

# **THE FUTURE OF DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In the near term, the capitalistic, consumer-oriented Western economic paradigm will continue to dominate economic development efforts worldwide. These efforts will raise living standards in many areas of the world but at a steep price. There will be a continuing decrease in cultural diversity in developing countries and an erosion of a sense of personal identity in developed countries. Additionally, pressures on the environment and natural resource reserves will reach potentially catastrophic levels. In the longer-term, the world will emerge from the constriction of cultural diversity and the brink of environmental tragedy with new models of economic development and an explosion in cultural diversity. New development approaches will share many of these characteristics: implementation of smaller-scale technologies and smaller economic organizations; less consumption of goods and more demand for services; more support for research and development; an increased reliance upon non-profit organizations; and major initiatives to re-environmentalise the earth. Cultural diversity will be renewed through identification with bioregions and local ecosystems, approaches and contributions to sustainability, relationships to one's immediate environment (e.g., with respect to foods, livelihoods), and evolution of new norms, habits, rituals, etc. borne through a refocusing on community and region.

## **Introduction**

In a sea of change, it can be argued that even more change is needed. In the Western world, and especially in the United States, change is seen as good. Faster change is seen as even better, as it indicates increasing levels of technology development and implementation, faster economic growth, and improving standards of living. Economic development seems to be driven by this paradigm, which celebrates the dominance of information technology-driven change in the workplace, personal lives, and everything in-between and so associated.<sup>1</sup>

Playing out this paradigm even a few years into the future reveals high potentials for very unsatisfactory, if not potentially catastrophic futures. It is a very de-humanising paradigm. James Gleick describes a 'hurry sickness' that underlies a widespread malaise as the Western economic paradigm intrudes into one of the rest of the world's most sacred areas: the ability of the individual to reflect.<sup>2</sup> The paradigm will contribute to the increased loss of cultural diversity in non-Western cultures and even the loss of personal identity in Western cultures. The hell-bent motivation for economic production and growth will continue to compromise the global environment and our natural resource base. People cannot live to their full potential without psychologically healthy and spiritually full lives and without a sound, supportive environment. Thus, something needs to change. This paper assumes that it is the development paradigm that will change, but not without a fight.

## Near-term Dominance of the Western Economic Paradigm

Few would argue against the conclusion that the Western economic paradigm now dominates the world's economic development efforts. By Western economic paradigm I mean:

- the reliance on free or lightly regulated markets to produce goods and services;
- the minimisation of the public sector in the production of goods and services (e.g., as now seen in the denationalisation of and/or deregulation in major industries such as telecommunications and energy);
- centrality of economic growth in national domestic policy;
- emphasis on increasing economic demand to cure economic ills;
- control of macro-economic indicators through increasingly coordinated central bank monetary policies;
- emphasis on corporate models of economic organisation;
- focus on 'corporate' jobs as keys to employment growth; and
- use of economic cost/benefit analysis to support governmental policy analysis.

As mentioned before, in recent years, the emergence of information technology and its rapid technological evolution have served both to increase the speed at which economic life takes place and to make the pace of change a central economic/social/personal value.

On a planet that is four and one-half billions years old, among life forms that can be traced back into time over three billion years, we, a species whose distant ancestors date back millions of years and who ought to expect to live on this planet for millions of years into the future, have devised an economic system that not only places quite extraordinary importance on second-by-second changes in stock and foreign currency markets but also could potentially collapse within the blink of an eye. It can be argued that this paradigm is shared not only by Western European and North American countries but also by the leading economic powers in Asia (to also include Australia and New Zealand) and South America.

This paradigm is being spread across the globe. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was expected that the former states of the Soviet Union, including Russia itself, would adopt this economic paradigm. Indeed, legions of 'economic' advisors descended upon the former states to direct and hasten the transitions. So dominant is the paradigm that the loss of communism as its 'only' Competitor leads Francis Fukuyama to declare the end of history as we know it.<sup>3</sup>

Developing countries in economic straits have few options outside of the dominant economic paradigm. They can ask the International Monetary Fund for assistance, but only if they make changes in their public sector spending and their private sector is deregulated in such a way that are in-line with the dominant economic paradigm. The World Bank can be approached for development loans, too, but again, the dominant economic paradigm shapes the uses for which most loan money can be put. A third option for these countries is to attract foreign capital, which arrives in the form of transnational corporations seeking continued growth, lower productions costs, etc. Countries trying to develop without the strings of the dominant economic paradigm are stymied because they do not have free access to Western intellectual property, technology, and other important ingredients for development. They also have only untested 'new' economic models to rely on, making the blazing of new economic paths quite risky.

## Loss of Cultural Diversity

There will be a continuing decrease in cultural diversity in the developing countries and an erosion of a sense of personal identity in developed countries.

The loss of human culture has been well documented. Over the past several hundreds of years, hundreds if not thousands of indigenous human cultures have perished or are at the brink of extinction. In North America, it is predicted that the number of Native American languages will drop from 175 to 135 in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> Since 1900, ninety of Brazil's 270 Indian tribes have disappeared.<sup>5</sup>

There are numerous reasons for the loss of culture. Most nefarious are cases where dominant cultures have committed genocide, eliminating whole peoples to gain their land and resources and/or to consolidate political power. Population growth within dominant cultures has led to migrations into lands where indigenous cultures have lived for many generations, thereby destroying traditional sustainable subsistence lifestyles and pushing the peoples out or forcing them to integrate with the larger, dominant society. The lure of the dominant society, especially Western society, has drawn many away from the cultures of their birth, to such an extent that cultural traditions and social capital are lost. For many Native American languages, it is now the case that only a very few elderly individuals remain alive who speak the original languages because younger generations have followed different paths. The ubiquity of American culture and the borderless nature of telecommunications media makes it difficult, if not impossible, to escape cross-cultural interaction and eventual assimilation.

One can argue that diversity of identity is being threatened in many of the dominant cultures. On one hand, many believe that cultural tolerance is fostered through increased inter-culture relationships. However, these same people are alarmed at the inevitable inter-breeding of cultures that threatens to dilute their identities. For example, inter-marriage is blurring racial and ethnic distinctions but it is a concern of the U.S. Jewish community, as many are marrying outside the faith and leaving the faith.

Identity within cultures is also being slowly eroded by economic forces, in that economics plays a larger role in life than culture; and that consumerism, while offering diversity in products, is homogenising in effect and shallow in content. In a very ironic twist, economic forces can now bring to people across the world American hamburgers and fried chicken, Vietnamese cuisines, and 'authentic' cultural products supposedly made in the special places of the world. What does culture based on food and artifacts mean if everyone in the world can eat the same foods and enjoy the same artifacts?

In the U.S., at least, the drive for economic gains and material goods is reducing the social capital of our communities. People move quite often for education and better employment. People move out of 'bad' neighbourhoods when they have the money to do so.<sup>6</sup> In the first case, some suburban communities are more like sophisticated hotels, where instead of hotel rooms people occupy for a few nights, people live in large homes for a couple of years before moving on. In the second case, the flight of the middle class from urban areas has created islands of poverty where the poorest of the poor are segregated from society.

The Western economic paradigm places too much emphasis on achievement and the meritocracy at the expense of other factors that lead to psychological satisfaction such as belongingness to community, obligations to family, and contributions to goals and endeavours that are beyond one's immediate self-interest. While some people

can get by in a strict meritocracy, in a win-lose society, others can't. And the losers will not live without identity of some sort, even if they have to manufacture a world-view of government conspiracies, racial hatreds, and justifiable violence. Indeed, those who are losing their cultural ties and those who have lost their identities have something in common: a psychologically compelling urge to change that society seen as responsible for their losses.

### **Continued Adverse Environmental Impacts**

The list of environmental problems facing the world is quite familiar. Somewhere at the top of the list is global warming and depletion of the stratospheric ozone layer. Also included on the list are international problems related to acid precipitation, management of water resources, species extinction and loss of biodiversity, and exhaustion of fishing stocks and old-growth forests. Regional and local problems are just as extensive and important and run from tropospheric ozone pollution to underground drinking water contaminated by pesticides, to automobile fuel additives to the development of wetlands and other special lands.

In every case, the major factors causing the problems are human economic activities. And in almost every case, attempts to solve the problems are constrained by economic interests. To no one's surprise, many energy companies do not believe in the phenomenon of global warming. Many electric power companies do not believe the evidence on acid rain is convincing. Automobile companies do not want to hear about potential restrictions on vehicle use to reduce tropospheric ozone. Loggers do not want to consider endangered birds in forests they want to cut down. Developers do not want to detour progress by moving their developments from 'prime locations' that just happen to be wetlands to other less environmentally sensitive spots. The battle against the dehumanising dimension and ramifications of current economic forces is cause for constant vigilance.

New ideas about development are needed. A de-emphasis on economic growth is warranted to help increase the probability that environmental problems are solved before the mid- to long-term negative effects greatly outweigh any short-term benefits.

There are a few signs that the Western economic world is moving in this direction. British Petroleum/Amoco is championing the cause of global warming. Companies such as Monsanto and Dow Chemicals are known for their commitments to sustainability and zero emissions production. There are signs in the US that people are yearning for more in life than increased economic consumption.<sup>7</sup> **Robert Theobald** estimates that close to 25% of the US population is ready for major change in their lives.<sup>8</sup> One could argue that because of environmental concerns, the seeds of change are being planted but that much more needs to be accomplished.

### **Future Development**

This and the following section present an integrated set of potential future paths in the areas of development and cultural diversity. The future world described in these two sections will not arise spontaneously; human intervention is needed. This prospective world will occur only through the dedicated efforts of many people in many countries who have some control and authority over decision-making processes and resources that can be directed at development activities.

The goals of future development programs should be the following: sustainability; a fulfilling quality of life for all individuals; meaningful full-work opportunities for every person of working age; re-environmentalisation of the earth; and space exploration, which would grow over time as the other four goals are met and stabilised. The next few paragraphs describe these goals.

Sustainability means different things to different people. The definition presented here is an amalgam of ideas found in the literature. Actually, the definition is really a list of prescriptions<sup>9</sup> :

- limit resource use -- e.g., energy, water, minerals; reduce pollution;
- recycle;
- protect biodiversity; conserve land;
- practice strong democracy; control population;
- constrain the pace of change; limit consumerism;
- meet basic human needs;
- achieve intra- and inter-generational equities; and
- use appropriate decision-making heuristics, such as the precautionary principle.

Many of these goals are well known and typically conflict with traditional development programs, such as those related to the environment and natural resources. Several are related to social issues, such as meeting basic human needs and achieving equity. These are included in the list because most definitions of sustainability and/or expressions of concern about the topic include social issues. The last prescription is related to decision-making and urges that all decisions be set within the purview of the precautionary principle.

The quality of life and full-work goals are included to ensure that development activities will benefit people throughout the world. Quality of life is defined to include all aspects of life, including health, education, housing, community, and leisure as opposed to a traditional approach that focuses mainly on individual or household income. 'Full-work' is used instead of the word 'job' to highlight the possibilities for individuals to use their time productively in non-corporate or non-employee situations. In other words, future development activities need to focus on keeping people engaged in constructive activities, whether or not these activities are situated in formal organisational settings or in more informal, subsistence or self-employment settings.

The sustainability prescriptions listed above represent efforts to staunch further negative changes to the environment and protect existing ecosystems. Re-environmentalisation refers to efforts to restore areas of the earth-- not necessarily to former 'wild' states-- but to conditions where ecosystems can thrive and evolve in natural manners. The goal is to simultaneously have areas that are wilder, more resilient, more supportive of the human spirit, more ecologically diverse, and more aesthetically pleasurable. Re-environmentalisation also refers to a re-integration of sound, productive environmental practices into developed areas of the world.

Most development acts to isolate the 'wild environment' from humans and to build environments that are totally controllable and risk free, like amusement parks. Future development will bring the natural environment back into developments. It will build upon research such as being conducted in Phoenix, Arizona, to understand its urban ecosystem.<sup>10</sup> In the Great Plains of the United States, this might mean re-establishing prairie grasses in backyards or even buildings with operable windows!

Space exploration is another important aspect of future development. In a separate paper, I argue that the goal of transcending oblivion, leaving the earth before the end of the life of the sun, should be a central goal of earth-life." This goal is consistent with human myths and psychological archetypes. It also provides an alternative to war and global economic competition as a context for human achievement.

Earth-life is not very far along in this endeavour. Thus, the challenges are great and the risks are great. Psychologists have found that some risk and tension in one's life and in community life is generally positive. Indeed, some individuals may even be genetically predisposed to risk-filled activities. Space exploration, even near-term goals such as colonising Mars to mining asteroids, would seem to provide opportunities for the adventurous.

These are interrelated goals. Meeting sustainability goals will improve the quality of life on this planet and will certainly provide meaningful work for many people. Re-environmentalisation will also provide work and more people with the psychological benefits of 'being-in-nature.' As has happened in the past, technology developed to support space programs will probably find applications in more earthly endeavours.

These five goals do not exhaust all potential goals for future development efforts but should be seen as a strong, interlocking foundation for these efforts.

Two general strategies are recommended to meet the above goals. The first strategy is to work to redirect a substantial amount of human productive effort from private sector productive activities to non-profit, governmental, and new forms of productive organisation. The purpose of this strategy is to free up productive resources now being utilized to produce a plethora of useless and excessive consumer goods and services to fund the recommendations listed below. In addition, a redirection of human activity away from unnecessary production to other pursuits will reduce the strains that the Western economic paradigm is inflicting upon culture and the environment. Lastly, this shift will create a consciousness that the private sector and the Western economic paradigm is not the end of history but only one aspect of human life that needs to be balanced against other needs and interests.

Traditional economic institutions can be expected to continue to produce food, clothing, housing, transportation, and the other necessities of life. However, non-profit organizations are proliferating<sup>12</sup> and are beginning to shoulder some of this burden in the U.S., despite the fact that in many cases they are undertaking activities supposedly reserved for the commercial sector. This trend needs to be nurtured and is discussed in more depth below.

A second strategy is to promote small-scale technologies and productive organisations. Of course, Schumacher proposed this strategy back in 1973.<sup>13</sup> So, 'small-is-beautiful' is not a new idea, but it takes on additional importance and has more potential in today's situation.

First, the influence of large economic organisations is increasing throughout the world, both in their influence upon economic policy and politics. As noted above, in the U.S. at least, all major environmental initiatives are constrained - but not completely stopped - by economic special interests, from oil companies to automobile manufacturers. Thus, meeting sustainability prescriptions and changing the shape of productive activities in this world will require the reduction of influence of large economic organisations, which means that smaller productive organisations will need to grow in number and influence.

Smaller is theoretically more doable at this point in time given the emergence of the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW). Now, information on any subject, from energy efficiency to recycling, to growing honey bees, is available to anyone. Thus, barriers to market entry related to a lack of information are considerably reduced for smaller productive organisations. If access to the latest in research can be provided to more people, this would further strengthen the ability of small players to compete successfully. Lastly, information technology itself is providing opportunities for smallness through its ability to interconnect people over time and space. Local manufacturers can link to other local manufacturers through electronic data interchange (EDI) to come together to make and distribute products. People can reassemble in innumerable combinations for productive purposes as they can more readily communicate their skills and availabilities and match emerging productive needs.

A highly related third strategy to the first two is to focus development efforts to create opportunities for people to contribute productively that are not necessarily set in the context of private sector jobs. People need steady and fulfilling work. They need to be appropriately rewarded and to be protected against medical and other emergencies. They can be employees of private sector firms, governments, or non-profit firms. They can be self-employed. They can work in constantly reconfiguring teams to achieve short-term project goals. They can manage through the bartering of in-kind services or the use of local exchange trading systems, such as Ithaca Bucks in Ithaca, New York.<sup>14</sup> Someone knowledgeable about computers can do some or all of these things: work part-time

for a computer manufacturer; work part-time as a computer instructor; devote a day or two per week to consult to local productive organisations about their computer systems; and maybe even barter a few minutes of work on the barber's spreadsheet accounting system for a hair cut. People ought to have these opportunities to be productive without fear of not having health insurance and other social benefits. This type of work environment is probably more appropriate for local productive activities, where it is more beneficial for everyone to have numerous skills and avenues for contribution.

Numerous development activities can be pursued according to these strategies to satisfy the five development goals. One of the most important development activities, if not the one with the most potential leverage to influence other elements in the development model, is the support for education and research infrastructures in every region of the world. Education is needed to build human capital, which is needed to support all productive activities as well as being the linchpin for civil societies.

Research is needed to support sustainability efforts in all areas, from continuing to improve energy efficiencies of motors and automobiles, to reducing the costs of renewable energy sources such as photovoltaics and wind, from devising better ways to process recycled materials, to continuing to reduce pollution from industrial processes. Humanity may have come to the point where serious consideration should be given to managing the global environment and climate; much more research is needed before this can be undertaken with confidence.

One can argue that research activities worldwide can be comfortably expanded by several orders of magnitude just through an intensive focus on topics directly related to improving the quality of life. Jeffrey Sachs argues that much of this research needs to be done in and for developing countries.<sup>15</sup> He documents that most research funds are expended in developed countries for developed country needs, at the expense of meeting the needs of the neediest in the world.

Medical research is one area with virtually unlimited horizons. Information technology, which includes the development of smaller and faster computers and continued improvements in software, is another. One can argue that real increases in the quality of life will flow from advances in medicine in conjunction with information technology. In other words, information technology, through computation, visualization, data mining, simulation, instrumentation, etc., will make possible advances in diagnosis and treatment and the overall gain in medical knowledge that would not otherwise be possible. Informatics has already helped to sequence the human genome and identify genes implicated in various diseases, such as Huntington's disease. Much additional research is needed on seemingly mundane topics such as roads and bridges, wastewater treatment, remediating hazardous waste sites, building construction, and fabrics. Agriculture is yet another huge area that deserves additional research support. All these research areas have specialized needs in developing countries, from finding vaccines for malaria and AIDS to developing new methods for agriculture in the tropics.

With respect to the second strategy listed above, much research is needed to make productive technologies smaller in scale to support smaller scale productive organisations. One can imagine electricity networks consisting of small-scale power generation units, from roof top photovoltaics to small hydro dams to basement fuel cells.

However, what would be needed to create cost effective but smaller scale regional automobile manufacturing plants, or better yet, mass transportation systems? As William Mitchell asks: 'Is this building really necessary? Can we wholly or partially substitute electronic systems instead?'<sup>16</sup> What about smaller scale production of steel, pharmaceuticals, computer chips, agricultural equipment, etc.? What technology is needed to support community-based production that aims to limit imports and the need for an export base to a level more controllable by communities, where the community-based production organisations are small in size and tightly integrated from an industrial ecological standpoint?

Re-environmentalisation and space exploration are two additional huge areas of research. As can be discerned from the deliberately vague discussion above, most questions associated with re-environmentalisation remain unanswered. Much research is needed to understand ecosystem processes, the health of ecosystems over time, and when and when not to intervene in the life of ecosystems. How to bring the environment back into the lives of city dwellers and urbanites in ways that are more than cosmetic requires much thought and experimentation. Research capabilities are needed around the world because many questions will be place-specific, such as re-environmentalisation and agriculture.

Currently, the amount of productive resources devoted to space exploration is minimal, especially when compared to what would be needed to support a very robust space program. Today, there are a relatively few space probes being sent to explore other planets, very few observing platforms being developed to collect data beyond our solar system, and only sporadic manned efforts to conduct a few space-based experiments. These kinds of activities could easily be expanded by several orders of magnitude and not exhaust all valuable research activities. And these activities do not include the next steps toward colonising a planet such as Mars or exploring the possibilities of faster-than-light travel.

Highlighting research as a prominent development activity provides several signals. The first signal is that technology must be part of the future of earth-life. We cannot return to the days of hunter-gatherer societies. There are too many people in the world to do so without a catastrophic decline in population. Additionally, technology underlies advances in medicine and meeting sustainability goals. Thirdly, technologies more advanced than we can imagine today will be needed to transcend oblivion. Lastly, it can be argued that research has its own value because increased knowledge about reality will help humans better integrate ourselves into the natural world (and vice versa) and make better decisions regarding anthropogenic perturbations to that world.

Another important focus of development activities should be non-profit organisations. These are organisations whose missions relate to education, research, and/or improving social welfare. They do not make profits although they do need to raise enough money to meet their expenses. They are not government organisations, although they may receive support from governments, as well as from private donations and endowments provided by wealthy benefactors. In the U.S., the number of non-profit organisations has grown substantially in recent years as people find that they can provide social services that governments cannot, advocate social issues in ways that their politicians will not, and conduct research in areas that are not fully or at all funded by the government. The non-profit sector in the U.S. is evolving into a very significant, responsive, and flexible element of society.

There are numerous types of non-profit organisations. Two types are those that make grants and those that seek grants. The grant making non-profits, such as the Ford Foundation and the relatively new Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, fund social service, environmental, medical research and many other types of projects around the world. Their support for research in the medical field rivals the support provided by the U.S. government. Unlike the World Bank and the IMF, foundations provide grants, not loans, and are willing to fund a full range of activities, not just those that promise to generate enough income to pay back the loans. Thus, non-profit grant-making institutions are not tied to the dominant economic paradigm nor tied to national politics. Grant-seeking institutions come in all shapes and sizes, but most are small, community-based, low budget organisations intent on pursuing a small niche in making the world a better place. Of course, some grant-making institutions conduct their own research and some of the largest grant seeking institutions conduct sophisticated research (e.g., the Environmental Defense Fund). In the U.S., universities and many hospitals are incorporated as non-profits, as well as local community (computer) networks (which may act as internet Service Providers), social organisations like the Girl Scouts, and churches.



These organisations will serve three functions with respect to future development. First, they will provide many services that are not now or are poorly provided by governments. These include social services, conducting policy analyses, and managing key resources, such as parks. Thus, non-profits can serve critical roles in achieving sustainability goals, improving the quality of life, and in managing re-environmentalization.

Second, non-profits are key to increasing the educational and research infrastructure of the world. Non-profit universities in the United States are world leaders in R&D. Non-educational non-profits are also beginning to increase their R&D activities, as noted above. For example, many environmental non-profit organisations conduct ecological, scientific, and policy-related R&D. This trend will continue to grow and will have a positive impact upon future development because non-profits tend to be more willing and able to share the results of their R&D than are private sector organizations. In fact, university researchers are expected to publish the results of their work in the open literature. Significantly increasing research activities through non-profits will result in more knowledge being produced that is more accessible to small productive organisations, other non-profits, and others engaged in activities related to sustainability, improving the quality of life, re-environmentalisation, and space exploration.

Non-profits could be an important new component in managing productive resources in countries. Currently, when a country such as the U.S. experiences an economic slump, one typical policy response of the Federal Reserve Bank is to increase the money supply by reducing the prime interest rate that member banks pay for money. The member banks then have more money to lend, which, in theory, will create new investments and economic growth. Governments can also use fiscal policy to spur economic growth. The first approach in particular is based firmly in the Western economic paradigm in that the solution is ultimately to increase private sector activity, or, in other words, consumption. The second approach can be less tied to consumption but usually takes the form only of increased income redistributions rather than investments in non-private sector activities. (Of course, the U.S. government funded many make-work public projects during the Depression in the 1930s.)

Consideration should be given to using non-profits as a hybrid platform for monetary and fiscal policy. The system would work something like this. Endowed non-profits would place their endowments in public escrow accounts overseen by the government. The government would not be able to use this money for any purpose nor have any influence on how the proceeds of the endowment are spent beyond reviewing and approving the non-profits' charters. However, the government would be obligated to pay the non-profit a percentage of the trust each year, which the non-profit would distribute as grants according to its mission. This provision relieves the foundations from relying on the performance of private sector stocks and bonds to maintain their endowment capital. To respond to downturns in economic activity, the government can increase the percentage of their endowments returned to foundations for their grant making and R&D activities. This provides a counterbalance to central banks managing economic activity through changes in the interest rates it charges to its member banks. To make this work, the government must agree to provide a minimum percentage return on these special trusts and the foundations must agree to disperse more funds in times of economic hardship. A less revolutionary but analogous idea would be for the government to change the percentage of the endowments' capital base that must be expended each year, regardless of how the endowment capital is invested, to respond to general economic conditions.

A third component of future development policy needs to address tax systems. This a necessity if one major strategy is to reduce the role of the private sector in social life. This is because current tax systems, the US system at any rate, are highly intertwined with the prosperity of the private sector economy. Sales and capital gains taxes are particularly tied to the robustness of the economy. Property taxes are somewhat less intensively but still strongly tied to economic health. Personal income taxes may be less tied to the economy because income can flow from

government and non-profit employment as well as from private sector employment. What is needed is a tax policy that is related to increases in the quality of life, one's roles and responsibilities as citizens, and ability to pay, protecting the environment, and increasing investment horizons in the private sector.

Here are several suggestions to consider with respect to a tax policy to support the development program outlined above:

One, non-profit organisations should be required to pay taxes on their revenues and property (e.g., as the Mormon church does voluntarily in Utah). These organisations benefit from government services (e.g., police and justice, roads and other infrastructures). In addition, if this sector of society is to grow to displace a larger portion of the private sector, then this sector needs to pay taxes to reduce the reliance of governments on the many taxes listed above.

Two, private sector organisations need to continue to pay property taxes and employee taxes, whether or not they make a profit. Additionally, at the national level, they should pay a reasonable government services fee, in addition to an income tax, if they make money. Emissions taxes, such as a global carbon tax, need to be considered.

Income taxes on individuals should remain, but sales taxes should be scaled back or eliminated. The latter involve too much conflict of interest between government and needs to grow the private sector economy at the cost of the environment and culture. All personal income should be taxed, whether it is employment or investment income. In-kind income should be taxed; ways of allowing individuals whose livelihoods are derived from in-kind income to pay their taxes in in-kind income (e.g., through devoting their time and particular expertise to government programs). All income derived from Internet activities needs to be taxed at appropriate rates by appropriate levels of government, if indeed sales taxes remain in place. This will not diminish the increasing use of the Internet for non-private sector activities.

A fourth component relates to the regulation of the private sector. Societies will continue to rely heavily upon the energy and efforts of the private sector to produce life's necessities. However, as the role of this sector becomes reduced, there will be less need to make accommodations in several areas. While it is useful to keep regulation of markets light and to foster efficient production, environmental regulations should be enforced and toughened if appropriate. It may be useful to lessen intellectual property protections in order to allow more sharing of knowledge, especially with developing countries. In return, private sector organisations ought to receive economic bonuses from society for their achievements. Economic policy decisions need to be less focused on increasing gross national product and more focused on achieving a host of indicators, such as increasing productive work, increasing quality-of-life indicators, improving the environment, moving toward sustainability, and moving toward the day when earth-life will be able to transcend oblivion.

### **Future Cultural Diversity**

In facing the facts, the loss of ancient, indigenous cultures appears to be irreversible. Environments within which these cultures emerged and flourished cannot be authentically recreated. The interconnectedness of the globe, the change in technologies, and the loss of the isolation of cultural lands and of wilderness areas to development make returning to the past very difficult if not impossible for these cultures. The challenge is to facilitate the emergence of new cultures and identities that are positive, constructive, and psychologically fulfilling before the emergence of forms that are violent, dysfunctional, conflict ridden, and, overall, darker in nature.

The development paradigm outlined in the previous section can lay a sound foundation for the flourishing of cultures throughout the world. Cultural diversity will be renewed through ties to the regional and global environment, one's identification with one's contributions to sustainability and other development goals, everyday relationships to one's immediate and regional environment, and new spirituality fostered by smaller organisations and renewed focus on community. These factors will combine with aspects of surviving religions and languages to create new cultural forms.

Sustainability and re-environmentalisation programs will help to create identification with bioregions and local ecosystems, especially if care is taken to appropriately name these places in the world. It is envisioned that through non-profit organisations, in-kind contributions to government activities, and citizenship initiatives, everyone from young children to busy adults to experienced elders will contribute to meeting sustainability goals and will take part in re-environmentalisation efforts.

Thus, someone who lives in the Great Plains in North America will identify with the region because they will contribute to conserving water drawn from depleted aquifers, reducing the run-off of pesticides from agricultural lands, and increasing the appropriate use of biomass as a renewable energy resource. They may also contribute to re-environmentalisation by reintroducing prairies on extensive swaths of inter-connected lands throughout the Great Plains and maybe even helping to re-establish endangered species on these lands or in other areas. People living in the Great Plains will have these values and goals in common, as will people living in a particular watershed of the Amazonian rainforest or the mountain highlands of Peru or on the big island of Hawaii.

People will also draw identity from their contributions to the development goals outlined above and their meaningful work. Of course, identity through one's work is quite common today, especially in the professions. This notion of identity will be extended and deepened because the value of everyone's contribution to the goals will be better understood and more explicit. No productive work will be degraded because it provides lower incomes than other productive activities. Forest rangers are important to protect natural ecosystems, sanitation workers are important to protect human developments, researchers are important to create new knowledge to solve problems that stand in the way of meeting development goals, etc. Movements away from large, transnational corporations toward more non-profit organizations and smaller productive units will help somewhat to lessen one's identification with one's level of income and to increase one's identification with one's productive contributions.

As is the case now, people who make similar contributions will probably assemble in social organisations of some sort and may even evolve forms of subcultures within larger cultures, distinguishable by values, common experiences, and specialised languages.

Sustainability programs, re-environmentalisation, and a re-emphasis on local production will strengthen one's relationship to the immediate and regional environment. A form of supracommunitarianism will evolve to bind people together over space and generations of time to meet sustainability goals.<sup>18</sup>

The pace of life will be different in the tropics than near the poles. Foods grown for local consumption will be different, and different at different times of the year. Regional research efforts will focus on different questions, depending on the agricultural, natural disaster, and production problems facing the region. One can imagine the evolution of new norms, habits, rituals, and beliefs in these types of situations that both are psychologically satisfying and distinguishing in nature. One's bioregion and one's contributions to development goals make for these robust dimensions of cultural space through which new cultures and identities will arise.

Other cultural dimensions include existing religions, languages, and regional cultures. To the extent that these elements conflict with the ideas presented above, they will need to change. Indeed, it can be strongly argued that a global research program is needed to foster sociodiversity, to test how the sustainability of various political and economic structures set within various cultural contexts.<sup>9</sup>

### **Conclusions**

This paper approaches the issues of future development and cultural diversity in an integrated fashion. I argue that smaller-scale productive organisations more tied to communities and local and regional environments will help to re-culturalise the earth. I suggest that future development efforts support the increase in research around the world; the products of which will then support improvements in economic production, re-environmentalisation efforts, and all other quality-of-life factors. I envision non-profits as growing in number and importance in the productive realm of life. One manner of using non-profits as a vehicle for macro-economic policy is even presented. I suggest space travel as an outlet for a certain segment of the human population now primarily engaged in military and excessive economic competition.

### Notes

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