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## Refocusing on Needs

While neoliberalism and other mainstream models have had the greatest influence on postwar development, a range of alternative frameworks has also emerged in recent years. Given the shortcomings of the mainstream models, these alternative strategies are receiving increased attention. Analysis of the key elements of alternative approaches can provide new insights into the theory and practice of development which may help overcome the major failings of the mainstream frameworks.

At the same time, however, the alternative development tradition is not without its own contradictions, which must be resolved if it is to play a larger role in development processes. This chapter analyzes these issues by examining the refocusing of alternative approaches away from simple economic growth toward broader considerations of equitable development and meeting human needs.

### **Redistribution, Basic Needs, and the Origins of Alternative Development**

Since the early postwar period, the central focus of mainstream development strategies has been economic growth and the top-down diffusion of development impulses. Growth is treated mainly as a function of investment – a simple formula links appropriate levels of investment with the incremental capital-output ratio and desired growth rates. The process of economic growth is characteristically thought to follow a series of ‘stages’ which would ultimately spread benefits to all, thereby alleviating poverty and inequality. The diffusion of technology and the other attributes of modernization would allow the benefits of development to trickle down to the neediest sectors of society. Development is viewed as a top-down process in which important decision-making is controlled by major international

institutions in cooperation with local Third World elites. Typically, international and national 'experts' have conceived and designed development projects from the outside. The people to whom these projects are supposedly directed exist mainly in the abstract as socioeconomic indicators. Popular participation is normally restricted to some hastily organized meetings in which outside experts 'brief' local people about the objectives and activities of the projects.

### *Dissatisfaction with Mainstream Development Strategies*

By the end of the 1960s, many analysts began to notice that economic growth was not necessarily correlated with other development objectives, such as rapid employment creation, the reduction of poverty and inequalities, and the provision of basic needs. Even in some countries (e.g., Brazil, Iran, Kenya, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, South Africa) in which rapid economic growth had been attained, severe 'maldevelopment' problems were appearing. Growth was not eradicating poverty or providing jobs at the speed anticipated and, in many cases, income inequalities were increasing. By 1970, some 944 million people, or 52 percent of the total population of the South, were still living in absolute poverty (United Nations 1989: table 24, p. 39),<sup>1</sup> despite the development efforts of the previous decades. Moreover, evidence was accumulating of growing labor underemployment, especially in agriculture (e.g., Turnham 1971), and rising inequalities in income distribution (Adelman and Morris 1973; Fishlow 1972; Griffin 1969; Griffin and Khan 1972). Indeed, by the early 1970s, it had become 'a commonplace to argue that throughout much of the Third World growth was accompanied by increased inequality' (Griffin 1989: 165).

The experience of the 1950s and 1960s suggested that, while growth was important, it was by no means a sufficient condition to induce broadly based development. In fact, growth could be impoverishing for a significant section of the population if it was paid for by a steady deterioration in the distribution of income and assets. In many countries, growth had been accompanied by declining standards of living and decreased access to productive resources for large numbers of people, including landless farmworkers, peasant cultivators, and many informal-sector workers. As

<sup>1</sup> These figures are for the whole of the South, excluding China. The absolute poverty line is defined as the income level below which a nutritionally adequate diet and essential non-food items (i.e., clothing, shelter) are not affordable. By 1985, the United Nations reported that the poverty rate in the South had declined somewhat to 44 percent, while the absolute number of impoverished people had increased to 1.156 billion. Between 1970 and 1985, the figures show a declining rate of poverty in the South's major regions, except Africa. However, in terms of absolute numbers, poverty increased substantially in all regions of the South (ibid.).

Chenery et al. (1974: xiii) noted, 'It is now clear that more than a decade of rapid growth in underdeveloped countries has been of little or no benefit to perhaps a third of their population.' In fact, ample evidence was available to contradict the notion that top-down development and trickle-down strategies, whether based on industrial or agricultural growth, would alleviate widespread impoverishment. Economic growth had simply failed to filter down – a fact that led many analysts to conclude that the nature, rather than the pace, of growth was the crucial factor for development. Mahbab ul Haq (1976: 24–5), a Pakistani economist and World Bank official, remarked:

In country after country, economic growth is being accompanied by rising disparities . . . the masses are complaining that development has not touched their ordinary lives. Very often, economic growth has meant very little social justice. It has been accompanied by rising unemployment, worsening social services, and increasing absolute and relative poverty.

As the United Nations First Development Decade (1961–71) gave way to the second, a growing number of theorists and practitioners of development concluded that the focus of development on macroeconomic growth had been misplaced. Rather, they argued, the focus should be on the 'animate' instead of the 'inanimate' – on human resources, as measured by quality-of-life considerations, rather than on material resources, as measured by GNP figures (Black 1991: 20–1). Successful development should be measured not in abstract, aggregate growth indices, but according to other people-oriented criteria, such as the universal provision of basic needs, the promotion of social equity, the enhancement of human productive and creative capabilities, and the capacity of communities to set and meet their own development goals. New development approaches should be oriented toward the satisfaction of basic human needs and desires, particularly at the local community level; and development projects should 'build development around people rather than people around development' (ul Haq 1976: 27–8).

### *Redistributive and Basic-Needs Strategies*

As dissatisfaction with the mainstream models became widespread within the development community during the early 1970s, many international and bilateral aid agencies began searching for alternative, more people-oriented approaches. Efforts were made to uncouple the direct, exclusive relationship between growth and development to make room in development programs for other considerations, such as distributional equity and poverty alleviation, basic-needs provisions, and the adoption of appropriate technologies. Programs promoting decentralized patterns of development were given

prominence, and emphasis was shifted to projects which directly targeted the poor, especially in rural areas. Many organizations adopted a rather broad, eclectic, and loosely defined 'neopopulist' ideology (see Kirching 1982), in contrast to the well-structured, but narrow, theoretical base offered by neoclassical economics. The effect was to redefine the aims of development toward fostering fairer distributions of income and resources, encouraging local participation, and promoting small-scale projects employing socially and environmentally appropriate technologies. It was thought that by targeting the poor and adapting programs to suit local conditions and needs, growth and development would proceed in a dispersed manner 'from below' (Stöhr and Taylor 1981), rather than following the conventional top-down, concentrated pattern. Through encouraging 'self-help' and participatory decision-making, the latent energies and creativity of the poor could be directed toward rapid and more appropriate forms of development.

Some isolated, halting efforts had been made to initiate alternative development projects in a few Third World countries. Bernstein and Campbell (1985), for example, report that a 'populist movement,' which stressed local farming practices and indigenous forms of knowledge, gained some support within the British Colonial Office during the 1930s. Similarly, Moser (1989) traces the origins of the concept of 'community development' to the British, who used it to develop basic education and social welfare in some colonial areas. In the 1950s and 1960s, some small-farm development projects, food-for-work, and labor-intensive public works programs were begun in a few countries (Peck 1988). However, the impetus for alternative development projects really began in the early 1970s when many large international organizations (such as the World Bank, ILO, UNEP, UNICEF) and bilateral aid agencies (e.g., USAID, CIDA) became involved.

In his presidential address to the 1973 World Bank annual meeting, Robert McNamara expressed the view that the mainstream development strategies of the 1950s and 1960s had made an unacceptably small impact on Third World poverty and inequalities. Largely through the prodding of its Development Research Center under Hollis Chenery, the World Bank began to adopt a new development approach, termed 'redistribution with growth' (Chenery et al. 1974). Redistribution and growth were treated as complementary rather than contradictory elements of development; sustainable growth would require redistributive policies and targeted programs for the poor during the initial stages of development, instead of simply relying on trickle-down mechanisms to eventually spread the benefits of growth. Priority was given to employment creation and basic-needs provisions rather than economic growth per se. In order to maximize job creation, emphasis was placed on small/medium agriculture and the informal sector. Similarly, basic-needs provisions were targeted for poorer and severely underserved areas, such as outlying regions dominated by peasant cultivators.

Although it contained these new emphases, redistribution with growth represented a modification rather than a clear break with previous mainstream development strategies. It retained much of the optimism of the earlier models in its promotion of the benefits of market-led growth. Redistribution of income toward the poor essentially remained tied to rapid economic growth; the traditional recipe of balanced growth was simply extended to cover social as well as economic development (Hettne 1990: 57). Although there was considerable evidence that the poor formed the majority in most countries, the Bank tended to group the poor into administratively convenient 'pockets of poverty' (Friedmann 1992: 58), which could be treated by targeted programs rather than more fundamental changes within macro-policies. Moreover, despite the rhetorical stress placed on community participation, a top-down, social-engineering approach continued to characterize the Bank's development projects. The political dimension of development was given some recognition, especially the stabilizing impact that increased consumption levels among the poor would have on long-term development. However, concrete measures to empower popular organizations to take a more active role in political and economic decision-making were largely avoided.

Parallel to the World Bank's strategy of redistribution with growth, the International Labor Organization (ILO) adopted a basic-needs approach during the 1970s. The idea of basic needs may have originated in a report by a group of Latin American theorists (Herrera et al. 1976), prepared for the Bariloche Foundation, Canada (see Preston 1986: 109). However, the basic-needs concept was formally placed on the international development agenda at a 1976 ILO World Employment Conference in which the participants adopted a 'Declaration of Principles and Program of Action for a Basic Needs Strategy of Development' (in ILO 1976: 189-214). As it was elaborated by the ILO, the basic-needs concept put equal emphasis on growth and redistribution. Although it focused on the needs of the poor, it was not opposed to rapid growth in the modern sector; rather, it sought to strike a more balanced approach to development (Emmerij 1987). Basic needs were defined to include the following elements: minimum requirements of private consumption (e.g., food, shelter, clothing); essential services of collective consumption (e.g., electricity, water, sanitation, health care, education, public transport); participation of people in decisions affecting their lives; satisfaction of basic needs within a broader framework of basic human rights; and employment as both a means and an end (see Ghai 1977).

The ILO's version of basic needs concentrated on harnessing local resources and providing the poor with the means to fulfill their development potential. It attempted to define basic needs in operational terms and it established performance criteria and targets for countries. It also acknowledged the need for structural (internal) change in the development patterns of Third

World societies to meet the basic needs of the poor (Streeten 1981). Even though the ILO regarded its version as a minimum definition of basic needs, it nevertheless created much controversy at the conference (Friedmann 1992: 60). Some employers' delegates and representatives from core capitalist countries believed that the ILO was over-emphasizing the need for structural change and redistributive measures; instead, they called for attention to be placed on rapid economic growth as the most important remedy for problems of unemployment and poverty. Other delegates regarded basic needs as a key unifying theme around which a new alternative approach to development could be constructed which would be radically different from previous models that stressed top-down growth and capitalist modernization. Such controversy has continued to swirl around the basic-needs approach.

In addition to the World Bank and ILO, a number of United Nations organizations figured prominently in the creation of an alternative development agenda in the 1970s, including the UN Environment Program (UNEP), UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN Development Program (UNDP), UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), UN Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). During the 1970s, these organizations held a number of landmark meetings dedicated to reformulating the development agenda. Particularly important was a symposium on 'Patterns of Resource Use, Environment and Development Strategies' convened by the UNEP and UNCTAD in Cocoyoc, Mexico in 1974. The Cocoyoc meetings brought together a wide range of development experts from all parts of the world, who represented two major strands of the nascent alternative development movement: those who argued that priority attention should be given to satisfying people's basic needs rather than simple growth maximization, and those who were concerned with the 'outer limits' of the world's ecological capabilities to sustain growth (Friedmann 1992: 2). At the end of the meetings, the participants issued a manifesto, the 'Cocoyoc Declaration,' which stated:

Thirty years have passed since the signing of the United Nations Charter launched the effort to establish a new international order. Today that order has reached a critical turning point. Its hopes of creating a better life for the whole human family have been largely frustrated. It has proved impossible to meet the 'inner limits' of satisfying fundamental human needs. On the contrary, more people are hungry, sick, shelterless and illiterate today than when the United Nations was first set up.

At the same time, new and unforeseen concerns have begun to darken the international prospects. Environmental degradation and the rising pressure on resources raise the question whether the 'outer limits' of the planet's physical integrity may not be at risk. (Cocoyoc Declaration 1974: 170)

The Cocoyoc Declaration went on to note that any process of growth that did not lead to the fulfillment of basic human needs was a distortion of development. Moreover, development should address not just basic human needs, but other considerations, such as freedom of expression and self-realization in work. 'Overconsumptive' types of development that violate the 'inner limits' of humans and the 'outer limits' of nature should be avoided. More people-centered and environmentally sustainable forms of development would require increased self-reliance. The South should work to establish a new international economic order (NIEO) in which mutual benefits of trade and cooperation would be derived from more symmetric global relations. However, until a more just international economic order could be created, Third World countries might want to pursue more self-reliance through 'a temporary detachment from the present system.' In the end, it would be futile 'to develop self-reliance through full participation in a system that perpetuates economic dependence' (Cocoyoc Declaration 1974: 174).

For Hettne (1990: 152), the Cocoyoc Declaration marked 'the birth of an "alternative" trend in development theory.' Alternative development approaches received additional attention in the mid-1970s, especially from two other sources. The first was the Swedish Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, which published a document in 1975 entitled *What Now: Another Development?*<sup>2</sup> Mainstream development models were criticized for neglecting issues of mass poverty and sustainability. A broadly humanist approach to development was outlined, which advocated 'development geared to the satisfaction of needs, beginning with the basic needs of the poor who constitute the world's majority; at the same time, development to ensure the humanization of man by the satisfaction of his needs for expression, creativity, conviviality, and for deciding his own destiny' (Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation 1975: 7). The second source was the International Foundation for Development Alternatives (IFDA), which was established in 1976 in Nyon, Switzerland. The principal purpose of the IFDA was to promote an alternative, bottom-up approach to development, termed the 'Third System Project,' which was dedicated to exploring new methods of raising consciousness and increasing participation by grassroots movements in development decision-making. A distinction was drawn

2 This document was prepared by the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation for the Seventh Special Session of the UN General Assembly and was further elaborated in the journal *Development Dialogue*. Another journal, *Alternatives*, published by the Institute for World Order (New York), also became a forum for alternative development approaches. While most of this work took place in the North, some research centers for alternative development also began to appear in the South, such as the Center for Developing Societies (New Delhi, India).

between the First System of political power (dominated by the state), the Second System of economic power (dominated by transnational capital), and the Third System of people's power, based on voluntary organization, consciousness raising, and local action. The Third System was composed of people acting individually and collectively through voluntary institutions and social movements. It was regarded as the principal source of new values and visions and thus held the most potential for engendering meaningful change. According to the IFDA (1980: 69-70):

The 'third system' is that part of the people which is reaching a critical consciousness of their role. It is not a party or an organization; it constitutes a movement of those free associations, citizens and militants, who perceive that the essence of history is the endless struggle by which people try to master their own destiny - the process of humanization of man. The third system includes groupings actively serving people's aims and interests, as well as political and cultural militants who, while not belonging directly to the grassroots, endeavour to express people's views and to join their struggle. This movement tries to assert itself in all spaces of decision making by putting pressure on the state and economic power and by organizing to expand the autonomous power of people.

### *The Evolution of the Basic-Needs Concept*

Perhaps the central focus of alternative development approaches in the 1970s was on basic needs. The basic-needs debate drew a fundamental distinction between economic growth and the satisfaction of basic needs. As a result, more direct, targeted methods were proposed for poverty alleviation, rather than the indirect approach of reliance on growth and trickle-down mechanisms to eventually benefit the poor. The satisfaction of basic needs figured prominently in the alternative approaches adopted by several international organizations, such as the World Bank, ILO, and UNEP, as well as many bilateral aid agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and independent development institutes. However, these approaches also differed substantially in their conceptualization of basic needs and the methods proposed for fulfilling basic-needs requirements. As the basic-needs concept developed, two schools of thought evolved which distinguished between a universal and objective interpretation of needs, on the one hand, and a more subjective and historically contingent interpretation based in the context of particular social systems, on the other (Lederer 1980).

The first approach was mainly associated with the World Bank, ILO, and some bilateral aid agencies of core capitalist countries. It concentrated on needs which in all societies are necessary for physical reproduction. It took a positive, quantifiable view of basic needs. According to the

ILO (1976: 32), for example, basic needs were defined as 'the minimum requirements of a family for private consumption, especially food, clothing, and shelter, as well as 'essential services provided by and for the community at large, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transport, and health and education facilities.' The ILO and other international organizations struggled mightily to define hierarchies of basic needs so that development programs might be targeted to maximize benefits for the poor. Streeten and Burki (1978), for example, distinguished between 'core needs' (food, water, clothing, and shelter) and all other needs. Friedmann (1992: 63) notes that this definition of core needs was probably influenced by the focus of the international agencies on immediate, tangible needs (e.g., food, housing) and the desire to avoid more troublesome philosophical considerations (e.g., in which food requirements might have to be weighed in comparison with liberty or other concerns). For Griffin (1989: 172), this approach was rather modest in its targets. It did not hold out any immediate hope of providing people with fuller, more meaningful lives, but merely indicated what would be required to attain certain minimum basic-needs objectives over the next generation.

The second approach to basic needs was largely associated with the work of some UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and independent development institutes. It tended to concentrate on the more subjective concerns of what makes life worth living in different cultures and societies, and was much more normative and qualitative than the first approach. Some analysts may have thought of basic needs as consisting of a 'shopping list' of essential private-consumption goods and public services. But the second approach to basic needs clearly distanced itself from this interpretation. Priority was given not only to the minimum physical requirements for human subsistence, but also to a range of other less tangible needs, such as protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity, and freedom (see Max-Neef 1986). Rather than being universal, finite, and quantifiable, these latter needs are infinite, qualitative, and subject to change across cultures and societies. Instead of concentrating merely on 'things,' they include the broader needs and desires which make life meaningful to people within particular historically constituted contexts.

From this perspective, basic needs are transformed into political claims for entitlements. The poor are no longer regarded simply as victims or passive recipients of outside aid, but as people who, despite enormous constraints, are actively engaged in the struggle to define their own lives and means of livelihood. For poverty programs to be effective, the poor must take an active role in the provisioning of their own needs, rather than simply relying on the state or outside organizations to solve their problems. However, in order to participate in this process, the poor must often receive some initial assistance to provide them with the means to help themselves. The

basic-needs approach does not necessarily require more aid or higher levels of public spending; indeed, government expenditures already account for a relatively high proportion of GNP in most Third World countries (Griffin 1989: 173). Instead, the approach demands greater popular participation. On the one hand, this requires a change in the organization of institutions and agencies involved in development programs, and on the other, the attainment by the poor of the means to become more organized and self-reliant. At both of these levels, basic needs tend to become highly politicized, inextricably tied to issues of representation, participation, and empowerment, over which different classes and social groups contend within the political arena. As Conger Lind (1992: 144) notes in an article on poor women's movements and basic needs:

The politicization of 'basic needs' demonstrates the way in which such 'needs' are actually much more than just the desire for bread and water. As poor women base their politics on their reproductive roles, they challenge the meaning of ascribed gender roles as well as the implications these roles have in the reproduction of society. They are not only struggling for access to resources, they are also challenging dominant representations of gender and incorporating this into their politics. State policy, then, cannot easily fulfill poor women's 'needs' simply by providing them with economic resources.

### *The Focus on Rural Development*

Beginning in the early 1970s, many of the alternative development programs of various aid agencies and international organizations focused on rural development as the key to reducing levels of underemployment, increasing access to public goods and services, and lowering poverty and income inequalities in most developing countries. Rural development emerged as a major issue as it became clear that previous development approaches had generally failed to improve the well-being of the rural population. Aside from some highly urbanized parts of Asia and Latin America, the majority of the poor in most Third World countries continue to reside in the countryside. This is particularly true for many of the poorest countries, in which some 80 percent or more of the population may be rural (Grindle 1988). As a result, over vast areas of the South, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, the most severe cases of absolute poverty remain largely a rural phenomenon (von Braun and Paulina 1990). Moreover, access to basic public goods and services (e.g., health care, and education) is usually most inadequate in outlying rural areas, thereby compounding problems commonly associated with poverty, such as high morbidity and child mortality and low life expectancy.

The focus on rural development inevitably raised many important policy

issues concerning the relative neglect of the countryside as resources were concentrated in urban areas, the bias of development efforts toward industry at the expense of agriculture, and the manipulation of internal terms of trade against agriculture, particularly domestic food production. These issues were grouped together within the broad concept of 'urban bias,' which became an early theme of organizations such as the ILO and World Bank. It was asserted that an urban bias in the development programs of many countries had drawn away resource allocations from rural locations to meet urban and industrially based priorities, thereby adversely affecting both economic efficiency and distributional equity (e.g., Bates 1981; Lipton 1977). Accompanying their overall urban bias, development programs had particularly neglected the needs of small/medium agricultural producers, who continued to supply the bulk of domestic foodstuffs in most countries. Typically, development models had viewed rural development mainly from an urban perspective; in almost all countries, an urban-based network of public-private institutions had subsumed the dynamic of overall development to the rhythms and possibilities of growth in the urban sector. However, urban bias was regarded as particularly inappropriate and wasteful for many poorer countries in which the majority of people and economic activities continue to be concentrated in rural areas:

Urban bias does not seem particularly helpful in the context of underdeveloped countries where upwards of 80 percent of the population live in rural areas, where agriculture constitutes the fundamental source of national wealth, where urban places have traditionally expropriated the rural surplus, and where the economy remains externally oriented. If development is to be for the people, there is a strong *prima facie* case that it should largely consist of development in and for rural areas: it is contended that urban biased strategies are incapable of achieving these aims. (Dartoo and Gray 1979: 261)

Not only had overall development efforts been marked by a pervasive urban bias, but agricultural programs had often reinforced structural inequalities in many rural sectors by promoting a 'bimodal' agricultural development strategy (Johnston and Kilby 1975; Thorbecke 1979). As a result, a bifurcated or dual pattern of rural development had been strengthened in which a few large-scale, capital-intensive farms, usually concentrated in the best agricultural zones and oriented toward agroexport production, were juxtaposed to a mass of small-scale peasants employing rudimentary techniques, often under precarious environmental conditions, to produce basic foodstuffs for their own subsistence and the local market. Although bimodal agricultural strategies became common in many parts of the South, they were particularly prevalent in Latin America, where

they tended to reinforce and extend the traditional *latifundio-minifundio* pattern of rural development.<sup>3</sup> In most areas, bimodal strategies have been associated with policies favoring cash crop and agroexport production using relatively capital-intensive technologies, rather than basic foods production employing more labor-intensive techniques (Johnston and Clark 1982).

In addition to the agroexport model, the Green Revolution also contributed to the deepening of bimodal patterns of agricultural development (see, e.g., Conway and Barbier 1988; Johnston and Clark 1982; Shiva 1991). The Green Revolution focused on increasing food production, especially grains, rather than agroexports. It was envisioned that an increased supply of grains would lower the relative cost of food and, in turn, help to drive down per unit labor costs for both agriculture and industry. Lower unit costs would raise profitability levels, permitting higher rates of savings and investment and a faster rate of overall growth. Benefits would accrue not only to agriculture, but also to industries, especially those located in rural areas. Increased agricultural production would provide raw materials (e.g., for food-processing industries); stimulate the demand for agricultural inputs and intermediate goods (such as fertilizer, pesticides, irrigation machinery); and create an expanded rural market for simple consumption goods (e.g., bicycles, radios). Technological innovation was regarded as the key to accelerating agricultural growth, and it was from this focus that the Green Revolution strategy derived its name. Improved hybrid seed varieties, greater use of fertilizers and other chemical inputs, investment in irrigation systems, expanded agronomically based research and agricultural extension services, and increased rural credit were emphasized.

Thus, the Green Revolution adopted a very technocratic orientation. Relatively little emphasis was placed on the need for land redistribution and tenure reforms, institutional change, or the direct participation and mobilization of the rural population in development programs. While the Green Revolution enjoyed broad success in raising grain production, many analysts argue that this was accomplished at high social and environmental costs (e.g., Bartra and Otero 1987; Conway and Barbier 1988; Hazell and Ramasamy 1991; Shiva 1991; Zarkovic 1988). Many of the technological innovations proved to be labor-displacing and created a greater dependence on relatively costly external inputs, such as hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and irrigated water. Small/medium producers were often squeezed out of traditional markets by their inability to adopt the new

technologies (through lack of capital and rural credit) and by falling producer prices (resulting from the increased output of larger producers). Green Revolution technologies have also often been linked to the penetration of transnational corporations into rural areas (especially through increasing dependence on hybrid seed types and chemical inputs) and to growing ecological problems (e.g., soil erosion, chemical contamination of soils and groundwater, depletion of water resources, greater crop vulnerability, decreased genetic diversity). Moreover, because they have generally not been accompanied by redistributive measures, these technologies have commonly widened rural inequalities in both socioeconomic terms (favoring richer, larger-scale farmers) and regional terms (favoring concentrations of large producers in areas with irrigated water). Both of these tendencies have accentuated the dominant bimodal pattern of rural development in most countries.

In contrast to a bimodal agricultural strategy, proponents of redistributive development approaches commonly advocate 'unimodal' strategies (e.g., Adelman 1975; Johnston and Kilby 1975; Johnston and Clark 1982). A unimodal strategy seeks to modernize and raise production levels of the entire agricultural sector, which is comprised of relatively uniform, small/medium farm units. Perhaps the best examples of successful unimodal strategies are found in South Korea and Taiwan, where extensive agrarian reforms were followed by development programs designed to improve basic social and economic infrastructure, raise levels of rural productivity and standards of living, and integrate small/medium agricultural producers into the dynamic of national economic growth. Unimodal strategies have also shown success in a few other Third World areas – notably in the Meseta Central of Costa Rica, where historically a relatively egalitarian pattern of rural development evolved in stark contrast to the polarized *latifundio-minifundio* pattern prevailing in most of the rest of Latin America.<sup>4</sup>

Unimodal strategies not only stress an egalitarian structure of land tenure, but also favor increased access to rural credit and other means of production, investments in basic social and economic infrastructure (education, health care, transportation and communications networks, etc.), and agricultural extension and other programs designed to promote technological change appropriate to smaller-scale, labor-intensive operations. Unimodal strategies seek to create an internally articulated pattern of development in which rising levels of production and consumption by small/medium farmers are linked to other local economic sectors in a mutually reinforcing manner through backward/forward linkages (e.g., supply of raw materials

<sup>3</sup> The origins of the *latifundio-minifundio* pattern of rural development in most Latin American countries can be traced back to the early colonial period. However, land concentrations accompanying the postwar expansion of agroexports significantly reinforced traditional dualistic rural structures. *Latifundios* are large-scale estates, while *minifundios* are small farms, often insufficient to meet the subsistence needs of a peasant family.

<sup>4</sup> Although recent trends of increasing foreign ownership, land concentration, and peasant displacements in the Meseta Central (the central plateau region of Costa Rica) have begun to erode the traditional unimodal pattern of rural development in this area.

for agro-industries, demand for industrially produced agricultural inputs and consumption goods). However, despite theoretical arguments and empirical evidence supporting unimodal strategies, they continue to face considerable obstacles and have yet to be adopted in more than a handful of countries. Johnston and Clark (1982) list a number of these obstacles, virtually all of which have a common source – in political opposition rooted in the distribution of power relations in developing countries. In most cases, the adoption of a unimodal strategy would significantly weaken the economic and political power base of rural and urban elite groups, which usually exert a dominant influence on policy-making. This begs the question of how unimodal strategies can be adopted in most Third World countries simply through rural development initiatives and without complementary structural changes within overarching political and economic relations.

The origins of redistributive rural development initiatives in most areas of the South can be traced back to the agrarian reforms of the 1960s and 1970s. Agrarian reform has followed a number of different paths, but may be loosely defined as any state-sanctioned change in land tenure and associated institutions which ostensibly is designed to benefit small cultivators, landless laborers, or other groups of rural poor (e.g., Jones et al. 1982; Thiesenhusen 1989). Lipton (1993) identifies a number of different types of agrarian reforms, including those which focus on landownership ceilings and redistribution, the purchase of plots by tenants and sharecroppers, restrictions on rental arrangements and other forms of tenancy, land-tiling and freehold laws, the 'patrilization' of land from colonizers to the rural poor, and the creation or privatization of state and collective farms. Agrarian reforms have sometimes also been accompanied by resettlement strategies designed to relocate peasants into frontier areas (e.g., Indonesia's transmigration strategy, Amazonian colonization schemes in Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador) or to concentrate patterns of dispersed settlement by grouping peasants together into villages (e.g., the villagization movement in Tanzania and Mozambique). Perhaps the largest of these resettlement strategies took place in Tanzania where some 13 million peasants were transferred from their traditional plots into 7,000 'village communities' by the *ujamaa* movement during the 1970s (McCall and Skutsch 1983).

Despite much rhetoric to the contrary, agrarian reforms and resettlement schemes have generally been administered in a paternalistic, top-down manner which has systematically excluded local peasant organizations from meaningful participation in decision-making. Moreover, these rural development initiatives have attempted to affect a redistribution of rural income and resources, while leaving the thrust of national development strategies largely unchanged. Agrarian reform efforts have characteristically reflected a localized perspective in which development solutions are sought within the rural sector itself, but little recognition is afforded to the possible

need for complementary systemwide structural change. In a broad analysis of Latin American agrarian reforms, de Janvry (1981: 203) concludes that the main economic thrust of the reforms was not actually aimed at the peasant sector at all, but was directed toward the capitalist transformation of the large-scale *latifundio* sector: by putting idle land into production, reorganizing precapitalist estates on a capitalist basis, and stimulating investments in capital-intensive technologies. Similarly, he finds that the principal political purpose of the reforms was to stabilize social relations under the peripheral capitalist model by removing state control from the landholding oligarchy, deepening rural proletarianization through the elimination of semifeudal labor exploitation, creating a stable class of middle peasants, and reinforcing an emergent class of capital-intensive bourgeois producers. The reforms were thus aimed not only at preempting a more radical solution to the 'agrarian question' in the wake of the Cuban Revolution, but, more fundamentally, at the consolidation of both capitalist agrarian relations and state control over the direction of rural development (*ibid.*).

By the early 1970s, interest in agrarian reform as a method for creating a more unimodal agricultural structure in areas such as Latin America was already declining. A two-pronged approach to rural development was adopted in many countries which institutionalized conventional 'dualist' notions of relatively autonomous modern and traditional sectors in agriculture (de Janvry 1981; Grindle 1986). On the one hand, integrated rural development (IRD) programs were established to assist small/medium farmers in producing a marketable surplus beyond their own subsistence needs. On the other hand, separate programs were created to provide incentives for larger producers to increase investments and expand output, especially of agroexports. This new rural development approach generally avoided the contentious issue of land redistribution; it also widened the scope for state intervention in various elements of rural production, circulation, and consumption (e.g., health care and education, agricultural extension services, rural credit, infrastructure provision, marketing). Politically, the extensive scope of IRD allowed the state to expand its influence among a broad range of rural client groups, while a de-emphasis on land redistribution avoided confrontations with powerful landowners and their allies.

Although the theoretical roots of IRD remained within traditional dualist notions of Third World agriculture, the approach also developed emphases which distinguished it from the conventional neoclassical agricultural models. Its programs were more specifically targeted toward problems of rural poverty and inequalities, and they expanded state intervention beyond the immediate realm of agricultural production *per se* (Harriss 1982; Lea and Chaudhri 1983). Generally, IRD may be defined as 'a process of combining multiple development services into a coherent delivery system with the aim



of improving the well-being of rural populations' (Honadle et al. 1980: 4). More specifically, Cohen (1980) attributes the following characteristics to IRD projects: a particular geographic area focus; design and implementation by outside groups, typically a national development agency assisted by an international donor; concentration on coordinating provision of public goods and services; and use of a multisectoral orientation, while emphasizing agricultural production.

Generally, IRD viewed agricultural growth as a necessary but, by itself, insufficient condition for rural development. Emphasis was placed on both production and the spheres of circulation and consumption. The qualitative dimension of rural development, involving 'quality of life' considerations, local capacity-building, and improving access of the rural poor to basic goods and services was also stressed. IRD was envisioned as a multisectoral, multifunctional development initiative. It asserted that rural poverty stems from a host of interrelated problems requiring a package of coordinated responses - from increased agricultural extension services and rural credit, to more efficient distribution and marketing channels, to improvements in basic social infrastructure, and health care and education. Because of their multifaceted nature, IRD projects often required a rather complex bureaucracy to administer them as special development enclaves. Typically, projects were identified and formulated by state agencies and international donors with little initiative from the local rural population. Moreover, most projects were separately funded and administered outside of regular state agencies, often with considerable assistance from foreign donors. This almost always placed IRD projects under tremendous pressure to show immediate tangible results, thereby negating possibilities for many longer-term development initiatives. As was common with redistributive strategies in general, the IRD approach was theoretically eclectic: it showed a respect for neoclassical economics, but was interdisciplinarily and even borrowed some concepts from neo-Marxist thought (Thiesenhusen 1987). However, despite its somewhat eclectic nature, the IRD approach also re-created, in slightly altered form, conventional dualistic notions of modern and traditional rural sectors operating in virtual isolation from one another, for which separate programs might be successfully developed. The neglect of any serious analysis of the impact of overall development strategies or of interrelationships among rural classes and social groups prevented most IRD projects from addressing many of the root causes of rural poverty and inequalities. The best of them became show-cases for international donors and the regimes in power, but most IRD projects failed to produce the desired results. As Friedmann (1992: 94) notes, 'In quantitative terms, they constitute[d] little more than a gesture.'

### *Major Elements of the Alternative Tradition*

While no development strategy explicitly aims for egalitarian development, mainstream strategies have implicitly assumed that inequalities, in both socioeconomic and regional terms, are a necessary price for growth. A trade-off is assumed between distribution and growth, especially during the early stages of development, so that redistributive measures may raise short-term consumption levels of the poor, but at the cost of reduced investment levels and diminished prospects for long-term growth. By contrast, the alternative development strategies that emerged from the 1970s were based on the assumption that there need be no conflict or trade-off between redistributive measures and other policies designed to accelerate growth. In fact, it was generally asserted that 'redistribution before growth,' and not vice versa, made more sense for development strategies. The alternative strategies, therefore, placed a higher priority on the need for immediate redistributive measures; they favored a direct, targeted approach to alleviating poverty and reducing inequalities rather than waiting for the 'trickle-down' effects of growth to occur. Because of their focus on direct redistributive measures, the alternative strategies have sometimes been called 'the Third World equivalent of Western social democracy' (Griffin 1989: 241).

As the alternative strategies developed during the 1970s, three distinct approaches evolved concerning redistributive measures (Emmerij 1987; Griffin 1989). Initially, there were strategists who stressed employment-intensive development measures for the working poor. Next, there were strategists who linked growth with redistribution by advocating measures that would transfer to the poor an increasing part of the increment to total income that would arise from accelerated growth. Such measures might take the form either of consumption transfers or of a redirection in investment toward the poor. Finally, there were strategists who focused on the elaboration of basic-needs approaches. Some concentrated on core basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, shelter) universally required for human subsistence, while others incorporated more culturally specific considerations (e.g., quality of life, identity, freedom) into the basic-needs approach. Especially for the latter, greater stress was placed on helping the poor to acquire more economic and political power. Within most polarized Third World societies, this would require a redistribution in the ownership of productive assets, especially land. Since most of the South's poor continue to be rural, it was generally believed that redistributive strategies ought to be based on a unimodal pattern of rural development dominated by small/medium farmers. Various rural development initiatives were promoted toward that end, including basic agrarian reforms (i.e., directed toward land redistribution) and more eclectic integrated rural development programs.

Complementary to their emphasis on redistributive measures, alternative strategies also tended to concentrate on relatively small-scale projects set at the local or community level. Within urban areas, informal sector activities and community-based groups commonly became focuses for attention; in rural areas, development efforts were usually directed at local organizations composed of farmers or agricultural workers. Typically, targeted programs for the poor were managed at the local level, particularly those stressing basic-needs provisions and investments in human capital (e.g., education, nutrition, health-care programs). Generally, alternative strategies regarded the local scale as especially important to a broad, human-centered approach to development in which non-material needs and quality-of-life considerations figured prominently alongside concerns for material welfare. Local organizations and primary communities were thought to be critical to people's 'creative unfolding,' through which a host of non-material needs (e.g., self-identity and expression, liberty, participation) might be more effectively pursued. It was at the local level (in neighborhoods, schools, parishes, sports clubs, women's organizations, and other community-based groups) that personal and societal developments were thought to interact most powerfully – thereby offering opportunities for direct, targeted development programs to achieve a maximum impact on changing at least some people's lives.

In one form or another, virtually all of the international organizations and bilateral aid agencies involved in alternative development projects also placed greater attention on questions of local participation – at least in theory, if not always in practice. Emphasis was particularly given to fostering local institutions to enhance people's participation in the selection, design, and management of development projects at the community level. Many analysts criticized tendencies to impose inappropriate, top-down projects without much public input from the affected communities themselves. Participation could be furthered both by decentralizing state agencies and other development institutions to make them more accountable to local groups and by helping the poor to represent themselves more effectively by strengthening community organizations and other local pressure groups. Participation was viewed as an important end in itself, but it was also linked to a number of instrumental values (Griffin 1989: 174). First, participation in community-based organizations could help to identify local priorities so that development projects might better reflect grassroots needs and wishes. Second, participation in popular organizations and groups (e.g., neighborhood groups, cooperatives, land reform committees, irrigation societies, women's organizations) might assist in mobilizing local support for development programs and projects. Third, increased local participation might reduce the costs of many public services and development projects by shifting more responsibility to grassroots organizations (e.g., by using the

voluntary labor of the beneficiaries of projects, by employing local people rather than highly paid outsiders).

In conjunction with increased participation, many alternative strategies also called for greater self-reliance. More broadly based, participatory development strategies would, it was thought, lay the necessary foundations for a more autonomous and sustainable pattern of growth. Self-reliance implies making more effective use of a society's own strengths and resources, both human and natural. The movement toward self-reliance can also take place at a variety of scales, from the local to the regional or even the national. Within highly dependent, polarized societies, the concept of self-reliance, if followed to its logical end, implies structural changes to allow for genuine cooperation at various levels based on the principle of symmetry. The transformation from a dependent to a self-reliant society involves not only broad, structural changes, but also more localized, individual adjustments. For this reason, participation was stressed so that individuals and groups within local communities could understand and react appropriately to the changes taking place.

Although alternative strategies tended to focus on the community level, some attempts were also made to extend the concept of self-reliance into the international realm, especially through development of the complementary NIEO (New International Economic Order) perspective (see, e.g., Cocoyoc Declaration 1974; Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation 1975). While the NIEO perspective emphasized the need for more symmetric global relations and the mutual benefits that could be derived from increased North-South cooperation, the concept of self-reliance stressed the need to reduce external dependence by making more effective use of one's own resources.

Within at least some alternative approaches, these two perspectives converged in the 1970s to support more selective participation by Third World countries in the international economic system. Instead of continuing dependence on exogenous universal models, it was thought that different conditions among Third World countries necessitated a variety of strategies which, in turn, required exploring the possibilities for new forms of participation, cooperation, and more endogenous, self-reliant development.

To recap, then, alternative development strategies, although they were generally eclectic and did not depend on any well-defined theoretical base, were characterized by a number of common elements, including the following:

- 1 a move toward direct, redistributive measures targeting the poor, instead of continued reliance on the eventual indirect trickle-down effects of growth;
- 2 a focus on local, small-scale projects, often linked with either rural

- 3 an emphasis on basic-needs and human-resource development, especially through the provision of public goods and services;
- 4 a refocusing away from a narrow, growth-first definition of development toward a more broadly based, human-centered conception;
- 5 a concern for local or community participation in the design and implementation of development projects; and
- 6 a stress on increased self-reliance, which might extend to a variety of scales, to reduce outside dependency and create the conditions for more cooperative, socially and environmentally sustainable development.

#### *Criticisms of Alternative Strategies*

As will be seen in later chapters, alternative development strategies have been substantially modified in recent years to include new emphases, concepts, and methods. Much of this modification resulted from a number of criticisms leveled at the alternative strategies of the 1970s. Such criticism essentially called into question the usefulness of such strategies and whether they really represented a viable alternative to mainstream development approaches. Further criticism was directed at the methods used to design and implement alternative development programs and projects. Many analysts questioned whether these methods were fundamentally different from those of the mainstream tradition. In many cases, it was concluded that a large gap existed between the theory or rhetoric of alternative development and the actual practice.

This gap between theory and practice was particularly noticeable in the area of participation. Many alternative programs and projects, especially in the sphere of rural development, were heavily criticized for paying only lip service to local participation (see, e.g., Brinkerhoff 1988; Daniel et al. 1985; Ekstein 1988; Esman and Uphoff 1984; Hyden 1980; Ngau 1987; Shao 1986), which supposedly was one of the key elements distinguishing alternative strategies from their mainstream counterparts. Indeed, many international organizations and state agencies involved in alternative development projects became increasingly self-critical. For example, a 1988 World Bank review of its Third World development projects candidly admitted, 'The principles guiding beneficiary participation in Bank-financed projects have been quite abstract and of limited operational impact. Beneficiaries were not assigned a role in the decision-making process, nor was their technological knowledge sought prior to designing project components' (World Bank 1988: 60). Similarly, a study by the Public Accounts Committee of the Indian Government into IRD projects found that 'the most important shortcoming in the programme is the absence of people's participation in

it' (in Hirway 1988: A91). Alternative development programs and projects were commonly administered in a top-down, paternalistic manner that afforded little opportunity for local organizations to participate meaningfully in decision-making. Large bureaucracies staffed mainly by outside professionals often exerted fundamental tensions against the empowerment of local people. Typically, these tensions contributed to a distortion both of the nature of the projects (away from local concerns toward externally imposed ideas) and of the quality of local participation (a stifling of real participation in favor of paternalism and patronage). For Ngau (1987: 534), both of these outcomes ironically reflect 'dearticulation or disempowerment at the grassroots level,' despite the frequent rhetoric of alternative strategies promoting genuine participation. The top-down, paternalistic manner in which they were administered, meant that many alternative projects systematically undermined indigenous forms of social organization and democratic political practice (Fox 1990). Local institutions often became dominated by 'imported' officials who failed to respond to local perceptions of development issues and problems (Daniel et al. 1985).

Frequently, external ideas and methods were imposed that paid scant attention to local particularities in terms of social relations, cultural traditions, spatial organization, and environmental conditions. In Tanzania, for example, the villagization program and associated rural development projects ignored 'existing patterns of settlement and land use that had been developed by the farmers after centuries of experience and of careful regard for the natural ecological conditions of their areas' (Shao 1986: 224). Commonly, alternative strategies tried to impose external development notions that were inappropriate to local conditions. Such was particularly the case for rural development initiatives that attempted to group peasant farmers into socialist-inspired collectives or production cooperatives in parts of Africa and elsewhere. As Texier (1974: 2) notes, these outside development models often produced consequences that were diametrically opposed to the professed goals of the programs:

The actual consequences of trying to introduce into a traditional environment the cooperative system which [has been] successfully practised in Europe and in North America under very different circumstances and for the benefit of very different kinds of communities has in fact been to consolidate the traditional system and to encourage further social stratification by creating new opportunities for class exploitation by small privileged groups.

It has been pointed out that alternative strategies, despite their ostensibly progressive orientation, have normally generated rather conventional development projects that have replicated many of the problems of the

mainstream approaches (Black 1991). Moreover, many of these problems have been glossed over by the tendency of many analysts to romanticize and simplify the alternative development tradition, especially in areas such as rural development (Burkey 1993). Ironically, it seems that one of the most consistent consequences of alternative development projects has not been increased local participation, but the extension of centralized state control through the establishment of patron-client relationships (see, e.g., Cheema 1985; de Janvry 1981; Grindle 1986; Mehta 1984). Through its involvement in various development programs and projects, the central state was often able to establish an extensive administrative and political apparatus in areas, especially outlying rural regions, in which its influence had previously been tenuous. This allowed the state, often in concert with outside aid agencies (e.g., USAID's Alliance for Progress program in Latin America), to manipulate and control, if not suppress, any development initiatives of the poor themselves (Black 1991). The steady extension of state control over various aspects of development transformed and cooped local identities and forms of political expression (Friedmann 1992).

Given this record and the limited scope of most alternative strategies, many analysts contend that preventing popular unrest and forestalling more revolutionary change, rather than reducing poverty and inequalities, actually represented the central goals of the state and external aid agencies, in programs such as agrarian reform and integrated rural development (e.g., de Janvry 1981; Griffin 1976; Grindle 1986; Migdal 1974). Concerning the World Bank's poverty and rural development projects, Ayres (1983: 226) contends that the underlying rationale was 'political stability through defensive modernization. Political stability was seen primarily as an outcome of giving people a stake, however minimal, in the system. Defensive modernization aims at forestalling or preempting social and political pressures.' Paradoxically, then, it appears that alternative development programs were given impetus not by underdevelopment, but by the fear of development that might not be programmed from above (Black 1985: 529). For the state, there was often a 'fundamental contradiction between lip service to participation for reasons of political expediency, and real fear that grassroots organization will lead to the empowerment of local communities (Moser 1989: 118).

While alternative development programs generally failed to achieve their stated goals of more balanced and equitable development, they often provided the state with a wide array of mechanisms for directing economic growth, mediating social and political relations, and limiting the scope of social movements through processes of cooption, fragmentation, and control. However, as conditions continued to deteriorate for the poor in many countries, the state often became an increasingly visible target for social protest movements, as various elements of development became

politicized. If widespread consciousness-raising and grassroots organization accompanied this process of politicization (as in the case, for example, of Nicaragua), a trajectory of rapid systemic destabilization and structural change could be created - ironically, the very scenario which the state's involvement in alternative development programs sought to forestall (Brohman 1989).

The top-down manner by which many alternative development programs were administered led to their frequent domination not only by the state, but also by local elite groups. In many Third World areas, local elites control land tenure systems, commercialization and economic terms of trade, allocations of credit, the electoral machinery and judicial system, and the principal means of coercion. As Cohen (1978: 42) notes, this has commonly resulted in the distortion of agrarian reforms and other development programs to serve the interests of local elites: 'Socio-political factors in many societies tend to condition a particular instrument [i.e., agrarian reform] in such a manner that the instrument, and the objectives to which the instrument was originally meant to contribute, are alienated from one another.' Typically, cooperatives and other local institutions, which alternative rural development initiatives created ostensibly to promote peasant participation and self-reliance, became instruments by which traditional patterns of domination and exploitation of peasants by rural elites were deepened and extended (see, e.g., Aphorpe 1972; Fals Borda 1971; Lele 1981).

Without a careful analysis of the social relations and structures within which development initiatives were being carried out, newly created local institutions, rather than representing instruments of progressive change, often became susceptible to cooption and manipulation by dominant classes and social groups. Local development projects would view communities in homogeneous terms, tending to deny possibilities for divergent needs and interests along class, gender, ethnic, or other factional lines (see, e.g., Fenster 1993; Moser 1989; Stone 1989). It was assumed that participation should take place through representatives of the whole community and that this process would empower everyone. However, in many fragmented and polarized communities, development projects quickly fell under the control of local elites, who used their influence to exclude the poorest sectors from meaningful participation (see, e.g., Black 1991; Burgess 1987; Ghose 1983; Peek 1988; Thiesenhusen 1989). Commonly, development projects were transformed to reflect the interests and perceptions of the local elites. Credit was extended only to those whose landholdings and other assets made them sufficiently creditworthy. Technological packages were employed that were appropriate only to medium/large-scale, capital-intensive operations. Infrastructure provisions (such as irrigation and transportation facilities) became monopolized by larger-scale producers. Projects designed to assist

the poorest sectors (e.g., provisions of social amenities, labor-intensive programs) were systematically de-emphasized in favor of investments designed to boost the productivity of medium/large producers. As a result, elite groups were often able to consolidate their control over the direction of local development, thereby accelerating processes of social differentiation and deepening patterns of exploitation based on patron-client ties and other traditional social relations.

Support for alternative development strategies has diminished substantially in most countries since the early 1980s. On the one hand, the thrust of development efforts has turned away from state intervention and targeted programs toward macroeconomic considerations accompanying the rise of neoliberalism. On the other hand, the results of the alternative strategies generally failed to meet expectations. In many cases, alternative projects, especially in the rural sector, acquired a reputation for being relatively costly, difficult to monitor, too complex, and poorly designed (e.g., Brinkerhoff 1988; Lele and Adu-Nyako 1992). But, more fundamentally, it was gradually recognized that the limited scope of these projects prevented them from achieving their broad objectives. Typically, such projects created only an illusion of reform for a few people, rather than actual reform which could have addressed the structural roots of much wider problems of persistent poverty and growing inequalities. No matter how well intentioned, alternative projects proved incompatible with the overarching structural environment of many countries in which land and other productive resources were systematically skewed in favor of an elite minority. Projects were commonly administered on an ad hoc or temporary basis, with little complementarity or coordination, and could do little more than shift the location of poverty, while its underlying causes went untreated. In fact, many localized projects seemed to be working at cross-purposes with the central thrust of macroeconomic policies.

In the end, the bottom-up, localized approach of the alternative strategies amounted to swimming upstream against a strong current of economic and political power. Small gains in alleviating poverty or reducing inequalities were usually quickly overtaken by the force of larger processes. Although the proponents of alternative strategies mounted a rather effective critique of mainstream development models, no coherent, rigorous alternative analysis of the essential processes of Third World development was offered. Despite the fact that poverty alleviation was a central theme of most alternative strategies, no adequate conceptualization of poverty was forthcoming, leaving ad hoc projects to solve the problem of widespread impoverishment. Moreover, these projects characteristically reduced the poor to being passive recipients of often inappropriate forms of aid supplied in a top-down, centralized manner. In order to be more effective, it is generally acknowledged that alternative strategies should be altered in two basic ways: on the one

hand, they need to 'scale-up' their approach beyond its focus on localized projects, and on the other, they must empower the popular sectors to find creative solutions to the sources of their problems. However, it should be noted that both of these requirements inevitably entail fundamental changes to the status quo and the distribution of economic and political power.

## 7

## New Concepts of Planning

Complementing the thrust of alternative development strategies in general are a number of recently evolved derivative frameworks of regional and spatial planning. These alternative planning approaches stress the need to create a well-balanced, efficient, and locally suitable spatial organization to foster democratic participation and equitable growth. Decentralization measures are often advocated to promote more appropriate forms of development and assist in the mobilization of local human and material resources. Debates over decentralization and participation have shed light on the interwoven nature of social and spatial structures in development processes. In addition, the complex role that place and locality play in creating specific development contexts has been revealed. However, a number of theoretical and practical shortcomings have also marked alternative planning approaches, and these must be overcome if they are to be a vital component of development strategies.

### Regional Decentralization and Alternative Spatial Strategies

The neoclassical paradigm has dominated regional and spatial planning in most Third World countries throughout the postwar period. A number of emphases of neoclassical planning theory (e.g., functional integration, hierarchical diffusion, polarization reversal through 'trickle-down' and 'spread' effects) have complemented the top-down thrust of the mainstream development frameworks – first with the modernization framework and more recently within neoliberal strategy. A 'functional' approach to regional development has been followed in which the development of various regions is essentially viewed as a function of their integration into the overall process of national economic development. Maximizing economic growth rates and establishing strong centralized control over investment are commonly emphasized. At the heart of this approach is the notion of polarized growth

and the belief that a well-integrated system of urban-industrial growth poles, from which trickle-down and spread effects can emanate, is the best spatial solution to overcome initial problems of regional inequalities without sacrificing macroeconomic growth. It was thought that, following an initial period of regional divergence, market forces would inexorably produce growing convergence and restore regional equilibrium to patterns of development.

However, by the early 1970s, increasing criticism was directed toward this functional approach to regional development. Many analysts contended that just as mainstream development frameworks had increased socioeconomic inequalities in most countries, so too, accompanying neoclassical spatial strategies had widened regional inequalities, particularly between core urban areas and outlying rural regions (see, e.g., Brookfield 1975; Conroy 1973; Santos 1975; Slater 1975; Sunkel 1973). In many countries, uneven patterns of spatial development inherited from the colonial era were being reinforced, as major politico-administrative and commercial centers increased their dominance. Anticipated spread effects from urban-industrial growth poles had failed to materialize and given way to polarizing 'backwash' effects, accentuating both inter- and intra-regional inequalities. Rather than spreading development through positive urban-rural linkages, cities had become parasitic (see Hoselitz 1957), sucking up resources and surplus value from their surrounding regions. In particular, many outlying rural areas had been relegated to an ever more dependent and peripheral status – unable to generate their own internal development and increasingly subjugated to the dominant interests of the national elites in core urban areas. Characteristically, local services and infrastructure which were needed to overcome problems of economic stagnation in peripheral rural regions were virtually nonexistent.

Against this backdrop of widespread rural stagnation and growing regional inequalities, some alternative spatial strategies were developed in the 1970s. Complementary to alternative development approaches in general, these spatial strategies emphasized redistributive measures to promote more equitable growth; the provision of basic social and economic infrastructure; the creation of targeted programs to address the special needs of poorer, rural-oriented areas; and the use of decentralized planning methods. Rather than juxtaposing growth with equity, links were drawn between economic efficiency and equality in both the socioeconomic system and the spatial structure. An efficient, well-balanced spatial organization would maximize economic growth, which, in turn, would generate a more egalitarian pattern of income distribution. Two principal alternative spatial strategies emerged from the 1970s which have continued to receive considerable attention in subsequent years. The first has variously been termed integrated regional development planning (IRDP), urban functions in rural