Electric media in rural development: Individual freedoms to choose versus politics of power and control.

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4 PARADIGM OR POLICY FOR DEVELOPMENT?

Electronic media, however, abolish the spatial dimension, rather than enlarge it. By electricity, we everywhere resume person-to-person relations as if on the smallest village scale. It is a relation in depth, and without delegation of function or powers. The organic everywhere supplants the mechanical. Dialogue supersedes the lecture (McLuhan, 1964: 255/256)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

My conception of rural development entails creating development spheres based on autonomy for, and self-empowerment by, people in rural areas. In my interpretation, such autonomous spheres are not so much a quantifiable, static objective as a dynamic process of increasing individual freedoms for people in rural areas. The argumentation of my conception of development was based on a limited number of political theories, the selection of which has arguably been arbitrary. However, the result is a broad, albeit abstract, conception of development, as opposed to a narrow, prescriptive conception including quantifiable means and objectives. Development discourse is organized in paradigms, each with different interpretations of the causes for underdevelopment and poverty and often with different objectives for development. The main question of this chapter is whether or not my conception of development can, or even should, be linked to an existing paradigm. If the answer is negative, one option would be to use the conception of development as a starting point for a normative policy framework, which would be in line with Nederveen Pieterse's claim that such frameworks are more relevant to development than explanatory frameworks of paradigms (see section 2.3).

Normative approaches to development have become more common over the last decades of the 20th century, but still a strong tendency towards positivism is present in development discourse. At the heart of many development paradigms are extensive analyses of static situations of poverty and underdevelopment from a western perspective. Perhaps because development studies originate in economics, structural analyses and emphases on things economic have dominated writings on the subject of development. This dominance has resulted in an almost obsessive preoccupation with explanatory economic models. In my opinion, those models in themselves provide valuable insights, but when models are used to predict economic development or to prescribe ways to achieve such development they reveal their shortcomings. Suddenly, the economists appear to ignore the basics of models and seem to forget that they are nothing more, or less, than attempts at representing a few specific elements of reality. Subsequently, the positivist nature of paradigms often leads to a mechanical approach at the implementation level. McLuhan's quote draws attention to a change of emphasis from mechanical to organic and from lecture to dialogue, both relevant in the context of electronic media for this dissertation. McLuhan's words illustrate my rejection of a positivist approach to development in general, and to electronic media in rural development in particular. On the other hand, normative approaches only seem to replace mathematical or economic models with ideologically motivated normative concepts, which risk to be perceived as more politically correct and people-oriented than positivist models in name only. I do not conceive of such normative approaches as necessarily supportive of autonomous spheres of self-empowerment, which allow people the individual

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1 Although advocates of normative approaches often conceive of normative as fundamentally different from positivist, that perceived distinction is not wholly unambiguous or free from controversy. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 'normative' means 'describing or setting standards or rules of language or behavior which should be followed' and 'positivism' is described as 'a system of philosophy based on things that can be seen or proved rather than on ideas' (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 1995). As I argue on page 44, 'the distinction between the positivist as opposed to the normative ought is artificial, since a normative use of ought, or should, leads to prescriptive development implementations just as much as the positivist use of models does'. Therefore, I tend to prefer a more organic approach to policy-making, for which my conception of development can serve as a political philosophy reference point.
freedoms to fully participate in policy- and decision-making processes in rural development. Therefore, I prefer a more organic policy-making process, which would use my conception of development and a related policy framework more as a reference, than as a (normative or positive) model. Furthermore, dialogue (information exchanges) is, in my opinion, more important than lecture (information provision) with respect to the contribution of electronic media to my conception of development. Therefore, this chapter leads to an outline of what I would label a referential policy framework for rural development based on the notions of individual autonomy and self-empowerment of my conception of development.

However, the fact that most development paradigms are judged as positivist does not mean that an overview of insights provided by paradigms cannot be useful. I conceive of paradigms as academic discourses, which provide analytical insights for policy frameworks, whether they are positivist, normative or, as in my interpretation, referential. In fact, utilitarianism's continuing influence on neo-liberal economic theory, as well as on economic development theory, requires that attention is paid to positivist paradigms. In theoretical discussions, these paradigms are losing ground, if not already repudiated, but in the real world positivist paradigms are still adhered to by policy- and decision-makers. Development discourse has gradually been moving towards an alternative development paradigm, based on a normative approach. In the alternative paradigm, less emphasis is placed on overarching theoretical explanations of macro-economic development, which in themselves offer too narrow a perspective. The search for an alternative paradigm has coincided with a move away from the prevailing technology-deterministic and GDP/GNP-centered views of development. According to Srinivasa Melkote, alternative development discourse increasingly emphasizes (i) equity in distribution of information and other benefits of development, (ii) active participation of people at the grassroots level, (iii) independence of local communities to tailor development projects to their own objectives and (iv) integration of old and new ideas, traditional and modern systems (Melkote, 1991: 270). Another issue which is also briefly addressed in this chapter is whether there actually is a need for a new paradigm. It may be difficult for me to justify labeling paradigms as dogmas on the basis of the overview of paradigms in this chapter. However, inevitably some rigidity is intrinsic to approaches to development, which claim universal applicability in a world distinctly different from country to country and even within countries.

Finally, I conceive of my conception of development as providing the theoretical basis for autonomous development spheres in support of self-empowerment of people in rural areas. For that reason it contains elements such as a negative notion of liberty, equality of opportunities and freedoms and just arrangements of institutions. To some extent, my conception matches with normative orientations, such as Anisur Rahman's people's self-development, which considers people to be the creative forces of development and no longer passive recipients (Rahman, 1993), an opinion to which Sen subscribes. Of particular interest to my policy framework are an emphasis on policy- and decision-making processes, instead of on positivist models and ends or normative concepts, a need for involvement of people in public discussion and political decision-making and the assumption that social change, not economic growth, is constitutive of development².

4.2 DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS

Considering my opinion on the purpose of paradigms in the introduction, the general reasons to include an overview of paradigms on development are (i) to arrive at a different approach to development, partly based on insights provided by existing paradigms and (ii) to illustrate, to some extent, a gradual shift in focus of development discourse which has occurred over the past two decades. To that purpose, this section

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² Macro-economic conditions are important, but, in my conception of development, are no more than one condition out of a set of favorable conditions. The neo-liberal emphasis on free market forces and a role back of the State is not necessarily incompatible with my conception of development. In my opinion, the two approaches operate at different levels, macro and micro respectively, and in different fields: economic versus social. Market forces may even provide one aspect of an environment conducive to social change, that of economic freedoms. I also acknowledge the need for economic growth, but conceive of it as an inevitable result of development as freedom of choice.
discusses neo-classicism (neo-liberalism), Marxism and neo-Marxism, balanced and unbalanced growth, basic needs and alternative development. The selection of paradigms and theories is an arbitrary one, but has been based on earlier paradigm overviews (Hunt, 1989) (Hettne, 1995) (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998).

The overview of selected paradigms provides a specific insight into (i) the dominant paradigm (neo-classicism), (ii) the political and social aspects of development (Marxism and neo-Marxism), (iii) regional dimensions of development (balanced and unbalanced growth) and (iv) non-economic centered approaches to development (basic needs and alternative development). The overview of paradigms does not address all aspects of the paradigms, which complicates an assessment. The objective, however, is not to assess the nature, applicability or relevance of paradigms, but to provide an overview of insights into development, which will be used to outline a referential policy framework in line with my conception of development. Apart from the general structures and insights of paradigms, their different perceptions of development or underdevelopment are of interest. Each paradigm description consists of two elements:

- some specific characteristics of, and insights provided by, the paradigm; and
- a perception of (under)development, if more or less explicitly mentioned as such.

The distinction between a paradigm and a theory is not always clear, but, in line with chapter two, I conceive of paradigms as consisting of more than one theory, hence theories are constitutive to paradigms.

**A neo-classical or utilitarian perspective**

As mankind approaches the end of the millennium, the twin crises of authoritarianism and socialist central planning have left only one competitor standing in the ring as an ideology of potentially universal validity: liberal democracy, the doctrine of individual freedom and popular sovereignty (Fukuyama, 1992: 42)

Neo-classicism has a continuing influence on the policies of the IMF and World Bank, for example, and it is effectively the most relevant paradigm in the current globalization process. Within neo-classicism, two different groups can be distinguished, laissez-faire and welfare theorists (Hunt, 1989: 325/326), with the laissez-faire group representing the paradigm in its purest form.

Neo-classicists attribute paramount importance to economic equilibrium models. They assume utility maximization by consumers and profit maximization by producers and typically emphasize short-term efficiency and allocation issues. With these three characteristic features come a belief in equilibrium theories and a reliance on free trade, based on comparative advantage. An interesting aspect is the almost libertarian emphasis on the values of individual economic and political freedom. The emphasis on economic freedom relates to the focus by neo-classicism on individual incentive and decision-making, as well as to a prominence attributed to individual economic behavior. Political freedom is converted into a preference for a pluralist constitutional democracy (ibid, 1989: 293). Other elements of neo-classicism are (i) the assumption of perfect world and domestic markets, (ii) the role of free international trade in creating economic growth and development based on comparative advantages and (iii) an almost complete rejection of State-interference in economic events. The welfare theorists accept a limited role for the State, e.g., with respect to income redistribution. However, the perspective is still utilitarian and emphasizes efficient use of resources and optimum allocation. Inequality is considered a source of economic incentive, which is hard

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3 It would be hard not to mention Adam Smith in this context, since for Smith the prime mover of economic growth, perceived as the expansion of national level output, is expansion of markets. He claims that there is no need for self-sufficiency for national entities, since agricultural produce can be obtained beyond national borders. Together with the expansion of markets beyond borders, this leads to the conclusion that free international trade is essential for economic growth.

4 The issue of efficient use of resources and optimum allocation can be traced back to classical economists such as Ricardo and Mill. Ricardo foresees increasing scarcity of land to lead to zero economic growth as a result of the impossibility to meet subsistence needs. The only possible way out, according to Ricardo, is through technical innovations (hence the connection with efficient use of resources) and international trade, where he favors the latter. Mill, on the other hand, is a believer in the capabilities of technological progress as an engine to economic growth without any real limits. Mill also sees opportunities for increasing imports of cheap wage goods and capital exports, hence the connection with optimum allocation.
to maintain in a context of disadvantaged situations and conditions in rural areas.

Major criticisms of neo-classicism concern the intense fascination with modeling and the extreme emphasis on individual economic behavior and free market mechanisms. Models are abstractions of the real world, but the even more abstract modeling of neo-classicism, supporting widely applicable generalizations, inevitably leads to neglecting various aspects of reality. As a result, neo-classicists, at least de facto, deny a wide variety of situations in, and conditions under, which people and countries have to address things and events economic. It is impossible to present a conception of development agreed on by all neo-classicists, but representatives of a laissez-faire approach conceive of ‘economic development [as] the widening of the range of alternatives open to people as consumers and as producers’ (Bauer and Yamey, 1957: 151). This type of economic development is illustrated for electronic media, for example, by the expansion of telephone services to some economically viable rural areas, based on economic rationales and resulting from neo-classical economic policies. The emphasis on people’s freedom of choice in a context of producers and consumers leads to an economic conception of development, which is significantly narrower than a conception of development as freedom of choice, since the latter also includes freedom of choice in political and social domains.

**Development and political philosophy**

*Sectarianism in any quarter is an obstacle to the emancipation of mankind. (…) The leftist-turned-sectarian goes totally astray when he attempts to interpret reality and history dialectically, and falls into essentially fatalistic positions (…) for the leftist sectarian, tomorrow is decreed beforehand, is inexorably pre-ordained (Freire, 1970: 22/23)*

**Marxism**

Marxist economic theory has some significantly distinct elements. Most importantly, Marxism offers a broader perspective than other early paradigms through the inclusion of social aspects. Marx focuses on the relation between capital and labor and its alleged exploitative nature. In addition to economic aspects of distribution, distribution of power is included in his analysis, with both distributions considered unequal. According to Marx, political and cultural aspects of society favor a particular pattern of class dominance and he identifies two classes: the capitalist class, owners of means of production, and the proletariat, the working class, the latter being exploited in the supply of their labor force. Marx predicts that the capitalist objective of surplus accumulation and cut-throat competition for market share, increasingly leading to a centralization of capital, will eventually create awareness among the working masses of the exploitative nature of the capitalist system5. They will rise against their exploiters and seize control over both the means of production and State-power in order to establish a socialist State, which is then expected to evolve in a State based on communist principles. Arguably most characteristic of Marxism is its rigid determinism, implied in its reasoning towards an inevitable collapse of capitalism and a transformation to a socialist society. History has proven the socio-political aspects of Marx’s prediction to be misconceived. However, the Marxist doctrine has subsequently been discarded as a viable economic theory, which has partly resulted in rejecting the role of social and political aspects, amongst others power, in economic theory. Perhaps because of Marx’s rather mechanistic perception of development, underdevelopment was not clearly defined by him. Given his deterministic extrapolation of past and present to the future, it is understandable that within his theory there was no real need for such a concept on which to base a development objective. Although Marx’s theory has been discarded, determinism has not disappeared in development economics, which is understandable given the dominance of economists and their preoccupation with models and measurements. The social, political and economic collapse of the

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5 Given the present background of globalization and mega-mergers, it is hard to ignore Marx’ prediction that cut-throat competition for market share of the capitalist system would lead to increased centralization of capital. His subsequent sociological analyses of the results of that process were rather less accurate.
communist world has made Marx’s economic theory obsolete, because of its linkage to specific socio-political arrangements of a communist society.

**Neo-Marxism**

Neo-Marxist Paul Baran mentions four elements of underdevelopment: monopoly capitalism, imperialism, class, and economic surplus (Baran, 1957). Unlike Marx, he does not focus on social relations in the production process, but on the distribution of the surplus. Baran distinguishes four surplus appropriating classes: domestic landowners, indigenous merchants, monopoly capitalists, and foreign capitalists. In general, neo-Marxism emphasizes analyses of historic and current situations over approaches to development. The main element of neo-Marxism is the perception that underdevelopment is a process: a continuous flow of surplus from the periphery to the center through international trade. In the rare case that solutions to that process of underdevelopment (as opposed to a situation of underdevelopment) are suggested, withdrawal from capitalist systems into autarky and radical political change feature prominently. Thereby, social change is assumed to follow political change. Neo-Marxists typically emphasize social structures in the economic domain, such as collectivization. Influential neo-Marxists identify international trade relations as causing the process of underdevelopment, whether arguing along lines of surplus extraction or unequal exchange, and sometimes mentioning distortions in the process of industrial growth in the periphery. Any real possibilities of development in peripheral countries are denied. Radical political change is advocated as the only way towards economic development, with or without withdrawal from the capitalist world system into autarky. The neo-Marxist definition of underdevelopment can be derived from its perception of the development process, leading to the opposite situation of underdevelopment, which holds that development is conceived of as a reinvestment of the economic surplus in the national economy to expand national output, the latter to be equitably distributed. The national output refers solely to material aspects, since for neo-Marxists the only conceivable purpose of development is to improve the material well-being of people. By contrast, the more immaterial aspects, such as allowing for increased individual freedoms of action and expression, characterize a perspective of social change and development which is not shared by neo-Marxism.

**Unbalanced and balanced growth**

The social process is really one indivisible whole. Out of its great stream the classifying hand of the investigator artificially extracts human facts. (...) the carrying out of new combinations is a special function, and the privilege of a type of people who are much less numerous than all those who have the ‘objective’ possibility of doing it. Therefore, finally, entrepreneurs are a special type, and their behavior a special problem, the motive power of a great number of significant phenomena (Schumpeter, 1934: 3, 81, 82)

**Unbalanced growth**

Hirschman claims that ‘in general economic development means transformation rather than creation ex novo’ (Hirschman, 1961: 56). Balanced growth supports large scale State-interference, which, according to him, is not how development in developing countries should be approached. Hirschman does to some extent support State-intervention, but mainly to guide processes of resource allocation. The State would have to take cues for allocation processes from major resource bottlenecks as revealed by a freely operating market system. He argues that actual decision-making on investment should not take place in centralized institutions, because such decision-making risks being based on the wrong assumptions and inaccurate information. Development is not about injecting missing elements, but about recruiting and organizing latent resources. In Hirschman’s opinion, existing elements of development have to be combined through a binding agent. He claims a need for an ability to invest and for induced investment decisions. Hirschman argues that in developing countries the ability to invest is lacking and, therefore, there is a need for economically induced decision-making on investments, or inevitable chains of investment. The necessity for these chains to start somewhere leads him to a concept of growth poles, with which he introduces the
regional dimension. Important is Hirschman's emphasis on the importance of backward and forward linkages, whereby he claims that investment should be done in public or private sectors with extensive linkages. In his view, inequalities are inevitable in the process of development, but they will be compensated for through spread effects, or the trickling down of growth. He implicitly uses the concept of cumulative causation, but claims it moves in one direction: towards positive progress. Thus he states that ‘the sequence that leads away from equilibrium is precisely an ideal pattern of development from our point of view’ (ibid, 1961: 66/67). The growth poles and trickling down concepts are key to Hirschman's unbalanced growth, as well as to utilitarian economics. He claims that no backward and virtually no forward linkages for agriculture exist. As a result, Hirschman more or less ignores that sector of the economy.

Balanced growth
Myrdal further develops the cumulative causation theory, applies it to national and international levels and addresses issues of regional differences. He describes equalization amongst regions within a nation-state as being ‘a phase of the cumulative social process of economic development’ (Myrdal, 1957: 48). Thus, he creates a broader perspective on development. His argument for cumulative causation turns around rejecting two main assumptions in economic theory. First, he claims that assumptions of equilibrium (action will cause equally strong reaction) are unrealistic, since forces of action and reaction are rarely operating in the same time and space. Instead of a drive towards equilibrium in an oscillating movement, Myrdal distinguishes a circular movement of forces reinforcing each other in the same negative or positive direction. Secondly, he rejects the view of economics as an isolated part of the social process, a view which states that economic factors can be isolated and used to explain things economic. The latter can be conceived of as an argument against excessive reliance on modeling, since models, by definition, are an abstract representation of reality. Myrdal focuses on balanced growth and is at times perceived as a structuralist for his cumulative causation theory (Hunt, 1989: 59). In addressing regional differences within countries, he admits that spread effects exist, but that the concept has a limited reach. He implicitly states that with increased distance from a center, backwash effects will be stronger than spread effects. Finally, Myrdal argues that the effectiveness of spread effects depends on the overall level of development of a country, indicating that only above a certain level of development may spread effects close socio-economic gaps. Myrdal defines development seemingly paradoxically as a social process of economic development towards socio-economic equality. The paradox is resolved when economics are perceived as a part of the larger field of social science.

6 Representatives of the structuralist paradigm are Prebisch, Furtado and Sunkel. Structuralists conceive of capital accumulation as the backbone of development. As a result, they claim that a development paradigm needs an explanation of the process of capital accumulation at its theoretical basis. Structuralists stress a need for State-intervention through economic policies geared towards diversification and industrialization, e.g., import tariff barriers, or economic development. Furtado defines economic growth as 'a process of growth which starts [at a point] where productivity capacity grows faster than the working population' (Furtado, 1964: 72). The failure of the structuralist approach caused the emergence of another structural paradigm: the center-periphery model of the dependistas (Frank, Dos Santos and again Furtado and Sunkel). However, both theories are too much focused on national, or even supranational level (dependistas) structures to be of interest for the subject of rural areas. Through Frank, structuralism is also connected with neo-Marxism.

7 Another contributor to balanced growth, Ragnar Nurkse, distinguishes between economic growth and economic progress (Nurkse, 1961). The latter seems to refer to development as defined by Schumpeter, who explicitly distinguishes between economic growth and economic development. In his view, economic growth is mainly more of the same, whereas economic development is a disruptive process, spurred on by innovations in the means of production, organization of production, or products. This implies that not incremental accumulation of capital is an essential feature of development, but rather the mobilization of existing resources for new uses, or the 'carrying out of new combinations [of means]' (Schumpeter, 1934: 66).
A different focus in development

Increasingly the claim is that alternative development represents an alternative paradigm. This is a problematic idea for four reasons: because whether paradigms apply to social science is questionable; because in development the concern is with policy frameworks rather than explanatory frameworks; because there are different views on whether a paradigm break with conventional development is desirable; and finally because the actual divergence in approaches to development is in some respects narrowing. There is a meaningful alternative development profile or package but there is no alternative development paradigm - nor should there be (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998: 343)

Basic needs

In the 1970s, it gradually became clear that neither economic growth (growth-mediated development), nor re-distribution (support-led development) policies had led to a more egalitarian distribution of welfare for the populations of developing countries. Moreover, the situation of the poorest people in the world had hardly improved, if not worsened. Therefore, a part of development discourse shifted from a preoccupation with GDP towards more human welfare based indicators of measuring development. The Physical Quality of Life Indicator (Morris and Liser, 1977), for example, was an attempt at producing an indicator in line with the new focus. Another attempt was a classification of basic needs indicators, concerned with availability of public services, whereby those indicators were labeled process indicators (Cornia, 1984). Without discussing all the proposed indicators, a remark valid for most of the indicators is that they illustrated a continued preoccupation with measuring objects, whether of a strictly economic nature or not. A strong desire to objectively measure development progress continues to dominate development discourse from which also Sen’s concept of capabilities and functionings has not completely escaped.

The newly suggested indicators were typically based on four categories of basic needs, which were identified during the 1976 World Employment Conference:

- the minimum requirements of a family for personal consumption: food, shelter, clothing;
- access to essential services, such as safe drinking water, sanitation, transport, health, and education;
- availability of an adequate remunerated job for each person able and willing to work; and
- the satisfaction of needs of a more qualitative nature: a healthy, humane and satisfying environment, as well as popular participation in the making of decisions that affect the lives and livelihood of the people and individual freedoms.

The first two basic needs received most attention, possibly because they were the least controversial needs and did not require social and political change, such as a shift in the balance of power from the State to the people. Within the basic needs approach, a distinction can be made between moderates and radicals. The moderate strand prefers to use the basic needs approach at a policy level within existing paradigms. The focus is on the second basic need, improved provision of public services in order to build human capital. The radical perspective, which emerged in the mid 1980s, is that of an entirely new development paradigm, with an emphasis at policy level on the first and third basic needs (Hunt, 1989: 270-271). Since the limited shift advocated by the moderates does not deviate much from earlier development approaches, I will focus on the more radical basic needs paradigm, which defines development and the role of participation as follows:

- economic development consists not simply in growth, but in improving mass welfare with priority assigned to meeting the basic needs of all; and
- to achieve the latter, the masses must have the right to participate in policy debate concerning the provision of basic needs.

In general, development is conceived of as the fulfillment of basic needs for everybody, with an emphasis

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8 The current preoccupation with information provision by means of community communication centers builds on this basic need, but the popularity of neo-liberal economics in the process of globalization appears to have replaced a public with a private provision of information services. Nevertheless, the aim is building human capacity, largely based on outside interference, including inserting western information and knowledge, rather than creating autonomous spheres in which people themselves can mobilize existing local human capacity.
on fulfilling basic needs of the poorest people in developing countries. Therefore, development is interpreted as involving more than economic growth, although that growth remains an objective. At macro-levels, the basic needs paradigm is structuralist, because of the attention it pays to the structures of asset distribution and demand (ibid, 1989: 277). The participatory aspect of the radical basic needs approach is rather ambiguous, since participatory methods can range from people being duly informed, via involvement of beneficiaries in development projects, to power-sharing through participation by people in decision-making processes. In general, people participate in activities initiated and sustained by outsiders, without power-sharing. Another aspect of the basic needs paradigm is the perceived need for State-intervention to create favorable conditions for development, such as redistributing land, extending public service provision and supporting institutional development, not just because of efficiency criteria, but rather because it can improve the socio-economic situation of poor households. The radical perspective on development has as the alleged weakness of leaning heavily on political will in developing countries. Probably because of its structuralist aspects, basic needs assessment theory did not result in a significant shift away from top-down oriented development approaches.

**Alternative development?**

According to Nederveen Pieterse, alternative development’s claim of paradigm status is problematic, because ‘alternative development has failed to develop a clear perspective on micro-macro relations, an alternative macro-approach, and a coherent theoretical position’ (Nederveen Pieterse, 1998: 344). The advocates of alternative development conceive of normative approaches as opposed to structuralist/positivist approaches of mainstream development. However, in my opinion, the distinction between the positivist is as opposed to the normative ought is artificial, since a normative use of ought, or should, leads to prescriptive development implementations just as much as the positivist use of models does.

Alternative development is sometimes referred to as Third System politics, or participatory and people-centered development. Third system politics are a response to the failure by governments (the First System) and the economic powers (the Second System) to produce development which benefits entire populations of developing countries (Nerfin, 1977). Bottom-up development can be perceived as a shift from an emphasis on society (Gesellschaft) to a priority on community (Gemeinschaft) ‘while the state level assumes the role of coordinator’ (Hettné, 1995: 201). Three mechanisms for economic integration are distinguished: the market system, redistribution and reciprocity. In terms of Nerfin’s systems, the market represents the second system and the first system is related to redistribution. Capitalist market systems have led to increasingly unequal distributions of wealth, which resulted in redistribution policies to compensate for inequalities. Hettné claims that the two mechanisms combined led to a demise of reciprocity. Reciprocity refers to ‘the socially embedded forms of exchange in small-scale symmetric communities’. A reduced role of the State, combined with decreased importance of the market system leads to the rise of reciprocity, implying a ‘new form of politics, or participation: the empowerment of the secluded, the poor, and the marginalized’ (Hettné, 1995: 172).

In all contributions to alternative development, the need for involvement of people in development is

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9 As normative concepts Hettné mentions endogenous, eco-development, self-reliance, basic needs and participation (Hettné, 1995: 175). These concepts were used by Nerfin in describing another development as need-oriented, endogenous, self-reliant, ecologically sound and based on structural transformation. The first four normative concepts determine the orientation of the transformation (Nerfin, 1977).

10 Rawls applies an abstract interpretation of reciprocity when he states that principles of a conception of justice, one of the conditions for a just constitutional democratic society, ‘must also satisfy the criterion of reciprocity’ (Rawls, 1999: 14). He points out that when terms of fair cooperation between citizens are proposed ‘[the people] proposing [terms of fair cooperation] must think at least reasonable for others to accept [the terms], as free and equal citizens, and not as dominated or manipulated or under pressure caused by an inferior political or social position’ (ibid, 1999: 14). Rawls’ criterion of reciprocity is important in his argumentation for a law of peoples, instead of one of nation-states. His law of peoples provides theoretical backing for my preference for increased autonomy of people from a central State.
a constant. According to Hettne, whether people are conceived of as creative forces of people self-development or as members of community based groups, both using autonomy and self-determination for development, participation and empowerment are essential to alternative development. Presently, however, people-centered development has been adopted by mainstream development. This points at a major weakness of alternative development. Positions more or less diametrically opposed to evolving mainstream positions are not so much alternatives as continuous negations of opposite positions. Another weakness is the emphasis on local levels, which creates some complications when addressing global issues of, such as ecological sustainability. Global aspects of supra-national policies are at odds with a bottom-up local approach, which includes a rolled back State. Nevertheless, alternative development theories and practices contribute to an increased importance of people’s agency and also to a more important role for communication in development.

**UNDP approach to human poverty reduction**

The UNDP approach to development is not a paradigm, nor part of a paradigm, but a set of policies and methods that has been instrumental in changing the focus of development discourse and continues to do so with the latest report on human poverty (UNDP, 2000). In 1997, the UNDP introduced a distinction between *income poverty* and *human poverty*. It argued that a lack of income cannot capture all aspects of poverty and pointed to aspects of poverty related to what people can or cannot do, a generalized form of Sen’s capabilities. Through indicators of human and gender development, the UNDP addressed the distinction between income and human poverty and provided alternatives for macro-economic indicators such as GDP-growth and GDP per capita. The Human Development Index (HDI) focuses on people’s capabilities, measured by health and educational indicators, combined with a standard of living indicator. The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) uses the same indicators, but focuses on the disparity between women and men.

Over the years, the UNDP has in general supported people-oriented development policies, but in its most recent report on human poverty, the UNDP stresses explicitly the urgent need for **good governance** at national levels in order to effectively reduce human poverty. By recommending policies for good governance, the UNDP has crossed the line of the national sovereignty of nation-states. The intended beneficiaries are the poor people in developing countries. The report emphasizes a need for elections and other formal democratic institutions and also suggests a devolution of power to lower administrative levels, in combination with an increased level of self-organization of the poor. Although not stated as such, the UNDP’s suggestions can be interpreted as policy recommendations for increased freedoms and a shift from central State-led development to semi-autonomous development and self-empowerment in rural areas.

**Development paradigms: a summary**

Despite the necessarily brief nature of the overview, the economic emphasis of the majority of the selected paradigms is evident. Whether it is an emphasis on individual economic freedoms, theoretical economic concepts, such as spread, trickle-down or backwash-effects, different conceptions of economic growth and development or economic growth combined with meeting other basic needs, economics appear to be an important element of almost all paradigms. Apart from alternative development, the paradigms appear to favor a structuralist or positivist approach, either growth-mediated or support-led, but in almost all cases including elaborate macro-economic models. Nederveen Pieterse explicitly claims that one of the difficulties of alternative development to achieve paradigm status is exactly the absence of specific macro-economic models. However, the shift from a positivist is to a more normative **ought** in alternative

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11 The HDI is based on three indicators: longevity, measured by life expectancy at birth; educational attainment, measured by a combination of adult literacy (two-thirds weight) and combined first-, second- and third-level gross enrollment ratios (one-third weight); standard of living, as measured by real GDP per capita (purchasing power parity in dollars, PPPS). The GDI adjusts average achievements of each country in life expectancy, educational attainment and income in accordance with the disparity in achievement between men and women (UNDP, 1998c: 107/108).
development does not prevent advocates of that paradigm from putting forward detailed suggestions, if not prescriptions, for means that are expected to lead to their alternative version of development. Nevertheless, only representatives of alternative development seem, to some extent, to be suggesting autonomy and empowerment as important elements of a development approach. Hetme even argues in support of a reduced State-role in favor of more autonomy for grassroots organizations. The positivist, and sometimes even deterministic, characteristics of most paradigms confirm my rejection of the use of a paradigm for my conception of development. Moreover, it supports my preference for a referential policy framework. Individual human rights do not appear to feature prominently in any of the paradigms and only alternative development attaches significant importance to autonomy and self-empowerment in combination with a reduced role of the State. In my opinion, the semi-paradigm status of alternative development and the prescriptive features of its normative approach, further support my preference for a referential policy framework to realize a conception of development as freedom of choice. Nevertheless, the paradigms also provide some useful insights, which are summarized below.

An interesting aspect of neo-classicism is its strong emphasis on individual freedoms, economic as well as political. However, neo-classicism is, in my opinion, an undesirable approach for my conception of development, because of (i) the conversion, at societal level, of individual economic freedoms almost solely to a free market system, the subordinate nature of the political freedoms and the absence of social freedoms, (ii) the positivist approach and emphasis on economics, as well as (iii) the strong utilitarian perspective, which offers limited opportunities for people in disadvantaged positions to increase their capabilities. I acknowledge the positive aspect of an emphasis on political and economic freedoms, but conceive of neo-classicism’s individualistic survival-of-the-fittest approach as incompatible with the Rawlsian conception of justice as fairness of my conception of development. I do not have objections to the conversion of individual political freedoms to a pluralist constitutional democracy, but it is not necessarily my preferred option. In chapter five, I elaborate on the latter in a discussion of democratic practices beyond formal democratic institutions favored by the neo-classicist ideal of a liberal democracy.

I conceive of the Marxist emphasis on social relations as a positive input, but consider the mechanistic (Marx) and radical positivist (neo-Marxists) approach to be more antagonistic than realistic and too rigid to be compatible with the abstract features of my conception of development. The antagonism has made distinguishing between haves and have-nots suspect. Berlin’s perspective on liberty clearly points at the dangers for individual freedom involved with communitarian perspectives on freedom and subsequently subordinated positions of individual freedoms. My explicit exclusion of a positive notion of liberty at State-level makes the (neo-)Marxist paradigms virtually incompatible with my conception of development.

With Hirschman, I agree on a need for, as well as on the importance of, decentralized decision-making in economic development processes. His reasons for decentralization appear to have a lot to do with having relevant information of, and correct assumptions on, specific local situations. The decentralization concept could possibly be detached from the economic framework in order to be used in a more social perspective, but that would still leave the positivist nature of Hirschman’s theory. The potential usefulness of Hirschman’s concept is based on its use of Myrdal’s cumulative causation, which itself is largely based on the rejection of both the assumption of a drive towards equilibrium and the assumption that economics are an isolated part of the social process. However, neither of the two theories emphasize individual political, social and economic freedoms the way my conception of development does, leaving only the insights provided into backwash and spread-effects as peripherally interesting information. In addition, despite Myrdal’s relatively enlightened perspective on the position of economics and modeling, both his and Hirschman’s approach have a positivist nature, focus mainly on economics and Myrdal supports a far larger degree of State-interference than would be compatible with my conception of development.

The focus on things non-economic of both versions of the basic needs paradigm is more in line with my emphasis on capabilities and freedoms. However, the first three basic needs are still rather narrowly defined, which can probably be blamed on a continuing desire to measure objects, and the fourth basic need
is not directly addressed by the basic needs advocates. In my opinion, the main input from the alternative development paradigm is an emphasis on autonomy and self-empowerment in combination with a reduced role of the State and, in a sense, alternative development emphasizes individual agency. Finally, the UNDP confirms a need for local autonomy and self-empowerment, which is a key element of my conception of development at which my referential policy framework is directed.

4.3 SYNTHESIS: A CONTINGENCY APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

[An individual's] capabilities can be enhanced by public policy, but also, on the other side, the direction of public policy can be influenced by the effective use of participatory capabilities by the public. The two-way relationship is central to [the conception of development as freedom] (Sen, 1999: 18)

Introduction

The overview of the paradigms supports my suggestion in the introduction to this chapter that a referential policy framework is more compatible with my broad conception of development than the paradigms of my overview. Therefore, instead of attempting to link an existing paradigm to my conception of development, the outlines of such a referential policy framework are elaborated in this synthesis. The policy framework will be based on the following aspects of my conception of development as freedom of choice:

- a Rawlsian approach to justice and the basic structures of society, which favor the person worst off;
- a conception of democracy, which is based on a combination of formal democratic institutions, depth and scope of democratic practices and an application in political, social and economic domains (in chapter five this conception is elaborated in more detail);
- a combination of negative and positive notions of individual liberty, theoretically leading to autonomous spheres of empowerment, together with a negative notion of liberty at State-level, which implicates non-interference by the State in the individual choices of people;
- a Rawlsian notion of political sovereignty for people over sovereignty of the State, as in his law of peoples, which is also elaborated in chapter five;
- Dworkin's liberal notion of equality, which entails the right to equal treatment; and, most importantly,
- Sen's individual freedoms of his concept of development as freedom.

I conceive of the above mentioned aspects of my conception of development as being part of the foundation of the referential policy framework. Eventually, that policy framework will have to be elaborated in detail, but to do so now for all aspects of society is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Furthermore, the participatory, two-way nature of public policy formulation, which Sen suggests, implies that elaboration of the referential policy framework requires participation by the intended beneficiaries. In my opinion, the use of electronic media in autonomous spheres provides opportunities to facilitate rural development policy-making processes.

In line with the subject matter of the research, the implementation of the referential policy framework applies to rural development in general, and electronically mediated information dissemination in particular. The policy framework addresses the individual freedoms of people to access, use and benefit from electronic media, as well as the general status of freedoms in the socio-political and economic context of a nation-state, which can prohibit, constrain or stimulate independent electronic media activities.

Therefore, the socio-political and economic dimension of structural social change, as well as the people dimension of individual social change in relation to electronic media are addressed. In my opinion, relevant individual and general freedoms with respect to electronic media are political freedom of the press, speech and assembly, social opportunities and economic facilities to have access to electronic media, as well as political freedoms and economic facilities for establishing and sustaining electronic media activities. Dworkin's liberal perspective on State-intervention holds that, as far as political freedoms are concerned, '[liberals] oppose regulation of the content of political speech, even when such regulation might secure
greater social order'. With respect to increased individual social opportunities he claims that ‘[liberals] approve government intervention to secure [racial equality], through constraints on both public and private discrimination in education’. Finally, Dworkin states that in economic policy ‘[liberals] believe that government should intervene in the economy, to provide services that would not otherwise be provided’ (Dworkin, 1985: 187). His left-leaning, liberal conception of State-interference in the economy is surprisingly similar to Hayek’s rightist libertarian perspective on the role of the State, since Hayek claims that ‘some [institutions and services] can never be adequately provided by private enterprise’ (Hayek, 1994: 43) and, therefore, should be provided by the State.

In my opinion, the central issue in development, to be addressed by development, is power and not wealth. As a result, the emphasis of a referential policy framework, which is intended to facilitate realization of the aspects of my conception of development as freedom of choice, is on self-empowerment of individual people in autonomous development spheres. I conceive of self-empowerment as ‘a process in which people achieve the capacity to control decisions affecting their lives’ (Hamelink, 1994: 132), a definition which is similar to Sen’s individual freedoms to choose alternative lifestyles. I conceive of freedom of the individual as a counterpoint to power of the State. The referential policy framework focuses on development processes facilitated through, or conditions for development processes created by, organically defined policies. In chapter two, a distinction was made between social change, with respect to (i) the conduciveness of a nation-state’s political, social and economic context to structural social change and (ii) the increased capabilities, and individual freedoms to choose different lifestyles, which constitute individual social change for people. The people-centered approach of alternative development emphasizes the people dimension, but that emphasis is implemented in mechanical ways. In my opinion, this mechanical approach can be discerned in the support-led and interventionist characteristics of alternative development. Instead of using development policies to create conditions for autonomous spheres by focusing on increasing individual freedoms (form), alternative development contains policy implementation elements related to development itself (content). However, I conceive of development as initiated and sustained by people themselves and with limited direct outside interference. Those elements of my policy framework, which can be labeled interventionist, are directed towards establishing and maintaining effective educational and health care processes, which both intend to increase individual social opportunities of people.

A referential policy framework
In order to focus on the essential elements of my conception of development, this section assumes that the Rawlsian conception of justice as fairness, Rawls’ and Sen’s conception of democracy, Berlin’s notions of individual liberty and non-interference by the State, Rawls’ conception of popular political sovereignty, elaborated in his law of peoples, and Dworkin’s liberal notion of equality from the foundation and basic assumptions of the referential policy framework. As a result, Sen’s development as freedom represents the essence of the policy framework and the following three freedoms are the main aspects: political freedom, social opportunities and economic facilities. In Sen’s theoretical concept, individual freedoms stand for people’s capabilities to choose different lifestyles, implying that policies aimed at individual freedoms have to compensate for disadvantageous aspects of internal and external diversities of individuals. In general, my

12 In my interpretation, ‘organically defined policies’ refer to policy-making processes which do not follow a specific (set of) policy-making model(s). Essentially, I conceive of the characteristics of the policy- and decision-making processes as being contingent on the situation.

13 Sen states that increased substantive freedoms are important to people, because of (i) their intrinsic value to the person’s overall freedom and (ii) the ‘importance in fostering the person’s opportunity to have valuable outcomes [of decisions and actions in her life]’. He relates the second reason to agency, in the sense of an individual who acts and brings about change. He does not refer to agency in the sense of ‘a person who is acting on someone else’s behalf’ and emphasizes the importance of ‘achievements [of an individual which] can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some external criteria as well’ (Sen, 1999: 18/19). Apart from using the Sen’s development as freedom, I also incorporate his conception of agency for my conception of autonomous development spheres of self-empowerment.
Increasing individual freedoms: autonomous spheres of development

This brief elaboration of a suggested policy framework only addresses potential policies aimed at increasing individual political, social and economic freedoms and at increasing the conducive social change of socio-political and economic contexts of nation-states.

Firstly, the suggested policies directed at safeguarding and expanding political freedoms do not preclude a pluralist constitutional democracy. The main objectives of the policies are facilitating democratic practices at all levels, and in all domains, of society, free dissemination of information and independent electronic media, something which could in principle take place in socialist countries like Vietnam. Freedom of speech is crucial in creating opportunities for electronic media in general, and particularly with respect to their contribution to democratic processes, but it also crucial to free and independent information exchanges between individual people. Freedom of speech has to be guaranteed through constitutional elements, as well as by means of legislative and regulatory measures and then has to be enforced accordingly. To some extent, policies aimed at increasing individual political freedoms are implicitly directed at changing socio-political and economic arrangements in society. This refers to a shift from sovereignty of the State to sovereignty of the people, with respect to political decision-making processes which affect the capabilities of individual people to choose different lifestyles. However, more directly, policies aimed at increasing individual political freedoms, and a reduced sovereignty of the State, create the

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14 Rawls' interpretation of sovereignty of the people contains parallel ideas to Hayek's distinction between two ways of choosing 'intelligently between the various possible organizations of society'. Hayek distinguishes between a State-controlled and central direction of all people's activities (an extreme variant of Rawls' sovereignty of the State) and a situation in which 'the holder of coercive power [i.e. the State] should confine himself in general to creating conditions under which the knowledge and initiative of individuals are given the best scope so that they can plan [their activities] most successfully' (a variant of Rawls' sovereignty of the people) (Hayek, 1994:40/41). However, Hayek's liberal, or utilitarian, variant of Rawls' sovereignty of the people does not explicitly take into account the differences in starting positions between individuals. Nevertheless, I conceive of Hayek's interpretation of the purpose of policies being to create conditions for individual people to plan their own lives as compatible with the interpretation of the purpose of a referential policy framework. Hayek continues his discussion on economic planning by defending the use of competition as the principle of social organization and mentions various situations in which coercion [by the State] cannot be used. Hayek's description of aspects of perfect competition implicitly supports a total absence of nation-states in favor of peoples, whose activities take place within an 'appropriate legal system, a legal system designed both to preserve competition and to make it operate as beneficially as possible' (ibid, 1994: 43). In my opinion, it is theoretically possible to combine Rawls' conception of political sovereignty of people with Hayek's economic sovereignty of individuals in my conception of autonomous development spheres of empowerment.
political aspect of autonomous development spheres of self-empowerment for people in rural areas. The inclusion of Berlin's negative notion of individual liberty in the foundation of the referential policy framework implicates an assessment of the division of rights and liberties between individuals and the State. From a hypothetical libertarian starting point, rights and liberties, which are transferred from individuals to the State, have to be justified on the basis of benefits to individuals and to society at large by using Rawls' principles of justice.

Because of the interdependence of the three individual freedoms, expanded political freedoms already increase an individual's social opportunities. However, in addition to equality in offered social opportunities, an emphasis has to be placed on equality in enjoyed individual social opportunities. Acknowledging internal and external diversities of people, which cannot be denied in a rural context, policies have to be directed at offering and safeguarding equal opportunities to education and health care for all in society. An implication for many rural areas in developing countries is that, e.g., the existence, as well as educational relevance of local languages, other than national languages, has to be recognized, enshrined in a constitution, guaranteed by legislation and safeguarded by enforcement of the law. Based on the importance of education and health care to individual social opportunities, other disadvantageous aspects of people's diversity, which stop them from receiving a good education or being healthy, will have to be addressed. My conception of development as freedom of choice focuses on processes, therefore, education refers to an individual's ability to participate in, and benefit from, free and voluntary exchanges of information in order for people to acquire knowledge. In my opinion, electronic media can play an important role in educational processes. Therefore, in chapter six, the role of electronic media in educating people, or rather of people educating themselves, as well as a social actor role of electronic media in rural development is discussed. Although only the example of education is mentioned, in general, policies have to be aimed at creating conditions for increases in individual freedoms and upward vertical mobility in society. Basic social rights and liberties are part of this and again a negative notion of liberty at the level of a nation-state will have to be applied for an assessment as mentioned above. Finally, I consider it inevitable that objects of policies are not restricted to mere economic indicators, nor to the narrowly defined material basic needs, but that the actual freedoms to choose different lifestyles have to be emphasized.

Despite a priority for political freedoms and social opportunities, economic facilities also have to be addressed. In my opinion, arrangements of society should not decisively inhibit a system of free market forces in its operations, but some of the basic economic assumptions, e.g., perfect markets with perfect information, definitely do not apply to rural areas in developing countries. Therefore, policies have to create conditions for economic processes in rural areas to the extent that the market system works to the advantage of people in those areas in line with Rawls' principles of justice. In his paper The Reconstruction of Rural Institutions, Gustavo Gordilla de Anda emphasizes economic facilities by stressing the need for the reconstruction of the rural institutional framework, focusing on 'an innovative scheme of incentives and regulations that fosters synergistic linkages between market dynamics, State promotion and [agricultural] producer's strategies' (Gordilla de Anda, 1997: 1). Chapter six shows that free market economics can have a negative effect on the role of electronic mass media in development. For electronic mass media, independence of a political power elite is almost impossible without simultaneous independence of

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15 In this dissertation I will make a distinction between political, social and economic actor roles of electronic media organizations and other organizations using electronic media for the dissemination of information. In my perception, an electronic medium performs a political actor role if its activities and information dissemination are directly and intentionally influenced or motivated by the political objectives of power of the ruling political force in a nation-state and aimed at strengthening the position of that political force. I consider an electronic medium to perform an economic actor role in case its activities and information dissemination are directly influenced or motivated by the structural factors identified by Herman and Chomsky (Herman and Chomsky, 1994: 1 - 35) and essentially aimed at economic profitability. Finally, a social actor role refers to situations when activities and information dissemination by an electronic medium are influenced or motivated by its perception of its position in society as a facilitator to increase the individual political, social and economic freedoms of people. In chapter eleven, I use this distinction as one of two analytical tools to define the ideal-types of electronically mediated information flows. I do not assume that the actor roles are mutually exclusive, but I contend that one of the three roles tends to prevail.
economic powers. Therefore, it is important to note that for electronic media political freedom comes with economic freedom. Both negative and positive notions of individual liberty have to be applied to economic facilities as well. In particular, economic rights and liberties of individuals and communities are relevant.

Summary
In short, I have added a preference for a non-interventionist, conditions creating, referential policy framework to my conception of development. The focus of the suggested policies is determined by my choice of Sen’s development as freedom of choice and includes increasing political freedoms, social opportunities, as well as economic facilities of individuals. Within this focus, my emphasis is on the role of electronic media in rural development. In the next chapter, I argue that individual autonomy and self-empowerment, which I expect to result from the implementation of the referential policy framework, require a setting of democratic practices in a State strong enough to consistently pursue policies towards increased individual liberties, if necessary even against the prevailing power structures’ vested interests in a status quo. Gordilla de Anda describes such an approach as aiming at ‘guaranteeing equality of opportunities’, without creating ‘a false social symmetry that cancels interests or differences’. In his opinion, an attempt ‘to strengthen the opportunities of the weak in order to enable them to develop’ is the linking pin between social policy and democracy’ (Gordilla de Anda, 1997: 9, italics added).

In chapter six, I argue that, with respect to electronic media in development, power is also the key factor influencing the contribution by, and the role of, electronic media in rural development. I subsequently claim that a role of electronic media in rural development, facilitated by policies derived from my policy framework, is determined by the existing balance of power between a prevailing political and economic power elite, resulting in vested economic interests on the one side and individual freedoms on the other. The focus is on the relation between power and electronic media, the impact of that relation on control over the form and content of electronically mediated information flows, as well as the possibilities to change the balance in, and impact of, the I&C power structures, by using electronic media in specific ways, or by using specific electronic media.