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The Creation of a New Culture in the Age of the Global Village
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Synergy of Different Equals
(An Alternative Development Model)

by
Illuminada G. Espino
Technological University of the Philippines ; PHILIPPINES

A SYNERGY OF DIFFERENT EQUALS

I came in the spirit of this auspicious occasion for three reasons, to:

1. provoke our sensitive and inquiring nature to reflect on fundamental development issues;
2. reinforce our readiness in a gnostic journey to an enlightened state of mind; and,
3. bring to all of us the goodwill of our Filipino people who, like everyone, are in endless search for a better quality of life.

Recognizing these objectives, which are truly inspired by the theme of this international symposium, the Technological University of the Philippines joins me, in expressing my appreciation for the invitation to participate in a laudable sharing and pooling-of-thoughts of respected personalities to address themselves to the pressing needs of the world!

A FORETHOUGHT

all i know to do is to wait for the end...
for no one could deliver me (nor you?)
from the dilemma to which my thought had led;

obsessed in the search for meaning in life,
i could hardly fathom the depths of my encounters
and the possibility of finding the elusive truth.

in the long deliberations, profound and resounding
words of the learned, it could not be found;
so here i am standing at the end of a rainbow.

trying to figure out the scheme of things,
hoping that the struggle in the final analysis;
shall make any desire, any task any deed,

worthy of a painful and seemingly futile effort.

This paper is all about the product of a reflective exercise hoping to break a myth about a seemingly and slowly eroding face of humanity. It is an attempt to make a shot which may not necessarily hit the eye, but could make some ripples in our effort to understand and explain the phenomenon of crisis in a global village. It is designed to lay the framework in considering the premises of a changing international culture.

Assumptions

Essentially, this discussion paper is guided by four basic (ABCD) principles:

1. **Anthropocentrism:** the individual is the be all and end all of development efforts; everyone is unique and must be respected, treated with dignity; and, has the inalienable right to participate in the process and product of development
2. **Balance:** system order and stability, wellness and well-being, result from the maintenance of an equal distribution of, but not limited to, energy, incentive, resource and responsibility.
3. **Cosmic unity:** the integration of different forces; and the belief in diversity as a competitive advantage.
4. **Dynamism:** the predictability and uncertainty of the phenomenon and nature of change respectively, which is very evident in our development scenario.

DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

To further situate the background of the thesis of this paper, allow me to take a quick review of the development scenario which appears to be similar in Asia, Africa, America Europe and the sub-continent.

David Korten (1996; 32-35) captured the synthesis of this scenario when he indicated that the last half of the 20th century has been the most remarkable period in our history. This was marked by the establishment of the United Nations, the Marshall Plan and other aid organizations to promote peace, manage reconstruction and institute self-help.

Scientifically, the world has unlocked varied and unimagined secrets of matter, space and biology. People have traveled beyond our world to the moon and reached out for the stars. Yet, the things most of us really need - - human security and development; a decent means of livelihood, good education and health care, clean water, food, and natural environment seem to slip further from the grasp of most people with each passing day.

Confidence in our major institutions is eroding. The evident manifestations of system failure constitute three universal human crises, **deepening poverty, social disintegration and environmental destruction.**

To what extent the objectives of the UN are attained (to promote peace and security by removing the scourge of war, enhancing socioeconomic progress in larger freedoms) remains a continuing puzzle to most of us, considering the amount of aid/monies that have gone down to the drain. The management behaviour in the last UN election could be another puzzling scenario. I am continuously searching for answers that could satisfy me.

A careful assessment of the UN's record in development seem to point that a major disappointment has been its inability to establish an effective institutional framework for the monitoring, implementation and enforcement it has created for development (Asante; 1996; 5).

The misuse in development aid is reported to result from the mismanagement of aid projects. And the impression that NGOs are more efficient and less susceptible to corruption than GOs is not always true; both often work under the same constraints (Cremer; 1996; 17).

The 1996 Human Development Report published equally alarming scenarios. Specifically, it points that:

1. Over the past 15 years the world has seen spectacular economic advance for about 15 countries and unprecedented decline some 100 countries. And, in 70 of these countries, average incomes are less than they were in 1980!
2. Widening disparities in economic performance are creating a more polarized world; the gap between the rich and the poor has further widened.
3. Everywhere, the structure and quality of growth demand more attention...to contribute to human development, poverty reduction and long-term sustainability.
4. Growth has been characterized as:
 - . **ruthless** - -where the fruits of growth mostly benefit the rich leaving the poor in ever deepening poverty;

- . **jobless** - -where growth in the economy is not accompanied by growth in employment;
- . **voiceless** - -where growth in the economy is not accompanied by genuine people empowerment;
- . **rootless** - -where growth erodes people's cultural identity; and,
- . **futureless** - -where the present generation squanders resources needed by the next generation.

5. There are striking contrasts of relationship between human development and per capita income. There are countries with high human development rate but low per capita income and vice versa.

Analyzing the above features of the development scenario, UNDP concludes that growth and development interventions must be so structured to ensure a mutually interactive cycle. Growth is not sustainable without development; likewise, development is not sustainable without growth.

Thus, it is recognized that the link between growth and development must be strengthened; new patterns and sustainable models of development must be explored. And, in the process, it is useful to realize that in a fast changing global economy there are no simple answers, no easy rides.

SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

The foregoing scenario seems to spell a culture of mediocrity in development management. The building of an appropriate culture for development is no easy task; I repeat, there are no simple answers, no easy rides; it takes corresponding pains to evolve comparable gains.

What and why is culture necessary for development? What is an appropriate culture in a global village? Your thoughts are just as good as mine. Together, let us explore.

Culture is an activity of thought, a quality of the mind, a way of life, a distinctive style of doing things. Being distinct and different, no two cultures are alike. You and I cannot be exactly alike. And, this is what makes development challenging.

Development is a process of improving the quality of a system (input, process, output); it is enhancing the quality of our thinking, feeling and doing; it is enhancing the quality of our work/life. It is improving our capacity to work and live a desirable and sustainable quality of life. It is and must be the outcome of growth.

Global Village is a construct, a universal catchword which describes a growing assumption of a desired state of unity in diversity; a concept of oneness - - a united nations.

To synthesize, how do we develop a culture to optimize our productivity in a global village? This requires extensive analysis indeed! I shall attempt to design a model that will provide a support base in the development of appropriate culture.

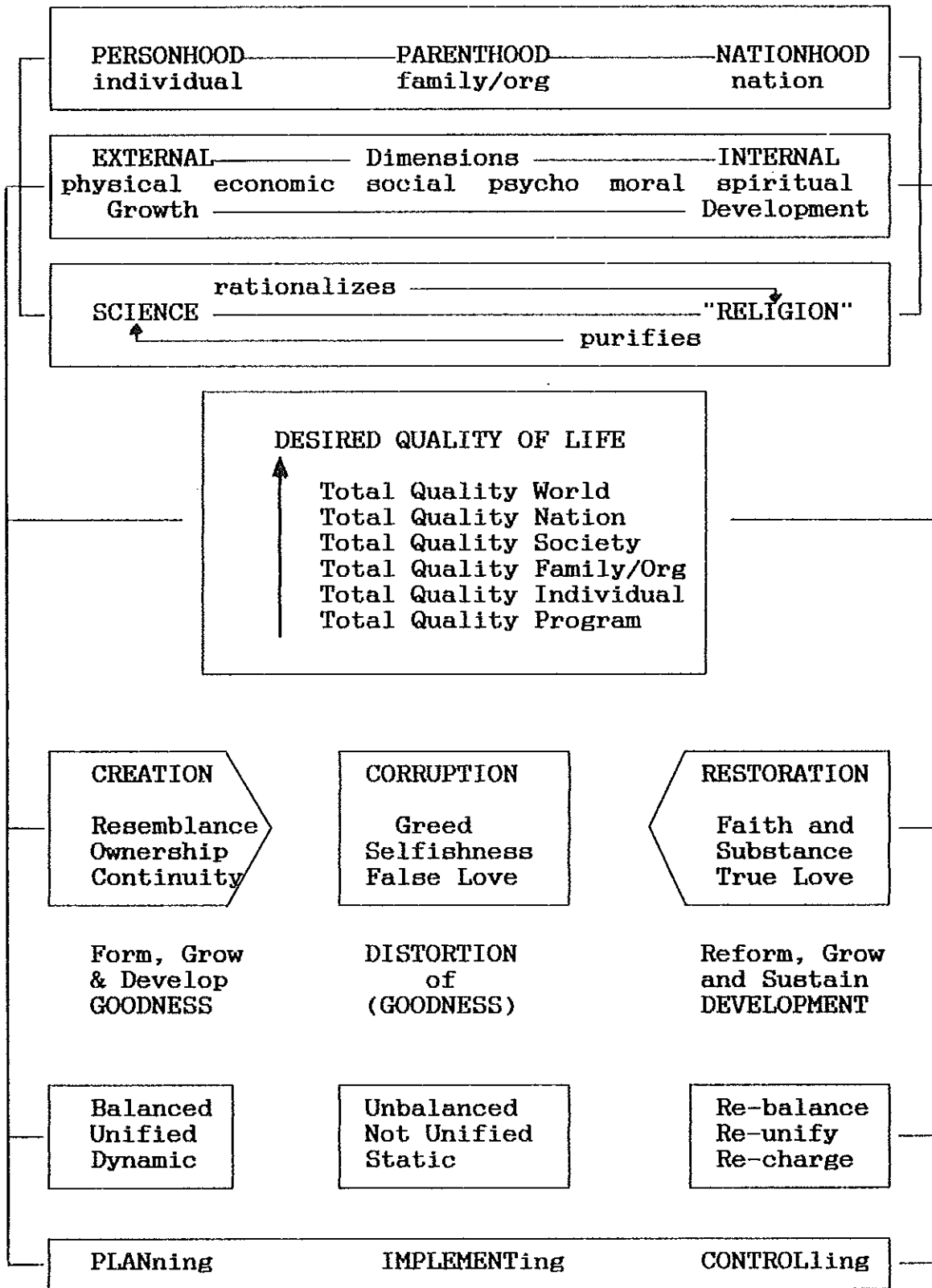
SYNERGY OF DIFFERENT EQUALS: A DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Development policy is in a crisis. Aids are shrinking and the overall results of development assistance are disappointing. It has achieved hardly anything. In most cases no self sustaining system has come into being (Thiel; 1996; 24).

With this alarming assessment, not to discount the increasing peace and order problems, erosion of our natural environment as well as moral values, deepening poverty and apparent inequality, the need to explore possible development models is both useful and necessary. This is an attempt to puncture a myth, to make a shot, hit or miss, and create ripples so to speak.

The Model

The idea is based on the assumptions earlier indicated, with special focus on the third principle of cosmic unity; hence, the name of the model: **synergy of different equals (SDE)**. The philosophy behind the model stresses **the synergy** (creative combination and synthesis of forces) **of apparently different and equally valued distinct entities is a natural and real phenomenon that has to be recognized, promoted and sustained in a global village**. Likewise, it underscores that comprehensive and total development requires a functionally integrated and unified effort. Finally, while development is influenced by outside forces, it evolves from within.



A DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK FOR SYNERGY OF DIFFERENT EQUALS (SDE)

A careful examination of the model on the preceding page explains characteristic features of developing a culture which is responsive to the requirements of a global village.

Everyone welcomes the philosophy of a global village as the **Good News**, the long-awaited answer, the messiah of social disintegration and a spiritual reawakening. It is a reaffirmation of the dignity of a human being regardless of status, color, sex, or creed; the recognition of the primacy of a **Universal Principle (UP)**, the be all and end all of life!

Invariably, every historical period is accompanied by a distinct culture; a system of shared beliefs that develops and guides the behavior of people and other social systems. Culture evolves; it is a continuous process of becoming, into what the Good News expects the world and its people to be.

The model basically describes the development of a culture which unifies differences in an integrated whole; believing in the gestalt idea that it is better than the sum of its parts; and, recognizing further that everything/one has an equally important role to contribute in the "achievement" of an ultimate goal.

What then is the focal point, the Ultimate Principle, the synergy that unifies all development efforts? The SDE model attempts to explain this. May I please invite you to refer to the model as it is explained in the next section.

Developing An SDE Culture

The center box represents the goal that unifies the process in a system of development hierarchy until the ultimate goal is approximated. Essentially, a sustainable future and a desirable quality of life progresses in a continuum: from material **growth** (physical, economic, social) to non-material **development** (psychosocial, moral and spiritual). Thus, the unifying goal is comprehensive and total. It recognizes the value of all six growth and development dimensions as equal in addressing the Ultimate Principle of linking the material to the spiritual.

Considering the above premise, peoples, families, schools, business, government and non-government organizations, communities and entities at all levels need and must systematically and practically translate this unifying goal into programs/projects/activities.

With this collective effort of alignment to the same goal, the automatic link between growth and development could be promoted. The evolution of a synergistic culture is guided.

In the process of transformation, education and training play vital roles. Both take care of a development program to prepare and set the basic foundation, to be aware, raise consciousness and appreciation, instill values attendant to the SDE philosophy; monitor, guide and control consistently the practice of such values until they are built in the students. An inherent responsibility of educational systems of all nations is to realign curricular programs with the core problems of the world namely, peace and order, equality, AIDS and the phenomenon of relationship, control of media and environment (Klafki; 1996; 7).

The full integration of the SDE philosophy in the work/life of people is a cooperative endeavor of both the informal (home, church, community) and the formal (government and other employment and service agencies) sectors. Together they have to develop increasing interrelationship and mutual dependencies if the SDE model has to succeed.

Invariably, the operational dynamics of culture building pose numerous and unexpected challenges to all of us throughout the cycle of planning, implementing and controlling. And what sustains our enthusiasm, energy and stability is a clear and overriding purpose. The Ultimate Principle inspires, guides, and enlightens our meaningful and laudable journey as we participate in the process of forming, growing, developing and sustaining goodness/development in a global village.

AN AFTERTHOUGHT

In the final analysis, the foregoing speculative exercise, unknowingly and consequently brought me to the forefront of science and religion and their virtual partnership. The apparent chasm between the two begins to eclipse. Science rationalizes the spiritual nature of the Ultimate Principle while religion purifies scientific premises.

The current practice of spirituality further illustrates the thesis of this paper. The new age movement finds its gnostic features when peoples, disillusioned with the inability of basic institutions to cope with the eroding socioeconomic situation, begin to search for rational and satisfactory answers. Is this a virtual coincidence to find the Good News? Thank you for considering to answer my final statement.

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