

Minorities, Minority Rights and Development

By Roger Riddell

issues paper

Acknowledgements

Minority Rights Group International (MRG) gratefully acknowledges the support of all organizations and individuals who gave financial and other assistance for this paper, including Christian Aid, Bilance and the Social Development Division of the Department for International Development (UK).

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- Builds on a global network of like-minded organisations and minority communities to cooperate on minority rights issues

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For further information please contact MRG. A CIP catalogue record of this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 1 897693 57 5 Published November 2002. **Typeset by** Texture. Printed in the UK on recycled paper. **Minorities, Minority Rights and Development** is published by MRG as a contribution to public understanding of the issue which forms its subject.

The text and views of the author do not necessarily represent in every detail and in all its aspects, the collective view of MRG.

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Preface

At MRG, we have been concerned for some time about the links between poverty, membership of a minority community and access to development opportunities. Not all minority communities are poorer than the majority population in a given country, but many are. For these groups, at least, it is clear that poverty affects minority communities' ability to gain access to and exercise their rights. Beyond this, however, the area has been little researched and most commentators have told us that there is a lack of data on the correlations between poverty, minority status and development. Many presume that a link exists, but it is very difficult to find evidence documenting this, and even more difficult to find any analysis of causal relationships, of historical developments over time or of the specific impact of particular policies and development programmes.

This paper is the first step in a longer process which will involve other papers, some from a thematic perspective, some with a geographical focus and some written by minority-based organizations and presenting their experiences, both positive and negative, of participating (or not participating) in development. This paper does not aim to answer the many and complex questions that arise about minority rights and development. What we believe Roger Riddell has managed to do is to ask most of the right questions and put them in a useful context. While there may well be an interesting academic debate to be had, that is not the aim of this paper either. We hope to build on what is here, in dialogue with a range of actual and potential partners, to establish a common foundation, from which together we can collect and present evidence, and identify practical solutions that will have positive and direct impacts on the lives of at least some of the many in the world today who are marginalized and excluded in a multiplicity of ways.

Some readers may find that this paper is rather academic in tone and content. We are aware of this. Our analysis has shown that developments in theory and policy in this area have tended to precede by a long way changes in practice in evidence in the field. We have therefore begun by seeking to document some of the views and policies that have already emerged as a basis before we go on, in later stages of this work, to consider

in more detail the challenges and opportunities that this paper presents for implementation.

MRG is, and wishes to remain, a rights organization; we are not aiming to become a development agency. We stand by our often repeated objective of 'promoting the rights of minorities and cooperation between communities'. This project will address both parts of this statement. The project will have the explicit aim of promoting the rights of poor minority communities to participate fully in social, economic, political and cultural life, and access their civil rights. At the same time, we believe that if this project leads to a greater consideration of the equity of development, its inclusiveness or exclusiveness, then this will also help to contribute towards better relations between communities in the long term.

As a rights organization, it is plain that if we are to reach useful conclusions and have a positive impact on the life chances and experiences of minority communities, we need to work in conjunction with partners who may have very close links with minority communities or have practical expertise in development across a range of situations. Working with these partners, we hope to analyse and document the linkages that exist, and isolate some of the causes of poverty and exclusion of minority communities and the effects of particular policies on minority communities. In doing so we shall establish a dialogue with donors and actors in the international community, persuading them, in the process, to honour the wording of Article 5 of the 1992 UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities:

- 1 National policies and programmes shall be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.
- 2 Programmes of cooperation and assistance among States should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of those belonging to minorities.

This paper is a step towards the day when every development or aid programme can answer, without hesitation, that its work and effect are in line with these statements.

Alan Phillips

Director

November 1998

Introduction

This paper has been produced as a background document for the Minority Rights Group International (MRG) seminar on *Minorities, Minority Rights and Development* – looking at the link between the (human) rights of minorities and the process of development – which is to take place in the first half of 1999. Its purpose is to map out the broad range of issues that are encompassed by these themes, drawing in particular on some of the literature reviewed during a brief survey undertaken in the early months of 1998, in order to identify major gaps and thus priorities for future work, including advocacy work with and on behalf of different minority groups.

The linked themes of *Minorities, Minority Rights and Development* encompass what may prove to be an extremely wide field as it embraces a number of often complex ideas, concepts and disciplines, including:

- the law and human rights – these embrace international and national legal issues; the link between group, minority and individual rights, and the development of thinking and action in relation to the different ‘clusters’ of rights; and links between them – most notably between civil and political rights on the one hand, and social, economic and cultural rights on the other;
- an understanding of the concept of development – includes, importantly, the way that different minorities perceive development, and constraints on development, and thus how they perceive their past, their present and their potential futures;
- an understanding of development processes, the socio-economic status of minorities (are they poor, what are the nature and causes of their poverty?) and how minorities are included in, or excluded from, these processes;
- an analysis and understanding of the way that different agents within the political economy – governments and politicians, organizations that make up civil society, institutions, donors and development-focused Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) – understand and prioritize development, rights issues and minorities; and
- an understanding and assessment of the effects that policies aimed at promoting change – implemented by governments, and both human rights and development agencies – have had in achieving their goals and objectives.

This paper should thus be seen as an exploratory essay and initial commentary. Its aim is, on the one hand, to alert readers to issues and texts with which they may not be familiar, and, on the other, to ask questions and indicate the range of work still to be done to develop some of the themes under discussion and advance some of the objectives for enhancing the rights of minorities. In a work that seeks to embrace literature from a number of disciplines, gaps will be found by readers already familiar with the breadth and depth of studies on some of the key issues touched on here. The paper is presented with full acknowledgement of this fact.

In many ways, minority rights and development can be viewed as a sub-component of the broader, linked concepts of *human rights, development and poverty*. This is an area that has witnessed a phenomenal growth in interest in recent years, not least because an increasing number of donor agencies have focused on and made explicit the link between human rights, poverty and the process of development.

The issue of *minority* rights and development can be linked to these wider donor concerns in two ways. First, to the extent that a significant number of people from minority groups are living in (extreme) poverty, minorities will be seen as an important sub-group to whom attention needs to be given. And second, if it can be shown that their poverty is linked to a denial of human rights, a lack of concern with human rights or even with abuses of human rights, then the issue of minority rights and poverty becomes an important part of the wider human rights–poverty–development continuum.

Three strong impressions emerge from this survey:

- 1 There is a significant gulf between those approaching development from a grounding in law and human rights issues on the one hand, and from the (ever-widening) development profession on the other. Indeed, there are at least two major, and a number of minor, discourses and different literatures.¹ As a result,
- 2 many donors, development specialists and activists remain ignorant of broad aspects of human rights discourse, and vice versa;²
- 3 one of the main obstacles to advancing the more general *human* rights and development agenda and the narrower (but still vast) *minority* rights and development agenda is not so much the intellectual gap between two disciplines or groups of disciplines (impor-

tant though that clearly is), but our lack of knowledge of the development and development prospects for particular minorities, and the link between impediments to development and the denial of human rights.

1.1 Defining minorities

One of the readers of an earlier draft of this paper suggested that this introductory section should start with a definition of the terms it employs – minorities, including ethnic minorities, development and human rights. While this certainly would be helpful, in many ways the *whole paper* can be viewed as a discussion of definitional issues. Frequently it is a failure to understand the viewpoint, or discipline, of others engaged in a ‘similar’ discourse, or a failure to understand that the same words are being used to describe different phenomena, or both, which gives rise to confusion and controversy within and across disciplines and individual and group histories. Nevertheless, at different points in the paper the key notions of development, minorities and ethnicity, are discussed and defined, and set against the backdrop of human rights discourse. The problem is that the worlds of development,

human rights and minority rights are far from static. To try to capture these changes and to link them has been no easy task; this text still falls short in a number of areas.

1.2 Overview of the paper

The paper is divided into six principal sections:

- Section 2 provides a brief summary of the 1995 seminar hosted by MRG on the theme of Minority Rights and Development;
- then four themes are discussed. The first is human and minority rights issues (sections 3 and 4);
- the second, development, meaning systems and development processes (Section 5);
- the third, conflict, especially the links between ethnic conflict and human rights and development problems (Section 6);
- the fourth theme is current donor approaches and attitudes to minority rights and development, presented in section 7;
- conclusions are summarized in section 8.

2 The 1995 Seminar on Minority Rights and Development

At the beginning of November 1995, MRG held an international seminar on *Minority Rights and Development*. It was inspired by the 1992 UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, of which the following provide key perspectives:

Article 1

- 1 *States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories, and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.*
- 2 *States shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends.*

Article 5

- 1 *National policies and programmes shall be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.*
- 2 *Programmes of cooperation and assistance among States should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.*

One of the main purposes of the seminar was to examine the relationship between minority rights and development, both to promote a better understanding of the causes of inter-communal conflict and to encourage and contribute to the fuller participation of minorities in the wider society. The seminar concluded by recommending that MRG continue its work in this area – it was seen more as the beginning of a process than as a stand-alone event.

A number of papers were presented and a series of recommendations were made.³ The seminar reported that experiences across three continents showed that minority communities are often marginalized or excluded from the development process; on occasion, programmes are implemented in the name of development, but in reality are at

the expense of minorities. It was suggested that assimilation or neglect were shown to be the two prime ‘development’ strategies by governments towards minorities.

‘The legitimate interests of minorities are frequently neglected, and minorities have little say in their societies; this being both a contributor to and a consequence of being among the poorest of the poor. It is here that poverty alleviation and minority rights come together.’ (p.15)

The seminar suggested that the experience of particular aid projects targeted at minorities shows that ethnic tensions may be heightened by creating inequality and resentment in other groups. It also noted that formal guarantees to protect minorities or advance their rights do not ensure the respect for minority rights in practice; for example the electoral process (including multi-party states) does not guarantee minority participation (eg. United States) to ensure minority/majority inter-ethnic harmony (e.g. Canada).

The following recommendations are particularly relevant to the issues raised in this paper:

- ethnicity should be considered as a cross-cutting concern in the development and implementation of aid programmes, and ethnicity should be incorporated as a factor in all country assessments;⁴
- the impact of previous development projects on ethnic relations should be assessed on a continuous basis for both short and long-term impact;
- efforts need to be made to ensure that development aid is provided to ensure that the needs of transnational groups are addressed;
- concern for ethnicity should be included in guidelines of aid donors;
- minorities and all disadvantaged groups should be empowered to participate at local, national, regional and international levels;⁵
- group needs and perspectives must be balanced by general constitutional and human rights principles.

3 Minority Rights and Human Rights

3.1 The context

It is helpful to consider minority rights as a part of a wider discourse on human rights, even though there are special features and issues of specific relevance to minorities which need to be emphasized (and often are in the literature).

An historical overview suggests that over the past 35-40 years, the development profession has not only failed to focus sufficiently on human rights and their links to development, but has failed to appreciate that just as the development agenda has changed and continues to change, so too has the human rights agenda. However, in the case of the latter, there would appear to be far greater continuity, not least because of the importance of the law in human rights discourse (and its development), with its emphasis on consensus and precedent.

This is not the place to discuss the development of human rights discourse. However, four events and/or processes are of particular importance to the link between human rights and development.⁶

The first is the increasing attention given to *all* human rights, most notably focusing not merely on civil and political rights but also economic, social and cultural rights.

The second was the acceptance (in 1993) that the 'various categories of human rights are mutually interrelated and inseparable and that one category cannot take priority over another'⁷ (1993 Vienna Declaration).

The third was the growing rejection (in the 1980s and into the 1990s) within development discourse of the previous, and widely accepted, view that it was 'acceptable' for some human rights, notably civil and political rights, to be 'set aside' temporarily in the interest of 'development'.

The fourth, building especially on the second and third, has been the growing realization within the development community of the profound and radical implications of the link between human rights and development, because it raises fundamental questions about what is important and acceptable within the development process. This poses key and, in some ways, new questions about the ways in which donors should engage in the development process.

Core issues include:

- the priority given to participation, leading to an analysis of how the notion and importance of *participation* should be manifested in practice;⁸
- the level of resources necessary to help address failures in the achievement and promotion of (all) human rights

and the obligations of donors in the role they play in this process;

- the implications of political participation for the inherited nature and concept of the nation-state, especially for traditional approaches based on different forms of 'assimilation'.

One issue in the general human rights discourse that remains controversial concerns the debates which have taken place on the 'right to development'. Although in 1986 a UN Declaration on the Right to Development was formulated and adopted by the General Assembly, it has not been widely accepted and is considered peripheral by most nations and many human rights scholars.⁹ Thus, many human rights lawyers are sceptical of the merits of pursuing the right to development, arguing that it raises more problems than it answers and that, partly in consequence, it is not an issue that has been taken up by the economically dominant nations of the world. There is widespread support for the view that its practical importance has to be questioned, not least because of the failure of most states to focus on the issue in a practical way. Thus, Alston (1996: 190) claims that the 'significance of the Declaration remains a matter of some dispute' while, more harshly, Tomaševski (1993: 48) argues that because its adoption by the General Assembly was not based on an international consensus, the 'prospects for an effective application of the right to development are dismal'.¹⁰

However, what is often not sufficiently understood within the development profession is that one does not have to embrace the notion of the 'right to development' to argue that the link between development and the core cluster of human rights which are widely accepted is not only important, as suggested above, but that a focus on these links can have profound implications for development and the role of different agents in the development process.

3.2 Definitional issues

It is against this backdrop that a particular focus on minority rights can be located. The issue here is the human rights of minorities. Three definitional and related issues continue to be the focus of attention and debate, spawning a growing and lively literature.

- 1 How one defines a minority remains controversial. There is no universally agreed definition of a minority,

although the 1992 UN Declaration on Minorities (especially articles 1 and 5) is influential and important (see below). In large part, controversy over definitions is rooted in different perceptions of minorities – not least whether they should be identified as distinct groups – across different countries.

For both minorities and indigenous peoples, a major concern is that if the focus is too wide, the term ‘minority’ becomes meaningless; if it is too narrow, it will not apply globally (Thornberry, 1996). Certainly, a major implication of the failure to agree a definition of minorities is that in a number of countries minorities are not recognized as distinct and separate.¹¹ Clearly, if minorities are not recognized in law, it is difficult to promote and advance most, if not all, of their rights.

In spite of the definitional problem, the ‘working definition’ of UN Rapporteur Capotorti is widely used and referred to:¹²

‘a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state, in a non-dominant position, whose members – being nationals of the State – possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language.’

Also important has been the definition agreed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (quoted in Advisory Committee on Human Rights and Foreign Policy, 1997: 8):

‘a minority is a group whose linguistic, ethnic or cultural traits divided it from the majority. It was also a group which wished to preserve – and in most cases even strengthen – its identity.’

Finally, Jules Deschenes’ definition, written in 1985, has been commended as a significant contribution to isolating the important characteristics of minorities (quoted in Alston, 1996: 221 2):¹³

‘A group of citizens of a state constituting a numerical minority and in a non-dominant position in that State, endowed with ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from those of the majority of the population, having a sense of solidarity with one another, motivated, if only implicitly, by a collective will to survive and whose aim is to achieve equality with the majority in fact and in law.’

This discussion is not meant to be exhaustive. In particular, the question of how the term ‘ethnicity’ is defined and

the importance of culture and cultural issues in the self-understanding of minorities and minority groups are discussed in section 5.3.

2 A number of scholars and members of minority and indigenous communities have been and remain uneasy about drawing too close a linkage between indigenous people (IPs) and minorities.

However, there appear to be important issues raised in the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Indigenous and Tribal People’s Convention (169) which resonate strongly with the development problems of minorities, not least in the way that the issue of participation is given such prominence. Thus, the Preamble to the Convention recognizes the aspirations of IPs to ‘exercise control over their own institution, ways of life and economic development and to maintain and develop their own identities, languages and religions within the frameworks of the States in which they live’. Article 7 recognizes, *inter alia*, that ‘the peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use and to exercise control to the extent possible over their own economic, social and cultural development’. In addition, they shall ‘participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programmes for national and regional development which may affect them’¹⁴ (Plant, 1998: 8).

3 The relationship and relative importance to be given to group and collective rights over and against individual rights is a key question.

This issue is both complex and controversial. On the one hand, a distinction is made between consideration of ‘people’ and ‘peoples’. In relation to indigenous issues, Thornberry (1996) argues that if governments refer to peoples, then they usually tend to look favourably on indigenous rights. But to what extent is it important – or even necessary – to look not merely at the rights of groups, but at the rights of individuals who are members of groups who need special treatment? Some – those whose focus is predominantly driven by consideration of *individual* rights – might argue that the way in which the rights of persons who are members of minorities should be advanced is by focusing on securing individual rights, and thus to ignore, or at least minimize, the need to focus (additionally) on the pursuit of group rights. To support such a view, it can be argued that when members of minorities have managed to secure development benefits for themselves and their families, and especially when

they have achieved recognition and/or status within the majority community, they are often less concerned with enhancing the rights of the group from which they originate. However, others argue that this approach is misguided as it focuses on (minor) exceptions and, perhaps deliberately, avoids the core issue: what is seen as the crucial link between rights and identity and the best way to achieve these ends. Paul (1989: 84) argues thus:

'The right to participate like all great rights is the totality of rights empowering people to protect basic interests. Perhaps the most important of these competing rights are rights to collective action. Since poor people, individually, are usually powerless and historically excluded, participation can only be developed and exercised through the formation of endogenous self-managed organizations.'

For its part, the work done by the Dutch Advisory Committee on Human Rights suggests a shift of focus on the issues of individual and collective rights. Thus, whereas in its previous study the Committee had argued strongly for the need, in each case, to consider whether the rights in question can be safeguarded by invoking individual human rights or by means of collective action, its more recent view (1997: 19) is that certain group rights merit separate consideration and that in so doing, certain criteria have to be fulfilled:

- the right 'should not be one which can be individualized';
- it must 'reinforce the exercise of individual human rights'; and
- 'in any event should not undermine recognized human rights.'

In his recent study, *Ethnicity, Law and Human Rights*, Poulter highlights the continuing tension between group and individual rights. Thus he maintains that

'Community solidarity based on the notion of group rights should not... curtail the individual's freedom of expression, the right to marry outside one's community or faith and the liberty to change or abandon one's religion ... The need to appreciate the malleable nature of culture is of vital importance... Solutions must lie in balancing the claims of groups against those of individuals, acknowledging that both have an important role to play in the pursuit of human happiness and fulfilment.' (1998: 95-96)

He quotes approvingly from Kymlicka (1995) on the inevitability of conflict between individual and group rights:

'People are owed respect as citizens and as members of cultural communities. In many situations, the two are

perfectly compatible and in fact may coincide. But in culturally plural societies, differential citizenship rights may be needed to protect a cultural community from unwanted disintegration. If so, then the demands of citizenship and cultural membership pull in different directions. Both matter and neither seems reducible to the other... Such conflicts are, in fact endemic to the day-to-day politics of culturally plural societies and various schemes of minority rights can be understood and evaluated in this light.'

3.3 Approaching minority rights

There are a number of ways in which the rights of minorities, and the link between minorities and development, can be approached.

First and most generally, one can examine the ways in which the (different) human rights of minorities are met and/or violated. This involves analysing and monitoring those rights. An important part of this work involves examining and making comparisons between the fulfilment of the rights of minorities *vis-à-vis* those of other citizens within a particular country. A major (minimal) policy implication of work in this area would be likely to encompass a push for:

- equal treatment under the law; and
- the rescinding of any law that discriminates against minorities.

It should be added that to pursue this agenda for just one country is likely to be a significant undertaking, if one wishes to assess in turn, and in relation to each other, the extent to which political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights are addressed both individually and in different combinations, comparing minorities with dominant and wider groups.

Second, a major thrust of human rights work for minorities (as with IPs) needs to focus not merely on equality before the law, but on the need for some sort of preferential treatment for minorities, in order for them to be treated fairly so that equality of opportunity can become a reality. In this context, one considered legal view (quoted in Poulter, 1998: 75), from the judgement on minority schools in Albania, was that:

'Equality in law precludes discrimination of any kind; whereas equality in fact may involve the necessity of different treatment in order to attain a result which establishes an equilibrium between different situations. It is easy to imagine cases in which equality of treatment of the majority and of the minority whose situation and requirements are different would result in inequality in fact... The equality between members of the majority and of the min-

ority must be an effective genuine equality; that is the meaning of this provision...'

In a similar vein, it is argued that 'special rights and measures do not constitute privilege as they are rooted in the rule of equal enjoyment just as is non-discrimination... If group rights are rejected and preferential treatment denied, the equal enjoyment of human rights of minorities will not be realised' (Alfredsson, 1998: 3-4).

Third, there is an area of work involved in considering an array of different initiatives which focus more formally on the links between minority rights (or the lack of them) and processes of development. It is helpful, initially, to

distinguish between two sorts of contexts or settings for such work. The first concerns those circumstances in which nations do not recognize the existence of particular minorities; in these instances the scope for advocacy using legal and formal mechanisms is extremely limited. Here the focus of attention will need to be on alternative ways of empowering minority groups. The second concerns contexts in which some form of legal recognition of minorities exists. Here, advances for minorities and minority rights are likely to encompass a varied mix of legal and non-legal approaches, and it is likely that a study of these issues will need to focus especially on political (including constitutional) issues.

4 The Link Between Human Rights, Minority Rights and Development

In this section we discuss the nature of the link between rights on the one hand, and development on the other. One way to approach this issue is by contrasting two different, though linked, subjects for analysis and advocacy: ‘minorities and development’, and the other ‘minority rights and development’.

If the focus were on the subject, and juxtaposition, of ‘minorities’ and ‘development’, and by extension poverty, then two core questions would be whether individuals from minorities are poor, and whether they are more poor than those in other groups. The link between minorities and poverty is often asserted in the literature, though it is exceedingly difficult to find studies which have attempted to assemble case-study evidence from different countries in order to come to some general, comparative view of the extent to which people from minorities are poorer than others. It is also apparent that some texts indicate that some minorities are certainly *not* poor or amongst the poorest.¹⁵ One reader of an earlier draft of this Paper pointed out that this is too generalized, being simplistic and insensitive to the realities of India, for example. The current literature review failed to locate even one study which did this. In part, the problem appears to lie in the fact that very few case-studies have been undertaken with the aim of examining the socio-economic status of people from minorities *vis-à-vis* the wider population, including dominant groups, focusing on differences and which try to analyze the influence of different factors which might have contributed to these differences.¹⁶ Additionally, as one reader of an earlier draft pointed out, the links between minorities and poverty are further confounded by the fact that in some countries, such as Indonesia and countries of East Africa, members of minority groups may be economically dominant and at the same time be denied a range of universally agreed human rights.

There are, however, a number of studies which look at different aspects of development - such as health status, education enrolment or performance data, or even average income levels – to pinpoint differences between groups. However, many of these studies – carried out especially by the World Bank – have not focused on minorities *per se*; most have been studies of indigenous peoples, though a few studies have focused on one group of minorities, namely ethnic minorities. One weakness is that some of

these studies have failed to draw comparisons between particular marginalized groups – whether IPs or minorities – and other groups within a country. A critical question concerns the merits of implementing direct action programmes to help promote the development status of those relatively, or absolutely, deprived. It usually matters a great deal, in terms of what might be done to improve the development status of those who are absolutely poor (whether minorities or not), to know whether others are equally poor as well as the overall resources available in a country – this determines the emphasis that needs to be placed on growth and/or on policies that focus on distribution and redistribution of income, wealth and assets. There are also important issues to be raised about sharing, and access to, resources, and the perceptions people have of different living standards and their causes, some of which are discussed in section 6.

In contrast, a focus on minority *rights* and development (including the problem of poverty) looks not at the development status of people from minority groups, but instead focuses on the rights that minorities have (or do not have) and the link between these rights (or lack of them) and their development status. While such an analysis needs to examine the links between minorities and development and poverty, it gives particular emphasis to the link between the rights (or lack of them) of minorities and their development status. Thus, it can be seen to provide two sorts of comparison: the first between the development status of minorities *vis-à-vis* others (members of majority groups); the second between the achievement of the (complexity of) rights of minorities *vis-à-vis* the rights of others. A key question here is the extent to which the non-achievement of rights of minorities, and the different reasons for this, is linked to (either caused or reinforced by) the differing development status of minorities *vis-à-vis* others.

These two perspectives provide a backdrop for understanding the different ways that human rights (and in particular the human rights of minorities) and development are linked. Three possible types of juxtaposition are discussed in a recent review by Novib (1997).

1 Human rights and development

Human rights are seen as something apart from devel-

opment; this is usually the case when a narrow interpretation of human rights and/or development issues is used, e.g. human rights are seen only as civil and political rights and development is associated (closely) with economic growth.

2 Human rights in development

This deals with the more internal processes of development; for example those working with and for the poorest to abide by basic human rights principles, such as consultation with and participation of such groups in design, execution and evaluation of projects.

3 Human rights is development

Here respect for all human rights is nothing more and nothing less than, but equal to, a state of development in which conditions have been created for a more just and democratic society.

Taking these different views as a basis, one can approach the link between human rights and development in the following ways:

1 Human rights as a condition for development

Here human rights are viewed as a precondition or basis for development to take place. Thus, where basic human rights are not in place, it is argued 'true' development cannot take place.

2 Human rights as an instrument for development

Here human rights are seen as a tool or instrument for achieving development; they are the means to the desired end.

3 Human rights as an aim or objective *per se*

Here, the promotion of and respect for human rights is seen as an end in itself and an aim of action and advocacy, just as development is seen as an end and aim in itself.

It is important to add, however, that these three approaches need not necessarily be seen as mutually exclusive. Indeed, it is possible to view human rights as both a condition for development and as an instrument, and also as an aim in their own right. Thus in her 1993 study of human rights and development aid, Tomaševski speaks of the need to make development 'responsive to' human rights in a context where current practice tends to dissociate rather than integrate the two – notwithstanding the rhetoric to the contrary, introducing the crucially important concept of 'do no harm':¹⁷

'The main purpose of introducing human rights into development aid is to make development responsive to human rights. Rather than placing people in the function of development, human rights requirements insist on freedom for people to articulate their needs and interests, to state what development means for them and to carry it out

by and for themselves. This necessitates participatory decision-making, leading to decisions on resource utilisation which are consistent with requirements of human rights. These requirements attach priority to human rights in the allocation of available resources at all levels – local, national, regional and global. This important principle is the cornerstone of the promotion of human rights; were it to be applied, international development cooperation would look totally different from what we know (and criticise) today.

The purpose of introducing human rights into the design and implementation of development is hence first to redress and ultimately prevent development from harming people and second to incorporate human rights into development in order to make it conducive to the progressive realisation of human rights.

Ideally, development could (or should) be the process for furthering the realisation of human rights through methods which respect basic rights and freedoms. In practice, however, the very interrelationship between human rights and development has to be argued over because human rights are more often than not dissociated from development. The current donor policies have reinforced this dissociation: human rights are treated as a self-contained issue, quite distinct from the mainstream development policies and practices.' (1993: 214)

Tomaševski also draws attention to the links between the human rights of minorities and their development, commenting that until recently the World Bank claimed that its Articles of Agreement precluded it from taking human rights into account. Yet in its 1991 Annual Report (p. 61), the Bank stated that the aim of development was to 'increase the economic, political and civil rights of all people across gender, ethnic group, religions, races, regions and countries' (1993: 61).

For her part, Hausermann (1997) speaks of human rights providing a 'coherent framework' for development and emphasizes the fruitlessness of trying to establish a hierarchy of different rights. In brief, she argues that:

'A rights approach requires a revitalisation of economic, social and cultural rights and a recognition of their equal priority with civil and political rights... It is an agenda that moves from the rhetoric of human rights to pragmatism by promoting an analysis in partnership with poor people of their actual experience with respect to enjoyment and denial of fundamental human rights...

The contribution of a HR approach to development is to add the vision of what development is striving to achieve... To be effective, a human rights approach requires a multi-level and multi-sectoral response to poverty elimination and human devel-

opment. The best planned projects at the grass-roots will be ineffective if state policy and action do not support them, and vice versa.'

This discussion is by no means exhaustive. Indeed, its purpose is merely to outline the different ways in which

the linked issues of human rights and development can be interpreted and approached. However, the way in which the relationship between human (including minority) rights and development is perceived will be informed, in part, by one's understanding of development. This is the issue to which we turn now.

5 Development, Development Processes, Meaning-Systems and Poverty Elimination

In this section we draw attention to a number of central issues about development and development processes, extending the discussion, more narrowly, to poverty. Within this context, in section 5.2, we discuss meaning-systems and definitions of ethnicity.

Three concerns, or criticisms, have been repeatedly voiced about development and poverty issues. First, development discourse has risked being viewed too narrowly in terms of economic indicators which fail to capture the 'essence' of development. Second, development has too frequently been viewed as something that is done *to* people by outsiders. This risks missing the core proposition, namely the identity of those people 'being developed' and their involvement with, and especially their participation in and attitude to, the process of development. In this regard, some people believe that the process of modernization is flawed, as the consequences of such a process – and perhaps even its purpose – is seen to entail the erosion, or at worst the destruction, of the people 'being developed'.¹⁸

Third, there is concern that if too much importance is attached to poverty – to poverty alleviation and, ultimately, poverty elimination – then attention is (again) focused on living standards measured by indicators that minimize or, at the extreme, ignore altogether other important issues. It is not that the socioeconomic status of people is unimportant, but that unless other issues are also placed centre-stage – not least, involvement in the political process and the cultural dimensions of life and of society, including the gender dimensions – the form of poverty elimination proposed may become too narrow.

We discuss first different definitions and definitional problems of development, and then discuss the implications of some current discussions about development and development processes.

5.1 Definitions and Processes of Development

The question 'what is development?' is frequently asked, but has never satisfactorily been answered. This is because the answer depends on different value judgements – about

individuals and the links between individuals and society – and because, as Dudley Seers has argued, even 'facts' are 'values' (see Blackburn, 1972; Seers, 1969 and 1972).

With this inauspicious background it is possible to provide a crude historical summary of the evolution and acceptance of an increasingly complex cluster of issues which need to be incorporated into the concept of development. It should be stressed, though, that this list should not be taken to imply agreement or acceptance of these different stages.

At its crudest and simplest, development was seen solely in terms of economic development, measured in terms of average income per head, both nationally and for sub-groups of people. Within this paradigm, it was assumed that if growth was taking place, then development was occurring. Though the prominence given to economic growth has been downgraded, the contemporary consensus view is that economic growth and its link to development remain important: most donors, the World Bank and southern scholars (for instance as represented by the South Commission) still argue today that economic growth is necessary – though not sufficient – for development to take place, and that without wealth-creation in poor countries, development cannot take place. However, emphasis is now put on growth that 'benefits all', that is, participatory and sustainable growth.

The first concerted, 'mainstream' attempt to move beyond such simple growth indicators (in the 1970s), the so-called 'basic needs approach', concentrated on four issues in an overall context that focused explicitly on and tried to identify the characteristics of poor people (see Chenery *et al.*, 1974).

- 1 The distribution, and redistribution, of income and wealth, giving some (crude) acknowledgement of the need to incorporate the notion of equality into an understanding of the nature of development, and explicitly focusing on assets such as land as important factors contributing to poverty alleviation.
- 2 The acknowledgement that politics and political processes matter; in this case not in terms of participation, but in terms of altering power structures which perpetuate and increase inequalities.

- 3 Explicit mention was made of a number of social indicators of development, such as health status and education, to embrace what was later termed ‘human capital’ both in terms of monitoring deficiencies, including inequalities, and in improving equality and access to services.
- 4 The study hinted at the importance of developing countries (but with little emphasis, at this stage, on ‘people’) taking control of development processes.

In the 1980s and 1990s, a number of different influences on understanding development and development processes can be identified, many of which diverted attention from broad aggregates and economic growth, and towards ‘human development’ and a closer analysis of what constitutes poverty. This led to policy prescriptions focusing on what is needed to ‘escape’ from poverty.¹⁹ Important to this process was the recognition that development processes should include an analysis and appreciation of gender issues. Importance was given too to the sustainability of the development process, which included, but was not confined to, ecological and environmental issues. Thus, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) constructed a Human Development Index which comprised the monitoring of the following indicators: life expectancy; health and education status; water and sanitation; and food consumption. Wherever possible, these indicators were broken down into gender-specific categories. The UNDP argued that development should be people-centred and gender-focused, and that development should be of the people, for the people and by the people. Emphasis was placed on participation at all levels; later the need to incorporate the notion of security was added. Together, the incorporation of these elements led to a growing emphasis on *participation* in the development process, which came to take a prominent place in the understanding of development at the local, national and international level.²⁰

These conceptual developments were linked to a switch in attention from what people needed *for* (human) development – health, education, water, food and security – to a focus on the nature of development. Various factors have been emphasized. One was the notion of *capabilities* – what was important, it was argued, were opportunities for human capabilities to be developed as a means to achieving human well-being (or components of that well-being). Another linked notion was *empowerment* – the process by which people are able to achieve their capabilities. This, in turn, led to the notion of *development as ‘entitlements’*. Within this context, poverty and underdevelopment give rise not merely to the absence of human development in terms of education, health, water, a long life, etc., but are seen more fundamentally as *a denial of*

choices and limitations on opportunities for at minimum a ‘tolerable’ and more widely a richer set of choices. Indeed by 1997, the UNDP’s *Human Development Report* had come to place greater emphasis on poverty as lack of choice than poverty as manifested in low incomes:

‘It is in the deprivation of the lives people lead that poverty manifests itself. Poverty can mean more than a lack of what is necessary for material well-being. It can also mean the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development - to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and respect for others. For policy-makers, the poverty of choices and opportunities is often more relevant than the poverty of income, for it focuses on the causes of poverty and leads directly to strategies of empowerment and other actions to enhance opportunities for everyone.’
(UNDP, 1997: 5)

The prominence given to empowerment and participation as key dimensions of the development process and the elimination of poverty is seen, perhaps, at its clearest in the Declaration of the World Summit for Social Development. The Declaration also provides the contemporary conventional view about how development should be promoted; namely, through strengthening the power and capacities especially of disadvantaged people to enable them to play a more influential (and participatory) role in society at different levels.

‘[We] recognise that empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their own capacities is a main objective of development and its principal resource. Empowerment requires the full participation of people in formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of our societies. (p. 10)...

...strengthening the capacities and opportunities of all people, especially those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable, to enhance their own economic and social development, to establish and maintain organizations representing their interests and to be involved in the planning and implementation of government policies and programmes by which they will be directly affected.’

Important though the shift to empowerment, capabilities and entitlements is, in the opinion of many authors who have focused on and given prominence to cultural, philosophical and theological dimensions of human development, it remains either insufficient or, for some, still wholly inadequate. For some writers, great emphasis is given to what gives meaning to one’s life, to what is

needed to create, nurture and confirm and give meaning to one's view of the world, both as an individual and as a member of a community or society. Indeed, for many it is this which constitutes and captures the meaning of development. Thus, argues Verhelst, culture is 'not a luxury nor a simple aesthetic appreciation but the sum total of the solutions applied by human beings to the problems the environment sets them' (1990: 16). It is 'the sum total of the original solutions that a group of human beings invent to adapt to their natural and social environment' (*ibid.*).

This wider perspective – one that appears to carry with it a far richer agenda than a mechanistic concern with 'removing' or 'eliminating' poverty by 'providing' food, education, health and water – is well summarized by O'Neill (1995: 202), in his attempt to capture the essence of culture and its links to creating and sustaining meaning in life through the interaction of the individual with society:

'The fabric of feeling, culture and convention which sustains trust and communication is always fragile and vulnerable. It not only has to be preserved from damage and destruction but to be shielded from mere indifference and neglect. It has constantly to be created and sustained, recreated and renewed to preserve the food of future generations and of the present generation. That 'food' will be reduced and capacities and capabilities will fail at least for some when nobody maintains and contributes to sustainable practices of communication, of toleration and confidence-building, of loyalty and engagement, of educating and encouraging that will enable action, interaction and the development of human potential and culture... to sustain and build confidence and trust, and with them the social fabric, we must not only act justly – so refrain from destroying them – but help to breathe life both into current and into new practices and ways of life.'

5.2 Value systems and definitions of ethnicity

It is within this framework that one can locate the contemporary debate about ethnicity and development, including 'ethno-development' – the meaning-systems of ethnic groups, and individuals within them, which stem from and are, in varying degrees, rooted in one's ethnicity. In this connection, Hettne (1996: 15) states that 'ethnicity has been a neglected dimension in development theory. It is this blindness which in retrospect seems remarkable, hard to explain and important to correct'. He goes on to argue that ethno-development (defined as a model of development that releases the potential inherent in different ethnic groups rather than bringing them into

conflict) is 'an essential precondition for harmonious development' (quoted in Dwyer and Drakis-Smith, 1996: 4). Conversely, to the extent that one's 'meaning-system', which originates from one's culture, philosophy and (where applicable) theological outlook, is threatened, challenged or potentially diluted by interaction with other meaning-patterns, cultures or other ways of living (or 'patterns of culture or development'),²¹ then these will ultimately be seen as a threat.

Rodolfo Stavenhagen devotes considerable space in his 1996 study to a discussion of definitions of ethnicity, most notably in the chapter entitled 'Pitfalls of Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict' (1996: 14ff). He makes a number of points of relevance to this discussion, noting that there is already a vast literature on the subject.²²

- He cautions against using the term 'ethnic conflict' too readily and is critical of the way it is frequently used in everyday speech.
- Indeed, he is concerned with the use of the term 'ethnic' and questions the extent to which it aids, rather than obscures, discussion and rigorous analysis.
- His initial view of ethnicity is simply that it describes 'the nature and characteristics of ethnic groups and their members' (p. 14). He goes on to note that almost all countries exhibit characteristics of multi-ethnicity; that is to say, people are divided into heterogeneous groups, distinguished according to certain ethnic attributes, which he refers to as *ethnies*. He adds that these different groups are, in different ways, incorporated into a territory such that discussion about 'ethnic questions' predominantly refer to relations between (different) ethnic groups and territorial states.
- He notes that ethnic groups have been formed by different historical processes in different parts of the world, that the formative process of some groups has not yet been concluded, in some places as a result of the colonial process, and that other ethnic groups have disappeared, either because of physical extinction or, importantly, 'by way of socio-cultural and political transformation' (p. 15). He adds the important distinction that some *ethnies* consider themselves as *nations*, and are viewed as such by others, even if they cannot boast a *state* of their own.
- Stavenhagen observes that one reason why the term ethnic group remains controversial is that there is still no consensus between and across disciplines on what constitutes the core characteristic of ethnicity. This confusion is exacerbated by the conflicting ways in which ethnic groups have been viewed in different parts of the globe, based, not infrequently, on different value judgments of commentators and both dominant and minority-based politicians.

- He traces various views of ethnicity held by different groups – though is critical of some of these, not least the *primordialist* position, which links ethnicity exclusively to genetics. This view, he argues, cannot account for the dynamics of ethnogenesis, nor account satisfactorily for the internal and external structures of ethnic groups or identities.
- More satisfactory is an understanding of ethnicity which is linked to *culture*. Within this perspective (pp. 19-20):

Ethnic identity and continuity are maintained as a result of the transmission within the group... of the basic norms and customs which constitute the central core of the ethnic culture... [Though] cultural patterns may vary... the core culture is reproduced and transmitted from generation to generation through shared norms and values which are recognized as such... Each ethnic group so defined can be distinguished from others by its culture, or at least by certain cultural elements... Inherent in the notion of culture is the concept of ethnocentrism, the idea that those on the inside consider themselves to be better and superior to the outsiders.'

However, Stavenhagen notes that anthropologists have learned that ethnic groups are not only defined by their culture, and adds that some would contend that 'cultural content is actually irrelevant', especially in contrast to 'boundary formation through social organization' and the complex web of relationships whereby groups are formed, bounded and defined, and by means of which individuals are included or excluded. He adds that culturalism or normative approaches are also vulnerable because of their failure to explain the origins and the variability or dynamics of ethnic change.

- In contrast, the *structuralist* approach focuses on the dynamic relationship and interaction of different ethnic groups, in terms especially of history and economic and social relations. Stavenhagen argues that this approach has been found helpful in the study of inter-ethnic relations both within the framework of colonization and in helping to understand immigrant societies. He is highly critical of one 'fashionable' modernization theory, which predicts the progressive disappearance of ethnic and 'sub-national' identities in the process of economic development and nation- and state-building. He is similarly critical of various postmodernist approaches in which:

'culture has become the determining factor, and so-called structural phenomena are denied importance when they are not actually argued out of existence... [I]t is sometimes held that the term 'ethnic discourse' of social scientists,

politicians, bureaucrats or ideologues actually 'creates' ethnies out of nowhere and imbues them with artificial life. A widely held opinion is that if only people did not talk so much about it, ethnicity would go away.'

- With this as his background, Stavenhagen provides the following summary view of ethnicity (p. 30):

'Culture defines the way of life which distinguishes one ethnic group from another. To the extent that culture is a dynamic factor subject to transformation due to a number of possible causes, cultural changes also condition the identity and viability of ethnic groups. Consequently, it may be argued that ethnies are cultural groups based on social structures (institutions and social relations). Culture and social structure (organisation) are interrelated in a complex web of reciprocal relations and influences.'

The complexity to which Stavenhagen refers is given an additional dimension in Poulter's discussion in *Ethnicity, Law and Human Rights* (1998) in which Poulter argues that definitions are made even more difficult because of the way that some ethnic groups use a range of measures to try to defend themselves, including the distortion or even invention of cultural traits. Thus, he argues that it is by no means easy to capture the essence of culture and meaning for particular ethnic groups, especially when under threat (1998: 7 and 10):

'The particular features of a group's culture, which are identified as significant by members and outsiders, and precisely where the boundary is drawn with other groups, especially the majority community, often depends upon the context or situation in which an issue arises. Furthermore, a group may choose to emphasise, adapt, or even distort or invent specific cultural traits in order to achieve certain goals or objectives in its dealings with the wider society and state institutions.'

'... when people are attacked it is common/natural for them to harness their cultural resources to devise collective strategies of active resistance to racial hostility, discrimination and disadvantage in order to enable them to circumvent patterns of oppression and exclusion.'

From this perspective, it is clear that one simply cannot 'define' ethnicity and classify different ethnic groups, and then discuss their 'development'. Definitions of ethnicity and the self-understanding of groups and their identity on the one hand, and definitions of development and the self-understanding of groups about development and development prospects on the other, must be seen and analysed together.

It is in this context that one needs to focus on the sorts of ideas that have given support, at the extreme, to a vigorous ‘anti-modernist’ literature and spurred efforts to ‘preserve traditional cultures at all costs’ from the influences of modernity. Indeed, they have led to a literature which challenges the very notion of development as a ‘westernized’ and ‘westernizing’ destroyer of culture.²³ The tension between preserving cultures and cultural outlook by turning inwards, isolating oneself from these forces of change, and adapting them to change and thus providing greater opportunities for their longer-term survival has a far wider applicability: it is played out throughout the developing world today as it was played out (with extreme violence) in Western Europe during the Renaissance. As Verhelst puts it (1990:158):

‘The peasants of the South are not asking for help or for financial charity, any more than they ask for aid in food-stuffs. They ask only that their environment cease to be destroyed, that they cease to be deprived of the natural means of production (land, water) and that they be paid a fair price for their products. In short they want to be allowed to get on with their work.’

For Escobar, what is particularly important about the cultural dimension is not so much the need to preserve the past but the manner in which, when linked to politics, it provides the conditions for how a radical reorientation of the future is conceived as possible – a future where not only the notions of ‘third world’ are rethought and challenged but the possibility is opened up of a challenge to capitalism and the capitalist system. Thus, powerfully, he writes:

‘At the bottom of the investigation of alternatives lies the sheer fact of cultural difference. Cultural differences embody... possibilities for transforming the politics of representation, that is for transforming social life itself... The greatest political promise of minority cultures is their potential for resisting and subverting the axiomatic of capitalism and modernity in their hegemonic form. That is why cultural difference is one of the key political facts of our times. Because cultural difference is also at the root of post-development, this makes the reconceptualization of what is happening in and to the Third World a key task at present. The unmaking of the Third World – as a challenge to the Western historical mode to which the entire globe seems to be captive – is in the balance.’ (Escobar 1995: 225)

In contrast, it is Poulter’s (1998) strongly held view that:

‘the demands of most members of minority groups for greater recognition of their cultural values springs from a

desire for greater integration within the wider society than for a separation from it.’

‘for minority communities, a rigid separation of the public and private domains denies the perspective of the communities themselves. For them, it is VITAL that their cultural identities be publicly and openly recognised by the wider society in a positive fashion, if they are to flourish in this country and play a constructive part in the life of the national.’

This focus on the cultural and ethnic dimensions of development also brings into view a profound sense of unease in current development parlance with the terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘social inclusion’. There is a potential tension between the (largely unobjectionable and indeed laudable) objective of wishing to incorporate minorities, and the pace at which disadvantaged groups are incorporated into the decision-making process as active participants as well as the fear that the process of inclusion will be made at the cost of challenging, or severely diluting, the core values that mark out and provide the defining characteristic of particular ethnic groups. What is more, whatever verbal assurances may be given to the excluded, the weight of development history suggests that the development process may be seen, most starkly perhaps, as being built upon the notion of assimilation. Though the process of assimilation wrought its most devastating consequences in relation to IPs, the basic tensions between core values, tradition and modernization apply to most minorities.²⁴

The following two statements give a very different sense of these tensions. The first is from the President of the World Bank, talking about the challenge of inclusion, the second from the Declaration from the World Summit for Social Development.

‘Our goal must be to reduce these disparities across and within countries, to bring more and more people into the economic mainstream, to promote equitable access to the benefits of development regardless of nationality, race or gender. This – the challenge of inclusion – is the key development challenge of our time.’ (Wolfensohn, 1997: 6)

We commit ourselves to promoting social integration by fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights as well as non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people. Including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons.

... to this end at the national level we will...

recognise and respect cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities and take measures to facilitate their full participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of their societies and in the economic progress and social development of their countries.’ (Social Summit: 18 and 19)

It is this background which leads world leaders to argue that there can be no overall development blueprint for devising a strategy for overcoming and eliminating poverty. However, within this context, the Summit outlines a number of ways in which particular (marginalized) groups could be assisted. Though some of these refer specifically to IPs, others are equally applicable to many minorities.

Extracts from the Social Summit Declaration

‘The full participation of indigenous people in the labour markets and their equal access to employment opportunities requires developing comprehensive employment, education and training programmes that take account of the particular needs of IPs (p. 91).

Encouraging the fullest participation in society requires:

strengthening the capacities and opportunities of all people, especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, to establish and maintain independent organizations representing their interests, within each country’s constitutional framework (p. 98)

Governments should promote equality and social justice by...

Carrying out a regular review of public policy, including health and education policies and public spending from a social and gender equality and equity perspective, and promoting their positive contribution to equalising opportunities. (p. 101)

Government responses to special needs of social groups should include...

- recognising and promoting the abilities, talents and experience of groups that are vulnerable and disadvantaged, identifying ways to prevent isolation and alienation, and enabling them to make a positive contribution to society;
- ensuring access to work and social services through such measures as education, language training and technical assistance for people adversely affected by language barriers;

- supporting by legislation, incentives and other means where appropriate organizations of the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups so that they may promote the interests of groups concerned and become involved in local and national economic, social and political decision-making that guides society as a whole;
- promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous people and empowering them to make choices that enable them to retain their cultural identity while participating in national, economic and social life with full respect for their cultural values, languages, traditions and forms of social organisation.’ (p. 102)

5.3 Implications from some key texts

In this section the focus shifts from definitions of development and their problems to a number of key issues in development, some derived from the discussion of definitions, others framed within and developed from other ‘literatures’. Thus, in the following paragraphs, we draw attention to some important texts on development which help to provide both a deeper and broader understanding of the concepts of development and, in the case of some examples, some inputs that contribute to the discussion on the link between minorities, minority rights and development.

Unevenness of development

The discussion on the concept of development – and the emphasis given today to terms such as capacities, inclusion, participation, processes – might suggest that once one understands and agrees the essence of development and what is required to achieve it, then the process of development can be viewed as a smooth and largely uncontroversial process. Hence it is important to add that while the development profession may not have been particularly adept at defining what is meant by development, one of its strengths has been the manner in which it has analysed processes of development and monitored changes that have taken place. It is here that emphasis needs to be given to five prominent features of the development process to which the development profession has largely been responsible for drawing attention.

The first is that, historically, development has been a very uneven process, with its benefits shared unequally among different individuals and groups. The second is that many of those who have benefited from development have repeatedly attempted to preserve for themselves any gains that they have achieved. This in turn has often provided the springboard for achieving further gains – the principle of cumulative causation. The third is that the

distribution of assets, which is so often necessary to ensure that poor rural dwellers gain from the process of development, requires strong states to be effective. The fourth is that one should not be lulled into thinking that because particular groups are either relatively or absolutely disadvantaged, all members of those groups will act and be motivated by activities that seek to enhance the welfare of the group and especially the poorer members of heterogeneous groups. The evidence suggests that those relatively better off will not infrequently tend to mirror the practices of people within the wider society, that is, they will use their relative advantage to ensure, and if possible better, their own development chances.^{xxv} However, the whole development process of disadvantaged groups and the internal dynamics of change seem to be a particularly under-researched area of development.

The fifth lesson to emerge from the history of development studies is that one needs to beware believing that development professionals, including economists, know absolutely how development can be promoted – even the World Bank is unsure about how economic growth can be sustained: its *World Development Report 1998* is devoted to the theme of ‘Knowledge and Information for Development’, which systematically highlights the areas in development where there is insufficient knowledge to stimulate growth and development and/or where differences persist about what is more or less important.²⁶

Need to focus on the wider context

One of the differences that is emphasized between IPs and minorities is the link between IPs and the land: hence the focus given to land rights issues in debates about furthering the development prospects of IPs. However, recent work reviewed by Plant (1998) for the Inter-American Development Bank argues that, today, there are significant numbers of IPs whose livelihoods are no longer dependent upon land and agriculture, or other traditional ways of making a living. Increasingly, therefore, they will need to find means of ensuring their livelihoods within the market economy. One consequence is that it will become increasingly important to target initiatives aimed at the development of IPs away from narrow and ethnically based goals and concentrate on ways that IPs can benefit from engaging in markets in which they are already involved and address those factors which put them at a disadvantage in such engagements. To the extent that these trends persist, it would seem likely that the development problems of many IPs and many minority groups will continue to overlap and be rooted in shared and similar causes, leading, in some circumstances, to a narrowing of the distinction between the causes of underdevelopment of IPs on the one hand, and different groups of some minorities. As Plant argues:

‘Respect for the cultural and political rights of IPs and the promotion of their socio-cultural development is not the same issue as the reduction of the material poverty facing IPs. The point may seem obvious. There has nevertheless been a tendency in highly influential circles to deal with these two issues together... [Yet, what is striking] is the absence of solid and recent data and ethnographic studies, concerning trends in indigenous economic and survival strategies.’²⁷ (1998: 31 and 32)

The importance of organizations

A growing strand of development analysis has highlighted the crucial importance of strong representative organizations in securing gains for the membership of those organizations. In that general context, it is contended on the one hand that if poor groups wish to make gains, they need to organize themselves, and on the other that these organizations need to be strengthened. However, it is important not to forget – something often not given prominence in the literature – that the ‘organizational path’ to development is based, initially at least, on the assumption that the overall economy is growing. In short, it is a redistributive approach. The need to focus on strong organizations embraces both the political and the economic spheres: to increase access, as well as voice and loyalty (to use Hirschman’s evocative labels), and to use the resulting power to draw resources to the group.^{xxviii}

Although this ‘organizational approach’ has been highlighted in particular in relation to IPs, it can readily be extended to all minorities, even if, as noted above, the purpose of forming and strengthening groups in the case of IPs requires a focus well beyond the geographical confines of the group itself. Roper *et al.* (1996: 1) note that:

‘The most common thread that bound together successful cases of development and was consistently discussed as important was the presence or creation of indigenous organizations both at the local level and multi-community level as a means by which IPs can be represented in the development process and manage development initiatives.’

However, it is important not to be too sanguine about the outcome: there is clearly no guarantee that building and strengthening organizations *will* lead to the outcome intended for the group in question. As ever in development studies, the isolation and rich analysis of a ‘new’ factor or element in understanding the development process carries with it the risk of eclipsing, or marginalizing, other important factors which contribute to the development process. As a large study of the excluded undertaken by UNRISD concluded, the ‘outcome of efforts by the hitherto excluded to increase their control

over resources and regulative institutions in specific contexts' remains 'unpredictable' (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994: xiii).

The attention given to organizations and their importance has been widened in the literature to a broader focus on 'civil society'. At issue here is the nature of 'civil' society, including the impact and influence of civil society and the role of civil society organizations on development, and vice versa. Within this context, what is termed 'social capital' theory emphasizes the importance and influence of structures over social agencies. Particularly important and influential has been the work of Putnam (1993), whose longitudinal study of economic development in Italy leads him to conclude forcefully that it is civil society and related factors which influence and predict development, rather than, or at least more than, development influencing, enhancing and 'developing' civil society. Putnam argues that economic efficiency is more likely to occur, and transactions to be less costly, in societies where people trust each other. Prominence has consequently been given to the notion of 'ownership' as a determinant of success and for successful development.²⁹

'When we use both civic traditions and past socioeconomic development to predict socioeconomic development, we discover that civics is actually a much better predictor of socioeconomic development than is development itself... This is one lesson drawn from our research: social context and history profoundly condition the effectiveness of institutions.' (Putnam, 1993: 156, 182)

The nature of the state

Concentrating on civil society and its organizations provides one route to focusing on the links between politics and development and, in that context, to a more systematic study of the role and nature of the state in the development process. This, too comprises various strands. One emphasizes the importance of the law and legal structures to development. This leads back to the discussion in the previous section about the direction of causality between human (including minority) rights and development. Roper *et al.*'s (1996) study, which can be applied directly to minority rights *per se*, argues strongly that the legal framework guaranteeing rights provides the basis for development to take place:

'What has become increasingly apparent to us is that establishing a legal framework that guarantees the basic human rights of IPs and that establishes secure rights to land and other resources is an essential first step to development. An essential second step is ensuring that these legal frameworks are enforced and that IPs have effective recourse when they make use of the legal system.' (1996: 15)

Within the development (political economy) literature, a number of authors argue that it is the nature of the state, and the role and influence that minorities have in participating in formulating laws and in implementing policies, which touches on the whole panoply of development: access to health and especially to education, credit and to the range of employment opportunities. These are critical as they underpin the debate about minority rights and development. Thus it is argued that it is the nature of so many states, both now and in the past, to reflect the views and interests of the majority. But it is these views and interests which are the main stumbling blocks to the realization of the rights and development prospects of marginalized minorities. As Hettne, puts it:

'More often than not, state power is linked with a dominant ethnic group which therefore becomes the carrier of modernisation and nation-building. The "ethnic interest" of the dominant group and the "national interest" coincide.' (1996: 20)

This theme is central to Stavenhagen's study, *Ethnic Conflicts and the Nation-State*, in which he argues that (1996: 194):

'When assimilation is a natural process, so to speak, such as that of voluntary immigrant groups in a host society, particularly when cultural distinctions between immigrants and natives are not large, then it may be viewed as a positive factor in social integration and national cohesion. However, when the assimilation of a minority (or majority) by a dominant nation or nationality is the specific objective of state policy carried out without the consent of the target group, then the seeds of discord and dissidence may be sown. This is particularly so when policies of assimilation are implemented by force or by bureaucratic coercive measures.'

In a similar vein, but more in terms of trying to resolve tensions, Asbjørn Eide has argued (in a report to the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities) that 'members of minorities' must be given 'opportunities for effective participation in the political organs of society'. He adds, though, that 'no single formula exists which is appropriate to all minority situations' (quoted in Steiner and Alston, 1996: 1004).

None the less, the dominant view of these and other authors is that it is through changes in the nature of the state which not merely provide for minority voices to be heard, but which are changed in order to reflect this institutionally and constitutionally. It is in this context that considerable interest is focused on countries such as Ethiopia and South Africa for changes occurring at the

national level, and for countries such as Uganda where the process of decentralization has focused explicitly on marginalized groups and their representation.³⁰ Stiefel and Wolfe (1994: 8) emphasize the dynamic nature of such changes which, they argue, need to be viewed as 'systems-transforming' rather than 'systems-maintaining' processes and objectives. Questioning whether the state should continue to be invested with a unitary character in handling increasingly diverse and interdependent populations and whether new or different institutions could be developed that would allow diverse groups of people to coexist, interact and, if they so wished, integrate within the same geographical space, Bangura outlines some of the issues on the agenda of possible future developments in this direction:

'States need to grant much autonomy, rights and freedoms to the various groups and individuals which constitute their society... and the state itself needs to embody the varied interests of such groups in its relations with society and the international community.'

Policies for greater representation and participation of different peoples (need to focus on the following): the devolution of power; power sharing arrangements; electoral systems that seek to reflect the plural character of the population; and cultural policies that promote harmonious relations...'

He adds that:

'A healthy system of ethnic relations also needs a sound policy on public education and culture. Many conflicts are sustained by stereotypes, myths or prejudices that have been fed into discourse at household, neighbourhood or national levels.' (1994: 36 and 37)

Ted Gurr's monumental study, *Minorities at Risk*, cautions against finding any universal blueprint; he argues that the approach to be used in trying to balance the interests of contending groups within states will vary 'depending upon the cultural and political context', a conclusion with which Stavenhagen (1993: 320) would concur. Ultimately, however, Gurr does not support the practicalities of trying radically to alter the nature of nation-states, even though he is convinced that 'economic inequalities are more resistant to change than are political inequalities' (p. vii). He suggests that:

'the most radical proposal for resolving conflicts between states and peoples is to reconstruct the state system so that territorial boundaries correspond more closely to social and cultural boundaries among peoples. But this does not solve problems of non-territorial groups... [A] more constructive

and open-ended answer is to pursue the positive-sum coexistence of ethnic groups and plural states. This means both recognising and strengthening communal groups within the existing state system.' (ibid.)

Relationship between rights and development and sequencing in the development process

A number of recent contributions from the development literature have thrown light on the issue of the relationship between development and rights. Broadly speaking, this literature tends to support a view based on the complexity of interaction.

In a major international longitudinal study, whose focus is the links between poverty elimination and economic growth, Ramirez, Ranis and Stewart (1997) show that the eradication of poverty is at one and the same time caused by improvements in factors such as education, better governance and improved social capital, but that progress in eradicating poverty itself contributes to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the supporting infrastructure. Additionally, and of more direct relevance to the links between development, minorities and minority rights, the study suggests that development is 'lop-sided', for instance in relation to access to the benefits of growth and development, and will be more likely to be unsustainable in the long term. This lends support to the view that it is not only more equitable and just, but also more efficient to ensure that minorities share in such benefits.

*'Thus countries which are initially lop-sided in terms of favouring growth at the cost of promoting Human Development (HD) always lapse into the vicious category. However countries where HD is favoured can [often] move into the virtuous category. This has strong sequencing implications, implying that while ideally both HD and economic growth should be jointly promoted, HD should be given priority where choice is necessary.'*³¹

Likewise, and more technically, Ravallion (1997) suggests that the initial distribution of income affects how much the poor share in rising average incomes. Higher initial inequality tends to reduce growth's impact on absolute poverty. By the same token, greater inequality mitigates the adverse impact on the poor of general economic contraction. Thus, if inequality is great enough, countries that would have very good growth prospects at low levels of inequality may see little or no growth and little progress in reducing poverty. More widely, such a view is supported by many studies which have attempted to analyse the causes of development success in south-east Asia.

A similar conclusion is reached by Hanmer et al. (1997) in their survey of the links between political rights and poverty. Thus they note that while it is often argued that the achievement of political rights will help contribute to the alleviation of poverty, there is also evidence to suggest that the relationship could go the other way – addressing problems of poverty can contribute to the achievement of wider and firmer political rights (1997: 35).³²

One part of Gurr's worldwide study examines the relationship between and relative importance of discrimination, cultural differences, economic disadvantages and political disadvantages of different minorities. In terms of the first two, a major conclusion of the study is that 'deliberate discrimination by dominant groups is a much more important source of minorities' disadvantages and grievances than are cultural differences that divide minorities from majorities' (1993: vii). Gurr also indicates that 'the more culturally different a minority is from other groups the greater are the economic disadvantages. This is consistent with but does not prove the theoretical argument, that cultural differentials cause or reinforce economic disadvantage' (p. 52). He concludes that 'there is no close or necessary correlation between political and economic differentials and discrimination' (p. 53). None the less, and more stridently, Gurr's analysis leads him to conclude that:

'cultural differences have a greater effect on economic differentials and discrimination than on political disadvantages. This is true globally... In other words, wide cultural differences contribute more to minorities' poverty than to their lack of empowerment... This fits in with the political inclusive policies of most modern states – it has been easier for governments to give minorities political rights than erase social practice responsible for persisting poverty. (1993: 57)

This confirms the views of the ethno-development advocates of the importance of the nature of the state.

Stavenhagen appears to give more weight to economic factors, at least to a stronger association between ethnic tension and economic deprivation and poverty. Thus he argues (1996: 294, 163 and 160) that:

'Economic factors play a crucial role in the generation of ethnic conflicts. When regional and social disparities in the distribution of economic resources also reflect differences between identified ethnic groups, then conflicts over social and economic issues readily turn into ethnic conflict.

generally speaking, economic causes can be said to be among the major factors generating ethnic conflicts

violent and protracted ethnic conflict is less likely to occur in countries high on the HDI scale, whereas it occurs more frequently at the other end of the scale... Gurr argues that ethnic grievances in the West have in general been solved through political accommodation and economic redistribution of resources over a long period of time, and this has diminished the potential for conflict.'

However, he agrees that 'in many cases, the roots of confrontation can be found in the way a modern state, when originally established, related to the different ethnic groups within its borders through constitutional arrangements, electoral system, legislation or simply political culture and practice' (1996: 33). He adds, 'It is surely correct to advance the proposition that the best solutions to antagonisms between ethnic groups, or between an ethnic group and the state, will be achieved within a framework of a democratic political system' (p. 278).

Limitations of empowerment

The current wave of popularity for and advocacy of processes of empowerment needs to be contrasted with the results of a number of studies which show, on the one hand, that increased empowerment does not necessarily lead to the beneficial development and poverty-reducing or poverty-eliminating results anticipated and, on the other hand, that development and poverty reduction can sometimes occur as a result of authoritarian, top-down approaches. In terms of the former, Roper *et al.*'s review of the literature 'suggests that control over all phases of development – while an ideal ultimate goal – is not necessary, nor is it realistic in every circumstance. Often IPs lack the knowledge or experience to identify potential solutions... [Indeed] self-determination in no way guarantees success – it was present in 5/8 of the failures examined' (1996: 23). An example of the effectiveness and success of top-down approaches in alleviating poverty is Tendler's (1984) study of development processes in the post-Somoza Nicaragua.

One factor in the empowerment debate which needs to be highlighted is the usually necessary link between participation and information. A number of studies – for instance, and most recently, the World Bank's *World Development Report 1998* – correctly point out that poor people are not able to participate fully in development unless and until they not only have access to information but are in a position to use it: frequently, people are not able to realize their rights precisely because they are not capable and do not have the *means* to realize them.³³ Hence, though information is clearly necessary, it is by no means sufficient for development to take place.

Finally, and linked to the issues of empowerment, information exchange, transparency institutions and civil

society, we need to take note of recent studies which have highlighted the importance of analysing the issue of corruption and shown the various, and often profound, ways in which different forms of corruption have impeded development processes and exacerbated or reinforced the gains from development accruing to particular (powerful) groups within society. Corruption can have a *cumulative*, systemic effect which builds and develops over time. Indeed, research by Eigen (1992) suggests that in low-income economies with a high level of corruption the overall effects of corruption could *quite easily and relatively quickly* (5-6 years) reduce the impact of aid to such an extent as to render its development justification untenable. Related research points to the need to view the systemic problems of corruption more holistically, well beyond the 'blaming' of particular individuals or groups of people within certain countries. Thus, Werlin (1994) distinguishes between *primary corruption* – simple greed or excessive partisanship or selfishness that is subject to legal sanctions or popular censure, as suggested in typical definitions of corruption – and *secondary corruption*, referring to greed (or manifestations of ambition or survival) in the absence of viable governance, which tends to be systemic or a standard operating practice. He argues that the roots of corruption lie not so much in excessive greed as in the failure of the political system to protect the public. This can be confronted only by addressing the low quality of governance through, for instance, promoting legitimacy, accountability, decentralization, respect for human rights, and the rule of law and participation in the political process.

Globalization, structural adjustment and their impact on minorities

Not surprisingly, the central and all-encompassing development debates of the 1980s and 1990s have generated questions about the effects of paradigms and processes under way or under discussion on different groups. Thus, it is not surprising that questions raised about the impact of structural adjustment policies on the poor have been extended to questions about their impact on minorities. Likewise, as questions have been posed about the impact of the process of globalization on the poor, these, too, have been extended to raise questions about the impact of the globalization process on minorities.

In its simplest form, globalization refers to a process in which important elements of life at the national level – society, culture and political economy – are increasingly influenced by external factors beyond the direct control of individual nations. Of particular interest to this paper are the development aspects of globalization. However, globalization (Oman, 1996: 6) is a term used by many but defined by few. In the sense in which it is now widely

understood, the term globalization began to be used in discourse about development in the 1980s.

Beyond this simple definition, globalization is understood in different ways which at first glance may seem marginal, but whose implication for policy can be far more profound. Thus one view of globalization is simply an extension of traditionally rooted internationalism, whereby the world economy is becoming increasingly dominated by a series of international economic transactions, particularly trade, investment and financial flows. The policy implications of these changes for individual countries is that they need to take advantage of new 'global' opportunities if they are to maximize their growth potential. A more far-reaching view is that globalization involves not merely a deepening and extension of traditional international relationships – of trade, markets, investment and financial flows – but a discontinuous and more profound set of changes which, it is argued, will have a cumulative effect on national economies. Indeed, the forces of globalization will not only require proactive, and often different, responses if countries are to maximize the possible benefits, but, to the extent that countries fail to respond, it is argued that they will be placed, or will place themselves, in an increasingly disadvantageous position, unable to achieve national growth and development goals. However, as one of the outcomes of the process of globalization is to reduce the ability of the nation-state to control its economy, globalization poses a dilemma: on the one hand, countries need to work to position themselves to respond to the new opportunities it offers, but, on the other hand, their ability to make a difference is ever likely to diminish.^{xxxiv}

The first thing to say about these issues is that they have been poorly researched: there is a paucity of evidence in the case-study literature of the impact of globalization or adjustment (see below) on minorities, and, consequently, an even greater absence of synthetic studies. What seem to be missing are case-studies of particular minorities which analyse the ways that these policies have impacted upon them and the ways that they have attempted to cope with both adjustment problems and the process of globalization and its consequences.

Second, it would seem that many of the general factors identified in earlier sections of this paper which limit and/or enhance the fulfilment of the rights of minorities and their development status can be applied to the issues of adjustment and globalization. For instance, out of many examples, one could state with some certainty that:

- to the extent that adjustment policies restrict and limit government expenditures and minorities are already disadvantaged and politically weak, then these policies are likely to accentuate their relative and/or absolute deprivation;

- to the extent that minorities require access to state-sponsored safety-net measures and funds, then minorities will tend to suffer disproportionately *vis-à-vis* the rest of the population when such funds are reduced;
- to the extent that adjustment policies encourage governments to introduce user-fees for basic services and minorities are among the poorest, they will find it even more difficult to gain access to education services;
- to the extent that equality of opportunity for all requires additional resources for deprived minorities in order for them to be in a position to take advantage of such opportunities, the squeeze on resources is likely to risk downgrading any priority given to pro-active initiatives, especially when, as is commonly the case, the political voice of minority groups is also marginalized;
- to the extent that globalization leads to increasing wealth and income inequalities within states, and minorities are already among the poorest and most disadvantaged, their relative position is likely to worsen.

Other factors (influences and impact) are likely to be both more indirect and more complex. Stiefel and Wolfe's study (1994: 198 and 200) focuses attention on two of these. First, they argue that one of the outcomes of the process of adjustment and liberalization has been not only to give greater prominence to markets and alter the relationship between states and markets, but also to weaken the ability of many states to make a difference in the marketplace. One result has been to reduce the legitimacy and authority of a number of states. They suggest that:

'The upsurge of sub-national, ethnic and religious movements which in many cases threatens the very integrity of existing states is both a consequence of this declining legitimacy and a cause of its further decline.'

Second, they suggest that the process of globalization is resulting in the formation of more groups lobbying for a better place in the world. To the extent that such groups are successful, 'traditional' minorities and minority groups will find themselves in a relatively worse position as a result of globalization. One consequence of this is to provide yet another factor influencing states to 'encourage' the exodus of 'unwanted' minorities.³⁵

In a study of Central America, which has resonances further afield, Gorostiaga (1997) suggests, more worryingly, not merely that the marginalization of poorer groups is likely to persist as the process of globalization is played out and its influence becomes more extensive, but that the manner and extent to which foreign development agencies intervene in poorer countries is likely to lead to the support of those very structures that already reinforce and perpetuate the process of marginalization:

'if the current societal models are maintained and deepen and if the styles of foreign cooperation do not change, then "low-intensity" chaos is predictable in Central America... The current tendency is a two-speed society in which the majorities remain unemployed, in poverty, with education and health that is too limited for them to be actors in their own development, and in which women, children and youth will be the sectors hardest hit by the growing tendency to Africanisation and social disintegration.'

The forecast is not of a return to armed revolutionary processes, but of a decomposition of the social fabric... Outside of the modernising enclaves, the urban and rural middle class will struggle with the dilemma of either emigrating or joining the modernising sector so as not to be absorbed by the process of exclusion and ever more widespread poverty. Direct foreign cooperation will be progressively reduced and will concentrate on compensatory social projects to cushion the social disorder and maintain governability amid growing social tensions. It will thus be subsidising the very system that reproduces the underdevelopment.' (1997: 67)

Relatedly, Galtung (1996) suggests that to the extent that efforts to incorporate the marginalized into the mainstream of development, not least through education, fail to achieve their objectives, the outcome is likely to be increased social disintegration. Thus, he suggests that those who fail are left in a worse state than when they were 'living in poverty' because of the likelihood that they will experience greater culturelessness (anomie) and structurelessness (atomie).

These are fundamental issues which merit far wider discussion. However, it is also important not to be too subsumed by pessimism, especially when it is based more on a priori and unproven ideological baggage than on careful analysis.

For instance, Sadasivam (1995: 630) states boldly:

'It is now well established that structural adjustment and stabilisation policies undertaken in developing countries to receive conditional-based loans from the WB and IMF have exacerbated conditions of poverty and deprivation for large sections of the population.'

This is too simplistic. In-depth studies of adjustment, and the links between adjustment and poverty, show clearly that different groups of poor people have been affected by adjustment policies in different ways. One positive, if tentative, conclusion, is that those whose livelihoods are less dependent on the market will not suffer as much as those where adjustment has resulted in economic contraction; a stronger and equally relevant conclusion is that adjustment

processes have tended to favour farmers producing for the export market. Clearly, therefore, the details do matter – and probably matter a great deal – and point more forcefully to the need for careful and targeted studies to be undertaken.

Of importance, too, even substantive studies of the effects of adjustment on poverty have produced contradictory results. Thus, Killick (1997a) suggests that the urban poor are hardest hit by adjustment programmes, whereas a Danish study (Engberg-Pederson et al., 1995) argues that it is the rural poor who have been hardest hit. Stewart suggests that while, in theory, adjustment may not lead to greater poverty, it tends not to be poverty-reducing when two factors are (all too frequently) absent: high growth and flexibility. In practice, she argues, in much of sub-Saharan Africa, adjustment has been poverty-creating, not only because of low growth and inflexible economies, but also because of the failure to implement pro-poor policies. Less unequivocal is a study by Kakwani et al. (1990) which analysed 40 policy conditionalities in World Bank adjustment programmes and their effects on living standards. This revealed different outcomes according to which measures were used. In some cases a positive relation was shown, in others a negative one, though most were ambiguous.

Part of the explanation for these divergent conclusions is found in a study by Killick (1997b) specifically on adjustment and poverty. He summarizes the links between adjustment and poverty alleviation thus:

'The truth is that SAPs are not primarily addressed to most of the causes of poverty in Africa. They are not directed at the demographic factors contributing to the poverty problem, nor the civil and political strife which aggravates it. SAPs can do little for the empowerment of the poor, nor can they be expected to impinge much upon the vicious circle of poverty and environmental degradation. They are not addressed to the initial inequalities of income and wealth which make the poverty problem more intractable ...SAPs are addressed to some of the sources of low productivities and incomes which underlie the poverty problem, and to correcting the past capital-intensity of growth by raising the cost of capital relative to labour, but the responses of African economies to the measures intended to improve on these variables has been generally disappointing.' (1997b: 38)

Of course, the technological developments associated with the process of globalization – not least the revolution in computer technology and tele-communications (e-mail and the internet) – have provided opportunities for some minorities, and offer a range of potential opportunities, to enhance and further their own developments, not least through establishing and developing networks for the

interchange of both experiences and information. (A point raised by a reader of an earlier draft of this paper.)

5.4 Some concluding comments

This has been a long chapter and it is not possible to provide a succinct summary, not least because one of main themes is that development is a complex process, comprising a whole series of different elements, the importance of which is likely to vary from country to country, and from context to context – political, economic, cultural, institutional and social though, importantly, always rooted in history and historical perceptions. Indeed, it is not only differences in understanding development between 'development specialists' and others – such as human rights lawyers – which are important, but often deep-rooted divisions between different disciplines which have formed the core of 'development studies'. Not only do there remain profound differences in what economists and, say, social anthropologists consider important in understanding development, but sharp differences remain between different 'schools' of economics, most notably between neoclassical and Keynesian economists.

What seems to be particularly important in trying to explain development, or the lack of it, is the need to embrace insights from a wide range of disciplines which draw on both the micro- and the macro-picture. This would include not only more orthodox (micro- and macro-) economics, but also institutional economics and political economy, history (including cultural history) and different branches of sociology, anthropology, gender studies, psychology, philosophy and (probably) theology. Within this context, I would argue that it is particularly important to focus on those factors that traditional analyses have repeatedly failed to incorporate into historical and contemporary analysis.

However, the risk is that too great a stress on discrete 'missing elements' – in the last ten years, these have included gender, the environment, institutions, civil society, participation and empowerment – will tend to eclipse important, even if well-known, influences on the development process. Since its inception, development studies has been the victim of fads and fashions. And if there is one thing that the history of development studies tells us it is that next year's fashion – or key ingredient of the development process – is going to be different from this year's. In this context, grassroots development agencies, and those who work for them, are eager to introduce innovative practices often at the cost of tried-and-tested approaches – not least because it is tedious to do the same thing year after year.

In the present discussion of minorities, minority rights and development, increasing prominence is rightly given to

the perceptions and views of minorities of the development process and the ways in which they perceive themselves to be – and often are – discriminated against. Major gaps remain and there is thus compelling need to fill these gaps. To this end, two elements are important. The first is to undertake more detailed case-study work in order to inform and enrich the development debate which, to date, has tended to be blind to this particular ‘first-person’ and ‘main-group’ focus and perspective. The second is to marry

the emerging perceptions and insights into the wider context and to attempt to forge links with other perceptions and understandings of development and how it might be enhanced. Such a process is likely not only to deepen and broaden our understanding of those factors which are impeding development, but, it is to be hoped, will also enrich our understanding of the very process of development and its constraints, as these are manifested in different ways, in different parts of the world.

6 Conflict

Conflict is defined, variously, as a struggle or clash of ideas, principles, people or peoples.³⁶ Conflict, including ethnic conflict, does not necessarily have to result in violence or be violent, but in human terms the greater the intensity of the conflict, the greater the risk that the conflict will be violent.^{xxxvii} The issue of minorities and conflict is one that has been given increasing prominence in recent years, often leading to questions about the link between minority rights and conflict. Alfredsson (1998: g), maintains a direct link between conflict and the violation of minority rights:

'Discriminatory patterns and other violations of minority rights are a major reason for ethnic conflict all over the world... respect for equal enjoyment of all human rights, backed up by non-discrimination and preferential treatment, based on objectivity and impartiality, offer the best chances of bringing relief and justice to the groups concerned.'

It is thus not surprising that the linked issues of conflict, lack of minority rights and under-development have been a growing focus of attention. But what is the link between ethnicity, minority rights, conflict and development?

A dominant theme in the literature, and major conclusion of some of the more substantive studies, suggests that the links between the absence or violation of the rights of minorities and development problems – low levels of development, relative or absolute deprivation, unequal access to the material benefits of development, and varying degrees of a lack of participation in the development process – are exceedingly complex. Young, for instance, suggests that 'the relationship between economic conditions and communal tensions is impossible to define precisely, [but] few would dispute that it exists' (1994: 29).

If it is difficult to establish the links between minority rights, conflict and development, equally it must be difficult to draw policy conclusions about how to minimize conflict. In this context, Bangura (1994) warns of the need to avoid simplistic solutions, adding that one needs to avoid the danger of focusing too narrowly on the issue of ethnicity, as this can limit options to find a more long-lasting and durable solution:

'no single policy is sufficient to address the problems of social order, political stability and participation in ethnically plural societies... A policy that is based exclusively on ethnic group rights is likely to freeze relations between

groups, promote chauvinism, entrench group privileges, punish individuals who seek to straddle or transcend group politics and frustrate social inter-actions based on individual interests.' (1994: 39)

Similarly, Stavenhagen's (1996: 12) list of factors which tend to increase the risk of ethnic violence suggests, or implies, that the roots of conflict can be different in different contexts as well as multifaceted:

'an increase in repressive measures by states against distinct ethnic minorities or against ethnic dissidents; the failure of democratic mechanisms for negotiation or power-sharing between ethnic political actors; the emergence of essentialist ethnic ideologies and tightly-knit ethnic political "vanguards"; the rise in racist and xenophobic postures among the population; increasing economic and political disparities between ethnic groups; and legal arrangements designed to favour one ethnic group and exclude others.'

In short, it is difficult, if not impossible, to draw general lessons (and thus construct general hypotheses or theories) about the links between the lack of minority rights, development (or its absence) and ethnically-based conflict. While the complexity of the issues provides one explanation for this, it may not be the only one. The lack of clarity is almost certainly the result of the paucity of in-depth, rigorous and 'objective' studies which have been undertaken on the linked issues. One consequence of this is that unsubstantiated and simplistic generalizations emerging from ill-conceived or inaccurate studies help to keep these waters particularly muddy.

Nevertheless, some important issues are raised in some of the studies cited here which are of importance to minority rights and development. The following capture many of the main ideas, including policy conclusions, of the literature under review, including, as one might expect, some contradictory and opposing views.

Does development reduce or exacerbate conflict?

The literature provides differing views on the link between development and conflict. Thus, on the one hand (though it would seem to be a minority view), Banuri (1990: 30ff) suggests that there is an 'increasing association of development with higher levels of conflict

and tension in much of the third world'. Relatedly, Hechter's work on the Celtic fringe leads him to argue that 'ethno-regional loyalties and conflict may be strengthened within a nation state as a result of the exacerbation of territorial inequalities between a culturally distinct core and its periphery' (quoted in Samarasinghe and Coughlan, 1991: 4). On the other hand, the more prominent view is that development is likely to ease tension and conflict. Thus Bangura writes: 'most of Europe escaped political violence and ethno-religious and racist conflicts in the decades when their welfare programmes and economies were sound and when governments and societies identified with the problems of the weak' (1994: 32).

As discussed in earlier sections, it is likely that differences in levels of development, in the incidence of poverty across communities and in the extent to which group rights are fulfilled, met or violated, will lead to tensions, though the extent to which they will lead to overt conflict will vary from circumstance to circumstance – a view with which the Stavenhagen study strongly concurs. In brief, the variables involved here are likely to include: differences in income levels and in access to basic goods and services; opportunities for productive employment; degrees of engagement in the political process; the nature of the state; and the attitude to ethnicity, culture and ethnic and cultural differences (whether they are accepted, tolerated, welcomed or encouraged).

Gurr's conclusions (if correct) provide a number of insights into those factors most likely to increase the risk of overt conflict and, concomitantly, those issues which are most likely to ease conflict. A major conclusion is that deliberate discrimination by dominant groups is a much more important source of both disadvantage and grievance among minorities than are cultural differences. But discrimination itself is complex, as it can have its roots in a mix of social and economic practices, deliberate government policy, or be 'a residue of historical circumstances' (1993: 7). His analysis further suggests that there are stronger links between cultural differences and political and economic differences than between cultural differences and political and economic discrimination. A second conclusion is that economic *differences* are more resistant to change than are political differences and discrimination. A third conclusion is that in the process of reducing conflict by trying to end *discrimination*, it is important to differentiate between the acceptance of policy change and its implementation. Thus:

'discriminatory barriers have been dismantled in many plural societies and politics of accommodation and reforms have been adopted, but in the face of great social inertia: formal equality of political and economic opportunity leads with glacial slowness toward power

sharing and material *well being*. In fact there are two sources of inertia: one is the preference of most minority groups to retain a distinct cultural identity even while they improve their political and economic status, and the other is the resistance of the advantaged groups against erosion of their position and privileges.' (1993: 37)

A fourth conclusion is that the role of the state is crucial to the ways in which differences which can potentially lead to conflict are either addressed or fail to be addressed, thereby fuelling or dampening that potential. In that context, Gurr argues that 'strong states have the capacity both to suppress rebellions and to make significant concessions to protestors, weak states may be unable to do either' (1993: 91).

It does not necessarily follow that deprivation and frustration will lead to conflict. As Bangura suggests:

'The basic argument is that large numbers of people do not benefit from development, face a crisis of identity when they are uprooted from traditional life or simply find it difficult to satisfy their ambitions when confronted with the pressures of modernity. The result is relative deprivation which generates feelings of frustration and a desire to express them in aggressive ways... Yet processes of deprivation and alienation do not always push their victims towards political violence but towards apathy or random violence and the leadership of many violence-prone groups is often drawn from individuals who could secure adequate livelihoods from or access to the political systems they challenge.' (1994: 23)

However, one needs to avoid the simplistic view that economic and/or political differences between ethnic groups will necessarily lead to or act as a catalyst for open ethnic conflict. As Bangura argues, 'although many ethnic conflicts erupt spontaneously, most need political entrepreneurs or mobilisers, a network of organizations and a discourse (or set of principles or ideas) to activate them'. Ethnicity may be used to 'mask class interests or prevent social groups in different ethnic formations from organising along common class lines' (1994: 9).

The importance of perceptions

It is not only the reality of differences – in rights and levels of development – which can cause or contribute to conflict. Perceptions – of differences between groups, of who has and can influence both economic and political power, and of the likelihood of action achieving results – are important, in some cases perhaps more important than the reality. Thus Gurr argues that 'the extent of a communal group's collective disadvantage *vis-à-vis* other groups is a principal source of its members' grievances and perceptions that they have a common interest in collective action'.

Likewise, Stavenhagen states that 'it is precisely when a democratic system is perceived by one ethnic group to work to its disadvantage that ethnic conflict can emerge – as Fiji and Guyana demonstrate' (1996: 278). Or, as Young puts it (1994: 29):

'Few, if any, state policies will be absolutely neutral in their distributive effects among ethnic groups. What matters, then, is whether the ethnic distributive effect is widely perceived as a product of deliberate bias towards those groups with favoured access to the state and whether offsetting or compensating policies are undertaken to redress imbalance rated by a given policy (the location of a major infrastructural project for example).'

Faulty understanding and monitoring of development

One country in which case-study work has been undertaken is Rwanda. In one study, Uvin argues that two development or developmentally linked factors in Rwanda have been given little attention but, in his view, are of major importance. The first is what he terms the ways in which development agents seemed to have been blind to (or failed sufficiently to understand) the issue of ethnicity, and the second the way the Rwandan state reinforced and exacerbated the problems of poverty and exclusion, not least because of the skewed priority given to security issues. Thus Uvin argues that the Rwandan genocide

'was the extreme outcome of the failure of a development model that was based on ethnic, regional and social exclusion; that increased deprivation, humiliation and vulnerability of the poor; that allowed state-instigated racism and discrimination to continue unabated; that was top-down and authoritarian; and that left the masses uninformed, uneducated and unable to resist orders and slogans. It was also the failure of a practice of development cooperation based on ethnic amnesia, technocracy and political blindness.' (1996: 34)

However, as with other major studies reviewed here, the problems are viewed as highly complex. In this context, Uvin suggests that a complete analysis lies in

'a combination of extreme pauperisation and reduction in life chances of the poor, especially from 1985 onwards; the FPR invasion and civil war which followed; an uninformed and uneducated mass peasantry treated in an oppressive, authoritarian and condescending manner; a history of immunity, human rights violations, corruption, and abuse of power; a deep-felt frustration and cynicism by many poor people; rapidly growing regional, ethnic and social inequality;

*ity; political strategies employed by small elite groups in search of protection against the pressures of discontent and democratisation; the existence of past and current acts of violence; and a history of institutionalised, state-sponsored racism and discrimination.'*³⁸ (1996: 2)

Policy conclusions

However complex and difficult to unravel are the causal links between the lack or violation of minority rights, underdevelopment and conflict, a dominant policy conclusion is to encourage the implementation of policies that encourage economic growth and development. Thus, the 1997 study on minorities in Europe by the Netherlands Advisory Committee on Human Rights and Foreign Policy commented:

'As a rule, minorities have to contend with the problem of economic deprivation. The pattern is as follows: an economic recession occurs which exacerbates their problems; intolerance of minorities increases further with lack of work and economic hardship affecting the most vulnerable groups which generally includes national minorities... It is the view of the AC that the Netherlands Government should direct its efforts towards helping to promote the prosperity in countries with minorities problems.' (1997: 23)

However, what is often left insufficiently analysed is both the distributional consequences of trying to accelerate growth without specific targeting of assistance to deprived groups and whether sufficient resources will be provided to bridge both gaps and perceptions. Indeed, other studies, such as those on Malaysia (see Samarasinghe and Coughlan, 1991; Faaland *et al.*, 1990), highlight the importance of tempering strategies aimed at maximizing economic growth with strategies aimed at ensuring a more equal ethnic balance in terms of the fruits of development – the argument being that if short-term growth had not been lowered, political unrest, and even violence, likely to result from growing inequalities would have led to severe economic disruption and far greater costs. In short, the issues raised in the discussion above on adjustment and globalization need to be revisited.

For their part, Ghai and de Alcántara (1994) propose the following measures, policies and circumstances which tend to lead to an accommodation of ethnic tensions and reduce the likelihood of conflict:

- the existence of the rule of law, respect for fundamental human rights and an independent judiciary in order to ease minorities' fears that they will be victimized and discriminated against;

- broad-based and sustained economic growth, because this both increases well-being and gives the government access to resources to meet some of the demands of particular ethnic groups;
- experiences from some countries indicate that systems of government characterized by power-sharing between the centre and regions can be effective in easing ethnic tensions;³⁹
- encouraging the development of a dense network of advocacy groups is another central element in the search for new approaches and solutions to ethnic tensions; and,
- major attention should be given to an expansion of educational opportunities for minority groups. (1994: 27-28)

Expanding this last point, it may seem self-evident that one way of easing tension and reducing the likelihood of ethnic tension spilling over into overt conflict would be to target deprived minority groups for preferential treatment – not merely in terms of education, but in housing and employment. Though the case for such action is strong, Young points to a series of problems in trying to implement it (1994: 33):

- the difficulty of defining the beneficiary group so that only the disadvantaged benefit;
- a tendency to foster rigid group categories with an entrenched interest in defending their allocations;
- a propensity to advantage the more privileged segment of beneficiary groups (presumably because they can position themselves to gain with their greater skills);
- the risk of alienating those who believe their life chances are curtailed by affirmative action; and
- the difficulty of defining the criteria for determining when such measures, invariably argued as transitional and temporary, are no longer required.

As noted above, the linked issues of minority rights, conflict and development are characterized, on the one hand, by a more than usual degree of complexity and, on the other, by a lack of sufficiently detailed case-study work to provide the data to attempt to draw out general themes. Even a book-length study of development and ethnicity in Malaysia came to the conclusion that there remained a lack of sufficient data with which to reach firm conclusions, not only on links between cause and effect but even to understand what has happened historically. Clearly, therefore, there is a strong case for further research to be undertaken in this area.

7 Current Donor Approaches and Attitudes to Minority Rights and Development

One of the central components of the proposed MRG initiative, *Minority Rights and Development: A Three Year Programme*, is to encourage donors, including NGOs, to focus more directly and systematically on the linked issues of minority rights and development, with the aim of encouraging them individually, and eventually as a group, to 'mainstream' minorities, minority rights and development. The purpose of this section is to provide some tentative thoughts on where donors and NGOs currently stand on these linked issues. There are three characteristics, mostly positive, to report.

First, an increasing number of donors, and some NGOs, have now broadly accepted that their work in and for development is linked to human rights issues and that human rights embrace not merely civil and political but also economic, social and cultural rights. In the growing priority which most (though not all) donors are now giving to poverty and its elimination, there is, similarly, an increasing acceptance that poverty and the problems of human rights are linked.⁴⁰

There remain, however, often large gaps between theory and practice. Thus within development agencies, there usually continue to be discontinuities between individuals and departments whose work focuses on what have been termed 'traditional' human rights, embracing political and civil rights, and those whose work has focused on 'development' work, which is not widely seen as having a direct link to 'human rights' activities. As Steiner and Alston have argued (1996: 256), the official position is that economic and social rights, on the one hand, and civil and political rights, on the other, are, in the words of the Second World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, 'universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated' (Vienna Declaration, para. 5). But this masks a deep and enduring disagreement over the 'proper' status of economic, social and cultural rights. At one extreme lies the view that *these* rights are superior to civil and political rights, both in terms of an appropriate value hierarchy and chronologically. At the other, we find the view that economic and social rights do not constitute rights at all, as properly understood, but rather provide an excuse to downgrade the importance of civil and political rights.

In practice, the great majority of governments have taken an intermediate position. This has involved:

- 1 support for the equal status and importance of economic and social rights – as of September 1995, 132 states were parties to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); together with
- 2 failure to take particular steps to entrench those rights constitutionally, to adopt any legislative or administrative provisions based explicitly on the recognition of specific economic and social rights as human rights, or to provide effective means of redress to individuals or groups alleging violations of those rights.⁴¹

Second, within that context some (though still currently a minority) of donors (and NGOs) have explicitly focused on the problems of minorities, mostly to highlight and to try to address the poverty problems of minority groups or – and the distinction is important – individual members of minority groups, but in some cases to focus on human rights problems faced by minorities. It has, however, been more common for both donors and NGOs to focus on different indigenous peoples (IPs), with a concentration in Latin America, where a major initiative has involved efforts to empower these groups.

Thirdly, there is a significant gap between growing acceptance in theory of the need to focus not only on the links between human rights and development issues and what is happening on the ground both in terms of analysis and practical policies and programmes, and openness to the notion of working in this context with minorities, especially if it can be shown that they form a particularly important cluster of deprived/marginalized and poor people.

The following examples illustrate and expand on these developments.

A growing number of bilateral donors have now formally acknowledged that there is a link between their work for human rights and their work in and for development. Within this grouping, some donors have explicitly stated that, in their view, there is a need to focus on *all*

human rights. Thus, for Norway, not only are development and human rights closely linked, but in the debate about civil and political and economic, social and cultural rights, it is not 'a question of either/or' (Johnson, 1998). Canadian policy explicitly recognizes the promotion of human rights as a major objective, dating back to the Winegard Report, which 'postulated that respect for HRs is one of the most important conditions for a true development process'. The Report recommended that HR criteria be developed coherently as part of overall Canadian policy and that these be applied in a universal, 'consistent and transparent manner' (Tomaševski, 1993: 89). Likewise for Switzerland, 'promoting civil and political rights and promoting economic, social and cultural rights are therefore important for development' (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), 1997: 5), while Australia speaks of the 'indivisibility of human rights',⁴¹ and a recent UK White Paper refers to the need for the UK to deploy its diplomatic, development and military instruments in a coherent and consistent manner to 'protect and promote the full enjoyment of all human rights' (United Kingdom 1997: 69).

More widely, since its November 1991 *Resolution on Human Rights and Democracy and Development*, the European Union has

'placed human rights and democracy at the heart of its development cooperation policy. It has two implications. First, the Resolution confirms the relationship between human rights, accountable government and development. Second, it comprehensively defines this relationship to include both proactive and reactive measures that together tackle the problems associated with development cooperation.' (Steiner and Alston, 1996: 862)

Thus, Article 5 of Lome IV reads:

'Cooperation shall be directed towards development centred on man, the main protagonist and beneficiary of development which thus entails respect for and promotion of all human rights... The rights in question are all human rights, the various categories thereof being indivisible and interrelated, each having its own legitimacy; non-discriminatory treatment, fundamental human rights; civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights.'

One of the NGOs which has gone furthest in its attempt to link its human rights and development work is the Dutch co-financing organization Novib.

Novib considers human rights as an important instrument in achieving the state of sustainable development it advocates: through empowering and educating people as well as

strengthening civil society... In addition, Novib regards respect for human rights as an important condition for development... Hence respect for human rights is not perceived as an aim in itself, but as a means to achieving sustainable development.' (1997: 15-16)

Some donors have indicated that efforts to focus more directly on the link between human rights and development could well lead to their having to alter (perhaps radically) their whole approach to development. For instance, in the Netherlands, in his 1990 publication *A World of Difference*, Minister Pronk hinted that

'development cooperation may be used to create the direct and indirect conditions to ensure that respect for economic, social and cultural human rights is firmly anchored in society. This... calls for an enabling, structural strategy... rather than an incidental approach inspired by impatience and the superficial assumption that democratisation is a simple process.'

In similar vein, a paper prepared for UNICEF focusing on reaching the poorest and most marginalized among ethnic minorities suggests not merely that its new approach is likely to be more expensive and time-consuming, but that adopting an explicit human rights perspective may well mean that UNICEF will need to 'engage in new areas of programming not previously undertaken because they did not belong within an ideology of meeting basic needs.' (Farzanegan, 1998: 3).

While in their focus on poverty many donors now speak of targeting their development programmes at the marginalized, a far smaller number have explicitly drawn attention to minorities. One of these is New Zealand. For New Zealand, the principal purpose of aid is to 'to achieve lasting improvements in the living conditions of present and future generations of people of developing countries, especially the poor... This includes efforts to increase the self reliance and standard of living of disadvantaged groups through improving their access and control over resources.' It is within this context that explicit mention is made of minorities. Thus:

'ODA has a particular role in supporting the efforts of those countries and communities that are less able to benefit from the new global economic trade and investment environment... In all situations, women and particular groups within societies such as ethnic minorities, urban squatters, those living in outer islands and migrants face political, social, cultural and economic barriers to full participation in their societies. NZODA will aim to assist countries and social groups within countries which face particular constraints on their full participation in society

and the global economy.' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 1996: 10 and 12)

More explicit still is the Dutch co-financing organization Bilance (formerly CEBEMO), which has chosen to work with and target assistance at two groups, one the urban poor, and the other the 'culturally marginalized', explicitly chosen because the groups consist of those 'who are not accepted by the dominant culture in society'.

As noted above, it has not been on minorities that donors and NGOs have focused so prominently, but on indigenous peoples (IPs). While a number of bilateral donors and NGOs have run specific programmes for IPs for a decade or more (in Norway's case since the 1970s), it has been some of the more prominent multilateral donors who have produced the most thoughtful, and thought-provoking, analyses on work with IPs. Analyses by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank from the late 1970s onwards which focused explicitly on IPs came to the profoundly worrying conclusion that there is a high risk that IPs (sometimes referred to as tribal peoples) were often likely to be harmed by both wider development initiatives and aid programmes unless special measures were taken to protect them.

In the case of the World Bank this led to Operational Directive 4.20, which

'provides policy guidance to ensure the IPs benefit from development projects and to avoid or mitigate potentially adverse effects on IPs because of Bank-assisted activities. In all Bank-financed projects which impact IPs, there should be either a component to address the needs of IPs or an IP development plan (IPDP) included in the project with informed participation of IPs in the preparation of development plans.' (Partridge et al., 1996: 21)

In turn, this was linked and in part led to the notion that development agencies needed to ensure at minimum that the aid and assistance they provided did 'no harm', either to those being directly 'assisted' or to those indirectly affected by aid or, more widely, by the process of development.

Oddly, these strong statements and approaches by leading multilateral agencies do not seem to have been followed by a similarly strong or consistent approach from many bilateral agencies. One exception is Switzerland, which speaks of the need to 'prevent the negative effects of projects and programmes' (SDC, 1997: 9). In the case of Denmark, country strategy papers including an analysis of the situation of IPs will take place 'where necessary', though it is stated more strongly that 'the promotion of rights of IPs forms an integral part of the implementation of the general objectives of development assistance policy,

that is, to promote the respect for human rights and democratic development in Danish programme countries' (Danida, 1994: 14).

What seems surprising, and of central importance to this paper, are the relatively few examples of donors or NGOs extending their interest in IPs, their development and their human rights problems more widely to minorities.

As noted above, Article 5 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (47/135 of 18 December 1992) states that:

- 1 *'National policies and programmes shall be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.'*
- 2 *Programmes of co-operation and assistance among States should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.'*

This was confirmed in its Resolution 1997/16, which

'Reaffirms the obligation of States to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law in accordance with the Declaration of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities.'

Freeman (1995) contends that 'the most important minority-rights provision in international law is Article 27 of the ICCPR which declares that *persons* belonging to certain minorities shall not be denied the right *in community with others* to participate in the culture of their group. Some commentators (Thornberry) have argued that Article 27 'bears a collectivist interpretation but the extent to which it does is uncertain' (in Beetham, 1995: 27). This is supported by Poulter, who argues that

'Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), for the first time, contained a provision seeking to guarantee the protection of minorities and their separate identity in a treaty intended to be of universal application' (1998: 79)

*In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion or to use their own language.'*⁴³

An initial review of recent policy statements of many leading donors suggests that:⁴⁴

- few, if any, donors would appear to assess either the direct or the indirect effects of their aid programmes on minorities in the countries in which they provide significant volumes of aid – even if they are aware of the need to undertake a limited assessment of the impact of aid on IPs;
- there is little firm evidence to suggest that donors discuss whether host governments evaluate national development policies, taking due regard of the interests of minorities as a prior condition for providing aid;
- there is little evidence to suggest that either donors or NGOs attempt to assess the socioeconomic and/or political status of minorities when they undertake their own country assessments in order to make a conscious decision whether or not to work with particular minorities, which is linked, at least in part, to the fact that few – if any – of these agencies have allocated special responsibilities for minorities to either specialized individuals and/or departments in order to ensure that at the policy level the agency implements a consistent agency-wide approach.

Two points need to be added. The first – mentioned by at least three readers of an earlier draft of this paper – is that it is crucially important to distinguish between donor statements of policy and their intentions, and what happens on the ground. The common view was that a large gulf exists between rhetoric and reality. While donors may

have gone some way towards articulating the importance of human rights issues in relation to what they intend to do, the view from the ‘field’ is that there is still little evidence to suggest that in practice this perspective is driving their aid and linked interventions.

The second (raised by a reader from a donor agency) stressed the need to emphasize the limits of and constraints on donor action in relation to human rights. As contemporary analyses of the impact of aid more generally are now showing, the early optimism and claims of what aid can do for development have recently been tempered by doses of reality: for instance, Burnside and Dollar’s (1997) World Bank paper, *Aid Policies and Growth*, argues that aid will have a positive impact only if inserted in a setting conducive to its anticipated virtuous impact. Likewise, it is argued that it is unrealistic to expect donor activities on the human rights front to be successful when the context in which human rights interventions are made is particularly hostile.

It is apparent that considerable scope exists for discussion of these differing perceptions.

Novib provides a partial explanation for this. Thus, ‘despite its intention to work on collective and socio-economic rights, Novib has shown a relatively low profile on human rights and development, most likely as a result of a lack of internal educational training, of a common policy framework and a clear position in this field’ (1997: 30).

8 Concluding Comments

The primary purpose of this paper was not to come to firm conclusions on the subject of minority rights and development, but to provide an overview of the complexity of issues to be addressed. Thus, these concluding remarks can be extremely brief.

Five tentative conclusions can be drawn.

The first is that the linked issue of minority rights and development is an immensely important one, not only because of the centrality of the issues raised for the members of minorities – who number tens of millions – but also because it informs and is informed by wider debates on human rights issues, and by debates from within the development profession.

Second, the subject matter clearly covers a wide number of themes encompassed by several key disciplines – economics and other disciplines which have traditionally as well as more recently come to form part of the development profession: law, political science and public administration. This not only means that the subject *has* to be truly multidisciplinary, but this, in turn, requires far more dialogue and discussion across these different disciplines than has been the case thus far. For decades, development studies has claimed to be multidisciplinary, but a gap between theory and practice has persisted. Likewise, for their part, many lawyers and human rights activists need to be made more aware of the dangers of using partial, inaccurate and often shallow studies of development as an uncertain or misguided basis for advocacy work. The discussion on adjustment in this paper (see section 5.2) illustrates these dangers.

Third, and relatedly, in the focus on minorities, minority rights and development, special efforts are required to attempt to bridge two gaps. First, it is important to learn more from minority communities

themselves both of their own understanding of what is important in development and where opportunities might exist or be opened up to accelerate the development process for them and to address major impediments to progress. Second, and relatedly, much work needs to be done analysing the (changing) nature and role of the state, especially in relation to different groups and group interests, of minorities *and* majorities and the interaction between them.

Fourth, as each section of this paper has illustrated, in spite of all the work that has been undertaken, major gaps in our knowledge remain. The link between human rights and development, our understanding of development and development processes, the nature and importance of the link between culture and development, the impact and influence of adjustment and globalization on minorities and the (even more complex) link between ethnicity, minority rights, development and conflict reduction – all these are areas which require further, often cross-disciplinary, work. Given the importance of the issues raised, the case for encouraging further work in these areas is compelling.

Finally, while the review of donor policies and debates within the donor community certainly indicates that there is considerable donor interest in the issues of minority rights and development, it also indicates that there are large gaps in policy and orientation which need urgently to be filled.

It has not been the task of this paper to map out in detail precisely how these different issues might be addressed. These will be taken up in some of the companion documentation being produced by MRG and presented in specific and concrete proposals for a future work and advocacy programme.

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Notes

- 1 The phrase 'ever-widening' refers to the fact that whereas 20 years ago development was dominated by economics, it has become increasingly influenced by other social science disciplines, especially sociology, social anthropology and public administration, by a more liberal approach to political science, and by influences from within the economics profession beyond the Keynesian and neoclassical framework, especially institutional economics.
- 2 Many working in development still equate the term 'human rights' with a narrow focus on civil and political rights, while many human rights activists still equate the word 'development' with a non-participatory process focused narrowly on economic well-being.
- 3 For a full report of the seminar, see MRG (1996) *Minorities and Development: Report on an MRG Seminar*. London: MRG.
- 4 The term 'ethnicity' and its definition are discussed in section 5.3.
- 5 As discussed in later sections, not all minorities are disadvantaged. I am grateful to an anonymous reader of an earlier draft for pointing this out.
- 6 For an excellent overview of the evolution of human rights, see the substantive text by Steiner and Alston (1996).
- 7 This contrasts with an earlier time, in 1966, when two separate treaties – one dealing with economic, social and cultural rights, the other with political and civil rights – were produced.
- 8 The issue of participation is discussed more fully in section 5. Suffice it to say here, and as noted by a reader of an earlier draft of this paper, there is a range of ways in which people can participate in the process of development and in civil society more generally – actively or passively, freely or under coercion, with knowledge or in ignorance, in a one-off manner (by voting in elections) or through a process of more sustained engagement.
- 9 Relatedly, in 1993 the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed the right to development as a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights (see Novib, 1997: 9).
- 10 It should be noted that some of the problems associated with trying to pursue the right to development are shared with efforts to promote economic, social and cultural rights, not least the question of justifiability, including whether courts can and sometimes will provide a remedy for aggrieved individuals claiming a violation of those rights. As Steiner and Alston (1996: 298) argue, the right to development is 'seen by some as a "red herring"; yet others see it as a *conditio sine qua non* for an entitlement to warrant classification as a human right'.
- 11 In some countries (for instance in Asia), a linked problem concerns the failure of some governments to recognize the existence of indigenous groups or peoples.
- 12 United Nations (1991) *Study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities*. New York: United Nations. UN Sales No. E. 91, XIV.2, para 568.
- 13 As one reader of an earlier draft of this paper commented, one of the problems with the discussion of definitions is that the literature has tended to focus on definitions given by outsiders. This needs to be complemented by definitions originating from *within minority communities themselves*. Clearly, what constitutes a minority continues to be an issue under debate and discussion. In a forthcoming report to the UN Special Rapporteur on 'Treaties and Constructive Arrangements between Indigenous Peoples and States', Suhas Chakma undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the complex issues of definitions of minorities and the links between indigenous people and minorities – not least the complexities originating in the fact that in some parts of the world, not least in South Asia, there continue to be indigenous people among whom distinct minority groups are found.
- 14 The link between participation and minorities (and using similar language) is made more explicitly in the Declaration from the World Summit of Social Development. Thus nations have pledged themselves to:
'recognise and respect cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities and take measures to facilitate their full participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of their societies and in the economic progress and social development of their countries...' (1995: 18)
- 15 Are minorities the poorest of the poor? Work by UNRISD in India indicates that as tribal peoples are not part of the dominant social groups and social systems,
'and thus legitimately 'exploitable' in the eyes of many non-tribal people, the tribal communities have, on the other hand, not suffered as much from the multiple fragmenting forces that operate in wider Indian society. Their strong sense of community and tradition of collective problem solving has given them a definite advantage over other groups of rural poor... Yet this strong sense of ethnic group identity, which facilitates in initial stages the emergence of participatory movements of rural poor, easily acquires exclusionist and xenophobic traits which blur class analysis and prevent the extension of the initial movement at a later stage of development to non-tribal sections of the rural poor.' (Stiefel and Wolfe, 1994: 71)
- 16 The study of Malaysia by Faaland et al. (1990) stands out as a partial and quite rare exception.
- 17 Even authors unsympathetic to human rights approaches to development, such as O'Neill, who has been highly critical of the narrowness of human rights approaches, based on a starting point rooted in Kantian ethics, argues forcefully that interventions need to be based on the need to avoid harm and prevent injury (1995: 5, 165 and 191):
'justice requires the rejection of principles of injury, hence the avoidance of action that injures either systematically or gratuitously.'
'Broadly speaking, just action aims to develop institutions and practices which effectively limit and prevent injury to all who fall within the scope of ethical consideration – on whatever side of various borders their lives are led. Although principles of justice do not provide a precise set of instructions, they set standards for building and maintaining institutions and cultures; their implications will differ in differing conditions.'
Commitment to non-injury calls for living in ways that always favour non-injury over injury. It calls for example to pacifism, non-retaliation and acceptance of any injustice to self or others which persuasion cannot avert. Commitment to rejecting injury demands less: it is a matter of not making a principle of injury fundamental to lives, institutions or practices... Commitment to universal principles of justice is

- most effectively expressed through specific institutions that limit risk to injury, so helping to secure and maintain basic capacities and capabilities for action for all.'
- 18 In a fast-growing literature, two influential works have been Waters (1995) and Escobar (1995).
 - 19 The following paragraphs provide an extremely truncated summary of substantive literatures and sub-literatures within and across development. For readers from the development profession they will appear ridiculously simplistic and lacking in nuanced qualification.
 - 20 At the local level, major emphasis was placed on participatory planning, appraisal and linked approaches, including stakeholder analysis. See World Bank (1995).
 - 21 Benedict's influential anthropological study *Patterns of Culture*, first published in the 1930s, represents an early study of cultural influences and clashes.
 - 22 Significant space is given to Stavenhagen's views, both because they provide a succinct summary of a number of the key issues of central importance to this discussion, and because, in the view of the current author, his approach provides a sound basis for further work and future discussion.
 - 23 This is a major strand in Escobar's (1995) *Encountering Development*. Thus he writes that 'this book can be read as the history of the loss of an illusion in which many genuinely believed. Above all, however, it is about how the "third world" has been produced by the discourses and practices of development since their inception in the early post-World War II period' (p. 4). One of Escobar's purposes is to try to outline a 'post-development' regime of representation and to 'investigate and pursue alternative practices in the context of today's social movements' (p. 11).
 - 24 In his review of development in Latin America, Deruyttere writes (1997: 10 and 11):
'Past efforts to improve the situation of IP were often based on the notion that in order to benefit from development they needed to sacrifice their culture and identity and become integrated or assimilated into the nation's economy and society... [The] virtuous circle between culture and development can be achieved only to the extent that development experts understand the local culture and create genuine opportunities for participation not only in project implementation but also in project identification and design'
 - 25 Dwyer and Drakis-Smith believe the problem is widespread (1996: 4):
'in "developing countries" development programmes frequently are controlled and administered at the higher levels by members of the politically dominant ethnic group; and most of the fruits of such development flow into the pockets of a tiny ethnic elite, or, at best, are distributed in a limited manner within the same ethnic group'.
 - 26 Thus in an early draft of the 1998 *World Development Report*, the Bank states frankly that 'while there is agreement among economists that a key cause of growth is "getting the institutions right", there is little agreement about what are the essential institutions'. A recent, and strikingly honest, example of this comes from a speech given by the Bank's chief economist in January 1998 where, *inter alia*, he stated that (Stiglitz, 1998: 28):
'We seek increases in living standards – improved health and education – not just increases in measured GDP. We seek sustainable development, which includes preserving our natural resources and maintaining a healthy environment. We seek equitable development which ensures that all groups in society enjoy the fruits of development, not just the few at the top. And we seek democratic development, in which citizens participate in a variety of ways in making the decisions which affect their lives. [However]... we must recognise that given our highly multi-dimensional objectives, not all policies will contribute to all objectives. There will be trade-offs and hard choices. We need to improve our understanding of these inevitable trade-offs if we are going to be able to make more informed choices in the future.'
 - 27 Likewise, Roper et al. (1996) argue that improving the socioeconomic status of IPs in Latin America increasingly necessitates efforts to improve the position of IPs within the broader market economy.
 - 28 A. O. Hirschman (1970) *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
 - 29 However, Putnam's views have by no means been universally accepted. Thus, as Harriss and de Renzio (1998) argue,
'much of the enthusiasm for Putnam's ideas and for the concept of social capital derives from the belief that they suggest either an alternative at least to the central government part of the state, or the means of improving the quality of government in general. What his critics suggest is not that the features of social organization, such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation are unimportant but that they are actually very powerfully influenced by political institutions, including state institutions. Development interventions which are aimed at creating social capital, therefore – as for example, in programmes of support for associations of civil society – could miss the mark.'
As Tandler argues, "the causal relationships between good government and civil society were anything but unidirectional' (1997: 156).
 - 30 The theme of decentralization takes us back to the debate about civil society. In a recent discussion of the issue, Tandler (1997) takes issue with Putnam's thesis to argue that the process of decentralization requires not less control and monitoring and guidance from the centre, but more if it is to be effective. This reinforces the view that a strategy to advance the interest of minorities based narrowly on trying to achieve gains at the local level would be far from optimal.
 - 31 A virtuous circle occurs when high levels of human development lead to high growth, and high growth in turn further promotes higher levels of human development. Conversely, a vicious cycle occurs when weak human development results in low growth which adversely influences poor progress towards improvements in human development.
 - 32 In support of this, they cite a study by Echevarri-Gent in India and the US which argues:
'the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes has important consequences for the political mobilisation of the poor. Each programme, to a greater or lesser extent, shaped the rural poor's perception of common interests, as well as their organisation mobilisation, and opportunities for collective action... as (political) parties take advantage of the opportunities provided by the programmes to mobilise support from the poor, they become less dependent upon the support of other groups.' (Echevarri-Gent, 1993)
 - 33 Relatedly, a timely article by Cooke provides an important historical perspective on the debate about participation and participation methods, arguing that participatory processes are not necessarily as 'virtuous' as most contemporary advocates might suggest, and were used as a form of brain-washing.
'Like other technologies, participatory processes are never value free or neutral in their application... These technologies can be used to promote values and interests other than those for which they were invented. Thus, from a radical perspective, participatory processes may still be necessary, but they are no longer sufficient in themselves to identify what is happening as radical.' (1998: 51)
 - 34 Oman provides a useful working definition of globalization which tries to capture both the continuous and discontinuous aspects of the process:

'Globalization is the growth, or more precisely the accelerated growth of economic activity across national and regional political boundaries. It finds expression in the increased movement of tangible and intangible goods and services, including ownership rights, via trade and investment, and often of people, via migration... The actions of individual economic actors, firms, banks, people, drive it, usually in pursuit of profit, often spurred by the pressures of competition. Globalization is thus a centrifugal process, a process of economic outreach and a microeconomic phenomenon...

Rapid and pervasive technological change, notably in the application of microelectronics, and changes in government policies, notably market deregulation, have visibly shaped and given impulse to a new wave of globalization since the late 1970s. Equally important is far-reaching change within industrial organisation, i.e. the way activity is organized within firms and the way firms cooperate and compete. This change blurs the very distinction between industry and services. More than any other, it disrupts entrenched oligopolies and alters rules of the game across many sectors worldwide.' (1996: 6ff)

- 35 Thus, in his study on migration, Van Hear suggests that 'a potential cocktail of increased pressure to migrate set against hardening barriers to immigration is thus developing: more and more potential migrants are emerging but there is "nowhere for them to go".' (1994: 2)
- 36 Whereas the word 'friction' is used to apply to both tense human interaction and the coming together of especially non-lubricated inanimate objects, the word conflict is not usually used to refer to the latter.
- 37 The discussion in this section takes as read the discussion (in section 5.3 above) of ethnicity and its definition which also touched on the issue of ethnic conflict.
- 38 A reader of an earlier draft of this paper pointed out that an additional impact of the Rwandan conflict – one not mentioned in Uvin's analysis – has been the way in which smaller minorities, such as the Batwa, have suffered substantial, and largely unnoticed, loss of life, caught 'in the middle' as 'sub-minorities' within a larger conflict exploited by groups playing on and exploiting larger ethnic rivalries.
- 39 However, Young cautions against simplistic, blanket

formulas. Affirmative action and federalism may appear to be effective in one setting, but be less appropriate in others; constitutional engineering is contentious and often difficult: 'these stubborn facts militate against categorical judgements' (1994: 8).

- 40 For a brief overview of donors and poverty, see *The UK White Paper on International Development – and Beyond*. ODI Briefing Paper, May 1998. London: ODI.
- 41 Tomaševski has been particularly critical of the shallow way in which donors have attempted to promote democracy and human rights. She argues (1993: 13) that: 'at the level of rhetoric, donors are using 'democracy' and 'human rights' interchangeably, while in practice concentrating on support for multi-party elections. This may well result in the replacement of human rights by 'democracy' and the loss of donor interest in human rights once elected governments are in place.
- 'Democracy' (both in rhetoric and practice) has been confined to electorism where countries are labelled 'democratic' as soon as elections have taken place. The fact that democracy takes centuries to develop (to which donors can testify themselves) is forgotten.
 - It is assumed that such instant 'democracies' can and will guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms. Both history and the multitude of current examples prove this assumption to be erroneous.'
- 42 Speech by Minister Downer, 'Promoting Good Governance and Human Rights Through the Aid Program', 27 August 1997.
- 43 Poulter quotes Thornberry's (1991) comment on Article 27 as 'a hybrid between individual and collective rights because of the "community" requirement; the right of a member of a minority is not exercised alone; enjoyment of culture, practice of religion and use of language presupposes a community of individuals endowed with similar rights. The rights may, therefore, be described as benefiting individuals but requiring collective exercise' (p. 80)
- 44 It should be stressed that this was not a comprehensive survey of all donor policy statements. Thus a more comprehensive survey might lead to a qualification of these generalizations.

Minorities, Minority Rights and Development: An issues paper is part of a 3-4 year programme of work which MRG is beginning with partners to improve the access to development opportunities of poor and marginalized minority communities. Four research papers (of which this is the first) will be combined with country/communities case-studies and studies documenting particular minority perspectives on recent development activities. This detailed research will form the basis for a concerted lobbying effort involving minority communities themselves as well as MRG staff and targeting donor Non-Governmental Agencies, Inter-Governmental Agencies and Governments.

MRG is currently seeking partners who could work with us to:

- review this programme and work with us to ensure that it involves minority communities in all aspects of the work and that the outcomes are useful to minority communities and can be sustained by them.

- document minority community experiences of development both positive and negative in a brief format which could be published and widely disseminated.
- research and analyse the needs and wishes of minorities in a country or community to develop a policy document to influence major donors already funding work in that area.
- based on the above research and publications take issues to international fora, carry out advocacy and lobbying work, nationally and internationally on minority rights and development issues.
- attend a workshop to take place in April 1999 to discuss with a wide group of potential partners how these activities and others can best be taken forward to make a difference to poor minority communities worldwide.

Most people will only be able to help in one or two of these ways. If you would like to become involved, or would be interested in receiving future publications, please contact us.