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Changing Perspectives of Education for Development

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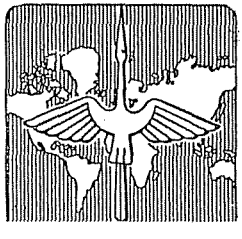

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Changing Perspectives of Education for Development:

emergent issues concerning substance and location of training programmes for third world development workers

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CHANGING PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT: EMERGENT ISSUES CONCERNING SUBSTANCE AND LOCATION OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR THIRD WORLD DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

L'expert, c'est l'ignorant qui s'ignore se mettant au service des ignorants qui s'avouent.
H. Laugier

I do not mean that there is a sociology only of ignorance, since it remains worth finding out what social conditions further the spread of knowledge.
M. Hollis

1. Statement of intent

The original version of this paper, dealing mainly with the problems relating to choice of location of development training programmes, was prepared for the Executive Committee of EADI, which intended to launch a discussion of the topic, first within the membership of the European association and then perhaps as between the five regional associations. Used next to prepare a series of working group sessions, it elicited a number of responses in the form of further papers and a stimulating discussion. It was then concluded that the paper should be broadened and submitted to a broader circle of interested persons, again with the intent to identify issues that demand discussion. The paper that follows is accordingly a discussion paper first and foremost. This implies that even where it presents the state of the art, no attempt has been made to avoid being controversial on any issues where it seemed desirable to elicit a response, whether of support, or of correction, or of disagreement.

Revised and expanded version of a paper presented at the third triennial congress of the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI), Milano, Sep. 1978.

2. Introduction

Since the early 1950s a number of institutions in the so-called rich countries have been set up or adapted to offer programmes of training, sometimes combined with research, geared to the needs of people intending to work in Third World countries. Some of these institutions have tended to cater mainly or primarily to students coming to them from the Third World. Several of them have benefited by special scholarship provisions, provided by rich-country governments, foundations, international agencies and the like.

It would be too simple to describe the gradual upsurge of these training facilities - using the word training in the broadest sense and avoiding quibbles as to the difference between training, education and the like - as a post-colonial legacy, as some cynics tend to do. The fine hand of neo-colonial interests, notably of multinational enterprise, is far less traceable, in this connection, than is occasionally alleged to be the case. Besides, there is another face to the coin, and he who ignores it risks falsifying the total picture. This is the purposive effort to turn a page and to make a fresh start, with new target groups and new educational goals, as well as a new outlook encompassing both. Of course, such an effort is not fully successful overnight, but the fact that it is made gives the lie to the cynics' picture. What is more, the very nature and problems of education for development cannot be understood by him who insists upon ignoring the field of tension in which it occurs.

In the basic orientation of these programmes one can readily distinguish two trends. There were cases in which existing training programmes were adjusted so as to accommodate Third World students. The adjustment could be minimal but it could also be considerable, as the situation seemed to indicate. The other kind are programmes especially de-

signed to meet the needs of development work in the Third World. Some of these have even been kept separate and different from existing similar programmes geared to rich-country conditions. Both kinds of programmes have encountered a number of problems, including the question how to overcome Western ethnocentrism, whether conscious or unconscious, in identifying and discussing the problems and prospects of the Third World. Obviously the former kind of programmes had more difficulty in this respect than the latter; it would be unwarranted to claim that either way these problems have been solved.

In the 1950s and perhaps to an extent in the early '60s, programmes of both kinds met an urgent demand that could not yet be met to an adequate extent by facilities in the Third World countries themselves. In the course of two decades, this situation has changed.

There are mainly two kinds of factors causing this change. One is the gradual emergence of Third World facilities for development training and research. In its wake arises the question as to the proper location of development training and research facilities. The other is an equally gradual, yet in effect quite significant, reorientation as to the true nature of development studies and developmentaction. In its wake arises the question as to the substance of development training programmes and development research projects. At the point of confluence of these two sets of emergent questions, one notes further questions arising, for example concerning the way in which rich-country interest and Third World interest in development training and research (and again, of course, in development action) can be made to work in tandem more effectively. A few words on each trend are now in order.

First as regards budding Third World facilities. For one thing, Third World universities have awakened to development training and research needs. For another, special institutions

have been created for specific developmental purposes, whether training or research or both. Initially many of such institutions and also many of the universities have tended to be staffed by people from Europe or North-America and to a lesser extent by nationals of the countries concerned who could show the appropriate Western academic qualifications. In the course of the years, this balance has been reversed quantitatively; but even after Third World nationals have become a majority in many Third World training institutions, one crucial problem has remained to quite an extent, namely the impact of Western-ethnocentric views on the training and research undertaken even in Third World locations.

In the Western countries there has always been a minority who have expressed uneasiness about the preponderance of Western-ethnocentric approaches to development. On the whole they were not listened to: not even by students coming from the Third World, whose main interest was to qualify by Western standards, thereby to become acceptable for top jobs in their own countries. Gradually a measure of concern is arising in the Third World as to the relevance of Western-inspired approaches to development under the specific conditions of particular Third World countries. The urge towards self-reliance has elements of this kind. Now and then, one can even hear people advocating a lull in communications between rich-country and Third World thinkers, so as to allow the latter to really get into their own and rethink their own situation, perhaps even to redesign theory so as to ensure optimal relevance to that situation. Yet even those who will venture such suggestions usually show adequate awareness of the circumstance that this world is one world of ongoing communications.

Secondly, about the change in the understanding of development, and consequently of development studies and development action. The recent outcry is for 'another development' - an eloquent term to beg the question, and a useless one for answering it.

For a long while, relatively speaking, development has been looked upon as something like growing problems in seedling plants - the newly independent states. With due and competent care - aid in various forms - these would be taken care of. When the expected effect failed to materialize at the expected time, uneasiness spread, in a variety of manifestations. Some of its expressions implicated the rich countries in ways other than that of being donors of appropriate aid and dispensers of relevant wisdom. This has resulted, inter alia, in the budding interest in rich-country adjustment policies. The trouble about such reorientations is that they occur in a welter of strident advocacy and of conflict between one hot issue and another, so that it is hard to see the wood for the trees. Nonetheless, gradually the insight dawns that the matter of Third World development is one out of various symptoms of the emergent One World, and that further symptoms of the same historical process - which in some respects assumes crisis features - include such issues as have been identified, for example, in the first Club of Rome report. This new understanding throws a fresh light, notably, on the somewhat problematic relationship between the internal and external dimensions of development in any country - not just in any Third World country. It also focusses the matter of interaction and interdependency - and by consequence the problem of ethnocentrism in the conduct of public and international affairs - in a new way.

The upshot is that indeed one needs to reconsider and redefine development, and by implication also the substance of development studies. This is one out of the many major issues symptomatic of the hoped-for advent of (including the search for) a One World pattern.[1]

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1 Demagogues clamour for a new international order, preferably an economic one, as the precondition to just development; they fail to see that in turning a historical process into a quasi-causal sequence they end up with a chicken-and-egg problem they cannot hope to handle.

Superficially considered, this could seem to broaden the scope of development studies immensely. Yet the temptation to envisage development studies as a new universal approach to world-wide change is to be avoided. It is more important to realize that, with development one out of a number of symptoms of a world-wide problem complex, what matters is a division of labour as between approaches. It would be preposterous to try and spell out such a division here and now. This is the kind of issue one must deal with by consciously and purposely living with it, not by handing down a prescription.

Thirdly, a word about the confluence of the two orders of problems, namely location and substance. The key here is interaction. The gradual wane of Western-ethnocentric domination of development leaves a gap that will notbe filled properly by an emergent solipsistic Third World style of perceiving development and dealing with it. What happens between one ethnocentrism and a countervailing one, short of conflict, is that they will cancel out one another.

In other words, the need arises for a new mutuality and interaction model in the pursuit of development studies. One element of this model, sorely missing hitherto, is needed Third World interest in ongoing change and salient issues in the rich countries. For too long, the rich countries, fully idealized for the purpose, have stood model for Third World development. Since recently, people are becoming aware that this is not a tenable proposition. In many ways, this realization is iconoclastic; it leads to correspondingly traumatic experiences and emotional reactions. What the present argument implies is the urgent need to overcome both the iconoclasm and the disequilibrating responses thereto, in order that room be made for the attempt, by those of the Third World, to look at the rich countries as a part of the world whose problems and prospects are significant for themselves, not just intellectually, but as part of the determinants of the One World

context in which their own collectivity has to make a living. Does this eliminate ethnocentrism, on whatever side, altogether? How could it. But it should make for a checks and balances pattern such as will ensure that any ethnocentrism remaining will be effective up to and not beyond the point where it would risk becoming indirectly or even directly counter-productive.

It is against this background that currently, discussions take place on two themes. They are not always easily separated. One relates to the most desirable location of development training programmes: whether in rich countries, or in the Third World countries to which trainees belong, or thirdly in Third World countries other than the ones to which trainees belong, for comparative purposes. The other is about substance and about who will contribute to it. The balance of this paper will be given up to an attempt to summarize some main features of each discussion, and to offer some comments. These comments are not designed to be definitive in any way. Their aim is to promote the efficacy of the ongoing discussion, by providing some questions or pointers here and there.

3. The debate on location

On the issue concerning desirable location, there are mainly two schools of thought. The one will argue that people being trained to take responsibilities towards the development of their own countries should take this training in the countries concerned. The argument is primarily that since this is where they will have to work, it also is where they will have to learn the trade. Now here is a thesis that has both a theoretical and a practical angle. The practical angle is fairly self-evident, insofar as the peculiarities of a work situation can be learned only in that situation itself. The theoretical angle is rather different, inasmuch as textbooks and other material available for training in Third World countries will mostly not be specifically geared to the

particular cultural and social conditions of the countries concerned. In other words, a problem remains in that the so-called generality of textbooks and the like, leaves a gap to be bridged between theory and actual conditions. We shall return to the problem of generality in the next section. As teaching materials properly adjusted to specific national or regional conditions will appear, this gap is likely to be bridged in the course of time. Those holding this point of view will additionally bring negative arguments, condemning the cultural estrangement to which will be subject those sent abroad for studies. More specifically they will refer to the complications of culture shock, both upon leaving home and upon returning, to the even worse problem of attempting to apply at home, under 'developing' conditions that which was learned abroad, under 'developing' conditions, and furthermore to the risks of brain-drain. The second issue is only to an extent a problem of applicability; to another extent it is a problem of facing barriers consisting of standing procedures and of the unwillingness of colleagues to relinquish these in favour of the foreign ideas brought home by graduates freshly from institutions abroad.

The opposite viewpoint, that development training is best given abroad, is defended with equally valid arguments. One such argument says that those who are to be responsible for development activities must be able to gain some mental distance from their own situation, in order to envisage dispassionately what needs to be done. This argument will be bolstered by lessons from experience, saying for example that in matters of management, one cannot begin to apply new techniques anywhere unless one has experienced their effective application by people fully accustomed to them, steeped in the appropriate mentality and outlook, and operating in surroundings to match. A third argument will be that especially for middle level jobs it is not always easy to attract the appropriate personnel, and that one way of making this kind of careers more attractive is by enabling those potentially

interested to go abroad and obtain the benefits and status that foreign experience will tend to convey. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that in the Third World many students, when given the option to train at home or abroad, will strongly prefer to go abroad, and so will their supervisors advise them.

In view of the dilemma between these two lines of argument, the question arises whether it is proper to deal with the matter in such a categorical fashion. It should perhaps be more realistic to look into specific programmes before asking whether they can be more appropriately taught in a Third World country or in a rich country. In some cases it is even sensible to wonder whether perhaps part of a programme should be taught at home and other parts abroad, whether in rich countries or in other Third World situations. The reference to other Third World situations, in this connection, is by no means a rhetorical embellishment. There exists an increasing awareness that by lumping together ever so many developing societies into the one broad category, labelled Third World, one achieves preciously little beyond continuining a Western-ethnocentric image of the world that has been obsolete for some time now. This image is given the lie furthermore by certain increasingly noticeable differences (added to the less noticed perennial ones) between the countries allegedly making up the Third World.

Nor is the matter of specificity of programmes (the topic of section 4) in relation to choice of locale the only issue to be obscured somewhat by discussing development training in too categorical a manner. There are at least two more problems that risk being ignored when the matter is discussed in categorical terms only.

One is whether perhaps particular parts of training programmes can more appropriately be taught in rich country settings as against other parts that might be more appropriately taught in the setting of the trainees' own country or perhaps of another Third World country. The question is more significant than may appear to be the case

at a first blush. It connotes, ultimately, the matter of the reciprocity of perspectives in the study of development, as briefly pointed out in the preceding. This is where choice of locale may directly reflect insight into substance.

A second issue, oftentimes overlooked, is whether any training programmes can do without exposure to actual field experience, including responsibilities in the field. In other words, even a stage of field research may not always be adequate to achieve the appropriate level and intensity of training.

The debate on the desirable location of development training programmes has been prompted, as stated above, by the emergence of new Third World facilities. It takes little imagination to see that as a matter of principle it was in order from the word go; but until a choice between alternative possibilities emerged the matter was too academic to merit consideration.

The emergence of development training and research facilities in the Third World, in ever increasing numbers, reflects in two kinds of questions that the leadership of established rich-country facilities are now asking themselves. One kind relates to their own independent role and function; the other refers to desirable relationships as between themselves and their Third World colleagues (assuming them to be not merely competitors).

As regards the future prospects of rich-country facilities, an immediate consideration is the expectation of a decrease in the demand for particular types of training hitherto offered by rich-country institutions, because they are henceforth available in a growing number of Third World locales. This apparently imminent loss of market has hitherto not materialized. If loss in demand there is, it is more than off-set by increases in demand for the same offerings on the part of countries hitherto less effective on the demand side, and by newly emergent demand for more

advanced and more specialized training. Increasingly also, business contracts contain training clauses.[1]

What could well appear puzzling is that on the whole this visibly, almost dramatically, shifting market situation has resulted in relatively little thorough reconsideration of substance and presuppositions of either training or research; - outcries for 'other development' notwithstanding. Management, to take one outstanding example, continues to be taught in a thoroughly Western-ethnocentric, mostly American, fashion: by express demand on the part of the Third World trainees and of the authorities sending them for training. In this respect, emergent competition from the Third World offers as yet no spur towards reconsideration of either approaches or premises Even the fashionable demands for self-reliance and independent efforts towards relevancy appear as yet largely ineffective in this regard.

There is yet another reason why it seems desirable that rich-country development studies centres and specialists continue their work. One hears it mentioned less than its actual importance would seem to warrant. Development studies are a window on the world, that nobody in the so-called rich countries can afford to close. The effort would have to go on, even if henceforth nobody in the Third World would ever demand rich-country expertise. In this respect, development studies is no more no less than one installment in the history of outward-looking Western scholarship.[2] Those who condemn this scholarship believing it has fallen into disrepute by its serviceability towards colonial expansionism, would be well advised to realize that the emergent One World implies a new demand for much the same kind of scholarly interest,

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1. But the effectuation of such training is not always entrusted to existing training centres.

2. A well-known predecessor is war-time regional studies; well before those came oriental and African studies of originally romantic inspiration; before those again, studies of other religions and their languages, as a means both to reach out towards one's roots and to be effective apologetically.

harnessed to a new goal.

In the absence of real competition, indeed of any indication of an imminent prospect of serious competition, what about co-operation? One can easily envisage various reasons in favour, in addition to the need for windows on the world. In a One World framework, there is merit as well as mutual advantage in building effective networks of international co-operation through mutual support. In certain cases the ensuing division of labour may well result in decisions to shift training activities from rich-country to Third World locations, and accordingly to adjust the substance to be taught. There is no doubt that such innovations will require novel patterns of institutional co-operation in designing, implementing and funding programmes of training. They may further entail modifications of existing scholarship programmes as offered by rich-country agencies. The degree of difficulty inherent in all of these changes tends to be grossly underrated, especially by politicians and administrators pushing in this direction, often for reasons other than the substance and quality of the programmes concerned.

It is worth recalling, besides, that, in the case of Third World programmes with or without co-operation with rich-country agencies, intellectual independence or, for that matter, co-operation on equal footing, is not really compatible with ongoing financial dependence. The intriguing demand, occasionally heard, for 'untying' scholarship programmes, deserves critical assessement for this very reason. Likewise, the somewhat lightheartedly used assumption as to comparability between one development situation and the next deserves closer scrutiny. There is no reason why significant comparability should exist *a priori* in any cases. Those inclined to assume it risk proving subject to some form of ethnocentrism: whether an underlying, so-called general theoretical model (e.g., centre-periphery, or exploitation), or a form of subjective group ethnocentrism (e.g., causing people from a particular Third World area to think that the

developments they have experienced represent general models).

In terms of outlook, the difference between development training in rich countries and the same in a given particular Third World country is not limited to the difference between specific manifestations of the problem of Western ethnocentrism. Rich-country locations have the advantage of being - and most probably, remaining for some time to come - meeting places for people from many different Third World origins. They thus lend themselves to any programmes likely to benefit by international and intercontinental comparison. Such comparison is in itself a viable and commendable corrective to any Western ethnocentrism that might be conveyed by the setting. As against this, programmes in Third World locations will more readily account for the specifics of the given national or regional situation. The location will then facilitate observation in depth, probably at the cost of width of scope. It is clearly necessary that the respective advantages and disadvantages of either kind of location be weighed: with reference to the particular subject matter to be taught and to the need, or absence thereof, of periods of field research or practical assignments as parts of the training to be offered.

What is remarkable about these and related problems is that they are rarely faced squarely and in their totality. One can safely maintain that the problems here reviewed receive inadequate attention on the part of those dealing on a day by day basis with some of their aspects of elements. This is perhaps in line with another fact.

The debate about the location of development training and research hardly catches the limelight. It follows, or at best accompanies, the very actual developments that it is, ideally, called upon to guide. The reason is that these developments will, more often than not, respond to impulses other than those provided by careful scholarly weighing of relevancies and prospects. There is of course no point in deploring such a state of

affairs; besides, how much guidance will scholarship really provide? On the other hand, there is no cause to conclude that the scholarly discussion of the matter is merely academic and supererogatory. If and when it arrives at clear insights, these could, indeed should, be fed into the decision-making process, to set or to correct a course to steer.

4. The debate about substance

The issue is clear: what is development training (and research) to be once development is no longer seen as being at once a process and an effort, in particular countries or regions, marked by a persistent dilemma, namely between imitating or eliminating the West, seen in its turn as the dominant muster idealized for the purpose? Rephrased in the terms developed in section 2, how to define development studies in the perspective of the needed division of labour between students of the various main issues marking the inception of a One World pattern, features of which include its being polycentric, with high communication, optimal interaction, and optimal interdependency? The attempt to answer this question in any detail requires specific reference to limited training or research goals and to well-identified target groups. Accordingly, one must expect a multiplicity and variability of answers, far beyond the scope of the present exercise. The only thing feasible here will be to point out a few selected issues likely to return in most of the specific cases in regard of which such answers might be forthcoming. Some of these issues have been recognized fairly recently, others are matters of long-standing concern, reactivated by current reorientations.[1] Both kinds have been mentioned in

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1 The remarks that follow will be made with specific reference to the social sciences. Science will not be included: not because it appears immune to the kind of questioning that seems in order, but because the questions may have to be asked in a different way. If the social sciences are exponents and then contributors of Western specificity in deviance from the Common Human Pattern, science has had the singular significance of being one of the main forces of this deviance, making for the specificity: a fact sometimes ignored.

passing in the preceding sections; what remains to be done is to underscore their importance.

As regards the more recent realizations, the one on the part of the so-called rich countries is that the fad which emerged some five years ago, about rich-country adjustment policies, has since proven to mistake one symptom for the entire issue. Nor have policies along these lines always been able to avoid an unfavourable balance between constructive and destructive effects. It seems now about to be superseded by a newly emergent fad, about life styles and levels of living. This could appear to be an improvement, in that it broadens the issue. Yet it begs the question as to the interrelation between the life styles issue in the rich countries and the levels of living issue in the Third World. In this regard more is required than the realization, advocated in the preceding, that the issues raised, for example , by the Club of Rome and the matter of Third World development are two faces of one coin. It also begs the question, even more than the adjustment policies fashion did, as to the thin margin between scholarly analysis and prognostication on the one hand and sheer advocacy, whether ideologically bolstered or not, on the other. The net effect of such advocacy is to blur the issue, which is, as stated above, to redefine development studies and development work as one task out of several, jointly addressing - according to some sensible division of labour - the range of problems symptomatic of the emergence of the One World.

The more recent realization on the part of the Third World is a double one. First, the very concept of the Third World as one category proves imaginary as soon as one tries to put it to use from a truly Third World standpoint. To those composing the Third World, the category Third World is no more than, and only usable as, a reflex, a mirror, for their more or less joint dealings with the rich countries. Such validity as this concept has derives immediately from the Western habit of categorically labelling the rest of the world in a manner fit to mark categorial difference. The term is comparable to such terms

as 'the middle East' or 'the near East' or 'the far East', which are incomprehensible but from the European vantage point of a particular age and which, particularly, have no meaning at all from the standpoint of those so designated. Accordingly the simple logic of ongoing decolonization demands that a term like Third World, and again a term like development in the specific sense of indicating an ailment of newly independent states, will fade away before too long. Historical coincidence seems to help: there is increasing recognition of growing diversity as between the various components of the 'Third World'. Before long, even a polarizing power game such as the North-South dialogue is likely to be hampered by nothing as much as the creeping realization that the dichotomy underlying it is rapidly obsolescent.

Secondly, under these conditions not merely the conception of development, as the faithful imitation (coupled to the drastic elimination) of the rich West, seen as the - idealized - model to copy, is on the way out. With it, the countervailing conception of development as self-reliance, provisionally bolstered by aloofness as to the emergent One World, is bound to lose validity; more so once the emergent One World will cease to misrepresented - with all the dangers of self-fulfilling prophecy! - as ongoing Western domination. Beyond the iconoclastic stance vis-à-vis the West, what needs to be achieved is a stance of positive critical interest, corresponding to an increasingly balanced mutual involvement.[1]

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1 The main obstacle, in this connection, is not so much the residual effect of post-colonial power relationships as, indeed, the ominous manner in which budding international interaction and interdependency are thwarted, in the case of too many so-called developing countries, by internal power conditions that load the dice in favour of persistently falsified international relationships. In this regard, international aloofness to internal conditions, in alleged respect of sacrosanct national sovereignty, amounts to strictly the same as international interference, however disguised. Here is a major problem area in regard to which, by international tacit conspiracy, no worth-while studies are undertaken. Such 'studies' as will attribute this entire problem complex to ongoing or recently emergent domination risk proving colonial, insofar as they neglect to recognize the primary significance of the internal dimension.

In other words, iconoclasm as a means rather than as a goal: a means towards effective mutual interest. In the preceding it has already been argued that for the rich countries it is inconceivable to drop their interest in Third World affairs in view of emergent Third World self-reliance - and this by no means on account of an irresistible urge to continue the domination game by hook and by crook. The one reason, and an entirely valid one at that, is the emergent One World of interaction and interdependency. Traces of the domination urge can certainly be found, but it would be misreading the situation were one to interpret them as anything more than residues. The immediate and urgent need is for a matching interest, on the part of the various components of what was the Third World, in rich-country affairs, both of the capitalist and of the communist variants, as well as in the affairs of other parts of the world. One has the impression that for the time being this interest has some difficulty to express itself and find its proper goals and channels. The need to bypass iconoclasm, just discussed, is certainly one of the hurdles to be taken; the feeling that, in a perspective of urgent self-realization, this is a supererogatory concern and perhaps ballast, may be another one. Neither is valid in the longer term.

Turning now to old-standing concerns that seem to be receiving the limelight once more, it will suffice to single out, by way of a crucial example, the matter of generality versus applicability in development theory. There are two key issues here, both symptomatic of Western cultural specificity as compared to most of the world. One is the way in which the effective generalization procedure characteristic of Western scholarship is unnoticedly yet wholly ethnocentric. The other is the way in which the presumed relevancy of general theory, in being interpreted as applicability, will be enforced in the organizational act dubbed application. Both are significant in a framework of Third World development. Firstly, because of the spread

effect that this style of 'construction of reality' has had hitherto, not in the least by way of Western training (whether in 'capitalist' or 'socialist' countries) given to persons from the Third World. Secondly and, in the long term, more importantly, because in the emergent One world a modicum of Western impact remains to be envisaged as one tributary to the emergent overall pattern; and in this Western impact not everything will be brand-new henceforth. A good deal of reconsideration is in order; its opportunity is increasingly recognized; but most of the work remains to be done. The effect will therefore be gradual in coming.

This is not the occasion for an in-depth discussion of the two major issues just mentioned. There should be room, however, for some brief comments.

At face value, generalization is the effort to overcome the inherent specificity of observed reality. In view of the stated purpose of generality of insight, specificity as inherent in observation is an undesirable limitation. It is not too difficult to offer some *prima vista* suggestions as to what needs to be done. First one should identify the specificity, and then, by accounting for it, overcome it. However, this suggestion sounds better than it is. Logically, the identification of specificity would seem to anticipate, in unwarranted fashion, the general insight that is to result from it, namely by assuming its availability as a necessary bench-mark or criterion. Methodologically, the achievement of generality out of specificity can be seen to result from much-repeated observation implying comparison. This is recognizedly more feasible in science than in the social sciences. Hence, the tendency of social scientists, who are short of statistically significant runs of observation of the same object, to resort to comparison, - regardless of the unhappy circumstance that in comparison, the matter of numbers pops up once again, namely with reference to numbers of apects compared in handling selected cases as objects. As it

happens, Western scholarship has since time immemorial had at its disposal the tool to cut the resulting Gordian knot. The job of Alexander's sword is done, in this case, by a gimmick bearing various names: *ideal type* with Max Weber, *idea* with Plato, and many other names before, in between and after. What does it do? It strips the observed object, or instance of reality, of its 'here and now', in the assumption that time and place, i.e. specific moment in time and specific location in space, are the factors of specificity. The resulting style of conceptualizing, and of ensuing theory-building, is based upon timeless and spaceless concepts, purely qualitative descriptors (or their quantitative substitutes). The question to ensue is whether such descriptor concepts can be really free from their original specificity, effectively disentangled from their vital referents, or not. This question surges up now and then. It is discussed perhaps more incisively in economics, where one would expect it rather less (Loewe, Joan Robinson), than in sociology, where it is much more noticeable but where few seem ready to address it. This lack of interest may well be due to the expectation that the answer may not turn out very satisfactory or helpful.

The point is that it should be hard to deny that, in the last resort, the standing practice of abstracting generalization does not and cannot deal with specificity beyond the point of concealing it, or rather, ignoring it. This is difficult enough within a Western context. It becomes dramatic in a cross-cultural setting where one side will no longer tolerate this setting being interpreted, by the other side, as being for all practical purposes an expanded Western cultural setting. As soon as its cross-cultural dimension becomes involved, Western general theory is liable to be recognized as fully and incurably ethnocentric. It proves unable to take into account a setting of intercultural transactions into which it would be introduced - let alone to accommodate a different cultural framework.

The problem is the more serious in that it is far from being a mere academic matter. Where it refers to vital intercultural transactions in need of being facilitated, its net effect is to hamper them. Nor is its solution brought any nearer if Western ethnocentrism, thus imposed, is countered by nothing more creative than would-be, more or less emotional, ethnocentrisms produced for the purpose by other parties to the emergent One World game. The crux of the matter is that the need to operate allegedly general theory interculturally results, in preliminary fashion, in some crucial questions as to the true content of Western theorizing: never mind what it has done to bring the emergent One World about. These questions ramify into the increasingly recognized need to look into theory-building within other culture contexts. They are further complicated by the circumstance that neither Western culture nor any other one is a stable frame of reference for the purpose of the needed analysis: each and everyone is changing, by itself and in mutual interaction.

Note, in passing, that the more virulent will be the ethnocentric nationalism that prompts any *prises de position* in this tangled matter, the worse will be the culture shock effect upon those who, in becoming involved, will realize the inevitable intercultural dimension of their undertaking. Culture shock is not just a temporary experience of somebody leaving home for training abroad or returning home after graduation. Where ethnocentrism is powerful, for instance by being disguised in allegedly general theory, it provides a measure of immunity against culture shock. Where readiness to engage upon real interaction results in openness towards 'the other', one's skin loses its armour, and culture shock becomes a real hazard.

The other pernnial issue is the relevancy of general theory as attested by means of application. It was already observed, in

mentioning this issue, that some logical sleight of hand seems to be at play. The relevancy of general theory, to any pertinent specific instances of reality, is interpreted as applicability, in line with an old-standing inclination to see theory not merely as a significant outcome of an intellectual process but to deem it, in addition, capable of some effect upon reality: possibly meliorative. Thus reified, theory appears as a mosaic of pieces of insight, and the question to arise next is whether it will serve to reconstitute reality, in a meliorative sense. Assuming the way from reality to theory to be clear, what about the way back? The answer is that there is no real way back,[1] once spatiotemporal specificity has been stripped off. Theory, however reified and however striking an abstract and generalized replica of reality, has no way of metamorphosing back into live reality, no matter how much recomposition of bits and ends of theoretical insight one would achieve, whether by means of interdisciplinarity or otherwise.

As it happens, this impasse, in being perceived as a challenge, has in no mean way contributed to the Western cultural specificity.Retrospectively, it appears that relevancy, interpreted as applicability (a feasible reinterpretation, given a modicum of reification of theory), has been subsumed under, and thus asserted by, application as a purposive act, - whether on the part of the theoretician himself or on that of the one to whom the theoretician handed the tools, be he a planner, a policy maker, a technician, or whatever. Thus, the action element that had been

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1. The alleged study of action, *n' en déplaise à* von Mises and Parsons, is the effort to reduce it to other categories of a qualitative nature. M. Hollis, *Models of Man*, Cambridge(UP.) 1977, p. 107, speaks of actor, stage and a missing alternative to causal explanation. Nor does the rationality concept that he employs to juggle causality and ideology, norm and intentionality, offer much relief; less so since it seems to render action virtually synonymous with identity (p. 122).

surreptitiously drained out by ignoring spatiotemporal specificity, is equally surreptitiously reintroduced; but in the two acts it is not the same. In the latter, the action element is the element of organization, rather than being a feature of a living organism. From the one to the other is a far cry. However, action as organization is certainly what the West excels in; - up to the point, now in sight, where it would prove subject to the law of diminishing returns.

We have returned, once more, to the problems of the first Club of Rome report. In this case, it is not so much the setting of international transactions that has the effect of exposing a hidden flaw in an otherwise most successful theoretical apparatus, but rather its very success in practical application, both interculturally and within the Western orbit.

The catch here is that if specific applicability of general theory cannot be taken to be axiomatic, the authority of the academically guided planner, technician and policy maker is not beyond challenge. Practice seems to confirm this conclusion in ways that are occasionally painful; and with the theoretical prop gone, there is little reason left for not taking a closer look.

For the time being, many of those in the Third World whose attention is drawn to this order of problems respond ambiguously. On the one hand there is some inevitable glee about the Western Prometheus seemingly on the brink of turning out an Icarus. On the other hand, there is the natural reaction that "these are not our problems: we would like to have yours". Both reactions are somewhat short-sighted; but this short-sightedness, along with the inability to learn the lessons of history, are part of the stuff that world history is made of.

Be all this as it may, the problem of specific relevancy as applicability of general theory is likely to catch more of the limelight for some time to come, and attempts to dodge it rather than face up to it are unlikely to become easier.

In much development training, both of the present and of the forseeable future, these quite fundemental problems may not appear conspicuously or, for that matter, in a readily recognizable manner. This may seem all for the better, in that there is less immediate occasion to worry about fundamentals in a framework that more often than not is meant to be entirely practical. Appearances are deceptive, however, inasmuch as underlying fundamental problems have a way of interfering, in a manner not easily identified, with apparently simple matters of curriculum development, expert advice and so forth.

In principle, the problems here identified demand being broached jointly by all those concerned, regardless whether they belong to developed or developing parts of the world, and whether they are bearers of one civilization or another. For practical purposes, there is no denying that, generally speaking, Western scholarship cannot avoid bearing the brunt of the new challenges now becoming manifest. The crux of the matter, then, is for them to play the innovative role that seems incumbent upon them, in purposive anticipation of the new rules of the game of international scholarship that remain to be elaborated - no doubt in full international interaction - as they try to forge ahead. The course to be steered is very much a matter of dead reckoning.

5. Location, substance, institutionalization

It is clear that much of the problematic of substance applies regardless of location of training projects. In research, certain undertakings will be possible only in particular locales. At the same time, there is reason to expect that in various locales the problems as to substance will manifest themselves in various ways. The upshot of these considerations is that for the topic of this paper, institutionalization is no indifferent matter.

In this respect again, actual developments have by and large overtaken, and thereby to an extent pre-empted, a discussion that might well appear in order as a preliminary.

To discuss it nonetheless is not necessarily futile. Some comments on these developments, and on the issues they have implicitly or explicitly raised or, for that matter, failed to raise, will now round off this paper. To concentrate the argument they will be limited to advanced training. Less advanced levels of training have of course not followed precisely the same track, though much of what will be said does apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Both in the rich and in the developing countries a rough-and-ready distinction can be made between kinds of facilities for development teaching and research. Some occur within the framework of, or appended to, the system of formal education - in the case under review, the advanced levels of higher education;[1] others do not, but may maintain informal links with the universities.

(1) Within the university systems, there exist individuals, departments and institutes (or centres) whose normal pursuits entail an interest in development studies. This need by no means be a full commitment, indeed it may be a lateral or supplementary interest. It will nevertheless enable those concerned to consider and announce themselves as students of development, whenever the occasion arises.

(2) Again within the university systems, special programmes, projects or other concentrations of interest have come into being expressly given up to development studies. In the rich countries, some may single out Third World problems or those of a particular part or region of the Third World; others may link such concern with an interest in comparable problems at home. In Third World countries the main or sole concern is with the home situation, and the difference between types 1 and 2 may accordingly be rather less marked.

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1. In East European countries, academies may play more of a role, in this connection, than universities: a matter of organization of the difference between teaching an research.

(3) Here and there, specialized facilities for development studies occur that are more or less appended to the university system but that in important respects are able to conduct their affairs autonomously. Thus they are freed from certain constraints considered typical of academia and burdensome to development studies. These include departmental confinement to single disciplines, prevailing theory-orientedness, and a somewhat distant way of becoming involved with the untidiness of actual reality, even for purposes of observation and investigation. The concern of such institutions is likely to be how to achieve or maintain academic solidity and respecability whilst deviating from academic custom in not unimportant ways. The circumstance that even in academia outcries against the ivory tower are currently fashionable is of no real help in this connection.

(4) Not under the umbrella of the university system, there exist numerous, often rather small, centres of development studies, given up to research perhaps rather than teaching, where academically sound standards of performance are presupposed as being instrumental towards the main purpose. This is to provide expert input, support or advice to those active in development work, regardless whether they originate from a rich country or from a Third World country. The action and policy orientation is clearly predominant here, not roughly in balance - however precarious - with the academic orientation as in type 3.

(5) Of a rather different kind, not as easily placed at a particular intellectual level, are institutions committed to action and advocacy against a backdrop of fund-raising and funding, or conversely to fund-raising and funding in such a manner as to involve action and perhaps advocacy.

If these are the main types, then the following comments may be in order.

First, there is no categorial way in which one could argue that some of the general problems discussed in sections 3 and 4 are more noticeable in one type of facility than in another. Even the problems of generality and applicability will occur in types 4 and 5 as much as in types 1, 2 and 3,

although the articulation may differ in each case. Nor do they necessarily appear more significant in rich-country settings than in Third World settings, or vice versa. The main reason here is that intellectuals will tend to be less different, in intellectual pursuits, than their origins may suggest. On the other hand, there is bound to be a significant difference in manifestations if the matter is inspected subject by subject and intsitution by institution. Much work remains to be done in this regard.

Secondly, it should be wrong to think that advocacy is limited to type 5. There is nowadays a pervasive streak of advocacy to which academia, let alone para-university institutions, is in no way immune. In rich-country situations it may be attributed to the erosion of academic mores; this in its turn may be interpreted as being symptomatic of the crucial problems currently encountered by active scholarship, some of which were mentioned in the preceding. In Third World situations advocacy is often said to be a matter of the scholars' more profound and more direct involvement in development and those of its aspects or problems that hurt most. This argument should perhaps not be accepted fully ad face value. The interaction between Third World academics and the societies to which they belong is not necessarily easy and effective at all times; under such conditions advocacy may serve more than one purpose. Under no conditions, surely, does it seem proper to envisage the scholar's role as implying, let alone as culminating in, advocacy. In presupposing definite commitment to a standpoint that will become *ipso facto* rigidified, not to say ossified, scholarly advocacy is nothing short of a self-contradictory position. This is not to declare advocacy out of bounds, let alone to deprecate it. It is, however, to mark the dividing line, however thin, between advocacy and scholarship. Neither side stands to benefit by this line becoming unduly blurred.

Thirdly, in the planning and execution of teaching and research activities anywhere in the world, a degree of institutionalization tends to be achieved and maintained that risks becoming counterproductive, particularly in respect of such hazards as ethnocentrism and self-purposive routinization of patterns of

of activity. Too many institutions everywhere are either near incestuous or near commercial when it comes to planning and executing their activities. If in any regard, it is in this regard that an urgent need exists for interaction between the various kinds of institutions and particularly between institutions in rich and in developing countries. Development studies more than any other kind of studies are doomed if they stay in an old rut. Of course, we all make fun of development studies as being prone to fads and foibles; but there is reason not to forget that by their very nature, as reviewed in section 4, they are to be either innovative or not to be at all. Amongst social scientists, the proper place of students of development is in the vanguard.

Bonn, 1 Oct. 1978 C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze