

occasional paper no. 2  
world summit for social development

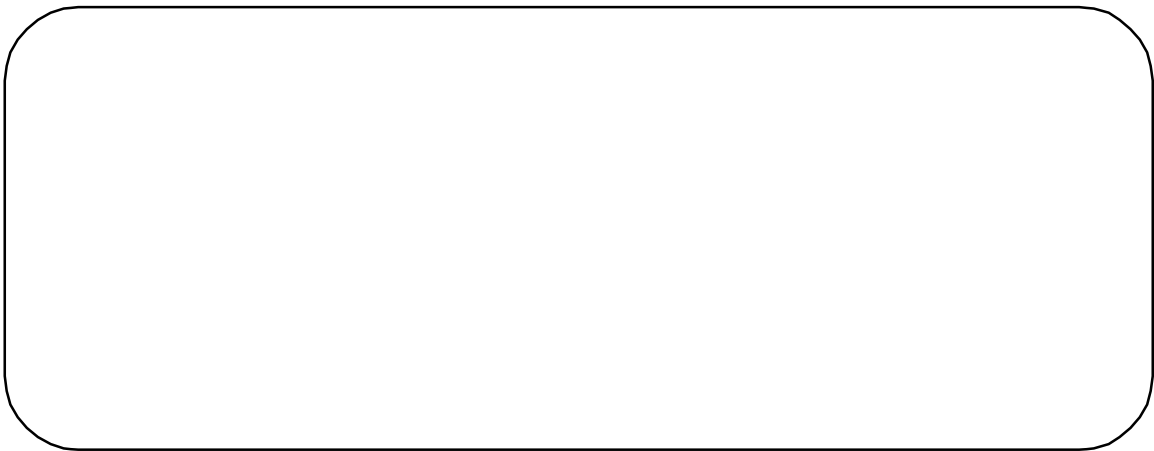
*globalization and  
social integration:  
patterns and processes*

*by dharam ghai and  
cynthia hewitt de alcántara*



unrisd

united nations research institute for social development



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geneva, july 1994



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## Preface

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The World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen in March 1995, provides an important opportunity for the world community to focus its attention on the nature and roots of current social problems and trends. In particular, the agenda of the Summit specifies three areas of concern: the reduction of poverty, the generation of productive employment, and the enhancement of social integration. UNRISD work in preparation for the conference is centred on the last of these. In the face of seemingly intractable problems of violence, institutional breakdown and mass alienation in various parts of the world, the subject of social integration should be carefully explored and debated.

The UNRISD Occasional Paper Series for the Social Summit takes up a range of issues related to social integration and disintegration. This paper provides background for others in the series by considering the relation between certain major processes or forces of global change, on the one hand, and the evolution of values, institutions and patterns of social interaction on the other.

The last two decades have been marked by dramatic political, economic and social developments: the turn toward liberal democracy and the collapse or retreat of communism in a number of countries; accelerated global economic integration and reliance on market forces; rapid technological change and associated modification of production systems and labour markets; the media revolution and expansion of consumer culture. These extraordinary changes have coincided with a period of slow growth, stagnation or economic collapse in most parts of the world, with the outstanding exception of several Asian countries. The result has in many cases been a deepening of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

In the following pages, an attempt is made to explore the implications of these changes for social integration at the level of households, communities and neighbourhoods, and within the network of associations which make up civil society. The implications of globalization for good governance are then considered. Finally, problems of social integration in multi-ethnic societies are discussed in some detail.

In the new age ushered in by global processes, noted above, the world community faces a series of challenges to which there can be no simple or absolute answers. How can the polarizing effects of global markets be controlled without returning to the kind of protectionism which stifles efficiency and growth? How can new bases of solidarity be created during a period when capital is perfectly mobile and labour more mobile than it has ever been before? How can the clash of values and cultures be minimise, and elements of a common culture be constructed, in a world which grows smaller with each passing day? And how can the current trend toward socio-economic and political marginalization of growing numbers of people be reversed?

July 1994

Dharam Ghai  
Director

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## introduction

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“Social integration” is a broad and ambiguous term, variously understood by different people. To some, it is a positive goal, implying the promotion of well-ordered and harmonious relations at all levels of society. To others, increasing integration has a negative connotation, conjuring up the image of an unwanted imposition of uniformity. For a third group, the term implies neither a positive nor a negative state. It is simply an invitation to analyse the established patterns of human relations and values which tie people to one another in any given time and place, defining the parameters of their life chances.

In this paper, the latter approach will be adopted: patterns and processes of integration are phenomena to be studied, not goals to be attained. Accepting such a premise makes it easier to explore the underlying causes of growing violence, deepening inequality and lack of solidarity throughout much of the modern world.

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### 1. the bases of social integration: individuals, groups, networks, institutions and values

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No one goes through life alone. All of us are created within, and influenced by, networks of social relations which provide us with our identity and establish a framework for our actions. We survive and pursue our goals within a structure of institutions ranging from our families or households, clans or neighbourhoods or communities (where we seek primary support and protection), to the schools, associations, street gangs or video parlours (in which we are trained); and the smallholdings, plantations, factories, sweatshops, stores and offices (in which we work). On a more general level, our opportunities or life chances are affected by larger political and economic structures ranging from tribal councils or municipal governments to the nation state, and from non-monetary exchange relations among friends to the international financial system.

As soon as this fundamental fact of human interconnectedness is stated — as soon as it is remembered that it is virtually impossible for any human being anywhere to survive entirely on his/her own — it becomes obvious that terms like **exclusion**, **inclusion**, **disintegration** and **integration** must be used carefully. Neither exclusion nor disintegration can ever be absolute; and therefore one must not fall

into the trap of supposing that the roots of our current social dilemma can be clarified through relying on simple dichotomies between exclusion and inclusion, or disintegration and integration.

There are of course areas of the debate on the grave social problems of the late twentieth century which can usefully be framed in terms of this dichotomy. The fact that growing numbers of people do not have access to the services, benefits and rights which others on the planet enjoy can certainly be labelled **exclusion** in order to emphasize the involuntary or coercive aspects of such inequality.<sup>1</sup> The broad outlines of trends toward increasing economic and political exclusion will be reviewed below.

It is a mistake, however, to frame the broader study of problems of social integration solely in terms of exclusion, so that policy recommendations become largely dominated by calls to “include” those who are “excluded” from development. The disadvantaged, no matter how difficult their situation may be, are immersed in networks of social relations which link their destiny to that of others. In other words, their predicament does not arise because they are unintegrated into wider social systems. It occurs because present patterns of integration promote unjust or destructive outcomes in some situations. It follows that good policy cannot be proposed without understanding the concrete forms of inclusion or incorporation requiring reform.

A similar problem arises when counterposing **integration** and **disintegration**. Profound changes in basic institutions, values and patterns of behaviour — all too frequently within a context of deep economic and political crisis — provide grounds for preoccupation with social disintegration at the end of the twentieth century. But even in the context of extreme collapse, of the kind occurring in the aftermath of savage civil war, the disintegration of previous social arrangements proceeds in tandem with the re-integration or recreation of other forms of social organization and control. Thus what remains is not a void, but a new form of integration which may make any return to the original point of departure impossible.

In the following pages, some of the complex issues emerging from the study of contemporary patterns and processes of social integration will be explored, with emphasis on the **qualitative** changes in human relations, values and institutions which mark this end of century. In particular, attention will be focused on changes in the family, community and civil society (discussed in section 4); the difficult problems of governance (analysed in section 5); and attempts to deal with challenges to social integration in multi-ethnic societies (section 6). But first, it is necessary to trace the outlines of recent trends which define the context of social integration in our day.

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## 2. major forces and processes shaping the context for social integration

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Patterns of social integration are shaped by dominant trends in the domains of politics, economy, culture and technology. In this respect, the context for social integration has changed radically over the past two decades. Of the many important and far-reaching changes that have taken place in this period, six are especially pertinent. Some represent reversals, others imply a strengthening of the trends of the post-war period. In all cases there is a tendency for these changes to assume global dimensions.

### the turn toward liberal democracy and the search for individual freedom

In the realm of politics, the most remarkable change has been the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet Union, and the progressive replacement of one-party, military and authoritarian régimes by multi-party systems in many parts of the world. This opens up new possibilities for participation and creates opportunities for the flourishing of a wide range of voluntary associations and interest groups.

Such organizations may widen and deepen bonds of solidarity and citizenship. But they may also become focal points for the accentuation of ancient rivalries and the creation of new divisions along territorial or cultural lines. This is particularly likely when a sudden collapse of authoritarian régimes reveals a void in institutions and values.

It is perhaps important to point out that the interest in greater individual freedom which is currently sweeping the world is not always a positive force for democracy. It certainly may be so when emphasis is placed on asserting the worth of every human being and proclaiming the right of each person to express his or her opinions. But freedom can be sought for a number of reasons which have little to do with political representation or tolerance. A great many people are, for example, currently engaged in a search for the freedom to make money or to define personal lifestyles. Extreme individualism can be associated with intolerance and disrespect for the rights of others.

### the dominance of market forces

The turn toward liberal democracy and the search for individual freedom have been preceded or accompanied by a worldwide shift in favour of market forces and private enterprise in the management and organization of the economy. The origins of this latest burst in economic liberalization may be traced to the crisis experienced by industrialized countries in the aftermath of the sharp increases in the price of oil during the 1970s; but the new doctrine has since attracted an ever-increasing number of adherents in countries around the world, including the communist régimes of East and South-East Asia.

This dramatic shift in policy is manifested in such changes as the steady retreat of the state from intervention in the economy, the phasing out of administrative and quantitative controls as tools of economic management, price liberalization and deregulation of utilities and services, privatization, reduction of budget deficits, control of inflation and more generally in stabilization and structural adjustment policies and programmes.

Increasing reliance on and liberalization of markets has profoundly altered the economic and political context for social integration. It has contributed to major changes in the configuration of power relations among different social groups and countries. For instance, it seems clear that the organized working class has been greatly weakened, while transnational enterprises, owners of capital, and some managerial and professional groups have been significantly strengthened. Similarly, at the international level, creditor countries, international investors and multilateral financial organizations have seen their influence increase at the expense of indebted countries and those heavily dependent upon aid and/or foreign capital. Often the power and autonomy of the state have been reduced, with enormous consequences for all aspects of public policy.

Economic liberalization has unleashed fierce competition nationally and internationally. While this has often led to gains in static efficiency in resource use, in the short to medium run at least, it has also driven down wages and contributed to increases in unemployment, poverty and inequalities, and thus to accentuation of economic insecurity. Such problems have been exacerbated by the elimination or reduction of subsidies on goods and services of mass consumption, by substitution of indirect for direct taxes and by cuts in social services and welfare benefits.

## accelerated global economic integration

Both increasing reliance on market forces and the turn toward liberal democracy form part of a marked acceleration in the creation of an integrated world economy, society and culture. Economic liberalization has removed impediments to the worldwide expansion of trade in goods and services, flows of capital and technology, foreign investment and tourism, and the internationalization of production. At the same time, innovations in technology, communications and transport have provided fresh stimulus for capital, enterprise, technology and skills to move across national frontiers. All these developments pose new challenges to the authority and autonomy of the state.

The trend toward creation of a global economy has of course not proceeded at identical rates in all spheres of economic activity: increased restrictions on international mobility of labour, especially unskilled labour, and imposition by industrialized countries of quantitative and other barriers on imports of some goods from the developing world, are clear violations of the free-market creed. The Uruguay Round agreement and the establishment of the World Trading Organization may, however, provide a new lease on life to liberalization of trade and extend it to new areas such as services, agriculture and protection of intellectual property. New developments in regional economic integration, including the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), as well as the planned expansion of the European Union, are likely to promote liberalization in some areas and to spur protectionism in others.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast to these somewhat contradictory trends in the field of trade, the growth of relatively unregulated global financial markets has been remarkable. The worldwide scope of these financial markets—which have recently expanded to include “emerging” markets in a number of Asian, Eastern European and Latin American countries—combined with the unprecedented volume of current investment in them increases the danger of sudden instability within the global economy. The destinies of people from all walks of life—ranging from steel workers in the Czech Republic to school teachers (and their pension funds) in the United States, and from cocoa farmers in Africa to restaurateurs in Buenos Aires—are linked as never before through such highly interdependent investment networks.

Transnational enterprises are the predominant actors in the continuing process of global economic integration, controlling almost 75 per cent of all world trade in commodities, manufactured goods and services. A third of this is intrafirm trade, which largely escapes regulation by governments and/or international trade organizations.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, the power of transnational corporations in the market significantly reduces the degree to which globalization can be easily equated with the creation of “free” or “competitive” markets, and increases the likelihood that liberalization will be associated with managed competition.

Most of the economic consequences of globalization are similar to those associated with the shift in favour of market forces and private enterprise, discussed above. Its differential geographical impact should, however, be noted. While globalization provides some countries and regions with opportunities for accelerated growth, it may worsen the performance of others through flight of capital, skills and enterprise, and competition from stronger economies.

## changing production systems and labour markets

Changes in production systems and labour markets are also profoundly affecting patterns of social integration around the world. In manufacturing production, for example, the importance of raw materials and unskilled labour appears to be declining, while that of skills and knowledge is increasing in a wide range of economic activities. Since the availability of cheap labour has underwritten the comparative advantage of many developing countries, in their efforts to attract foreign direct investment, longer term trends favouring highly trained personnel over the unskilled will present difficulties for many developing economies.

There is also a growing trend towards smaller, more flexible, decentralized and autonomous production units, within large corporations or linked through subcontracting agreements with the latter. Particularly in high technology sectors, this may imply better working conditions for those involved. Nevertheless in less technologically advanced industries, especially in the Third World, flexibility and decentralization are associated with the renunciation of social obligations and a refusal on the part of large modern enterprises to share economic risk with smaller suppliers and assemblers. Flexible specialization contributes to extremely unstable conditions of work in many small enterprises around the world.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, technological progress and organizational reform appear to be weakening the relationship between expansion of output and growth of employment. Employment is thus likely to shrink, even if recession gives way to a new period of high growth. This is a qualitative change of the first order in the structure of opportunity of most societies around the globe.

All of these trends will worsen the existing trend toward an increase in part-time, informal and insecure jobs, involving a growing number of women workers. The rapid growth of the informal sector within countries with varying income levels and economic structures can be partially attributed to the greater flexibility and cost-effectiveness of informal enterprises; but in many situations, such growth is merely a reflection of the role of the informal sector as a holding ground for the reserve army of the unemployed and migrants from rural areas.

## rapid technological change

Rapid technological change — especially in electronics, communications, transport and biotechnology — is one of the key features of the contemporary world. Its effects are evident everywhere, in the invention of new products and services, methods of management and organization of production. Technological breakthroughs transform work relations, destroy existing jobs and create new ones, and alter patterns of consumption and leisure activity. They have drastically reduced the importance of distance in economic activity and made global communication both relatively inexpensive and virtually instantaneous. Thus they affect the distribution of power among different social groups, between governments and civil society, and among states.

## the media revolution and the globalization of consumerism

The sixth major force for change can be found in the impact of the media on culture, social relations and institutions. Recent years have witnessed an extraordinary expansion in the reach and influence of the media. While the written word and press have acquired increasing importance, the really revolutionary developments have taken place in television and video. The images and messages transmitted through these media influence the thinking, behaviour and values of hundreds of millions of people.

The revolution in mass communications, which encourages the creation of a global culture, has great potential for promoting understanding and solidarity, and enhancing knowledge throughout the world. In its present form, it also has an awesome capacity to exalt consumerism.<sup>5</sup> This can represent a serious challenge to traditional values. It is therefore not surprising that the invasion of foreign influences through films, music, television and videos should have aroused strong opposition from many quarters in countries around the world. Furthermore, the instant and widespread transmission of news, especially of a sensational and dramatic nature, seems to encourage some people to emulate these exploits in order to obtain publicity or to achieve other objectives through violent means.

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### 3. Deepening poverty, unemployment and inequality

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The incorporation of very large numbers of people around the world into a global culture — holding out the promise of participation in an affluent consumer society and the exercise of greater individual freedom — occurs during a period when developments in the world economy in fact profoundly restrict the life chances of many. The picture of wealth and leisure transmitted by mass media thus frequently stands in harsh contrast to a real world of increasing deprivation. This contradictory process of simultaneous inclusion (in the realm of the imagination) and marginalization (in day-to-day material terms) must be highlighted when considering the grave social problems of our times.

Recent years have been marked by a clear trend toward intensification of poverty and inequality in most regions of the world. In Africa and much of Latin America, this tendency has been observable for nearly two decades. Most industrialized countries have also experienced high levels of unemployment, increasing poverty and inequality during the past fifteen years or so — a situation worsened by the recession of the 1990s. In addition, the previously centrally planned economies of Central and Eastern Europe have suffered catastrophic declines in production and income, and an unprecedented increase in poverty and unemployment, over the past four to five years. East and South-East Asia, and to a lesser extent South Asia, are the only regions which have been able to buck the general trend.

The factors underlying this situation have been much discussed and need not be repeated here, the more so as they fall outside the scope of this paper.<sup>6</sup> In general terms, the global processes already outlined have played a central role; but the immediate causes vary from one region to another. In the industrialized market economies, the marked slowdown of growth in the post-1973 period lies at the heart of the problem. Latin American, African and Middle Eastern countries were affected by deterioration in terms of trade, rising real interest rates, an increase in the debt burden and the cessation or reduction of private and public capital flows. The ex-communist countries of Europe could not escape the consequences of collapse of previous economic systems and the swift turn to economies based on market prices and private enterprise.

In a situation of economic crisis, deepening poverty and rising unemployment, the provision of social support by the state and other public and private organizations assumes critical importance. It is necessary to reduce insecurity and distress by ensuring minimum incomes for the poor, whether through direct grants such as unemployment benefits or pensions, through creation of employment opportunities, or by ensuring access to essential food and shelter. Yet it is precisely during this



period of great need that most governments have been reducing the range and value of social security and welfare benefits and eliminating or curtailing subsidies on goods and services of mass consumption.

Systems of social support are thus in a state of profound crisis around the world. Yet there is not even a universal recognition of the existence of a problem, much less agreement on its dimensions and characteristics, or on the type of measures required to deal with it. Under such circumstances, a renewal of social policy is of cardinal importance. There are strong links between economic marginalization and vulnerability, on the one hand, and a host of social ills (including drug and alcohol abuse, increasing rates of crime and violence, juvenile delinquency, child labour and prostitution), on the other. These aspects of social disintegration are assuming a global dimension; and their human, social and financial costs are incalculable.

## polarization and migration

Ironically, the impoverishment of increasing numbers of people throughout the world — and often their growing inability to meet even the most basic requirements for food, water, shelter, education, medical attention — occurs during a period when the incomes of the very rich have risen markedly. Between 1960 and 1989, the share of global income held by the richest fifth of the world population increased from 70 to 83 per cent, while the share of the poorest fifth dropped from 2.3 to 1.4 per cent.<sup>7</sup> Statistics on changes in the distribution of income within specific countries paint similar pictures of increasing inequality.

This noteworthy process of polarization can also be observed among regions. While growth in some areas of Asia has been remarkable over the past two decades, most African countries lag further and further behind in the sharpening competition to capture a portion of the world's wealth. Between 1970 and 89, the participation of sub-Saharan Africa in global trade dropped from 3.8 to 1 per cent, and foreign investment in that continent declined markedly.<sup>8</sup> The spatial elements of contemporary processes of polarization could be illustrated with any number of other examples, within countries and among them.

As opportunity is concentrated in certain regions and countries, and in particular economic sectors, one of the most obvious responses on the part of those threatened with exclusion or marginalization is to migrate, whether within countries or abroad. And over the past few decades this has become a central element in the livelihood strategy of millions.

Migration, like the revolution in communications technology, both integrates and divides. For the well-educated, or relatively affluent, migration is simply a means to improve life chances: to obtain a better job, to enjoy more personal freedom or a different style of life. Receiving countries or cities generally welcome the transfer of wealth and knowledge inherent in this kind of immigration, although it signifies a loss for the societies and economies left behind.

Larger scale migration by poorer people can imply greater impoverishment and disruption of existing forms of social organization in communities and regions of origin of migrants, particularly when most able-bodied members of households depart, leaving the young and the old to cope as best they can. Nevertheless the potential for improving the level of living of migrants' families is also considerable, as remittances are sent home and invested. Some migrants get ahead, and some find departure from their place of origin a form of liberation from oppressive obligations. In all too many instances, however, migration remains a harsh necessity — a last resort involving privation and not infrequently the danger of physical harm.

In major receiving countries, international migration creates enormous problems of social integration and cultural adaptation which are currently at the centre of the policy debate. The juxtaposition of people who often share neither a common language nor a common religion, and who have very different customs, makes unusual demands on human tolerance and understanding. The arrival of large numbers of foreigners also creates unusual strains on existing social services and local economies. Some of these issues will be taken up in more detail below, when the problems of multi-ethnic societies are reviewed in section 6.

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#### 4. integration and disintegration: changing values, behaviour and institutions

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All of the developments just noted — advancing globalization accompanied by the strengthening of relatively unregulated world market forces, deepening polarization and immiseration, a revolution in communications and transport, new aspirations for greater individual freedom — are associated with deeper changes in the most basic institutions of society. These involve both modification of existing bonds and patterns of behaviour, and the creation of new forms of interaction and obligation. Although this is obviously a very complex subject, some underlying currents of social change will be explored below.

the adaptation and modification  
of family structures

Families in different parts of the world vary so markedly in composition and function that it is impossible to make a simple statement about developments within them. In many parts of the industrialized world, traditional nuclear families, composed of two parents and their children, are declining in importance, as single-parent households increase in number. Rising divorce rates, as well as the growing number of children born to unmarried parents, can be taken to indicate a “disintegration of the [traditional nuclear] family”.

In the industrial world, single-parent households, most often headed by women, are usually the poorest. This, as many analysts have noted, is because there is only one adult income earner, because women tend to receive lower wages than men, and because their double burden of child care and work outside the home leaves them less time for the latter.

This is also the case in areas of the Third World in which two-parent families (often extended to include grandparents, aunts or uncles) are the ideal. Nevertheless it is important to note that self-contained two-parent families are not the norm in many parts of the world, where women and children may traditionally live with the former’s extended family, or with other wives and children of a common father. There is no direct link between female-headed households and poverty under these conditions.<sup>9</sup>

Longer working hours at lower pay, more frequent periods of unemployment, and other trends associated with economic retrenchment and changing production practices are placing an enormous burden on low income households throughout the world. They are also weakening the capacity of families, whatever their composition, to care for their young. Under contemporary conditions, every able-bodied family member must often work, and this increasingly includes children. While such a trend can be called “disintegration”, it should probably more aptly be labelled “degradation”: households may stay together, but under such difficult circumstances that the quality of interpersonal relations deteriorates markedly.<sup>10</sup>

Permanent migration of some members of a household does, of course, promote disintegration of the family in many areas of the developing world. So does temporary migration, when virtually all able-bodied adults must make a living somewhere else, leaving grandparents to take care of children, as is increasingly the case in rural areas hard hit by economic crisis and adjustment. Yet heroic efforts are made by millions of migrants to keep their families together, and their departure in search of work is in fact often the central element in a strategy to provide for the continuity of their households.

A final, tragic, element in the disintegration of households in some parts of the world at the end of the twentieth century is civil strife. The indiscriminate killing of civilian populations which characterizes wars like those in Cambodia, Rwanda or Somalia decimates families and leaves a legacy of millions of widows or widowers and orphans.<sup>11</sup>

Neither poverty nor warfare creates ideal conditions for strong and loving families, or for educating and rearing healthy children. To reduce these threats, rather than to reinforce the nuclear family, is perhaps the most important challenge at hand today.

## the weakening of solidarity within communities and neighbourhoods

Families can only provide for the well-being of their members when they can count on at least a certain critical minimum of support from the surrounding community. Many of the global processes of change outlined at the beginning of this paper nevertheless have a tendency to undermine, rather than to strengthen, solidarity within neighbourhoods and communities, while also posing new challenges to local government.

Globalization, as many analysts have noted, reduces the importance of social bonds based upon residence or place of work, and creates new relations which do not depend upon “groundedness” or “place”.<sup>12</sup> In developed and newly industrialized countries, for example, where informatics increasingly dominate the workplace, the life chances of people begin to depend less on their daily interaction with fellow workers than on management of distant relations through computers. An extreme and very modern example of this phenomenon can be found in the financial sector. The growing flow of remittances from city to countryside, or across international boundaries, has a similar effect: it also creates a basis of local livelihood which does not depend on local co-operation.

At the same time, the credo of extreme individualism which gained favour among many during the 1970s and 1980s has made it publicly acceptable — and perhaps even fashionable — for large numbers of people to renounce responsibility for the welfare of others. If the free market, driven by individual interests, is accorded supremacy in strategies to promote development, then it becomes harder to justify a call for sacrifices to be made by individuals, in the name of the common good. Stunning examples of the socially destructive character of extreme individualism can now be found in the former socialist world, where the collapse of an egalitarian ideology has created an opening for daring, and sometimes violent, attempts on the part of new “entrepreneurs” to appropriate the property of neighbours and co-workers.

Even when groups in local communities continue to have a strong commitment to working together — as is of course true of a great many communities around the world — current developments in the world economy make it increasingly difficult to maintain existing bases of solidarity and to defend existing sources of livelihood. In a relatively unregulated international competition for capital, communities must vie with one another to offer the best conditions for investment. Neighbourhoods in Essex or New Jersey or Normandy must compete with others in Johannesburg or São Paulo or Shanghai in providing tax incentives, cheap labour and (often) lax

environmental protection. A reputation for strong defence of local interests may win interest and commitment from some investors who are concerned about the quality of life of their employees. But throughout much of the world this is clearly not the case.

Deepening poverty and associated migratory trends also pose serious challenges to community solidarity in the majority of Third World and former socialist countries, as well as in China. Agrarian communities, which have provided the primary framework for local level co-operation in developing countries, are being torn apart by contradictory forces associated with globalization and recession: both the increased pace of modernization of the past few decades, and the subsequent withdrawal of many new forms of support on which local people were coming to depend, have left rural communities disorganized and vulnerable. The loss of population, as people try to make a living outside the community, has converted the more remote villages and towns of some Third World countries into hollow shells, and has sharply reduced the ability of the remaining inhabitants to farm or to protect the natural environment.<sup>13</sup>

A further element of stress which poses a sharp challenge to existing mechanisms of social solidarity — whether traditional institutions or modern programmes — in both urban and rural settings is of course the accommodation of refugees. In an age marked by a growing flood of people fleeing violence and persecution, local communities must often make extraordinary efforts to provide for the uprooted. The fragile resource base of poor rural areas can be strained to the breaking point by the massive influx of refugees, and the local labour market forced into dangerous surplus.<sup>14</sup> As in the towns and cities of the developed countries, the degree to which cultural differences can be accommodated within the existing structure of social relations is also problematic.

## the changing landscape of civil society

“Civil society” is an extremely ambiguous term. In many cases, it is used as a catchword which is difficult to distinguish from “society” itself.<sup>15</sup> Here it will refer to the network of associations and interest groups formed to accomplish certain goals, further certain causes or defend particular interests outside the structure of political institutions directly associated with the state.

Until recently, in countries characterized by authoritarian rule, the kind of independent association necessary to constitute a civil society was generally proscribed. Over large areas of the world, people therefore pursued their interests through channels controlled by the government. This situation is changing markedly, as steps are taken to replace authoritarian régimes with nominally democratic political systems and as economic crisis reduces the capacity of many governments to maintain clientelistic or corporate structures of representation and control.

There is thus a new opening for citizens' initiatives in situations of transition to democracy, whether in China, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union or the Third World. And such initiatives are being encouraged by the international development community, which is currently committed to strengthening what have become known as "non-governmental organizations" through channelling an increasing proportion of available funds for aid and relief to that sector.

Certain aspects of globalization greatly favour the creation of new associations and interest groups in societies on the road to democracy. Worldwide networks of like-minded people, linked by modern communications, offer support and resources. This is particularly visible in fields like environmental protection, equality for women and human rights. International links are also forged between some trade union and farmers' organizations in Northern and Southern countries, as they attempt to find allies in the struggle to limit the harmful effects of the internationalization of production. And a plethora of business associations of course search for partners in well-established and newly created democracies alike.

Since it is a truism that neither democracy nor development can be achieved without effective organization of people to pursue common interests, the awakening of civil society in many parts of the world is a heartening sign. Nevertheless some cautionary words would seem in order.

First, it should be remembered that under authoritarian régimes, the kinds of associations which permit a certain limited expression of independent identity are often based upon religious or ethnic loyalties. This "civil society", though truncated, may be better developed than any secular or non-ethnic alternative when the transition to democracy begins; and it should therefore not be surprising that exclusionary and messianic forms of organization can gain prominence in this context.

Groups may be formed to defend some very unsavoury interests. At the same time, organizations which spring up to defend very worthy causes may prove totally ineffective.<sup>16</sup> Both observations suggest the conclusion that the apparent burgeoning of private associations is not a sufficient indicator of progress. The strengthening of civil society must be based not only on organizing drive, but more importantly on the broadening and deepening of a kind of "civic culture", which presupposes adherence to certain universal values and acceptance of workable rules for the adjudication of interests and the protection of the weak.

Furthermore, the effective exercise of citizens' initiatives, in a way which furthers sustainable human development, presupposes the existence of a functioning governmental structure based on law. And government in turn depends upon a relatively stable and widely accepted political system. These obvious points become less obvious when seen from the perspective of societies totally shattered by civil war or engaged in a revolutionary change of régime. For hundreds of millions of people today, the institutional structures which validate the very concept of citizenship are still to be built.

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## 5. governance and social integration

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The combination of institutions, laws, procedures and norms, which allows people to express their concerns and fight for their interests within a predictable and relatively equitable context, forms the basis of good governance. Efficient administration of public resources is an additional element in this definition. And the entire edifice of good governance ultimately rests upon a legitimate use of power: public authority must be sanctioned by the consent of the governed.

The established industrial democracies have developed systems for managing and reconciling a dense and potentially very conflictive field of special interests, based primarily on class, religion and ethnic origin. In some cases, these interests are represented through corporate structures, so that certain segments of the body politic (such as workers, employers and government; or Catholics, Protestants and non-believers) are granted a specific place in relevant negotiating bodies, and/or form separate political parties. In other cases, the interests of citizens are more diffusely expressed through broadly based political parties appealing to a very wide constituency.

Contemporary concern with exclusion and social disintegration reflects not only the perception that structures of governance in the developing world are failing to provide a minimally acceptable framework for processing the demands of most people, but also that the political and administrative systems of the industrial nations are increasingly unable to live up to the expectations of their citizens.

Part of the problem is obviously ethical, and part is most certainly structural. Corruption scandals have rocked a great many governments around the globe in the course of the past few years. But at the same time, even the most honest and efficient political systems have had to confront the enormous difficulties created by globalization, market integration and slow growth.

### accommodating international interests

It has already been noted that national governments — North or South, East or West — forced by liberalization and deregulation to strengthen the competitive position of their economies in the global arena, must (like local governments) increasingly adopt measures which attract foreign capital and which furthermore cheapen production for export. As a result, new (**international**) interests come to

form an increasingly important part of the national political equation and affect the capacity of governments to respond to well-established local constituencies in the manner traditionally expected of them.

This development is reflected in a growing inability to protect the national industrial sector, to sustain wages at levels considered adequate by organized labour, and to maintain social security provisions which symbolize the hard-won gains of working people. Whether in Mexico or Nigeria or Russia or the United States, governments whose political systems may be very different still confront the similar dilemma of how to maintain a broad and coherent basis of political support at a time when the dictates of international competition do not allow what is considered to be an adequate response to the demands of major segments of national society.

The situation is greatly complicated by the interpenetration of leading business groups of different countries, joining forces in ways which make it difficult to separate out and defend specifically “national” interests. In a sense, this is nothing new: the development of transnational enterprises over the past four decades has of course created conditions in which national boundaries became increasingly irrelevant for giant conglomerates. But in the most recent phases of internationalization, co-operation among transnational firms has grown to include joint production arrangements which make it difficult to determine the ultimate “national origin” of major products and services.

These developments divide established interest groups, creating new alliances among subgroups with particularistic links to the international economy. National labour movements, for example, suffer new forms of division. Business groups split into opposing factions based upon differing access to international markets. Political parties which have aggregated interests in relatively stable patterns over a number of years in many countries are therefore increasingly likely to confront the threat of fragmentation, instability and ineffectiveness.

The field of interests underlying political systems around the world also suffers reorganization as the livelihood of ever larger numbers of people comes to be directly dependent upon developments in world financial markets. Governments can control these markets only partially. Their room for manoeuvre at the national level is increasingly limited. In fact, even the capacity of the Group of Seven to mount a co-ordinated response to speculative forays by currency traders has proven insufficient to prevent instability.

At present, there is thus a worldwide tendency for national governments to lose their authority to regulate some of the most important variables in the national economy. This gives even a relatively efficient régime the appearance of weakness and ineptitude. Furthermore, as states attempt to protect their international financial position, they must increasingly grant priority to financial concerns over all other social and political ones. And this conveys an image of distance from the real problems of everyday life of its citizenry.



The latter problem is, of course, especially serious for highly indebted countries, where public policy — both economic and social — has been shaped within an overarching context of conditionality. Priority has been granted to reducing the government deficit, improving the balance of payments and re-establishing international creditworthiness; and the influence of international actors in this regard has been visibly more important in most countries than the influence of local interest groups. In fact, governments are often perceived as having abdicated their responsibility to defend national projects, preferring to ally themselves with powerful foreign patrons than with their own political supporters.

## social services and citizenship

In a great many industrialized and developing countries, economic crisis and adjustment have simultaneously promoted a deep reduction in government expenditure on administration, regulation and the provision of general services, ranging from health and education to the maintenance of roads and other vital infrastructure. Especially in the Third World, as well as countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the quality of public administration and social services has often dropped markedly, as staff is laid off and salaries cut; and, once again, this reinforces a public perception of incompetence on the part of the state. When services are subsequently privatized, this may improve their efficiency. Nevertheless the introduction of fees simultaneously reduces the coverage of the programmes involved and sharply lessens access to them on the part of low income families.

The progressive segmentation of social services (some of which become private and others subject to new criteria of means testing and targeting) is in fact related to an important change of direction in social welfare policy during the past few years. Over wide areas of the world, the very idea that governments have the obligation to ensure a certain minimum level of welfare for all citizens is being challenged on both economic and ideological grounds. And this has clear implications in the field of governance.

In many industrial countries, whether of the market economy or centrally planned variety, the concept of citizenship has for a number of decades implied not only the enjoyment of certain legal and political rights (and the acceptance of corresponding obligations in those fields), but also the collective assurance of social rights or entitlements. This broad definition of citizenship underpins democracy: it attempts to ensure that all members of a society have access to the kinds of services (such as education, health and child care) which enable them to make informed judgements and to find productive work. And it institutionalizes a kind of social solidarity which protects those afflicted by sickness and unemployment, or rendered vulnerable by disability or old age.

The ideal of ensuring a general minimum of welfare services for the entire population has been adopted by many developing countries in the course of the past half-century, and some progress has been made toward realizing it. But there

is now a clear retreat from this position in both North and South, as universalism is replaced by a residualist emphasis on targeting public assistance only toward the neediest, while leaving the provision of general social services more frequently to the private sector.

There is of course no question that targeting has a role to play in ensuring that scarce resources reach the neediest. In fact, providing special programmes for the most disadvantaged has often formed part of the policy “mix” in so-called welfare states. But relying too heavily on targeting — and more recently on adjustment-related social welfare funds — reinforces divisive tendencies within any society. There is often a stigma attached to receiving public support, and a gap is created or widened between the quality of services to be obtained in the private and public sectors. Furthermore many administrative obstacles lie in the way of targeting the neediest effectively.<sup>17</sup>

## governance, informality and illegality

For many people, then, — particularly in Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the former Soviet Union — the existing state is becoming increasingly less relevant to the satisfaction of their everyday needs. The explosion of the informal sector, under the impact of economic crisis and restructuring, is one of the clearest symptoms of this trend. Growing numbers of people provide for themselves without contributing through taxes to the maintenance of public services or receiving the protection and benefits which have been stipulated in national laws.

The question of how the rapidly growing informal sector is being — or can be — integrated into new political coalitions, so that the interests of the many groups within it can be effectively represented in widely based and relatively stable structures of governance, is an important and difficult one. The extraordinary heterogeneity of this “sector”, as well as the often semi-illicit nature of activities within it, constitutes difficult terrain for the construction of political pacts within national political systems which are democratic, or engaged in a transition to democracy.<sup>18</sup>

There are, of course, wide areas of the world in which so-called “informality” has always been the norm and where the idea of political or social citizenship has never had wide currency. The poverty of most people within the informal sector, especially within the Third World, and their frequent dependence on favours extended by patrons (rather than on rights to which they are entitled as citizens) are elements in a form of governance which is often authoritarian and personalistic.

This traditional form of authoritarianism, in which allegiance or quiescence is ensured through bestowing favours or using force, can find a modern ally in international criminal syndicates — as, in fact, can any number of interests within industrial democracies. The drug and arms rings, smugglers of illegal immigrants, and other criminal organizations which have gained such attention during the past few decades are, like older mafias, organized on the basis of networks of patronage

or personal loyalty, and they can dispense immense wealth. In the democratic systems of the industrial world, they can corrupt certain segments of the political system and distort the administration of justice. In less democratic settings, they can reinforce despotic government.

Over a significant part of the world today, the struggle to create relatively more democratic political systems and to defend elemental human rights is being undermined by the growing strength of criminal organizations. In countries from Colombia to Thailand, and from Pakistan to Russia, the resources which can be marshalled by these syndicates rival or surpass those of governments themselves. In the specific case of the drug trade, which is said to control the second most important commodity in international commerce (after arms), the revenue recycled by drug syndicates determines the viability of a number of national economies; and the political fate of some governments depends to a considerable degree on negotiations with such interests.<sup>19</sup>

In summary, then, it seems clear that developments in the global economy and society are posing increasingly complex problems for political and administrative institutions at both local and national levels, and that some of these problems must be addressed at least in part through institutional innovation at the international level. If international crime undermines legitimacy and the rule of law in country after country, then forms of international co-operation must be designed to combat it. If global competition for capital and markets is tearing institutional structures of social solidarity apart, some way must be found to regulate competition, and/or to create new structures of social support. If traditional structures of identity are challenged or shattered by the global communications revolution, new attempts to define and promote a global identity — based on universal human rights — must be made.

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## 6. social integration in multi-ethnic societies

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Many of the problems just discussed are magnified and distorted within the context of multi-ethnic societies.<sup>20</sup> Most countries in the world are of course to some degree multi-ethnic: they contain a number of groups distinguished by differences of language, religion, tribe and/or race. Nevertheless the historical processes creating ethnic difference, as well as the challenges posed to public policy by the

latter, vary greatly by country and region. In consequence, some have been more successful than others in attempting to forge tolerant and just societies.

## western europe

Despite the fact that the unified nation state was forged in Europe, most states on the continent comprise many different ethnic groups brought together by conquest, colonial expansion and migration. The countries of Western Europe, in particular, are currently faced with two major ethnic problems: the older problem of accommodating the demands of “nationalities” such as the Basques, Britons, Catalans, Flemish, Irish, Walloons and so forth; and the newer problem posed by post-war immigrants, first from the Third World and currently from countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Most countries have been able to accommodate the older problem, although it continues to pose challenges in some cases, such as Northern Ireland and Belgium, and to emerge in new contexts, like that of the Lombardy League in Italy. The consolidation and expansion of the European Union both stimulates regional nationalisms and provides a framework for their accommodation. The presence of coloured minorities, however, constitutes a much more serious policy challenge in Western Europe. The rise of far right parties on the strength of their anti-immigrant slogans, as well as a growing wave of violence and harassment directed against coloured minorities in several West European countries in recent years, represent a dramatic manifestation of underlying tensions and policy ambiguities.

The presence of migrants from Asia and Africa is a legacy of the colonial empires of European powers. Small numbers of these immigrants, already resident in Western Europe in the early post-war years, were swollen by waves of new arrivals in the 1960s and early 1970s, drawn by booming economies and labour shortages in the region. There was, however, a virtual cessation of immigration from Third World countries following the first petrol shock and the accompanying economic slump. Recession and unemployment in the 1990s have led to a further intensification of restrictions on immigration throughout Western Europe.

The nature and seriousness of the problem of integration of coloured minorities varies from one country to another, in part because there is a great deal of country variation in the absolute numbers and relative importance of Third World immigrants in Western Europe. There are also differences in the citizenship status of coloured residents in Western Europe. While some of the newcomers already possessed citizenship in the host country, as was the case in France, Portugal or the United Kingdom, most came as citizens of their countries of origin. Furthermore, while in most countries it was relatively easy to acquire citizenship after residence of a certain duration, this was sometimes impossible (as in Germany) or required complicated procedures and extremely long residence (as in Switzerland). Since citizenship endows individuals with certain legal, political, economic and social rights which are denied to non-citizens, this is a most important attribute differentiating two categories of coloured people resident in Western Europe.

Although coloured minorities in Western Europe are not a homogeneous group (they differ with regard to their countries of origin, religion, language and socio-economic status), there is a persistent tendency in almost all countries for them to be disproportionately represented among socially and economically marginalized groups. Marginalization takes the form of low incomes, unskilled and precarious jobs, high unemployment and residence in poor, high risk neighbourhoods. Some of these characteristics may be explained by the low levels of education and skills attained by the immigrants and their willingness to accept jobs, as well as working and living conditions, spurned by the nationals of these countries. But the persistence of marginalization over prolonged periods, sometimes extending even to second and third generations, indicates that other factors, such as lack of equal opportunities, prejudice and discrimination, are also involved.

Governments of Western European countries have developed at least four different approaches to dealing with ethnic problems: **separation, toleration, cultural pluralism** and **assimilation**.<sup>21</sup> Separation, exemplified by the German experience, is based on the policy of treating migrants as temporary workers who will at some stage return to their countries of origin. Residence is therefore tied to work permits and employers assume responsibility for provision of hostels and other forms of accommodation. The approach of the United Kingdom, in contrast, is characterized by toleration. Integration is defined as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance; and equal opportunities are promoted through enforceable anti-discrimination legislation rather than through the creation of positive programmes to benefit ethnic minorities.

The Netherlands and Sweden have been the leading proponents of cultural pluralism. Although during an earlier period migrants in the Netherlands had been treated as guest workers, as in Germany, the Dutch government assumed the responsibility in the 1980s to help minorities preserve, develop and express their cultural identity. At the same time, alarm over continuing marginalization of minorities has encouraged the Dutch to shift the focus of policy toward combating deprivation. In recent years, there seems also to have been a subtle shift in French policy towards encouragement of cultural pluralism, despite the fact that in the 1960s and 1970s, the emphasis in France had been on assimilation of ethnic minorities to national culture or repatriation to the country of origin.

It is evident that, while considerable progress has been made in ensuring a relatively secure legal status, as well as *de jure* equal treatment in such areas as housing, employment and education for most immigrants in Western Europe, no line of policy has proved totally effective in removing socio-economic barriers to upward mobility experienced by coloured minorities. Approaches adopted by governments have evolved and have become more flexible; but clearly the factors responsible for the continuing subordinate socio-economic status of ethnic minorities are stubborn and complex. Meanwhile, under the strains of economic crisis, some of the earlier gains in ethnic accommodation are being threatened by a resurgence of racism and a growing incidence of discrimination, harassment and

violence directed against coloured minorities in several Western European countries.

## central and eastern europe

The historical experience of Central and Eastern Europe has been radically different from that of Western Europe in at least two respects. First, most of the people in this region have been accustomed to live in states which were specifically defined as multinational and multicultural. This was the case not only under the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Russian empires, but also after the break-up of these empires, in the aftermath of the First World War. Most of the new “nation states” — particularly the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, but also in varying degrees Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania — continued in the inter-war period to display characteristics of sharp ethnic and cultural diversity.

The second distinguishing feature of the Eastern and Central European experience is of course that the population of this region lived under communism for periods ranging from four to seven decades. Communist states displayed an ambivalent attitude toward the question of “nationalities”.<sup>22</sup> On the one hand, ethnic inequalities and other culturally defined differences were attributed to the operation of the capitalist system. It was assumed that with the establishment of socialism such differences would disappear. Indeed the dominance of the working class and the achievement of economic equality were supposed to deal a mortal blow to the ethnic problem. On the other hand, some versions of communist doctrine insisted on the principle of the sovereignty of nationalities and their voluntary association in a commonwealth of republics or multinational federations. Reality, however, seldom conformed to these ideals. In practically all communist states for most of the time, while superficial expressions of national identity were tolerated and indeed encouraged, power was highly concentrated in the central committees and *politburos* of communist parties. In some countries, systematic efforts were made to erase all markers of ethnic identity.

The collapse of communism has been followed by a veritable explosion of ethnic conflict. How does one explain this largely unexpected outcome of the end of communist régimes in Central and Eastern Europe? While there are no doubt important factors specific to different national contexts, it is possible to discern some common patterns which were inherent in the communist system and in the way it disappeared.

The first point to emphasize is that efforts to eradicate ethnic identity through suppressing its public manifestations seldom achieve their objective. The result is most often to drive ethnic groups underground. Nevertheless it might be expected that the reduction of inter-ethnic inequalities in incomes, education and living standards, as well as provision of a modicum of universal economic and social security, would have contributed to lessening ethnic tensions. In fact, it seems quite plausible that during the communist era this aspect of social and economic policy did make a positive contribution to improving ethnic relations.

The irruption of ethnic violence is perhaps most attributable to the situation created by the sudden collapse of the communist system. The abrupt disintegration of the latter created a formal institutional vacuum. With the discrediting of the communist party, which constituted the centre of political and social organization, there were few institutions which could provide a viable and legitimate basis for any kind of organized activity. In this respect, as noted earlier, a fatal weakness of the system was the paucity of autonomous institutions of civil society. At the same time there was widespread rejection of the values associated with communism. Furthermore, this institutional and moral crisis coincided with a profound economic crisis, which produced a massive decline in living standards and the collapse of the social security system. Under the circumstances, it is understandable that people turned to ethnicity in their search for security and identity, and that leaders succeeded in exploiting cultural differences for political ends.

## the english-speaking new world

The industrial countries of the English-speaking New World share many of the problems of Western Europe with regard to integration of ethnic minorities. Unlike Western Europe, however, the former were created as immigrant countries of relatively recent origin. Their societies have been formed through the interaction of people of European origin, on the one hand, and indigenous minorities, descendants of slaves or indentured workers, and new immigrants from the Third World, on the other.

The industrialized countries of the New World, with the exception of the United States, first saw their destiny as white dominions of the British Commonwealth. Therefore it is only in recent years that they have thrown their doors open to selective migration from all parts of the world. In view of their origin as countries of immigrants, however, they have fewer problems in accepting their identities as multicultural and multi-ethnic societies than the “nation states” of Western Europe. The bulk of their new immigrants now come from the Third World.

The experience of the United States with the integration of ethnic minorities is especially revealing. First, it illustrates with dramatic force the bitter legacy of large-scale slavery, whose consequences are still to be found in many areas of national life. Second, it can provide insights on the impact of a *de facto* apartheid system, which functioned for nearly a century. The South African experiment with apartheid was merely a more formalized and ruthless version of the American model. Third, over the past four decades beginning with the struggle over civil rights, the United States has probably made a more systematic effort than any other country to come to terms with the ethnic dimensions of social integration. Fourth, the country continues to keep its doors open, even if on a modest scale, to immigrants from the Third World at a time when many other doors are closed.

Thus, in terms of diversity and size of ethnic groups, the United States is without parallel. In a certain sense its experience can be considered the first large-scale effort in human history to create a truly global society on national soil.

As in Western Europe, ethnic minorities are on the whole disproportionately represented among the underclass in the English-speaking New World, although a significant proportion of some minorities, especially of Asian origin, enjoy high incomes and a middle class status. The absence of a well-developed system of social security and welfare benefits, especially in the United States, further intensifies economic insecurity. The marginalization and alienation of indigenous people is, however, a problem unique to the New World countries, although it finds an echo in the fate suffered by gypsies in Europe.

The most interesting aspect of the experience of industrialized New World countries is to be found in the unusually wide range of policies and programmes designed to remove discrimination and create equality of opportunities for ethnic minorities. These include establishment of autonomous territories for indigenous people, restitution of their rights to lands and natural resources, a battery of legislation to combat all forms of ethnic discrimination, wide ranging programmes of affirmative action, strong promotion of cultural pluralism, as well as the sensitization of the media, educational institutions, the police, the judiciary and the bureaucracy to the ethnic dimensions of social integration. The activism of the English-speaking New World in this domain stands in sharp contrast to the timidity of the Western European stance.



## latin america

The clash of cultures began earlier in Latin America than in most of the English-speaking New World and involved larger numbers of people. The core of the Spanish empire in the New World was in fact built in the sixteenth century on the ruins of well-developed Indian civilizations in Mesoamerica and the Andean region, whose peoples were conquered and eventually integrated into multi-ethnic societies.

In contrast, the Portuguese New World, southern Central America and the Southern Cone of Spanish South America did not contain great Indian empires and were settled largely by European immigrants (supplemented especially in the case of Brazil by slaves). Relatively primitive or isolated groups of native people in these regions were exterminated in the course of military campaigns much like those undertaken in the United States, or managed to find refuge in the vastness of the Amazon. With the notable exception of these campaigns, racism and other forms of ethnic conflict were muted by a relatively less exclusive definition of lines between cultures in Latin America (when compared to the English-speaking New World) and by centuries of intermarriage among Europeans, Indians and Africans. Slavery was abolished in Spanish America during the early nineteenth century, although it lasted in Brazil until 1888.

The major lines of social conflict in Latin America have been drawn more frequently along class than along ethnic lines. Nevertheless there are significant areas of Mesoamerica and the Andean region in which the large pre-Columbian indigenous population was gradually pushed into marginal rural areas and dominated by large landowners, mining companies, moneylenders and/or political bosses of both Indian and non-Indian background. Resentment against exploitation, which was only partially based upon ethnic identity, contributed to revolution in Bolivia and Mexico, and to a number of Indian uprisings in other Andean and Central American countries.

Unlike indigenous populations in the English-speaking New World, those in Latin America have not fought for territorial separateness. They have, however, demanded recognition of their rights to hold communal land and to preserve their local customs, as well as assurances of economic and political equality within the wider society. Ethnically based violence has been limited to certain regions, such as Ecuador, Guatemala, southern Mexico and Peru, and has usually taken the form of sustained, low level conflict. On occasion, however, this has given way to encounters on a large scale.

Despite the reality of a violent conquest and later of everyday discrimination against indigenous minorities, Latin America has witnessed many enlightened attempts to promote and protect Indian culture and livelihood. Progressive elements within the Catholic Church wrestled with questions of cultural difference as early as the sixteenth century; and during the early twentieth century Mexico was once again the site of pathbreaking efforts to integrate Indian peoples into national societies without destroying their cultures. Perhaps the greatest stumbling

block to promoting the well-being of indigenous peoples in Latin America is posed by the deficient development of institutions which protect human rights for all citizens of the region and permit the development of democracy.

## asia and africa

Unlike Latin America, the boundaries of most Asian and African countries are relatively recent colonial creations. Typically the colonial authorities grouped together a diverse collection of neighbouring ethnic groups into territories which subsequently became independent states. The ethnic mosaic was further enriched by immigrants from other parts of the colonial empire. The primary challenge faced by governments under these circumstances was to create a sense of national identity and unity among their diverse ethnic groups and to promote economic development and improve living standards of the people.<sup>23</sup>

At the time of independence in the mid-twentieth century or later, few leaders had given much thought to the complex issues raised in the course of creating national identity and integration. Special constitutional arrangements were made on the eve of independence in some countries, such as Fiji and Malaysia, where indigenous people felt threatened by immigrant communities. Similarly, a few countries (such as India and Lebanon) devised power-sharing and territorial arrangements in response to ethnic problems. More generally, however, there was a tendency to opt for strong states, centralization of power and suppression of ethnic claims. The expression of ethnic identity was generally frowned upon, and tribalism (and its variants) became a term of opprobrium.

In contrast to the sporadic violence seen in Western Europe and the New World, ethnic tensions are a pervasive reality in most African and Asian countries; and the incidence of violent conflicts appears to have increased significantly since the early 1970s. The heritage from the colonial era in fact continues to cast a long shadow on ethnic relations in many countries. Since separate communal residential areas, schools, hospitals, social and cultural organizations were a common feature in many colonies, social and economic distance among different ethnic communities was often systematically maintained. In several countries colonial policy also tended to promote or intensify specialization of occupation along ethnic lines, as well as regional or ethnic economic inequalities.

After independence, governments sought to overcome the problems of divided societies through such policies as provision of social services on an integrated basis and adoption of preferential policies for disadvantaged regions and minorities. But several developments tended to militate against ethnic accommodation. There was a general trend toward concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the central government. Multi-party régimes were replaced by military or single-party governments, especially in Africa. Autonomous organizations such as unions and co-operatives were either suppressed or brought under government control. At the same time, governments assumed an ever-increasing role in the economy.

Control over the institutions of the state thus became an obsessive objective of most groups. In the absence of other bases of legitimacy, the dispensation of economic benefits to selected groups and individuals came to be a principal mechanism for buying support for the régime. Furthermore, the control of the state often passed into the hands of a dominant ethnic group or an alliance of similar groups, with the result that those excluded from such benefits not only suffered material deprivation but saw their culture — and even their future as a distinct ethnic group — under threat. The combination of economic insecurity, discriminatory social and economic policies, and a lack of any avenue for expression of their demands was reason enough for many minority groups to take up arms and to fight for secession or autonomy.

These sources of discontent were massively aggravated by a profound economic crisis which engulfed most African, Latin American, Middle Eastern and some Asian countries in the late 1970s and 1980s. An abrupt decline in living standards and increasing unemployment, combined with sharp reductions in public services and welfare benefits created widespread social distress, which extended even to groups who were hitherto relatively secure. Such developments coincided with a further erosion in the authority and legitimacy of the state, brought about by its diminishing resources and power. The national project, associated with independence, was tarnished, and there was a proclivity for widespread corruption and violation of human rights. The growing ease with which international support could be secured for ethnic claims, in a situation which also permitted increasing access to arms, fanned the flames of violent conflicts based on ethnic difference.

Violent ethnic conflict is by no means inevitable or universal in African and Asian countries. Several multicultural and multi-ethnic states (including Cameroon, Mauritius, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, in Africa, and Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, in Asia) have succeeded in achieving peaceful accommodation of tensions inherent in all such societies. There are no doubt many features specific to these countries which account for their relatively favourable experiences. But some of the lessons they have learned are of wider relevance.

## accommodating ethnic tensions

Although any realistic attempt to deal effectively with ethnic tension must be firmly grounded in the historical experience and current situation of a particular country, certain kinds of policies are likely to promote accommodation in a wide range of situations.<sup>24</sup>

For example, it is obvious that the existence of a rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights and an independent judiciary are essential in mitigating minorities' fears that they will be victimized and discriminated against. At the same time, broad-based and sustained economic growth creates a feeling of general well-being and security, and gives governments access to resources which can be used to meet some of the demands of aggrieved ethnic groups. On the other hand,

economic crisis, mass poverty and high levels of unemployment are breeding grounds for tensions which can be manipulated by ethnic entrepreneurs who capitalize on a generalized state of insecurity.

The experiences of countries as diverse as Belgium, India, Lebanon, Malaysia and Nigeria and Switzerland illustrate the fact that systems of government characterized by power-sharing arrangements between the centre and the regions, as well as among different ethnic groups, can be effective in easing ethnic tensions over critical periods. Electoral systems can also be tailored to the specific ethnic structures and problems of individual countries, so that they guarantee a place for minority ethnic groups. The extremely original and imaginative arrangements recently hammered out in South Africa over a long period of intensive discussions among contending ethnic groups highlight the central importance of developing innovative institutional mechanisms for relieving ethnic tensions.

A dense network of advocacy groups, concerned with humanitarian questions and human rights as well as with social welfare and development, is another central element in the search for new approaches and solutions to ethnic conflict. These institutions have no doubt contributed to the reduction of ethnic discrimination and bias in Western Europe and the New World, and they are now beginning to do so in Latin America. In contrast, the absence or weakness of such a web of autonomous institutions has been an important factor in the failure to find peaceful means for accommodating ethnic conflict in many countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia.

Finally greater attention must be paid to the important role that education can play in promoting understanding and tolerance in multicultural societies. This should go hand in hand with tough policies and actions directed against those who seek for various reasons to stir up ethnic hatred and to indulge in acts of ethnic harassment and violence.

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## 7. changing patterns of integration: past, present, future

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In closing, it is perhaps useful to place current patterns and processes of social integration in historical perspective, before looking toward the future.

We live at a time when the vast majority of people around the world are being integrated into a single global economy and culture, organized around the principles of individualism, liberal democracy and faith in the market. This is a revolutionary development, comparable in its scope to the industrial revolution of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and in many ways a logical extension of that process.

The industrial revolution uprooted people in agrarian societies, destroyed their families and communities, and forced them into precarious wage labour under conditions of great vulnerability. As traditional forms of integration broke apart, crime and other violent manifestations of social stress became more frequent; and the poor were stigmatized as slothful and of doubtful moral character.

The current expansion of the market economy is having similar effects. People who have been protected from indigence by traditional forms of solidarity in the Third World, or by modern forms of social protection in the industrial capitalist or socialist world, are being forced to fend increasingly for themselves — but within a context of global consumer culture and instantaneous communication unimagined when the industrial revolution began.

Mass migration accompanied the industrial revolution, just as it marks our contemporary world. And ethnic conflict erupted in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, just as it does today. Throughout the past century, many were required to build new identities, as certain categories of occupation and certain localities or regions were degraded or made irrelevant by the rapidly changing economy. Again, however, migration and the juxtaposition of cultures occur at present with a speed and depth not possible in a less technologically advanced era. And the sheer numbers of people affected today are very much larger than they were a century or more ago. The scale of the current process of social reorganization is planetary.

The new order created over the course of the last century to cope with the deeply divisive effects of the industrial revolution rested in many parts of the world on citizenship, nationality and class. In a growing number of settings, individuals were eventually perceived to have rights; and these rights were protected by new forms of social organization including trade unions and other interest associations,

political parties, courts, and so forth. The modern state became the guarantor of political and economic rights and provided the framework for collective identity across wide areas of the world; and an attempt was made under colonialism to transplant it into new territories.

Current developments within the global economy and society, however, tend increasingly to undermine the efficacy of states and in some instances create incentives for their fragmentation or dissolution. Unregulated markets can destroy social compacts, as notions of solidarity and the concept of citizens' rights are subject to the strains inherent in all-out competition. Uncritical adherence to consumerism has a similar effect. In consequence, many of the modern structures of representation and accountability, which emerged as an outgrowth of social conflict and accommodation in industrial or newly industrializing democracies, are being severely challenged.

At the same time, of course, the current process of rapid economic and social change creates new opportunities for personal freedom and choice in many settings traditionally characterized by rigid social stratification and/or the authoritarian or dictatorial exercise of power. The problem faced in these situations is how to create new institutions which satisfy the basic economic and political needs of most people, during a period when so great a degree of influence on local conditions is in fact exerted by forces far beyond local control.

There is at present a striking incongruence between patterns of social integration which bind people around the world more closely together than ever before, on the one hand, and the frailty of existing mechanisms for subjecting global processes to regulation and channelling them toward the promotion of human welfare, on the other. Although the nation state increasingly fulfilled this function in the aftermath of the industrial revolution, it cannot be expected to assume primary or sole responsibility for doing so in the new global context.

A number of challenges thus emerge which have only partial corollaries in earlier periods. How, for example, can the international community control the centripetal, polarizing effects of global markets — sustained by information technologies which permit virtually instantaneous communication — without returning to a kind of protectionism which stifles possibilities for growth in Third World as well as Northern economies?

How can new bases of solidarity be created during a period when capital is almost infinitely mobile and labour is much more mobile than it has ever been before? And how can the clash of values and cultures be minimized, and elements of a common culture constructed, in a world which grows smaller and more densely interconnected with each passing day?

How can new forms of livelihood and standards of personal worth be created in a context characterized by secular decline in the need for human labour? And how can the current trend toward socio-economic and political marginalization of growing numbers of people be reversed?

Finally, how can we deal with the unprecedented degree of environmental degradation generated by current patterns of resource use, as well as with the equally unprecedented opportunities created by modern technology for conflict to degenerate into violence, and for violence to expand over wide areas?

Confronting these challenges will require institutional reform at many levels of society and within many different spheres of daily life. It will also require a conscious shift of values. The international context assumes greater importance in this endeavour than ever before — not because it is possible to design universal solutions, uniformly applied around the world, but because global forces have created inescapable common problems of worldwide scope. The concept of an “international community” is no longer a simple ideal. It is a fact of life.

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## notes

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1. See the collection of papers prepared for the Workshop on Patterns and Causes of Social Exclusion and the Design of Policies to Promote Social Integration, sponsored by the International Institute for Labour Studies and the United Nations Development Programme, and held in Cambridge from 14-18 July 1994. See also Wolfe, 1994.
2. For a good discussion of this point, see chapter 7 of Griffin and Khan, 1992.
3. UNDP, 1994, p. 87.
4. For an analysis of the Chilean case, see Díaz, 1993.
5. On global consumerism, see Barnett and Cavanagh, 1994.
6. Some recent discussions include Berry and Stewart, 1994, and Khan, 1994.
7. UNDP, 1992, p. 36.
8. Ibid., p. 37.
9. See Moore, 1994.
10. Growing adult and child prostitution in some areas and localities, as well as the development of new networks for the sale of child brides and babies, are harsh reminders of the effects of deepening poverty on primary solidarity and affection within households. Increasing numbers of children living and working on the streets of large urban areas have also drawn the attention of the world community. See Swift, 1991.
11. The collection of papers edited by Utting (1994) contains recent commentary on this subject.
12. See Carnoy et al., 1993.
13. See Hewitt de Alcántara, 1994.
14. Allen and Morsink, 1994.
15. On the definition of civil society, see Howell et al., 1994.
16. See Vivian and Maseko, 1994.
17. See the series of papers on adjustment-related social funds and the targeting of social policy in specific country contexts, prepared within the context of the UNRISD/UNDP project on Economic Restructuring and New Social Policies. The conclusions of this project are presented in Vivian, 1994.
18. Bangura, 1994.
19. See Tullis, 1991.
20. Issues relating to the dynamics of ethnic conflict are explored in the UNRISD global project on Ethnic Conflict and Development. Findings from studies are synthesized in a forthcoming volume by Rodolfo Stavenhagen.
21. Collinson, 1993.
22. See Tishkov, 1994.
23. Horowitz, 1985.
24. The role of public policies in promoting ethnic accommodation is addressed in the UNRISD/UNDP project on Ethnic Diversity and Public Policies. The



results of this work are synthesized in a forthcoming UNRISD Occasional Paper for the Social Summit, by Crawford Young.

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