and some spectacular changes all through the 1950s out by the great Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, has its own to 1960s that seemed to justify the optimism. In a way, it was again a theme, that is, its own preoccupation. I would add that every generation case of coherence between language and historical reality.

also has its own language in which it is trapped.

Since the mid-1970s and all through the 1980s (this latter decade already baptized in United Nations circles as "the lost decade"), a new
crisis, this megacrisis that confronts us now, came about—a megacrisis

**On Constraints of Language**

we are still unable to interpret in all its magnitude. The strange thing
about this crisis is that it has not generated its own language. In this
We are trapped, whether we want to be or not, in the language of
megacrisis, we are still using the language of development, "enriched,"
economics, which has domesticated the entire world. A language
so to speak, through the introduction of precisely the most reactionary
domesticates us when it manages to permeate our everyday life and our
principles unearthed form the cemetery of neo-classic economics. So
everyday forms of expression. The language of economics is used in
what we have now is a language based on the enthusiasm of unlimited
the kitchen, among friends, in the scientific associations, in the centers
economic growth and expansion faced with a reality of social and
of culture, in the club, in the work place and even in the bedroom.
ecological collapse. This means that we are living—and this may be
Whatever part of the world, we are dominated by the language of
one of the outstanding characteristics of the present crisis—in a situa-
economics and it heavily influences our behavior and perceptions.
tion of dangerous incoherence: our language is incoherent with our his-
Now the fact that we are domesticated by a certain language is not necessarily negative, although in this case it may be. It boils down to a question of coherence and incoherence, which I would like to explain and illustrate.

This is not because an alternative language has not emerged. There are alternative languages that may prove to be more coherent, but the truth of the matter is that none of them have managed to cast the old language, but simply as adjectives. They represent only cosmetic improvements. Take a concept such as sustainability (all the byzantine concepts of alternative languages have penetrated the still dominant language, but simply as adjectives. They represent only cosmetic improvements. Take a concept such as sustainability (all the byzantine efficient tool to overcome the crisis. It was a case, as I would like to call it, of a language coherent with its historical moment.

metamorphosed into sustainable growth. The merits of unending

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, during the period known as the "Great World Crisis," the language of Keynesian macro-economics emerged. Keynesian macro-economics was not only the response to a crisis, but it allowed for its interpretation and, more than that, it was an efficient tool to overcome the crisis. It was a case, as I would like to call discussions about and around its definition notwithstanding) being it, of a language coherent with its historical moment.
The next language shift occurred in the 1950s when the "development" and "growth" are not discussed, because its assumed virtues are a "nicer" growth. Although Joseph Schumpeter had already written about the concepts of economic development in the dominant language, he was not allowed for in the dominant language. So, all that is allowed for in the dominant language is a "nicer" growth.

**110**

**Human Scale Development**

**A Stupid Way of Life**

**111**

Why do alternative languages not penetrate further? One reason is solutions. I strongly believe that we should start respecting the capacity of reflection and the power of silence a bit more.

who still adhere to the conventional and traditional positions. There This world probably requires something extremely simple—to be seems to be a prevalent attitude, summed up in such observations as: together with it, and enjoy the magnificent diversity such an effort can "We don't talk to them"; after all, "academic are worthless"; "Western bring about. But when I say be, I mean be, not be this or be that. This is science is
harmful"; "business people are insensible." After all, if we in my opinion the greatest personal challenge each of us is faced with: to are unable to dialogue intelligently, we will never cease to be be brave enough to be.
schizophrenics. But these skeptics will remain; we cannot expect them Now, since we are all concerned here with human well-being and to leave the planet. So those who are making efforts to change things the health of our planet, just let me remind you of a few facts. First, we should also try to make themselves understood by others. It is our turn, are living in a planet in which societies are increasingly interconnected and we must have a sense of self-criticism. I would never adhere to the and interdependent in everything that is positive and everything that is idea that we own the truth; that would be arrogant in the extreme. I simply negative. Actually, this is how it should be with every living system. presume that we are searching for something in good faith, but we Yet, due to the human attribute of stupidity, we fail to take advantage of may also be wrong, and looking back in twenty years, we may say: the conditions of interdependence and interconnectedness to give "How naive I was, how absurd my position. I never realized this and solidarity a chance to display its synergic possibilities for overcoming that."
our grave predicament. We still seem to favor the economic efficiency of

There is nothing wrong in making mistakes; there is something
greed and the political dynamics of paranoia. This maintains a global
wrong in being dishonest, and it is that which we cannot afford. We
sy stem in which poverty keeps increasing worldwide and a great deal of
make proposals, we make propositions, and this is natural among
the scientific and technological effort is directly or indirectly geared
humans. We tend to believe, probably influenced by the logical prin-
toward insuring the possibilities of destroying the entire human species.
ciple of the excluded middle, that every proposition is either right or
Second, it no longer makes sense to talk about developed and
wrong. That is why we are so passionate in always taking sides. I would
developing countries, unless we add an additional category: the under-
recommend Wittgenstein again because then you will realize that
developing countries or countries in a process of underdevelopment.
propositions are not necessarily right or wrong. In fact, perhaps the
This would be the category to fit most of the presently rich countries,
majority of propositions are nonsensical, and this is something very im-
where peoples’ quality of life is deteriorating at an alarming speed. Take
portant to keep in mind. We should also realize that it is very dangerous
one extreme case. A recent study in an early October 1989 issue of the
when beliefs turn into rigidities and inflexibilities. We have lived
Miami Herald shows that in the United States, one in every five children
through the historical experiences of blue and brown and red fundamen-
lives below the poverty line. A projection warns about the possibility
talist intolerances. I sometimes shudder when I think of the possibilities of
that by the year 2010, the proportion may rise to one in every three. And
a future green fundamentalist intolerance.
this in a country that has 6 percent of the world population and accounts
for almost 55 percent of the world's total energy consumption.

Some Solutions?
Third, one of the most tragic conditions, for which humanity as a
whole should feel pain as well as shame, is that we have managed to
This world is tired of grand solutions. It is tired of people that know
construct a world, as has been pointed out by UNICEF, where the
exactly what has to be done. It is fed up with people walking around
majority of the poor are children and, even worse, where the majority
with a briefcase full of solutions looking for the problems that fit those
of the children are poor. One thing should be clean: we cannot go on
pretending that we can solve an unsustainable poverty through the im-
plementation of an unsustainable development.

The paradoxical issue, it seems to me, is that we know a barricades or fortresses to protect that wealth from the immense lot; we probably know all we need to know, but we understand territories of poverty and misery extending beyond the barricades. very little. Let me elaborate on this statement.

It is interesting to note that this scenario appears more and more in the science fiction literature of the last decade. It is the sort of Mad Max atmosphere which the Australians have so brilliantly and then have explained that something, we have understood depicted in their films. Many of its symptoms are already found that something. This is a mistake because, as observed in the mental attitudes and in the actual creation of isolated areas foregoing chapter, describing plus explaining does not amount to for the very rich who do not want to be contaminated by
understanding. Let me remind you of the example I have on page seeing, hearing or having anything whatsoever to do with poverty.

106: You can never understand love, unless you fall in love. This Part of this scenario will be the resurgence of repressive regime s co-operating with the wealthy bubble s and imposing something of which you are not a part. Hence, how can we further hardships on the poor:

understand a society, a world, a planet, a biosphere, detaching.

S cena rio

th ree

p re sen t s

the

p o ssibility

of

a

great

ourselves from it?

t ran si tion—the

passing from a dominant rationality of blind
How many of us actually understand the problems we are economic competition and greed to a rationality based on the trying to solve? Problem solving belongs to the realm of knowledge principles of sharing and solidarity. We might call it the passing and requires fragmented thinking. In the realm of understanding from a Mutually Assured Destruction to an era of Mutually Assured problem posing and problem solving do not make sense, because Solidarity. But can we do it? Have we the tools, the will and the we must deal with transformations that start with, and within, talent of constructing a mutually assured solidarity? Can we ourselves.

overcome the stupidity that keeps such a possibility out of our reach? I believe that we can, and that we have the capacity. But there may not be too much time left.

Future Scenarios

We want to change the world, but we are confronted with a great paradox. At this stage of my life, I have reached the

No w, what about the future? In this matter I would like to conclusion that I lack the power to change the world or any share with you the insight of my good friend, the distinguished
significant part of it. I only have the power to change my self. And Argentinean
e col ogi st
Dr. Gilberto Gallopin, who has the fascinating thing is that if I decide to change my self, the re i s
proposed three possible scenarios.3
no police force in the world that can prevent me from doing so. It Scenario one, is the possibility of total or partial extinction of
is just my decision and if I want to do it, I can do it. No w, the point
the human species. The most obvious way for this to come about
is that if I change
my self,
something
may happen
a s a
would be a nuclear holo caust, which, a s we kno w, i s ba sed on
con sequence that may lead to a change in the world. But we are the principle of Mutually Assured Destruction. But apart from afraid of changing ourselves. It is always easier to try to change the nuclear holocaust there are a number of processes under others. The dictum of Socrates was "Know thy self," for he knew way that may bring this scenario about: the deterioration of the how afraid human beings are to know themselves. We know a lot about en vironment, destruction of forests, destruction of genetic of forests,
derogation of the way that may bring this scenario about: the deterioration of the how afraid human beings are to know themselves. We know a lot about
environment, destruction of forests, destruction of genetic diversity, pollution of seas, lakes and rivers, acid rain, greenhouse manage to change ourselves, something fascinating may happen to effect, ozone layer depletion and so on.
the world.
Scenario two is the barbarization of the world, a new I hope the day comes in which every one of us may be brave way of turning human kind into barbarians. Characteristic will enough to be capable of saying in absolute honesty: "I am, and be the emergence of bubbles of enormous wealth, surrounded by
because I am, I have become a part of . . ." It seems to me that this is the right direction to follow if we want to put an end to a stupid way of life.

114

_Human Scale Development_

NOTES

1. The Schumacher Memorial Lecture, upon which this chapter is based, was delivered before the fall of Ceausescu's regime.


3. Outlined in a private conversation with the author.
HUMAN SCALE DEVELOPMENT

As we embark on a new decade, Latin America and much of the Third World are in a state of crisis. This crisis is born out of the failure of both conventional state-directed development and neo-liberal market-oriented monetarism to meet vital needs of large and growing numbers of peoples. Human Scale Development sets forth another approach in confronting this crisis.

The approach presented in this book is focused on meeting freshly defined human needs, both material and non-material, through the self-reliant efforts of grassroots communities. The people thus became protagonists of their own future—subjects, rather than objects, of the development process, which must be conducted on a truly human scale. There is no possibility, the authors argue, for the active participation of the people—essential to sustained development—in gigantic systems where decisions flow from top to bottom.

Here is an imaginative and provocative contribution to the continuing debate on how to build more just and sustainable societies in both North and South. As such, it merits the attention not only of the international development community, but also of social activists, community leaders, government officials and scholars, teachers and students of economic, social and political change in industrialized countries as well as the Third World.