This book newly addresses the question about the Christian churches’ participation in development. The innovative element of this reflection is the way in which the author finds meaning and significance particularly in the concept of a fourth generation approach to strategic development engagement. The book’s essential argument is that a fourth generation strategy – an approach that makes the contemporary social or people’s movements the primary subjects of its development action and theory – holds the greatest prospect for authentic participation by the Christian churches in development. Development, now more than anything else, is viewed in terms of a ‘politics of ideas’, as a condition of change to be brought about by the power of ideas, values, (transformed) relationships and communication. And it is to this sphere of expertise, the ‘unlimited space’ of social life that it can be argued the churches (and religion in general) also belong. While the notions of ‘idea’ and ‘value institutions’ cannot define them completely (as they are from a sociological and theological point of view also many other things), the churches can (at their best) be defined as institutions that are educated in their own distinctive way in a ‘politics of ideas’, and which may rightly perceive their primary task to be the changing of minds, conscience and behaviour of human beings and (other) institutions (e.g. the state and government).

Finding initial orientation and perspective in the debate on development in the Christian ecumenical movement, the book proceeds to find a further deepening and innovative perspective in the contemporary NGO and related people-centred debate on development but also a wider selection of debates from the social sciences literature. On the basis of this exploration a synthesis of perspectives is offered whereby four areas or beacons of meaningful development action by the churches – the new social movements, the new communication solidarities, alternative development policy and ‘soft culture’ – are highlighted and discussed in particular.

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THE CHURCHES
AND
THE DEVELOPMENT DEBATE

PERSPECTIVES ON A
FOURTH GENERATION APPROACH

Ignatius Swart
The Churches and the Development Debate: Perspectives on a fourth generation approach

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Dedicated to my wife and daughters:
Karen, Clara-Mari and Jacqueline
This book is the revised version of my doctoral dissertation (Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies) that was submitted at the University of Stellenbosch in 2000 under the title, *The Churches and the Development Debate: The promise of a fourth generation approach*. The decision to publish the dissertation five years after the initial submission stems from my conviction that its essential argument of a fourth generation approach to strategic development involvement remains as valid and important as before. As the recalling of the ecumenical interest in the issue of development in this book clearly testifies, Christian theology and the community of churches that it aspires to serve can by no means be regarded as mere newcomers to the debate on and practical concern with development. Although perhaps often sidelined by the mainstream (secular) actors in the development enterprise, the contribution of this sector to the advancement of a people-centred development discourse and practice – which is nothing less that an overt agenda for greater justice, sustainability and inclusiveness in our contemporary society – cannot be underestimated.

I for one remain convinced about the contribution that the Christian theological and church sector could make to the ideal of meaningful development. Whereas this statement can be taken as a reference to society in general, I specifically also have in view here my own South African context in which a concern with development has today, perhaps more than anywhere else in the world, become a noticeable issue of concern in academic theological and religious reflection. Indeed, I would like to go so far as to claim that in the context of South Africa this newly found interest in the issue of development could be seen as an integral and significant part of the post-apartheid quest for new constructive social discourse, a discourse that in short may contribute meaningfully to the challenge of social reconstruction and positive societal change.

The argument for an investment in fourth generation modes of thinking about and participation in development in this book – an understanding of strategic development involvement that has been formulated first in the work of well-known alternative social thinker David Korten but which also underlies the thinking in a larger corpus of social sciences literature – I believe challenges the Christian theological and church sector in South Africa and elsewhere in a radical way. My underlying thesis in this book is that it captures a new mode of authentic participation for the churches in development, yet it is at the same time a mode of participation that challenges the very nature of conventional theological and ecclesiastical thinking and practice. In a nutshell, what is at stake here is nothing less than a new mode of inclusive, participatory and supportive
thinking and action with others in the development sphere, a new mode of solidarity with the agendas of others that is demanded by a new societal epoch.

The publication of this book coincides with and is the direct outcome of the new opportunity I have had in the last three years to work in the Unit for Religion and Development Research at the University of Stellenbosch. This has been made possible by a number of people, whom I sincerely want to thank: Prof. Walter Claassen, vice-rector of research at the University of Stellenbosch, who continues to support my academic career in a considerable way; Prof. Jurgens Hendriks, head of the Dept. of Practical Theology and Missiology at Stellenbosch University, who has been instrumental in my appointment at Stellenbosch; and Drr. Khotso Mokhele and Prins Nevhutalu, respectively President of the National Research Foundation (NRF) and Executive Director: Institutional Capacity Development at the same institution, who have enabled substantial financial support for my appointment at Stellenbosch.

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Ignatius Swart
Stellenbosch 2006
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INTRODUCTION

Any development work of the churches must be seen in the theological and organizational setting of the ecumenical movement, even when not directly connected with that movement. The ecumenical movement has opened new dimensions of awareness to the fundamental issues of the developing world. It has brought into the discussion of Christian responsibility people with radically different perspectives. It has thrown social issues into a new context and given inescapable immediacy and urgency to the plight of the poorer nations. It has brought vitality, and also confusion into the theological and philosophical debates on a Christian understanding of man, society and history. It has also required the forging of new conceptions of the Church and churches’ participation in society. Richard Dickinson (1968:47)

For more reasons than one, the contemporary theological and ecclesiastical concern with the issue of development leads us back to what can be called the ecumenical theological debate on development. We may begin by putting this statement into the following historical perspective:

Firstly, the theological and ecclesiastical concern with development originated within the very realm of what is popularly referred to in Christian theological and church circles as the ‘ecumenical movement’. As indicated in ecumenical literature itself, it is a concern and debate that especially took off after the World Council of Churches’ (WCC’s) World Conference on Church and Society at Geneva in 1966. Consequently, this event marked the beginning of a

1 Whereas development as an officially launched nation-state project is generally recognised to have started after World War II - which is well indicated by the United Nations' partitioning of this official period into a succession of 'development decades' (see, for instance, how this historical determination is indicated in essays by Wolfgang Sachs (1993:1-5; 1993a:102-115) and Gustavo Esteva (1993:6-25) in The Development Dictionary) - it is commonly recognised by writers from the ecumenical movement that the church and theological sector itself only started to engage seriously with the issue of development after the above-mentioned conference at Geneva (see e.g. Dickinson 1991:269; Itty 1974:6-7; 1967:352). This recognition of the churches' ecumenical movement's relatively late entry into the worldwide concern for development (when compared with development's earlier beginnings as an official nation-state project of world-wide proportions) is, for instance, well captured by Ans van der Bent in her book on vital ecumenical concerns: ‘Hardly any theme and concern has been so inadequately handled in official ecumenical statements during the period 1948-1965 than that of economic and integral development. A naïve and romantic conviction prevailed that once poor peoples in the Third World obtain a minimum of technology and are profiting from “the benefits of more-machine-production”, the process of development will move in the right direction and the living standards of a large part of the population will be raised ... Only in 1966 did the Geneva World Conference on Church and Society make a serious attempt on the part of the WCC to understand the revolutionary realities which shape the modern world. It made the issue of world
strikingly fruitful period of reflections and writings on the theme of development within the theological and organisational setting of the WCC, but also other related branches of the ecumenical movement, such as in southeast Asia in particular. Having made this observation, it is necessary to add here that contributions from other representations of Christian theology and the churches only followed at a relatively later stage.

Secondly, the ecumenical movement, through the formations referred to above, presents us with the bulk of theological literature on the theme of development, at least up to a particular point in time. Following from the later entry of other groups into the development debate, we encounter a longer, substantial period of serious grappling with the issue of development only in the case of the above-mentioned movement. What is referred to here is a confined and clearly demarcated core of literature that first of all emerged in the theological and organisational setting of the WCC over the last three to four decades and that in actual fact only encompasses a relatively small group of writers leading the ecumenical debate on development. It is a debate that can be traced back to

2 In the construction of the ecumenical theological debate in the first three chapters of this study, writings and perspectives from the latter branch will accordingly constitute an important complement to those coming from the direct circle of the WCC (see also the next paragraph in the main discussion above for the names of those southeast Asian journals that constitute part of our frame of reference). Having said this, it will be necessary to acknowledge here the prominent place taken by scholars of southeast Asian descent in the conceptualisation over the years of the official WCC perspective on development itself - persons such as Samuel Parmar, C I Itty, C T Kurien, M M Thomas and Gnana Robinson.


(2) Taking the present author's own particular South African theological and church context as a further case in point, it can be noted that a more explicit reflection on the theme of development followed at an even later stage. The first notable initiative here came from a group of researchers (theologians and non-theologians) predominantly from Afrikaner and Dutch Reformed descent, who under the leadership of J J Kritzinger engaged in an extensive research project on the role of religion in development from 1987-1990. While it can be noted that the latter project resulted in a substantial number of articles published on the subject of religion/church and development in the years 1989-1991 (see Kritzinger 1991:10-11), it has, however, been a series of studies and reports emanating from the conferences on 'Church and Development' held annually by the Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa (EFSA) Institute from 1992-1997 that have come to present researchers with the bulk of literature on the theme of religion/church and development in the South African context. (See in this case the following publications that have to date been published by the EFSA Institute: Church and Development: An Interdisciplinary Approach (1992); Transition and Transformation: A Challenge to the Church (1994); The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP): The Role of the Church, Civil Society and NGOs (1995).)

4 See the previous footnote.
articles published in *The Ecumenical Review* as far back as 1967, but also to a series of monographs, collective studies emanating from conferences and consultations on development, and essays in larger works. With regard to the observation of other related ecumenical branches or settings over a similar period, this debate also finds a significant extension in southeast Asian journals such as *Religion and Society* and *Bangalore Theological Forum*, and more recently *Al-Mushir* and *East Asian Pastoral Review*.

Having stated the historical perspective, there may, however, also be a more explicit social theological reason for postulating the ecumenical debate on development as point of orientation. The reason for this is that this debate, from the point of view of a particular ecumenical self-awareness and self-appreciation, anticipates the progressive and innovative stream of thought on development within the broad theological-ecclesiastical sector. As discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two of this study, within the ecumenical theological debate on development one encounters what can be called the ‘pretence of a critical challenge’ posed both to a traditional theological and church sector and a mainstream secular development discourse. Hence, this debate (more than any other account of the development theme in Christianity) anticipates and spells out a new radical *worldly* engagement by the Christian theological and church sector, a new radical social praxis and comprehensive social language that surpasses the traditional confined engagement and language set by the latter sector’s traditional self-containment vis-à-vis the non-ecclesiastical and non-theological world. Accordingly, it is also the radical worldly basis and commitment of that debate that anticipate and spell out a critical disposition by Christian theology and the churches towards the mainstream secular realm, as their entering into the worldly realm and adaptation of new modes of learning.

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5 See especially Vol. 19, No. 4 of *The Ecumenical Review* in which a whole series of articles on development that followed on the 1966 Conference on Church and Society in Geneva can be found. See, for instance, the introductory article by C I Itty (1967:249-353).

6 Ans van der Bent’s critical chapter on development in her book *Vital Ecumenical Concerns* (1986) and Richard Dickinson’s entry on development in *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (1991) constitute the important examples of this third category.

7 See the point made in footnote 2 above about the close association of scholars of southeast Asian descent with the debate on development associated more directly with the WCC. Thus we could recognise amongst the names mentioned in the latter footnote persons such as Samuel Parmar, C T Kurien and M M Thomas, who also figure prominently in these two journals.

8 These two journals may be added to the list as the perspective on development propagated in articles in them articulates the same line of thinking as the corpus of ecumenical literature already mentioned.

9 In his two important essays on the theological foundation of the churches’ participation in development, Trutz Rendtorff stated significantly that the development process had to be seen in its entirety as “a new form of Christian unity in the world” (1971:95; 1969:210).

10 In one of his later writings Richard Dickinson, one of the ecumenical movement’s most prominent spokespersons on development over the last three to four decades, writes that for the ecumenical churches the germane issue in development was no longer *whether* they should be in solidarity with the poor, but *how* (1983:71).
and cooperation with other worldly actors enable them to engage in such a critical way.

On the basis of its own ecumenical inclination, this study finds its critical point of departure in the ecumenical development debate demarcated above. More specifically, it takes as a central concept the notion of charity, which in the ecumenical development debate came to conceptualise a mode of ecclesiastical understanding and involvement that once again problematises the church sector's meaningful engagement with the problems of poverty and socio-economic deprivation. It is indicated how within this debate the notion of charity came to denote a particular historical mode of ecclesiastical social engagement and understanding that the ecumenical sector aspired to have surpassed in a later, new (development) era. From this historical point of departure the discussion will then focus on the actual (progressive) contents of the ecumenical theological debate on development. It will analyse the extent in which this debate poses a critical challenge to a historical and traditional theological and ecclesiastical social involvement and understanding, but also a challenge to a mainstream secular development discourse.

Besides setting out the above charity-development juxtaposition in the framework of a particular ecumenical historical consciousness, the intention of the discussion is also to show how a development involvement by the churches would once again be problematised in the ecumenical development debate by what has been termed the pragmatic debate. In fact, in the discussion on this particular debate it will be pointed out how a culmination point has been reached in the whole ecumenical development debate, as it is once again brought back to a consideration of the very basics of the theological-ecclesiastical debate on development against the background of the already identified charity-development juxtaposition. It will be argued and illustrated how the pragmatic debate, in a most meaningful and critical way, brings us back to a consideration of the actual praxis of the churches that has occurred in the name of development. This includes (i) questions about the actual contents of the churches' development work, (ii) questions about whether the churches' involvement in the area of poverty alleviation could in fact be accounted for as development, (iii) questions about whether the development work undertaken by the churches did in fact articulate the radical worldly engagement and progressive development discourse set forth by the ecumenical position, and ultimately (iv) questions about whether the churches' apparent involvement in development did in fact reflect something new, more critical and profound than its former engagement with the poor and deprived through the historical mode of charity work.

Following from the above exposition it can be said that this study is primarily concerned with the question of development strategy, development praxis and the
modes of authentic development engagement by the Christian churches in particular. It undertakes such an exercise in an abstract and generalising manner by not engaging in specific case studies as such, but by applying particular critical aspects of the ecumenical development debate to reflect on the churches’ meaningful participation in development. However, in this study’s endeavour to think critically and anew about the churches’ participation in development, such an application of the ecumenical development debate only represents a first stage. In compliance with its ecumenical and interdisciplinary intentions,11 this study’s aim is to reflect in a further deepening sense on the participation of the churches in development from the point of view of a broader NGO and related people-centred development debate in contemporary development theory, particularly from what has been conceptualised as the third and fourth generation approaches or strategies in this theoretical framework.

Pointing out in further discussion how a charity-development juxtaposition similar to that in the ecumenical development debate can be traced in a broader NGO development debate, this study proceeds to find a further deepening and innovative perspective that was first formulated in the work of David Korten.12 It indicates how Korten, a foremost exponent of an emerging ‘people-centred development’ theoretical corpus, would himself come to problematise NGO development work in terms of what he identified as first generation strategies of relief and welfare activity and second generation strategies of (local) community development involvement. From this basic point of departure, the study indicates how, in Korten’s case, this identification has come to form part of a particular stratified and historical scheme that in the NGO development debate not merely reflects the initial line of problematisation (that is, the problem of a charity-development juxtaposition). The study in an innovative way also comes to conceptualise a mode of authentic NGO development activity that goes beyond such an initial problematisation to articulate so-called third generation strategies of sustainable systems development activity.

In a first round of argumentation this study wants to put forward Korten’s framework of three generations of NGO development strategies as also particularly significant for the theological-ecclesiastical development debate. It is argued here, firstly, that Korten’s perspective could be taken as representative of

11 Here the notions of ecumenicity and interdisciplinarity closely follow the position in earlier ecumenical development debates that state that a meaningful ecclesiastical and theological understanding and engagement could only come from this sector’s cooperation and integration with the other (non-theological) actors or disciplines in the development field. It asks of theology to take on a supra-ecclesiastical identity, which in fact means taking on a non-identifiable character at a certain moment in the whole process, a position of learning in order to come to a higher level of understanding and theorising (see Rendtorff 1971:35, 102; 1969:210, 214-215; see also the discussion in 2.2 of this study).

12 We find the deepening and innovative perspective more specifically and especially in Korten’s, Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda (1990), which represents the culminating point in his strategic thinking on development.
a larger NGO debate that, like the ecumenical development debate, has been grappling with the problem of charity. It is argued that NGOs, like churches, belong to a civil society or voluntary sector that has traditionally been trapped in welfare work and that has only slowly and painfully started to negotiate and define its rightful existence as a political and development actor vis-à-vis the state, government and business sectors. Secondly, and directly related to the first argument, it is argued that we could, in the case of Korten’s perspective, find an attempt at the conceptualisation of a mode of strategic development engagement that deliberately aims to surpass first and second generations of relief and project development work (that is, those in which churches have also remained stuck).

In the light of the above-mentioned correspondence this study wants to argue that Korten’s formulation of a third generation development strategy challenges in an appropriate and meaningful way the theological and church sectors to move towards a level of theoretical and strategic innovation beyond its past and present understanding of, and engagement in, development (as this study concludes with regard to a third generation perspective). Consequently, this study wants to propose that the notion of third generation development strategies challenges the churches to adapt to a far more critical public role, to come to the realisation that their current efforts in development through works of charity and community projects remain unrefined and insufficient. In the positive, strategic sense, it proposes that the churches should realise that they could only play a meaningful structural and transformative role in development if they themselves were to adapt to a third generation mode of engagement through which they would manage, in one way or another, to become part of the policy-making processes at various levels of society (micro, meso and macro).

The discussion will then go on to indicate how Korten’s perspective underwent a further deepening that introduced the NGO development debate to the concept of a fourth generation approach or strategy. Departing from his initial identification of three generations of NGO development strategies,13 it will be pointed out how Korten, in a further development of his own thinking, came to regard the third generation strategy or approach as still having definite shortcomings in terms of an overall theory and strategy of (global) transformation. While attending to the critical problem of institutional and policy constraints in development, the third generation strategy, in Korten’s own critical assessment of it, not only required countless interventions in the institutional and policy processes at macro level (similar to that of the second

13 The original restriction to a third generation perspective in Korten’s thinking is clearly evident from an article written by him that dates back to 1987 (thus only three years before the work mentioned in the previous footnote in which the fourth generation perspective is put forward); the article was entitled, “Third Generation NGO Strategies: A Key to People-centred Development” (in World Development, Vol. 15, Supplement, pp. 145-159).
generation strategy at micro and community levels), but it also had to do so within a basically hostile political and institutional environment. This necessitated a complementary fourth generation strategy that would be able to go beyond the focused initiatives of a third generation strategy and energise a critical mass of independent, coalescing and decentralised initiatives in support of a global social vision for transformation. It points to a strategy or approach – a fourth generation strategy or approach – that ought to make the contemporary social movements the primary subjects of its development action and theory:

Social movements have a special quality. They are driven not by budgets or organizational structures, but rather by ideas, by a vision of a better world. They move on social energy more than on money. The vision mobilizes independent action by countless individuals and organizations across national boundaries, all supporting a shared ideal. Participants in successful movements collaborate in continuously shifting networks and coalitions. They may quarrel over ideological issues and tactics. But where they have been successful, their efforts have generated a reinforcing synergy. (Korten 1990:124)

As indicated by its subtitle, the ultimate aim of this study is to present the perspective of a fourth generation strategy or approach as the mode of development engagement that holds the greatest prospect for authentic participation by the Christian churches in development. Development, as suggested in the above quote from Korten’s book, now more than anything else – and in a still more radical way than in a third generation strategy – has come to be viewed in terms of a politics of ideas’, as a condition of change to be brought about by the power of ideas, values, (transformed) relationships and communication. And it is to this sphere of expertise, this unlimited space of social life that one may argue the churches (and religion in general) also belong. While the notions of ‘idea’ and ‘value institutions’ cannot define them completely (as they are from a sociological and theological point of view also many other things), the churches can (at their best) be defined as institutions that are educated in their own distinctive way in a politics of ideas, and which perceive their primary task to be the changing of minds, conscience and behaviour of human beings and (other) institutions (e.g. the state and government).

At this point it should be pointed out how the notions of ‘limited space’ versus ‘unlimited space’ are especially important to the argument, as they indicate the

14 Here the order (very much in correspondence with the position of churches and religion in general) of ‘structures’ before ‘attitudes’ is actually reversed: the power of ideas/values becomes the precondition for structural change more than the other way around.
significance of a fourth generation strategy as opposed to the third generation strategy for the churches even more than for the NGO and civil society sector in general. While maintaining particular significance as a progressive mode of development engagement, it follows that a third generation strategy still represents a strategy of a limited space, especially for the churches. In this mode of involvement the churches in particular would not only be confronted with a secular, public and organised space that does not readily welcome them as meaningful participants, but at the same time also with a specialised terrain for which they themselves have traditionally displayed few skills and little appreciation and experience. It can be added that it indeed represents a terrain of public activity that for the churches (as in the case of a broader NGO sector) cannot be the beginning and end of a strategy of large-scale transformation, which (a la Korten) has to go beyond such a strategy.

More appropriate for the churches in particular would be the unlimited space of the fourth generation strategy. For here they do not have to be restricted and marginalised by the institutional processes of policy-making. Here they could participate in a larger (transnational) civil society space, in an ‘idea politics’, a ‘movement politics’ in the most radical sense of the word that does not let itself be confined to set places, spaces and institutions. In this sphere they would also find much in common with the new social movements and their supporting actors (e.g. NGOs), who are driven by similar ideals, ideas and values on the issues of peace, human rights, women, environment, democracy, people-centred development, and so on. In this unlimited space they would be able to perform what they in fact can do best, namely appeal to and change the attitudes and consciousness of people across boundaries and cultures. In this space their general, but sometimes also specific, ethical teachings would appeal to a considerable civil society audience that overlaps with their own constituency. And lastly, as also pointed out in this study, in this sphere they would experience an emerging new appraisal of the contribution of religion to development: not only by someone like David Korten, but in fact by what can be called a broader ‘alternative’ intellectual movement in the field of development and the social sciences, which this study will put forward as a further complementary articulation of the fourth generation strategy and vision. According to this study, in this broader ‘alternative dynamics’ religion (and by implication

15 The definition of ‘unlimited space’ at this point correlates well with the notion of ‘transnational civil society space’ that Susanne Hoeber Rudolph discusses in an article on “Transnational Religions and Fading States”. Following the political theorist, Ronnie D. Lipschutz, transnational civil society has, for Hoeber Rudolph, come to denote those emerging and actual ‘self-conscious constructions of networks of knowledge and action, by decentred, local actors that cross the reified boundaries of space as though they were not there’ (1996:317). Importantly, it denotes an emerging and actual transnational activity (of which religion has very much become a part) that is today constantly negotiating its own autonomous position vis-à-vis the state. It is an autonomous position that can be defined as “a space for self-conscious, organized actors to assert themselves for and against state policies, actions, and processes” (ibid).
the churches) is increasingly being recognised as a significant, if not indispensable, actor in promoting (but also resisting) the implementation of particular values (e.g. peace and reconciliation) viewed as the precondition and foundation for meaningful development. In this ‘alternative dynamics’ there is an increasing appreciation of religion’s role in providing the spiritual energy and vision (at least in part) for the collective action and social transformation advocated by the new social movement politics.

Having spelled out in brief what is propagated in this study as the prospects of a fourth generation and, to a lesser extent, third generation development approach for the meaningful participation of the Christian churches in contemporary development, a more concrete framework for the churches’ participation in fourth and third generation strategic development action will finally be proposed. This framework will be presented in the form of a concluding chapter in which it is argued that the ecumenical development debate explored in this study represents a remaining incentive for the churches’ progression to third and fourth generation strategic development activity. The discussion will then propose a number of broad beacons that, beyond a historical and contemporary ecumenical development perspective, may guide the churches to new levels of meaningful participation in fourth and third generation development strategies. Based on our exploration of third and fourth generation strategic development in this study, these ‘beacons’ will be: (i) the new social movements, (ii) the new communication solidarities, (iii) alternative development policy, and (iv) ‘soft culture’.

By means of this exercise in the concluding chapter the study embarks on a conscious attempt to adopt the idea- and value-centred language of the fourth generation and to a certain extent third generation strategies. As such the study aims to broaden and fill in the basic perspectives and language gained from the exploration of the third and fourth generation approaches to development by drawing on a wider, complementary, interdisciplinary and normative social scientific field. It will offer a wider corpus that still includes complementary perspectives from the field of development theory but, as the above proposed modes or roles might suggest, also includes further political, sociological, communication and cultural specific perspectives.

Whilst these reflections in the final chapter could be taken as a further manifestation of the underlying motive in this study to go beyond a critical theological-ecclesiastical perspective and to find a deepening and innovative perspective in a broader social-scientific debate on development and transformation, it should be stated how this particular discussion comes full circle by the way in which it will once again draw selectively on perspectives

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16 See, for instance, how this perspective or position on the role of religion in development is clearly found in Korten’s argument (1998:188-191).
from the discipline of theology to construct an own perspective. In particular, the intention here is to draw from progressive theological perspectives or discourses located outside of the direct theological/ecumenical development debate (such as Ulrich Duchrow’s discussion on alternatives to global capitalism from a social theological point of view, the World Parliament of Religion’s ‘Declaration toward a Global Ethic’, perspectives from the WCC debate on civil society, debates on public theology/religion, feminist theological perspectives, Jürgen Moltmann’s perspective on a theological expression of joy) that may contribute to a fourth and third generation language - especially as the mode of development engagement that this language anticipates would now involve the meaningful participation of the Christian churches. Stated differently, through drawing on this theological and religious input, this study emphasises its ideal of true integration, which eventually aims to develop a mode of interdisciplinarity through which the perspectives drawn from the broad social-scientific base envisaged might be integrated into a unified, complementary and normative framework or discourse-praxis - one in which theology, religion and indeed the churches would also interactively and constructively participate, often in an implicit and anonymous manner, but at times also explicitly.17

17 Here this study closely relates to the position in contemporary public theological debates that determines that theological discourse ought to become anonymous or secular in order to participate effectively and meaningfully in the public domain (see Lategan 1995:226-228). Yet, while this can be stated as the basic mode of discourse adopted in this study, it at the same time does not want to exclude theology and the churches from speaking at particular moments in the public discourse and context with a more explicit, discernible theological and religious language serving and complementing this very discourse. This in turn thus also implies that the theological and religious disciplines will, in so far as the academic debate involves the public involvement of the churches/religious institutions, draw on perspectives formulated within their own discipline and presented in their own more distinctive language. This, it is proposed, is admitted by a conceptual framework in which the principle of plurality is not forsaken as the expression of a particular reflexive unity, and in which no one actor and its specific language or discourse is allowed to dominate over the other actors.
Chapter One

THE ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE: CHARITY

1.1 Introduction

The contemporary theological and ecclesiastical concern with the issue of development cannot be studied in a historical vacuum. Having indicated in the introductory section how the official concern with the idea of development as well as the churches' own concern with the idea constitute a fairly recent phenomenon,1 a closer investigation of the churches' prior engagement with the contemporary problems of poverty and socio-economic deprivation is therefore necessarily called for. It would be through such an investigation that we could come to a fuller determination of the meaning of development, a concept that apparently came to denote the progression in the churches' understanding and engagement with contemporary social predicaments vis-à-vis earlier modes of understanding and engagement.

It will be shown in this chapter that, in the broader corpus of ecumenical literature on development referred to in the introduction, a definition of the churches' socio-economic engagement in contemporary history prior to the 'era of development' is explored in a most critical and particular way in the book, Separation without Hope? Essays on the Relation between the Church and the Poor during the Industrial Revolution and the Western Colonial Expansion. Initiated by the World Council of Churches' Commission on the Churches' Participation in Development (CCPD) and published at the beginning of the 1980s,2 it is in this study that the CCPD had put before the ecumenical movement and the churches in general a particular historical perspective to guide their understanding of contemporary socio-economic realities and their own engagement with those realities in comparison with past modes of engagement. As the title indicates, the book presents a historical perspective that for the CCPD and its authors had to be traced back to the industrial revolution and the period of Western colonial expansion during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800-1914). In the explanatory words of Julio de Santa Ana in the editorial preface:

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1 The World Council of Churches' (WCC's) World Conference on Church and Society at Geneva in 1966 has been indicated as the landmark in theological and ecclesiastical concern with development.
2 Published for the first time by the World Council of Churches in 1978, a second edition was published in 1980 by Orbis Books. In this chapter the latter edition is used as source.
Before embarking on a discussion of present-day relations between the poor and the Church, we feel it is essential to take time to reflect on what these relations were during the industrial revolution and the period of western colonial expansion (1800-1914), when the attitudes directly affecting the nature of the problems as we face them today, first developed. (1980a:vii)

It would be impossible to do justice to the full range of perspectives and rich layer of case studies emanating from this book. The aim here will nevertheless be to show how one major assumption might be extracted from the study as a whole by which a meaningful synthesis can be made of the various perspectives on the churches’ response to the social problems in industrial and colonial societies during the demarcated period. This assumption (which can be found explicitly in a number of the essays and implicitly in the others) is that in those instances where the churches did in fact respond to the plight of the poor and the social problems that erupted in the wake of the social changes brought about by the industrial revolution and subsequent colonial expansion, the response in general merely involved a mode of social engagement that could be defined by the notion of charity.4

Having stipulated above that the dissection of the deeper meaning of charity is the central aim of this chapter, it will first of all be indicated how such a meaning of the churches’ socio-economic engagement is informed by a particular socio-ethical evaluation of the far-reaching social changes caused by the industrial revolution. Against this background it will be shown how, for the particular authors, the notion of charity denotes much more than merely an innocent and pious social involvement by the churches and the Christian élite in the newly industrialised and colonialised societies. It will be indicated how, against the background of the above-mentioned socio-ethical evaluation, the notion of charity, in fact, defines a whole mental attitude and ideological presupposition or bias amongst the churches by which they showed themselves to be implicit and explicit agents of the status quo rather than actors seriously concerned with the sufferings and interest of the poor majority. In all, it will be indicated how the notion of charity embodied a mode of social engagement that, for the authors of the book, summarises the beginning and end of ecclesiastical social involvement in the period of industrial and colonial expansion, an involvement that had little impact on alleviating the actual causes of social suffering.

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3 Ten authors (excluding Julio de Santa Ana’s editorial conclusion) contributed to this book, writing respectively on the nineteenth-century societies of Western Europe, Britain, Germany, North America, Russia, the Arab Orthodox world, Latin America, Asia and Africa.

4 See in this regard, for instance, the editorial conclusion by Julio de Santa Ana at the end of the study in which such general assumptions on the specific notion of charity are clearly indicated (1980b:174-177).
1.2 Socio-ethical evaluation

The first essay in the WCC study, written by André Biéler, “Gradual Awareness of Social, Economic Problems (1750-1900)”, presents a profound socio-ethical evaluation of the social changes brought about by the industrial revolution. 

Foremost in this author’s evaluation would be the postulation that humanity in general and the churches in particular had come to deal with a phenomenon of social change that, up to that time, had only been partly perceived and mastered. According to him, this indicates “the astonishing fact of runaway development … with roots reaching back into Greco-Roman antiquity, that only began to produce its innumerable, galloping and all-transforming effects in the 19th century” (1980:4).

It must be admitted, then, that viewed in a long-term perspective of human history, the scientific and industrial revolution, as a phenomenon with radically subversive consequences for all societies, has never yet been completely analysed and understood. To a great extent it is still mysterious. It is not all the case that science, of which we are so proud, has succeeded in identifying all its elements, discovering all its factors, working out all its mechanisms… Since the process has only been partially understood, it has only been partially possible to master it. Its future course is therefore completely unknown. No human group at the present time, in east or west, north or south, whatever its ideology, can claim to have succeeded in mastering it. That is why the havoc it caused in the past, and even more the damage which its exponential growth … is actually doing to the human and planetary ecosystem, disconcerts and baffles even those who are contributing to its explosion. (Ibid.)

From the point of view of social progress, Biéler conceded that it is particularly unjust to deny the good that the industrial revolution has done. The balance sheet includes both debit and credit entries. Yet, and this brings him to the essence of his argument, from the point of view of Christian faith, attention must be directed primarily to the factor of human suffering inherent to the process (1980:9). This suffering was and remains a feature of modern society that debars Christians “from any pretension to objective, morally and ideologically neutral observation” (1980:5). To them the question has to be raised whether they, in the light of such suffering and the profound social eruptions brought

5 Whereas a profound general socio-ethical evaluation of the social changes brought about by the industrial revolution can be found in the essay by Biéler, but to a certain extent also in the concluding essay by Julio de Santa Ana, it can be said that the other essays in Separation without Hope? deal more exclusively with the strategic response of the Christian churches to the above-mentioned social changes. In these essays the general evaluation explicitly found in the essays of Biéler and De Santa is implicitly sustained.
about, have come to show any growth of understanding and commitment toward addressing this common feature:

Can we really speak at the present time of a historical process of growth of understanding on the part of the Christian churches and sects in the West of the social and economic problems created by the industrial revolution, when in fact the extent, complexity and speed of the upheavals that mark the spread of technological civilization appear increasingly to escape the notice of our contemporaries? (Biéler 1980:3)

For Biéler, as for the other writers of the study, the outstanding and most destructive feature of the industrial revolution was the ever-increasing and ongoing pauperisation of the majority of the world's peoples (1980:9). As strikingly summarised by Julio De Santa Ana at the beginning of his concluding essay, it is this recognition that in fact constitutes the common denominator of the study as a whole: “...in all the situations dealt with in these essays, we encounter the fact of poverty, the presence of the poor... We have here a universal phenomenon.” (1980b:171)

Informed by Biéler's more detailed evaluation, pauperisation in the identified period indicates a phenomenon characterised by the common sight of “immense human groups crowding in search of work into zones of industrial concentration ill-prepared to receive them” (1980:9). More specifically, it denotes a phenomenon that particularly involved the working classes. They were the people who executed some sort of labour, but under conditions of permanent impoverishment (that is, declining wages and deteriorating working conditions) as they would come to experience the subversive competition from machines and the growth of the population. They are the people who, as a result, have to this day suffered extreme forms of exploitation and whose exploited cheap labour stands in stark contrast to the improved living standards of a relatively small minority of the working classes, specifically those in the industrial countries of the West and East (ibid.).

Biéler referred to this process as the phenomenon of “[i]ndustrial serfdom in the new urban centres” of the world and pointed out that it took place simultaneously and side by side with the exploitation of those living in the colonies of the new industrialised countries. This was a concurrent process as it necessitated the conquest of people and resources in the new colonies to sustain the initial accumulation of profits and also to bear the consequent cost of the infrastructure needed for industrial expansion (ibid.). It likewise entailed the impoverishment of the large majority of people in the latter societies and the

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6 De Santa Ana points out in his editorial conclusion that the factors of the uprooting, exploitation and pauperisation of the broad masses in the colonised societies are clearly brought out in the contributions by
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enrichment of a relatively small proportion of the remaining population (1980:5).7

Biéler, and in a complementary way De Santa Ana, came to define the deeper meaning of the pauperisation in industrial and colonial society as involving a number of characteristic features or consequences.8 Drawing upon a definition of pauperisation by Max Pietsch, Biéler pointed out that this phenomenon involved:

(i) a distinct sociological and anthropological factor whereby the human person is bereft of property, life-sustaining resources, family and neighbourhood ties. It points to a situation in which he/she falls into a state of economic dependence, is torn from his/her roots, militarised in his/her work, estranged from nature and mechanised in his/her daily activities. It points to a situation, in short, which causes a serious state of human devitalisation and depersonalisation (1980:10);

(ii) a powerful factor of demoralisation9 of the formally employed person for whom ‘work’, instead of being a positive gain or source of creativity, becomes nothing more than a servile means to an end, directly contributing to the vicious circle of reckless and unfulfilled living:

The more conscious the workers become of the inner emptiness of their work, the more they seek compensation by squandering their wages, only too often in amusements and pleasures that are no less mechanical and empty than their work. (Ibid.)

Julio Barreiro, C I Itty and Sam Kobia (1980b:182) (that is, by those authors representing the various societies or regions exploited by colonisation: Barreiro (Latin America), Itty (Asia), Kobia (Africa)).

7 This statement could be further qualified by noting that the enrichment of people in the colonised societies was, and still is, far less in comparison to the enrichment of people in the industrialised countries (particularly as such contrasts unfolded in the later periods of nation-state formation and political independence). Julio Barreiro, in the final section of his essay, describes the multinational companies (who represent a very small section of local and foreign economically privileged groups) as ‘the new conquistadores’ vis-à-vis the exploited and impoverished indigenous communities (the large majority of people) in Latin America. In contemporary Latin American society, Barreiro argues, the trucks, planes and rifles of the multinational companies have merely replaced the horses, armour and swords of the Spaniards and Portuguese. They have become the new conquerors and exploiters of the great mineral and ecological wealth of the region at the cost of the local and indigenous peoples who, as a direct result, have suffered genocide on a large scale and who, away from their natural habitat, have been compelled to do manual labour of a deadly kind (such as in the mines) (1980:134). Referring to the factor of forced migration, Barreiro further describes the common sight identified by Biéler and mentioned in the main discussion: ‘Equally dramatic is ... the vast legion of men, women and children of indigenous origin who each year swell the ranks of the migrants; because of the lack of work and poor health conditions in their natural environment, they are obliged to move to the huge, crowded, absurd cities of Latin America, ending up in the “barrios de emergencia” (shanty towns), with no security of employment, an easy prey to sickness, malnutrition, economic exploitation, prostitution, and so on.” (Ibid.)

8 These are characteristic features that inform the current limited understanding mentioned in the first quote in 1.2.

9 A factor that for us is closely related to the factors mentioned in (i) as it likewise pertains to the notion of the total alienation of the human person (that is, a form of alienation that covers all spheres of human life). See how the notion of alienation is also used by De Santa Ana (1980b:182).
Having pointed to the closer analysis of Biéler (and consequently of Max Pietsch) as basic to the understanding of the phenomenon of pauperisation caused by the above-mentioned events, De Santa Ana also emphasised that such a phenomenon can furthermore to be seen as:

(iii) the unequivocal result or consequence of social injustice of a structural kind. The existence of the poor and the social fact of poverty (that is, the factors mentioned in (i) and (ii)) in the period in question are not to be attributed merely to natural causes or to personal conduct, but to structural causes producing injustice, inequality, dependence and destitution. Poverty, as such, was the result of economic growth of the kind that brought large profits to some, while offering barely even mere subsistence to others. In sum, it was the result of the exploitation of human beings by other human beings10 (1980b:182).

It was important to present this brief exposition of the critical socio-ethical evaluation of industrial and colonial society. Through this exposition we came to see how this evaluation postulates that we are in actual fact dealing here with a phenomenon that in general has been poorly understood and has generated a state of pauperisation on an unprecedented scale. This evaluation also constitutes the basis for a series of interrelated questions asked in the WCC book, particularly with regard to the churches’ response to the social eruptions caused by the industrial revolution and subsequent colonial expansion. On the basis of this evaluation, questions were specifically asked about the extent to which Christians and the Christian churches showed an understanding of the above-mentioned developments or features. As these are fundamentally related to questions of actual social praxis, the question was not only in what ways Christians and the churches reacted and dealt with those developments or features in practice (Biéler 1980:10), but also what was the nature of the relationship between the churches and the poor, the exploited and non-beneficiaries, in the new system (see De Santa Ana 1980a:vii).

Furthermore, as these questions relate to an inescapable theological imperative, they are also questions that spring from the very heart of the Gospel message and affirm the poor as the heirs of the Kingdom of God. At the deepest level such interrogation therefore asks to what extent the churches have been faithful to the Gospel message that demands a distinct participation in changing the social conditions of the poor. It is an ecumenical reading of the Gospel message that, to quote De Santa Ana, takes a fundamental structural approach (not less radical than a critical social-ethical interrogation) to the social problems at hand:

10 For De Santa Ana the way in which women and children were compelled to work during the last years of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century could be taken as a foremost example of such exploitation (1980b:182).
The proclamation of the good news must be rooted in practical action to secure a transformation of the structures which presuppose the existence of poverty and indeed tend inevitably to create poverty. The proclamation of the message of Jesus requires the Church to engage in action to promote justice at the social level (both institutional and structural) and not simply at the level of the individual. (1980b:182)

1.3 Charity: three meanings of an ecclesiastical response

We have referred to the central place that the concept of charity takes in the book under discussion, as it conceptualises what its authors in general concluded to be the churches’ inadequate and limited response to the social eruptions caused by the industrial revolution and colonial expansion. We may now look in greater detail at the actual meaning and implications of the kind of social action denoted by the concept. Taking into account the above-mentioned critical evaluation of the period in question (1.2), the following synthesis of the meaning of charity is extracted from the study as a whole:

1.3.1 A first meaning: works of charity denote a first stage, but only first, in the growth of awareness amongst the Christian churches of the social and economic problems that arose with the industrial revolution and colonial expansion.

This perspective, first of all, recognises that Christians and the Christian churches in part, were not apathetic about the sufferings of the poor. Biéler noted that it was a human condition to which the churches and individual Christians responded actively from the very dawn of the industrial revolution by doing works of charity (1980:10). As further appraised by this author, it was a kind of engagement that, “when undertaken seriously with faith, mobilized a great deal of effort, energy, time and money of an active minority” (1980:13). De Santa Ana also concluded that it comprised at best a relationship with the poor that went deeper than “a paternalism inspired by pity”11 (1980b:175). It was, at times, a genuine and sincere engagement, as implied by the example Sam Kobia gives of the early mission stations in Africa that served as the homes of ex-slaves and social outcasts.12 It rendered some sort of identity and safeguard to such people:

They gave refuge and a sense of belonging to those who otherwise could have lived a very hopeless and miserable life. The social

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11 See the subsection on paternalism in 1.3.3 below.
12 This is the example, incidentally, with which De Santa Ana also substantiates his point of appraisal (see 1980b:175).
outcasts could not help but embrace an institution which recognized him or her as a person worthy of respect. (1980:162)

Charity, or social service, as C I Itty indicated in his systematic exposition of the churches’ involvement in Asian society, comprised a substantial range of categories: education, health services, social welfare and some sort of economic development (see 1980:143-146). It (charity, aid to the poor) was a mode of involvement, as pointed out by Nicolai Zabolotsky in his discussion of the relation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the poor in the period in question, which in a few cases also took another direction, namely to promote social, economic and political reforms (1980:74). Lastly, according to André Biéler, it was those Christians most devoted to reaching out to the poor through charitable work who, in countries such as England and France, gave their active support to the anti-slave movement and protested against the oppressive lot of the very poor (1980:11-12).

However, it is with such a range of activities that the contribution of the churches stopped. To start with, the considerable effort by Christians to engage with the plight of the poor in industrial and colonial society through what has been described as works of charity was recognised by a number of authors in the study. In the best of those efforts, these authors recognised a noticeable sincerity and sensitivity (at least by a minority) to the sufferings of the poverty-stricken. But, and this constitutes the common ground amongst the various authors, despite all the good that these activities intended and entailed, the churches’ involvement made little contribution towards changing society for good. According to Biéler, this denotes a first stage, but only first (!), in the growth of awareness amongst the Christian churches of the social and economic problems that arose with the industrial revolution and colonial expansion (see Biéler 1980:10-13). There was little scope for, and understanding of, the structural and ideological factors underlying the problem. In the words of De Santa Ana, the

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13 According to Itty, this is the sphere of service to which the missions and churches had given the greatest attention. Summarising the Christian involvement in this sphere, he notes: “Christian missions pioneered in introducing modern school systems in almost every Asian country. In a number of countries, university level education was also initiated by the Christian churches. Their involvement in education is far more than the proportionate strength of the Christian population in the nation.” (1980:143-144)

14 According to Itty, this was another important sphere of involvement by the missions and churches. It was this sector that was mainly responsible for introducing the modern system of medical services based on Western medicine and dispersed through clinics, hospitals, sanatoria, etc. into Asian countries (1980:144-145).

15 This sphere included the Christian churches' and missions' often pioneering work in fields such as orphanages, schools for the blind, deaf and dumb, mental hospitals, houses for widows and unwed mothers. It also pertains to the major relief programmes that this sector launched in times of famine, such as in India and China during the years between 1877 and 1920 (Itty 1980:145).

16 This constitutes the area of least imaginative involvement by the churches and missions, according to Itty. Taking a marginal place over and against the first three spheres of involvement mentioned above, it nevertheless refers to a limited scale of programmes initiated to improve the living standards of the new converts, such as handicrafts, leather work, brick and tile making, rural projects to improve agricultural production, and the organisation of co-operatives and credit unions (1980:145-146).
The net result of all the churches' efforts was that the poor were indeed served, “but the social reality of poverty and its underlying causes went practically unchanged” (1980b:174, italics added). As Biéler added, the charity work done by the churches in the end turned out to be nothing more than “a sort of compensation for the increasingly harmful effects of the capitalist and colonialist expansion of Europe” (1980:12). It was only a minority amongst the minority of socially concerned Christians who also engaged in what he calls the second and third stages in the growth of social awareness. For the majority of Christians sensitive to the sufferings of the time, works of charity continued to be the principal remedy for the ongoing pauperisation of the masses in the industrial centres. They lacked the conceptual tools to explore “the origins of the social evil whose ravages they perceived, or the means of correcting it” (1980:13).

As elaborated in the discussion on paternalism below (1.3.3), it follows from the latter observation that the Christians and churches who engaged in charity work were by and large trapped in an ideological frame of mind that made it impossible for them to progress to other stages of growth in social awareness. They, the Christians doing charity work, were from the middle classes of society who, as Biéler indicated, unconsciously attributed “a sacred character to the ideologies and existing structures of their social or national environment” (1980:5-6, italics added). As this could, in the context of the overall argument, be explained in terms of the notion of power, it follows, if only on the subconscious level, that an involvement by means of charity work conveniently did not critically challenge the position of power of the Christian middle classes themselves (social, political and economic) and by implication the societal and mental structures that safeguarded that position of power. It did not challenge the psychological comfort that they (the middle-class Christians) derived from being the actual benefactors and directors of the social process that supposedly was to benefit the poor in society.

This exposition of the first meaning of charity will close with a perspective and quote from John Kent’s essay on the relationship between the churches and the trade union movement in Britain in the 19th century; the factor of power, according to this author, accounted for the irreconcilable separation between the churches and the trade union movement (see Kent 1980:36-37), and, for that matter, the churches' categorical resistance against any idea of revolution. The

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17 In his discussion Biéler defines four stages in growth of awareness. Having identified charitable work as a first stage of awareness (see 1980:10-13), the farthest a very small minority of Christians would progress, according to Biéler, on the way of critical social awareness and involvement, were second and third stages, namely the recognition of the need for state legislative intervention (second stage; see 1980:13-15), and studies, publications, inquiries and associations for social progress (third stage; see 1980:15-19). According to Biéler, and as especially also reflected in our exposition of a third meaning of charity in 1.3.3 below, Christians and the churches were hardly involved in a fourth stage, something he calls the emancipation of the working classes and the class war (see 1980:19-24).

18 The idea of revolution is also meaningfully set out by De Santa Ana. Referring to the churches’ a priori anti-revolutionary position in industrial and colonial history, he points out how a revolutionary activity or
activities of the latter movement - vis-à-vis works of charity - brought the churches and their members from the middle-classes face to face with the inescapable issue of the redistribution of power - substantial redistribution of power that they were unwilling to sacrifice:

Unionism was concerned with, and rose out of, the directed classes. And what was always implicit, and finally explicit, in both the revolutionary tradition (from 1776) and the distinct socialist tradition (from a slightly later period), was the proposal that some power, even great power, would have to be given (not ought to be, but would have to be given) to large numbers of people who in the traditional western society had been the directed, the subjects of the powers of others. Because unionism always meant some degree of redistribution of economic power, it inevitably threatened the redistribution of all power. (1980:33)

1.3.2 A second meaning: a social involvement merely through charity denotes a church sector by and large lacking the capacity for a critical, social theoretical understanding that could have enabled that sector to go beyond such a confined mode of thinking and activity.

Charity, as the discussion above has made clear, involved much more than mere innocent (neutral) and pious social engagement by the churches. Far from it; charity was part of a distinct world-view or ideological presupposition that rendered a ‘sacred’ meaning to the existing societal order, which accepted this order as an absolute given, as ‘essentially good’. Moreover, as an activity performed by the middle classes and privileged members of society, it sustained the psychological comfort of that social grouping. It provided them with little, if any, critical input whereby the ideologies and structures that sustained such comfort would be questioned and whereby other modes of social involvement would be explored.

Charity, by denoting the beginning and end of the churches’ involvement with the social problems of the day, indicates the lack of any sufficient social scientific knowledge-base or insight into the churches’ formal theological make-up with which to understand the wider political, economic and social regulations of society (in this case, a most complex modernist society). It presumes a theological discourse that fails to challenge the very ideological presuppositions line of thinking stands against what the churches at best would embrace, namely a charitable and more or less reformist frame of mind. To explain this further in terms of the notion of power applied in the main discussion above: in the case of charity and reform, the status quo (the middle-classes, the churches) remained the directors and determiners of the process (not at their own cost). In the case of revolution, however, a process of social change is implied in favour of the poor, the working classes, or whom De Santa Ana calls “the victims of the conditions which generate poverty”, who should have become the actual subjects or directors of the process (see 1980b:183-184).
or world-view underlying such regulations. It presumes a theological consciousness incapable of exposing the historical temporariness and biased nature of such regulations, and as such, of stressing the possibility of forming alternative regulations. It points to a theological awareness that does nothing more than serve such regulations by explaining or formalising them.

It follows that a relationship of mutual enforcement could be identified between the social activity of charity (‘praxis’) and the prevailing theological discourse (‘theory’) of the churches. Charity, as an activity that brought the churches into the realm of social praxis, for reasons of its own nature, had posed no critical challenge to a theological discourse devoid of meaningful social insight or understanding. It points to a theological discourse that, at the same time, appears impotent in converting that very ongoing charitable activity into other modes of critical social involvement.

Charity, as implied in Nicolai Zabolotsky’s discussion of the churches in Russia, was an activity that, in the ecclesiastical consciousness, found its very point of orientation in the above-mentioned a-social theological discourse. It is an activity that, according to this mode of consciousness, could only be successful if executed within a theological determination in which the place of worship represents the fundamental starting-point for service to the poor, for the clergy as guides and directors of the charitable efforts, and for the wider society (of which the members of the churches were a part) as executors of works of charity (1980:74). It is a framework in which a centrifugal order of things is clearly stipulated, a framework in which theological criteria take precedence over the social. It determines that:

Only if welfare work springs from the place of worship and is guided towards its aims by the church hierarchy can it be stable, free from the influence of the pride of the do-gooder ... But if it issues from the Church as a central point, and is directed to a definite goal by members of the hierarchy, charitable work can be successfully carried out with the greatest possible active participation of society itself. (A. Vertelovsky, quoted in Zabolotsky, ibid.)

For Zabolotsky, however, such determination by and large remained “merely a pious wish” (ibid). While he did not go on to elaborate on this statement, a further explanation could well be derived from the larger context of his discussion according to which charity work done by the churches in the nineteenth and early twentieth century did not achieve the ideal where “Russia would no longer have any hungry, destitute, sick, forsaken people. The Church was not in a position to solve the problem of the poor and this constituted the tragedy of its encounter with the world of those in need” (1980:62). Contrary to
the mobilisation of Russian society at large by the inner dynamics of the church (as anticipated in the quote above), which supposedly would ultimately bring about a complete eradication of the problem of poverty, the church was, as he pointed out, confronted rather by a society (that is, Russia of the nineteenth and early twentieth century) of growing contradictions in all spheres of life\textsuperscript{19} (\textit{ibid}). But, in the end, this also did not matter so much to the churches. For as Zabolotsky indicated towards the end of his essay, they had a different understanding of their primary task, which was one of a particular\textit{spiritual} kind:

But the Church, let us repeat, did not possess its own explicitly formulated programme of political and socio-economic reconstruction of life in Russia; above all, it refrained from that kind of activity, not without reason, believing that precisely as Church it has a much more important field of responsibility. First and foremost, the Church’s responsibility consisted (in the actually existing conditions of relations with the state) of maintaining its own proper identity as an institute of salvation in the proclamation of the Gospel, that is, in its internal and external mission, in the moral education of the faithful, in the celebration of the liturgy, the sacraments and rites of the Church, in pastoral care of souls. (1980:81)

If, with the preceding discussion, a most important\textit{existential} clarification has been given that accounts for what at most can be stipulated as a\textit{limited} involvement in charity by the churches (since a theological paradigm was at work here that absolutised its own peculiar self-understanding and self-concern of the churches vis-à-vis the larger social world\textsuperscript{20}), it is to the perspective of

\textsuperscript{19} It was this situation (of overt contradictions), according to Zabolotsky, which gave way to the radical assessment of values and far-reaching changes that ultimately led to the 1917 socialist revolution (1980:62), a historical event and process that ostracised and radically opposed the churches.

\textsuperscript{20} It can be noted here, in anticipation of the discussion in the next chapter (2.2) and with reference to the comments already made in the introduction, that this particular problematisation of mainstream Christian theology was also taken up as a crucial aspect in the earlier ecumenical debate on development. For instance, in an important series of working papers on ‘a theology of development’ launched by Sodepax (The Committee on Society, Development and Peace constituted jointly in 1968 by the Holy See and the WCC) at the end of the 1960s, this particular problematisation is explicit in a paper by the South American theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez Merino, in terms of a church versus the world dichotomy. For this author this distinction, which according to him prevailed in what he called ‘the New Christianity’ (a phenomenon dating from the 16th century onwards), captures the basic problem of a contemporary engagement by the churches in development. Capturing the basic rationale of this way of thinking and its untenability in a contemporary social context, he stated: ‘The world was presented much more clearly than in the past as existing in its own right, distinct from the Church, and having its own aims and purposes ... The Church as an institution should not interfere in temporal matters except (following the oldest traditions) ethically, which meant in practice through the conscience of the individual Christian. Thus the building of the earthly city acquired its own “consistencia” ... As a result, the Church’s mission in the world becomes clearer. The Church (it will be said) has two missions: evangelism and animation of the secular ... The task of building the world does not concern the Church ... This consideration, in fact, makes Christianity appear to be an ideology for building up the world. Thus the two fields are clearly
André Biéler that this discussion should turn. The latter provided a further explanation of the constraints that were (and that for him still are) at stake in the theological and social make-up of the churches. Closely related to the central point already made above about the churches’ lack of a critical social theoretical base, pertinent mental, cultural and ideological factors were, for Biéler, at work that explain the constraints of the churches when it comes to, as he calls it, their “growth of awareness” of social and economic problems (1980:6).

According to Biéler, an explanation of the churches’ limited growth of awareness and actual social involvement (that is, charity) during the industrial revolution goes much deeper than a merely conscious restriction or delimitation of their relation to the social sphere. What has to be scrutinised is the very mental and cultural structure upon which the churches operated, which by and large still reflected a pre-industrial frame of mind. This state of affairs was sustained, firstly, by the power of a (pre-industrial) theological and religious tradition that had a firm hold on the churches, and secondly, complicated by the fact that the cultural framework of the Bible, that foremost authority to which the Christian religion appeals, is itself rural, artisanal and pre-industrial. Yet, as summed up by Biéler, from the churches and their theological faculties came little, if any, systematic effort to overcome the above-mentioned constraints that could have enabled them to creatively reinterpret the Christian message and principles in the new context of industrial and technological society. This is because they lacked knowledge of the political, economic and social mechanisms with which they could execute such an interpretation and go beyond the framework of private life and personal relationships that constituted the hallmark of their prevailing ethical application (1980:7). They, the churches and their theologians, made no serious effort to acquaint themselves with those mechanisms by integrating them into their theological apparatus. They, in Biéler’s words, remained “passive in regard to the development of technological society without overmuch concern about the human dramas to which it gives rise” (1980:6).

In the light of the subsequent analysis of Biéler, it would be wrong to deduce from the above that the churches operated in a social vacuum. This brings us back, once again, to the pertinent ideological factor already referred to earlier, as it could be said that the indifference by the churches towards the new social context in which they found themselves exposed their very schizophrenic nature. While pretending to be purely ‘spiritual’ in matters of faith and church life - which at best extended to doing some neutral charity work - the whole life style and mental attitude of the churches and their members, or what can be called differentiated. Unity will be given by the Kingdom of God. The Church and the world contribute, each in its way, to the building of that Kingdom ... Both from the level of concrete commitment by Christians in the world of today, and from the level of contemporary theological thinking, the two planes are seen to be inadequate ... If, at a given moment, this theology motivated and supported the presence of Christians in the task of building the world, it appears now to be obsolete and ineffective vis-à-vis the new problems which confront us today.” (1969:128-129, 133)
their ‘social existence’, rendered tacit support to the dominant interests (political, economic and social) and mode of development in industrial society. As expressed by Biéler himself:

These Christians and these theologians were unaware, and sometimes still pretend to be unaware, that they have actively contributed, both by their own individual daily political, economic and commercial activities and by their ignorance of the collective effects of these activities, in promoting more and more intensely an ill-considered and irresponsible development under cover of the alleged neutrality of their spiritual and church life ... Now in the light of present-day social sciences, it appears increasingly evident that this unawareness by Christians of their real participation in the process of development is a defence mechanism designed to hide the important action they exert on society by reason of their faith and of the ideology which they often combine with it. It is not true that, apart from the so-called Christian social circles, the Christian churches and sects are economically, socially and politically neutral, and do not take an active part in economic expansion, in the choice of its structures with their multiple good and bad effects. (1980:6, 8)

1.3.3 A third meaning: charity work represents a form of paternalism of which the net result has been the historical, almost complete estrangement between the Christian churches, on the one hand, and the working classes and the poor, on the other.

It follows, finally, that charity work denotes an act of overt paternalism. As already indicated in the discussion, charity denotes an activity in which the middle classes direct the process. It assumes, as pointed out by De Santa Ana, “a certain distance between the giver and receiver of aid” (1980b:174, italics added). It presumes a relationship of marked inequality.

There is no question of a relation of equals. However much love and compassion there may have been on the part of the churches in this relationship, therefore, it must have been an uncomfortable one for those on the receiving end, provoking responses which the would-be helpers of the poor simply could not understand. (Ibid.)

De Santa Ana’s observation on incomprehension on the part of the initiators and benefactors of charity - the churches, the middle classes - would also correlate
well with the idea expressed above of charity assisting the psychological comfort of the benefactors or well-doers. In terms of this observation, it can be said that the complacency of the benefactor or well-doer in the whole charity enterprise, regarding his/her inability to close the distance that De Santa Ana is speaking of and also regarding his/her inability to show a comprehension and sensitivity that would have made the poor and beneficiaries the actual subjects and (at least) co-determiners of the social processes, expresses nothing less than an almost complete self-centredness on the part of the former. In that sense, charity work ultimately has to do with his/her (that is, the benefactor's, well-doer's) satisfaction to (at all cost) direct and determine the social processes, if only at the subconscious level. This would, not to a lesser extent, apply to those charitable activities that were appreciated in more positive terms earlier in the discussion, as at least denoting a genuine and sincere engagement on the part of a Christian minority. These latter cases, which De Santa Ana called “compassionate charity” (1980b:175), can also not escape the ultimate verdict that applies to all charitable efforts in the history of the churches, in particular those charity efforts with the best emancipatory intentions. It remains an “emancipation from above”, as indicated by Nicolai Zabolotsky (1980:75), initiated and directed by those in positions of relative and absolute power.

This brings us to the overarching theme in the study under discussion. The writers of the study hold that it was the very paternalistic attitude towards, and way of dealing with, the poor that resulted in an insurmountable and permanent estrangement between the Christian churches, on the one hand, and the poor and working classes, on the other. In the words of De Santa Ana, it is a “gulf between the Church and the poor ... [that] is still there today and ... [that] goes deep”. It is an alienation that is also not to be modified by any counter-argument of a substantial Christian presence amongst the world's poor today. While such presence may be of some extensive proportions, it is still far outweighed by the larger majority of poor and working class people estranged from and hostile toward the churches:

There are poor people in the churches, it is true; but the proportion is far fewer than in society as whole. There are attempts to present the Gospel to the poor, to establish a Christian presence amongst the workers (for example, worker priests, or Christians who live in the slums of great cities or devote their lives to the cause of justice and human liberation). But these efforts do not represent a major current in the churches. The Pentecostal churches in certain parts of Latin America or Africa are described as “churches of the poor”, but, as Christian Lalive d'Epinay's study of

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21 Cf. also De Santa Ana's own observation of the predominant psychological character of the paternalistic attitude that accompanies the activities of charity (1980b:174).

22 See again the first paragraph of 1.3.1 and the quote that directly succeeds it.
the Pentecostals in Chile makes very clear, these groups, although
made up of poor people, do not really represent a “popular”
mentality ... In view of all this, we are safe in saying, without
claiming absolute validity for the statement, that the
underprivileged sections of society have on the whole found no
place in the churches and that these have not seriously tried to
welcome them ... The ultimate outcome is a vast, solid, structural
separation between the poor and the churches. (1980b:180)

It follows that the paternalistic charitable approach with which the churches
persisted in their dealings with the poor during the industrial revolution and
colonial expansion left that class of society (that is, the poor) with a mental
attitude of deep mistrust and antagonism towards religion and the churches. A
point had been reached in history, as De Santa Ana points out, when this section
of society could feel that they had reached maturity (1980b:175). And in this
discovery they experienced a religious or church sector that was little prepared
(for reasons already set out earlier) to fight the social structures that the poor
themselves had come to recognise as being at the root of their sufferings. At
most that sector persisted with its charitable programmes geared to individual
rather than mass poverty, which appeared rather ineffective and insensitive
towards the ongoing sufferings and exploitation of the poor (ibid.).

But there is also a further perspective to the long-term experience of the poor of
the charitable works of the churches, as indicated by C I Itty in his review of
that approach to poverty in Asian history. They, the poor, were in reality not the
main beneficiaries of those areas in the enterprise of charity that could be
regarded as most long-term in quality. Their experience of first-hand assistance,
in actual fact, did not go much further than those services of a predominantly
short-term nature, such as famine relief, orphanages, institutions for the
handicapped, etc. On the contrary, they were rather by-passed in such areas as
education and health as in actual practice the rich and middle classes made
better and more use of these services than the poor. They, the new middle class
and rich, were in the end the actual beneficiaries as the poorest people often
lacked an awareness of the value of these services and had the minimum
economic means to make use of them. And where the poor did benefit to some
extent, these services were restricted to the new converts rather than rendered
to the poor in general (1980:146).

The end result of this whole experience was a counter-revolution by the poor of
the world that rejected religion and the churches as ally in their struggle for
emancipation and justice. It was a form of resistance, as evident from the study

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23 In the study under discussion this statement is well supported by Sam Kobia and Julio Barreiro in their
essays dealing with the relation between the churches and the poor in Latin America (see Barreiro
1980:127-130) and Africa (see Kobia 1980:155-170) respectively.
under discussion, which most actively and vigorously came from those poor living in industrial societies. These poor, as indicated by John Kent in his essay on the relationship between the churches and the trade union movement in England, developed their own sub-culture, which remained foreign to even the best formations of solidarity that the churches could offer (see 1980:34-36).²⁴ As Kent notes, Christian socialism was an expression of Christianity that came closest to making common cause with the poor. But it remained, in accordance with the notion of an ‘emancipation from above’ mentioned earlier, “a middle-class affair, an attitude recommended to the working class, but never very popular in the working class” (1980:31).

To conclude with André Biéler’s perspective of an apparent fourth stage²⁵ in the growth of awareness amongst the Christian churches of the social and economic problems that arose with the advent of the industrial revolution and colonial expansion, the following can be stated. Referring to this stage as “the emancipation of the working classes and the class war” (see 1980:19-24), Biéler’s description of this stage leads us to identify the underlying irony of this stage. While assuming a particular Christian participation in this stage, the mode of involvement in this stage, in terms of Biéler’s own description, came to present the working classes and the poor’s ascendency to take control of their own situation, to become the subjects in their own struggle (ibid). And as such, it very much points to the latter group as an autonomous force liberating itself from any religious patriarchy through its own struggle.

Assuming the solidarity of a small minority of truly committed Christians (see Biéler 1980:24-26), there was in reality little scope for Christian participation. The poor and exploited workers had found in the institutionalised labour movement of the nineteenth and twentieth century their direct ally for emancipation, a movement that was (and is) per se anticlerical and anti-Christian (Biéler 1980:26). As pointed out by Biéler, there was in actual fact “nothing left for Christians who wanted to act in solidarity with the proletariat except to create denominational trade unions” (1980:25). For the working classes, as this author finally concludes, it was already too late. They had discovered in the ideology of atheism and in the hope rendered by the revolutionary doctrine of Karl Marx, a substitute for the indifferent and often hostile views held by the Christian majority.

In sum, having espoused, tacitly or expressly, the interests of capitalism and the ruling classes (of which Christian charity appeared to be a mere extension), the poor and working classes, from their perspective and actual experience, could find no allies in the churches and religion. And, for more than one reason as the

²⁴ Kent (ibid) at this point refers to the example of the so-called Christian “Chapel communities”, which as “alternative” communities of faith achieved little lasting contact with working class people, as it was ultimately a case of two different cultures that could not be reconciled.

²⁵ See footnote 17 of this chapter.
foregoing discussion has made clear, a critical and committed Christian minority could not turn the tide (see Biéler 1980:27-29).

1.4 Ecumenical renewal

It was not until the ecumenical renewal of the first half of the following century that a different aspect of Christianity would reappear, more faithful to its original tradition and capable of responding anew to the divine inspiration of nations seeking social solidarity and supranational fraternity… Consequently, it needs to be stated emphatically how great is the merit of those few people who, following in the footsteps of the pioneers of the minority social Christian movements, originated the ecumenical movement of the last few decades; they have alerted the churches, their authorities and theologians, and have courageously brought them face to face with the complex realities of the contemporary world. They have only partly succeeded, for that matter, and not without difficulty, not without meeting with fierce resistance, and often with caustic and unjust criticism. (Biéler 1980:28, 7)

We may close this chapter with the above extract from André Biéler’s essay, which provides us with an appropriate transition point to the discussion in the next chapter. Having seen in the foregoing discussion how the notion of charity has been central to a most critical historical perspective by a number of critical authors linked to and writing for the contemporary ecumenical movement, it is the latter extract that requalifies that critical perspective to some extent. While not further elaborated upon in Biéler’s essay or anywhere else in the study under discussion, we are presented here with what we may call an ecumenical self-appreciation, a statement of appreciation within the ecumenical movement itself that points out the different route that this representation of the Christian churches has apparently taken versus the larger majority. To interpret this further in terms of the critical perspective on charity defined in this discussion, it is suggested in the above statement of appreciation that (i) the representation in contemporary Christianity that has come to be known as the contemporary ecumenical movement had gone beyond a charitable mentality and mode of social involvement; (ii) that the individuals and groups that represent this movement have engaged in and have pressed for a mode or modes of social involvement pursuant of the critical structural and ideological understanding called for by the above-mentioned authors in their study; and (iii) that these efforts have likewise resulted in the same kind of fierce opposition on the part of the Christian majority as experienced by a critical and committed minority in the nineteenth century, but with the one exception, namely that this time this minority had positioned itself better in terms of its own organisational setting
(with reference to the World Council of Churches and its affiliations worldwide).

In the next two chapters of this study the above-mentioned suggestion of a new direction in Christian social thought and praxis by the contemporary ecumenical movement will be subjected to closer scrutiny. This will be done by taking a closer look at what was indicated at the start of this study as the ‘ecumenical development debate’. Having come to denote the apparently new conceptual framework (that is, ‘development’) by which the contemporary ecumenical movement or churches in particular would express their engagement and solidarity with the poor of the world,²⁶ such further exploration will enable us to draw the historical comparison mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (that is, charity versus development). Through such an exploration we will now not so much be presented by the historical counterpoint, that is, the perspective (as in this chapter) on a mode of historical socio-economic engagement by the Christian churches that precedes a development mode of engagement by that sector, but rather with the articulation of an actual progressive discourse by that praxis in a more recent, new era of ecclesiastical socio-economic engagement.

²⁶ C I Itty, an important representative of the ecumenical movement in the 1960s and 1970s, wrote the following appreciation in the introduction to the special issue in *The Ecumenical Review* that followed the 1966 WCC Conference on Church and Society in 1966: "Development is the most crucial human concern of our time ... Development is also a matter of deep moral concern ... To Christians this moral challenge and human cause have deep spiritual implications. The care for the poor and the needy is part of our divine obligation. To love one's neighbour is a Christian imperative. In today's world, the concept of neighbour includes men in need everywhere and not only those in the immediate neighbourhood and the concept of love includes international economic justice. To be concerned about the development of the "Third World" is the most active expression of the Christian imperative for love and justice in our time." (1967:249-351)
Chapter Two

THE ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE: CRITICAL CHALLENGE

2.1 Introduction

The issue of development has become a major preoccupation of the churches, but the churches have not been uncritical participants in the broader debate about the goals and methods for promoting development. They have challenged fundamental assumptions and conceptions, and they have called into question many existing patterns for trying to achieve development at both the macro- and micro-levels. Not least significant, they have continuously explored the possible implications of these new insights for their own theories and actions. Richard Dickinson (1991:273-274)

We started this study with a positive statement of the ecumenical movement's contribution to the churches' thinking on development from one of Richard Dickinson's earliest works. In that quote the same kind of ecumenical self-appreciation may be observed as indicated in the final section of the previous chapter. There is one difference, though. While the statement once again came from a key thinker in the ecumenical movement, the difference is that this time the focus of appreciation had shifted more specifically to the notion of development. It upholds the view that the ecumenical movement had come to show the way to the rest of the Christian sector or churches towards a new progressive engagement in the contemporary socio-economic problematic of poverty and underdevelopment through its concern with development.

In the same sense the quotation at the beginning of this chapter can be taken as an important continuation of Dickinson's earlier statement. As this quotation represents a more recent statement by the same author (in his entry on 'development' in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement), it not only confirms Dickinson's earlier positive pronouncement (which dates back to the beginning

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1 See p. 1.
2 Dickinson is the person responsible for the entry on 'development' in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement (see also the next footnote and the next paragraph in the main discussion above). Appreciation for Dickinson's central contribution to the ecumenical movement's thinking on development, is also clearly expressed by the various representatives of this movement writing the respective forewords or introductions to this author's publications through the years on the ecumenical churches' participation in development. See De Santa Ana (1983:vii-viii); Itty (1975:vii-viii); Lacey (1968:7).
3 Published in 1991 by Eerdmans and edited by Nicholas Lossky et al.
of the ecumenical movement's involvement with development, but it also claims a positive *progression* in the ecumenical movement's whole engagement with development during the past few decades. Whereas Dickinson's earlier statement could be taken as a declaration of the ecumenical movement's participation in development *as such* (which distinguishes this group from the rest of the church sector), this more recent statement assumes more overtly a distinct *critical* engagement by the ecumenical churches in the whole development enterprise.

For Dickinson the ecumenical movement's involvement with development did not merely represent an activity of a particular factual or quantitative status, that is, of an ecumenical church sector that has unconditionally or uncritically made development one of its major preoccupations. He suggests that such an involvement by the churches presumes a progressive status on two levels. It firstly presumes that such an involvement challenges mainstream secular development discourse and praxis in a distinct way. It secondly presumes that this critical engagement also finds a particular application in terms of the churches' own theories and actions as it challenges the thinking and activities of the church sector in general.

This chapter intends to explore more closely the nature of the ecumenical development discourse along the lines of Dickinson's twofold presumption. In this statement a clear example of what may be called the 'pretence of a progressive discourse' on development maintained in the ecumenical self-consciousness can be found. The discussion will now elaborate on this author's claim of the ecumenical discourse's respective challenge to the church sector in general and to mainstream secular development discourse by drawing on a larger corpus of writings in the ecumenical debate. Starting off with the second part of Dickinson's claim, which is directed to the churches, the discussion will in particular concentrate on the critical challenge that the ecumenical discourse would gradually come to pose to mainstream secular development discourse (that is, the first part of Dickinson's claim). It will be shown how, in this framework of critical reflection, the ecumenical concept of development would in particular be formed through the three interrelated concepts of ecumenical growth, social justice and self-reliance.

### 2.2 Challenging the church sector

In a wider application of ecumenical writings on development the challenge to the churches can be recognised in particular in the contributions of those

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4 See our demarcation of an ecumenical concern with development in the introduction and particularly in footnote 1.

5 See again the statement by C I Itty in footnote 26 of the previous chapter that makes 'development' the cardinal concept in the whole ecumenical socio-economic debate.
writers who, in the earlier phase of the ecumenical development debate, had come to problematise a prevailing *church versus the world* dichotomy in mainstream theological and ecclesiastical thinking and praxis. These writers proclaimed that, in contrast to mainstream theology and ecclesiastical praxis, the contemporary ecumenical concern for development represented the most significant expression of the new movement in Christianity working towards the overcoming of the *church versus the world* dichotomy. It reflects, in the words of Gustavo Gutierrez Merrino, “the advance in theological thinking” that leaves behind the outmoded concept of this distinction (1969:133).

As this appreciation could first of all be found in the meaning of development itself, the contemporary question of development represented the most comprehensive viewpoint for a theological reorientation (Rendtorff 1971:89; 1969:206). Development, accordingly, includes “consideration of the interdependence and the participation of all productive forces” (Rendtorff 1971:91; 1969:208). It cannot be restricted to “the problems of economic, technological, and scientific development”, as its complexity extends beyond the latter to embrace “all spheres of life”. Not only does it include an indispensable ‘cultural dimension’, but it also constitutes a vital connection with the problem of peace that, through the ethical and institutional aspects that it entails, expresses “the most striking example of the complexity of the problem of development” (Rendtorff 1971:95-96; 1969:210).

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6 The contributions by Trutz Rendtorff (1969; 1971) and Gustavo Gutierrez Merino (1969) are in particular recognised as most explicitly and most specifically touching upon the theme envisaged in this subsection (see also footnotes 9 and 11 of the introduction and footnote 20 of Chapter One).

7 In close connection with the previous footnote, it should be noted that this particular problematic has already been touched upon in footnote 20 of Chapter One. Whereas the discussion in this footnote points to the nature or contents of a theological expression or ecclesiastical praxis in which the above-mentioned dichotomy is sustained in a negative sense, the discussion in the main section (2.2) here concentrates on the actual positive overcoming of such a (negative) dichotomy in an ecumenical theology and ecclesiastical praxis - or, at least, the movement towards overcoming that problem. (See also as a further expression of the positive aspect of the church versus world theme, the comments made in the introduction of this study.)

8 At this point the discussion may also refer to Rendtorff’s juxtaposition of the concepts of ‘development’, on the one hand, and ‘evolution’ and ‘revolution’, on the other. Debated within the context of his interrogation of a prospective ‘theology of development’, Rendtorff argued that the notion of development provided a prevailing ‘theology of revolution’ (which still occupied the foreground at the WCC’s Geneva Conference in 1966) with a potentially broadened meaning. This, for a start, is captured by the concept of development itself, or for Rendtorff rather the German term ‘Entwicklung’, which may “be regarded as an alternative to the opposition between revolution and evolution”. In contrast to both the latter two concepts, the notion of development indicates something “more rational and more comprehensive”. It implies a well-considered and constructive human activity of a kind unmatched by the other two concepts. It implies “the impetus to projection, to planning, and to positive reflection and consciously ratified change” that the other two concepts do not reflect in the same manner (Rendtorff 1971:91). And in this very sense, it also poses a most meaningful challenge to the theological and church sector: it is the rich and comprehensive enterprise of development with its imposition of a complex array of economic, cultural and institutional issues on the contemporary world-wide project of social change that presents a most viable and concrete frame of reference for a new Christian orientation of worldly involvement (1971:87).
Viewed from the perspective of the churches and Christian theology, the development problem in all its complexity constitutes the *motivation* for a process of profound *renewal*, a breakthrough of a (traditional) static ontology - in the structural sense (see Rendtorff 1971:94-100; 1969:209-213). Formative here is not only the very nature of the development process in which the churches engage, but also the *kind* of involvement to which the process of development compels the churches and Christian theology. For them such an involvement constitutes "a new form of Christian unity in the world" (1971:95; 1969:210). Its most immediate consequence is the reality "that the frontiers between faith and earthly tasks, Church and world, [are] becoming blurred" (Gutierrez Merrino 1969:133). It denotes "a new, world-wide experience of unqualified Christian involvement in the vital problems of the contemporary world", which clearly differs "from traditional forms of church action and theological thought" (Rendtorff 1969:204; cf. 1971:86) and which necessitates "the transcending of hitherto accepted theological formulations and churchly self-concepts" (Rendtorff 1971:86; cf. 1969:204). Rendtorff explained this in the context of what he saw to be the reality of the ecumenical churches' involvement in development:

The dominant themes of the general Christian awareness are no longer specifically churchly in the sense that the special identity of the Christian church is the first consideration. The main interest is directed rather to world development in all its aspects. More and more the churches are seeing themselves as part of a Christian process which thematically and institutionally leads far beyond the boundaries of the established churches and the theological overtures they have hitherto made toward mutual understanding. (1971:87; see also 1969:205)

At this point in the discussion a first basic distinction could be drawn between a 'development' involvement by the churches and a 'charity' involvement as set out in the previous chapter. In so far as the preceding determination relates to what Rendtorff claimed to be "the real, factual, established, and growing engagement of the Christian churches in the whole development field" (1971:94; see also 1969:209), it denotes the definite theological and ideological separation of a certain part of the church sector (broadly defined as the ecumenical movement) from the rest, which, at most, is still engaged in charity work and determined by a charitable mentality. In terms of Rendtorff's vital distinction, a development involvement points to a new mode of *co-operation* and *integration* in the worldly sphere (see 1971:102-103; 214-215). It presumes, contrary to the self-contained identity and its own peculiar (theological/ecclesiastical) response

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9 See the initial introduction of these two concepts in footnote 11 of the introduction.
to worldly problems sustained by a charitable involvement and mentality,\textsuperscript{10} a new openness and willingness (on the part of Christian theology and the churches) to engage in and identify with non-traditional, worldly spheres and identities.\textsuperscript{11}

This new development mode of engagement has to be determined by an awareness of a limited competence and a sense of dependence on the part of the churches and theology. According to Rendtorff, this sector’s concern for development ought to be governed by the recognition that “[t]he complex, diverse, and far-reaching problems of development” are far beyond their competence to solve. Their experience in development, based on their new worldly engagement, has to bring them to acknowledge that any development work undertaken exclusively on their own would be “either arrogant or naïve” and that they themselves can “play only a modest part” in the development task as a whole.

Here if anywhere, the need is for cooperation with all social, national, and international bodies engaged in development work… The cooperation factor means that we cannot construct a theology of development from existing church dogmatics and doctrines alone. This factor imposes on us a new concept of theology, one which is, as it were, supra-ecclesiastical. (1969:210, italics added; see also 1971:95)

\subsection*{2.3 Challenging mainstream secular development discourse}

\subsubsection*{2.3.1 Gradual critical awareness}

As can clearly be seen from a wider range of ecumenical writings on development, the recognition of the need for co-operation and integration in the earlier stage of the ecumenical development debate pointed out above did not prevent representatives from that section of Christian theology and the churches from simultaneously criticising mainstream development thinking in a very

\begin{itemize}
\item This meaning or definition has been emphasised particularly under the second aspect of a charity mode of involvement discussed in Chapter One (see 1.3.2).
\item Here, in anticipation of the more detailed discussion in Chapter Six of this study, reference can be made to the present author’s MA Research Paper, \textit{Towards a New Solidarity Praxis: Critical Reflection’s on the Churches’ Participation in World Transformation}, in which the idea of a new openness and willingness to engage and identify with non-traditional entities has been developed under the specific denominator of a ‘new solidarity praxis’. Hence the idea stressed in this research paper, with reference to, but also supplementary to, a contemporary ecumenical consciousness (see Swart 1997:36-60; 88-89), that a meaningful contribution by the Christian churches to (world) social transformation (and by implication development) can only be realised by that sector’s adoption of such a praxis. It would most radically entail adaptation to “a new universalism, a new worldview, a new commitment to be in solidarity with ‘strangers’ and erstwhile ‘enemies” (1997:88-89), in the political, disciplinary (epistemological), ideological and strategic sense (cf. e.g. 1997:1-6; 7-9; 61-65).
\end{itemize}
definite way. It entailed, beyond what a theological and church sector was capable of within traditional parameters, speaking a proper, critical discourse of development that would not accept the reigning (secular) point of view and practice of development out of hand (cf. Rendtorff 1971:102-103; 1969:214-215).

In the ecumenical development debate it is pointed out how the ecumenical movement soon adopted a rather critical stand vis-à-vis the dominant secular position. They started from a position of initial compliance with the mainstream notion of development through conforming to the Rostowian model\textsuperscript{12} of development (see Dickinson 1991:268-269), their support to mainstream institutions of development (governments, UN agencies, international development organisations) (Itty 1974:6-7; Dickinson 1975:70), and their preoccupation with economic categories\textsuperscript{13} in their own discussions and writings (see Itty 1974:7). Gradually, the prevailing and growing contradictions in the economies of particularly the so-called developing countries\textsuperscript{14} led individuals and institutions in this movement (e.g. the WCC) to adopt a more critical position

\textsuperscript{12} Referring to the ideas and theories captured in the 1960 development economics classic by Walter Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, this model dominated understanding of development during the earlier stages of official, secular development thinking. It emphasises, in simple terms, the necessity of a particular ‘take-off’ stage for traditional (undeveloped) societies to develop to a state of economic and social ‘maturity’ (see further e.g. Hetne 1995:52-53; Oman and Wignaraja 1991:10-13). Whereas the realisation of this ‘take-off’ stage requires a sufficient level of technical skills, financial support and economic organisation to be made available in the newly developing societies, it also explains the churches’ understanding of their own task in development in the initial conformist stage mentioned above: to generate financial and other material resources to give to governments, secular agencies of development and technical specialists, whom they willingly entrust with the further task to put into operation the actual development process (see Dickinson 1991:269; 1975:70). (See furthermore the discussion of the ‘Pragmatic Debate’ in the ecumenical development debate in Chapter Three.)

\textsuperscript{13} This point is made by C I Itty in his 1974 article in *The Ecumenical Review*. For this author economic categories clearly dominated the debate and the ensuing statements and reports emanating from ecumenical conferences and assemblies during the mid and late 1960s: the Church and Society Conference in Geneva (1966), the SODEPAX Conference at Beirut (1968), the WCC Fourth Assembly at Uppsala (1968). As pointed out by Itty, particularly with reference to the assembly at Uppsala, at this occasion the debate would in a rather confined way be concerned with economic growth amongst the poor people and nations of the world, which had to be achieved by far-reaching structural changes in the international economy and the responsibility of rich nations to provide better terms of trade, investment and appropriate technology (1974:7). (See also, for instance, how, as a direct consequence of the Uppsala Assembly, the theme of ‘Rich and Poor Nations’ dominated in the Vol. 20, No. 4 issue of *The Ecumenical Review* (1968).)

\textsuperscript{14} In his 1974 article in *The Ecumenical Review*, ‘The Limits-to-Growth Debate in Asian Perspective’, Samuel Parmar listed the following contradictions within the economic growth paradigm:

1. An increase in the extent and intensity of poverty despite the increase in national and per capita incomes;
2. A shortage of foodgrains, rising prices of agricultural produce and greater inequality in rural areas concomitant with social discontent and unrest despite a successful green revolution;
3. An increase in industrial unrest, unemployment and under-employment, prices of manufactured goods, unused capacity, power shortages and monopoly tendencies amidst impressive industrial progress;
4. Continuing balance-of-payments deficits and debt-servicing despite a more than doubling in the value of annual exports;
5. An increase in illiterate persons (70% of the Indian population, for instance) despite educational expansion and a doubling in literacy (1974:35-36).
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Towards the dominant paradigm. They had, in a relatively short period of intensive reflection on the theme of development, become quite critical of the whole equation of development with *economic development* and specifically with the economic growth paradigm upheld in mainstream circles. In the words of C I Itty, who wrote the following about the ecumenical churches' growing discontentment with the economic growth paradigm towards the end of the 1960s:

The GNP-biased view of economic growth was criticized as it need not reflect any improvement in the standard of life of the poor masses. In fact, the experience of many countries in the Third World showed that, in spite of certain increases in GNP during the first development decade, the lot of the vast majority of the poor, instead of improving, was actually worsening. The increase in GNP largely benefited the already rich and the middle class in those countries, resulting in increased social inequalities and economic exploitation. ([Ibid.](#))

While ecumenical scholars did not want to forsake the macro and structural aspect of development, a new emphasis was now placed on the human dimension in the ecumenical reconsideration of development. Constituting the guiding principle in many of the ecumenical writings on development since the early 1970s, this critical perspective wanted to challenge the anthropological and ideological basis of the mainstream secular paradigm that confines the meaning of human existence to economic categories. ([Ibid.](#)) It emphasised that

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15 Highlighted in a number of publications directly associated with the institutional framework of the WCC, it should here be noted how the theme of human development would take central stage in writings from the southeast Asian representation of the ecumenical movement (see the discussion in the introduction of this study). In the former case, see Robinson 1994:316-318; Mulhalland 1988:1-8, 18-30; De Santa Ana 1985:123-124; Itty 1974:6-11; Elliot 1971:59-69; Land 1971:2-35; Fernandes 1970:218-239. ([While writing here in *The Ecumenical Review*, Robinson also comes from a southeast Asian context.](#))


(2) At this point in the discussion it can also be noted (if only in a footnote) how ecumenical thinking shows a significant parallel with what is later identified in this study as the ‘alternative movement’ in development. As is well illustrated in the recent work of Raff Carmen, central to the alternative representation of development’s critique of the mainstream development enterprise is the latter’s own particular reduplication of the Western value construct captured by the notion of *homo oeconomicus* (economic man). Development (or developmentalism) in this sense became the Third World parallel of Western economism, which in tandem with the latter ‘attempted to steer the course of a complex human
development has to be understood in a *holistic* sense. It determined that an authentic development process has not only to consider *all* aspects of human well-being, but it also has to counter the factor of *exclusion* sustained by the economic growth paradigm (that is, exclusion of the larger majority of people and nature). To quote in this regard Gnana Robinson's more recent formulation of ecumenical theology's critical position vis-à-vis the economic growth paradigm:

Development theories which are based merely on economic growth have to be subjected to criticism by Christian theology, which is ... concerned for the holistic development of the whole human community. We are here concerned with the development of all people, all ethnic communities - black, white, brown and yellow, high-caste and low-caste, male and female. Holistic development focuses on the material, physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs of every person in the community, not only the present generation but also future generations. Stewardship of the resources of nature therefore becomes very important. Waste has to be avoided; and nothing should be done that will disturb the ecological balance of nature. (1994:318)

However, in critical ecumenical thinking, the debate on development would not lose its economic angle. Important in this regard are those voices that at an early stage in the new period of critical thinking warned against defining development too broadly as the total or integral liberation of the human person (see Itty 1974:10; Thomas 1972:36; Kurien 1972:16; Elliot 1970:21). While these voices, on the one hand, did not want to forsake the principles of a human development perspective, which naturally has to define the ultimate objective or outcome of an authentic development process, on the other hand, Elliot stressed that such a broad term of reference also robbed the word of any specificity and workable meaning (*ibid*). The cutting edge of any liberating development process, as was determined in this counter-perspective, has to remain the *economic* entry point of development. Development is specifically about “the conscious struggle against mass poverty” (Thomas 1972:36). It is the lack of a minimum of economic goods and services that holds people captive in a state of poverty,
causes their spiritual and human enslavement, and remains the decisive link with the other dimensions of human well-being that are fundamental in the ecumenical concern with development. In the words of M.M Thomas, a prominent ecumenical scholar of Indian descent:

> In defining Development too broadly as the total spiritual or integral liberation of man. This is no doubt the ultimate objective of every human activity. But Development service should emphasise specifically the spiritual and human enslavement which want of a minimum of economic goods and services (food, clothing and shelter, work, health and literacy) brings to men, women and children and it should emphasise the distinctive contribution liberation from such wants makes to the larger integral human liberation. No doubt, material poverty is closely linked with traditional religious ethos, value-systems, traditional social institutions and power-structures, and therefore cannot be fought in isolation from them ... But the distinctiveness of Development service is that the conscious struggle against mass poverty, i.e. economic liberation, is the point of entry and should remain the conscious connecting link for our concern with these other aspects of human existence. Otherwise, everything which the Church has been doing and wants to do will be defined as Development service, and the cutting edge of our economic objective of development, viz. the elimination of mass poverty, will be lost. (Ibid.)

2.3.2 Three interrelated concepts

In the discussion so far we have come to see how the critical ecumenical debate on development of the late 1960s and early 1970s has left us with the image of a debate that fluctuated between the two poles of economic versus human development (Itty 1974:10). From this point onwards we can now proceed by pointing out how this debate would further refine itself around the three interrelated concepts of economic growth, social justice and self-reliance. Finding wider acceptance and first entering the ecumenical conceptual framework at the ecumenical consultation at Montreux in 1970, these three concepts gave a clearer structure and direction to ecumenical reflections and statements on

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18 It is the economic aspect of development, as Thomas meaningfully stated in a previous point in this article, through which development work has to be distinguished from the churches' charitable diakonia. Contrary to the latter involvement, ‘development’ means change in the pattern of economic and social living that causes the poor to be poor (Thomas 1972:35-36).

19 In the continuing ecumenical development debate people would also come to refer to the latter three concepts as the ‘Montreux triangle’ (see e.g. Kurien 1974:201).
development in the years to come²⁰ (Itty 1974:8; see also De Santa Ana 1991:316).

Through the influential thinking of Samuel Parmar,²¹ an Indian professor of economics and a prominent member of CCPD in the 1970s, it was argued that economic growth remains fundamental to the idea of development. At the same time, this did not imply an acceptance of the idea of economic growth per se. It was stressed that the notions of social justice and self-reliance have to radically redefine the meaning of development.²² These two concepts not only have to render a qualitative meaning to economic growth, but have to bring to the fore the human, political and structural dimensions of an authentic development process. What follows is a synthesis that would now, from the starting point of Parmar’s formative thinking, constitute the basic framework of a progressive ecumenical definition of development.

2.3.2.1 Economic growth

In the critical ecumenical definition of development the principle of economic growth retained central importance. While this position had to be meaningfully informed by the ‘limits-to-growth’ debate, which challenges the living patterns and policies of the industrial or ‘developed’ nations (see Parmar 1974:43), it rejected the prescription of a zero rate of growth for developing societies. This was stated by Parmar, with specific reference to the countries of Asia (and thus by implication also to the rest of the developing world), as follows:

From this angle, prescriptions of zero rate of growth and global equilibrium as made by the advocates of limits to growth are not an option for Asia. Even on the assumption that rich nations will impose cuts on their consumption and transfer surpluses to poor nations, a zero rate of growth is unacceptable to us. Short of a one-world government built on international economic justice, such transfers would institutionalize charity and dispossess our countries of their dignity and integrity. On the other hand, if a policy of zero rate of growth is accepted under existing politico-economic conditions, it would only perpetuate the status quo, leaving developing nations and deprived groups in developed nations to their miserable lot. In that case, even if industrial nations succeeded in overcoming their problems of pollution, ecological imbalance,

²⁰ A reliance on these concepts is clearly still evident in the 1990s, as reflected in one of the more recent publications on development in The Ecumenical Review by Gnana Robinson (see 1994:318-320).
²¹ The formative influence of Parmar is generally acknowledged in ecumenical literature on development (see e.g. Itty 1974:8; Dickinson 1991:270; 1975:69; De Santa Ana 1991:316).
²² Or, as otherwise stipulated in an ecumenical understanding, economic growth has to become one of the means for promoting social justice and self-reliance (see De Santa Ana 1991:316).
etc., the environmental problem of poverty in developing nations could only become worse. (1974:42)

Implicit in the above statement by Parmar is the perception that the problem of environmental degradation in Third World societies was, contrary to its causes in the developed world, not caused by over-development or excessive growth, but by a lack of sufficient growth. In these societies the cause is poverty, the lack of goods and services that are basic to decent human living (see Parmar 1974:41-42). It consequently called for development strategies focusing on the eradication of absolute poverty. This, however, could not be enough as people would still be living at a subsistence level. Authentic strategies of development ultimately need to operate with the yardstick of a ‘desirable minimum’ (Parmar 1975a:14-15), which clearly calls for some kind of growth (see Parmar 1974:42).

It can be said that the aspect of economic growth would, in the ecumenical definition, be best described by the juxtaposition of qualitative versus quantitative growth. According to this, the conventional view of development is seen as reducing and limiting the enterprise of development to a quantitative approach to growth. Here the ecumenical point of view did not neglect the value of the important indices of development such as increases in GNP, per capita income, quantum of resources, size of investment and expansion of education and welfare facilities. It regarded these indices as meaningful indicators of general socio-economic improvement, but only up to a certain point. It maintained that they could still be misleading, for the reason that an approach inclined towards aggregates and averages often conceals the real situation (Parmar 1975a:8-9).

As the critical ecumenical position could be taken a step further, it maintained that the quantitative approach gives no real explanation for situations of gross absolute poverty prevailing in developing societies despite the realisation of growth. As such, this approach in actual fact contradicts (see Parmar 1974:35-36) the very meaning and goal of development:

Development is a process by which poverty should be overcome. Therefore, if the fruits of growth reach the poor then it can be affirmed that development has taken place; otherwise not. (Parmar 1975a:9)

Related to the above-mentioned critique is the fallacy of this approach in describing a whole country as ‘poor’ on the basis of per capita income. This

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23 Following Mahatma Gandhi, Parmar also refers to the spiritual dimension of ‘bread’ and ‘work’. Growth is accordingly to be seen as the positive realisation of the divine calling to eradicate poverty, inequality and exploitation, and hence, as a key element in the process of humanisation (see 1974:42).

24 See, at this point, footnote 14 in which Parmar’s list of contradictions within the economic growth paradigm of development is specifically mentioned.
constitutes a *generalisation* that neglects the existence of “small pockets of affluence” within poor countries that actually control the economic and political processes and accordingly appropriate the major share of production (*ibid*).

These recognitions expose the great weakness and limitations of the quantitative approach. It is a *non-institutional* approach that neglects fundamental institutional and structural indicators. It does not take into account the factor of institutional and structural changes that have to be implemented in favour of the poor. It omits the fundamental political factor that has to bring a *policy-making* process into place that can break through the power structures that sustain the negation and exploitation of the poor - despite the actual realisation of growth as measured by GNP. As argued in the following comment on a rectification of the quantitative approach, which anticipates much of the essence of the second and third principles of ‘social justice’ and ‘self-reliance’ in the ecumenical triangle of development discussed in this chapter:

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*Policies of development should bring about structural change. The development process should not be seen merely as a technoeconomic exercise for accumulation and deployment of resources. It should aim at fundamental changes in the overall social, economic, cultural and political institutions. Structural change calls for a change in values and institutions. Experiences of a number of developing countries show that, under the influence of the quantitative approach, development efforts have become adjuncts and allies of the *status quo*, both nationally and internationally. It is commonplace for spokesmen of developing countries to condemn neo-colonialism and the unjust structures of international economic and political relations that promote it. But it should not be forgotten that external influences are able to enter and permeate our economies through the connivance and cooperation of unjust internal structures. A quantitative approach bypasses these fundamental issues of development. (Parmar 1975a:9-10)*

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However, the ecumenical critique of the quantitative approach to economic growth does not end here. Closely related to the third principle of ‘self-reliance’ discussed later in this chapter, the conventional economic growth paradigm of development would be criticised for its *imitation* of the paradigm applied to developed countries, rather than taking the socio-economic realities of the developing world seriously. Concerning the impact of a consumerist, scientific and technological drive upon developing societies similar to what is taken as the norm in the developed societies (see Parmar 1975a:12), the ecumenical position pointed out the fallacy of conventional thinking in claiming that it was possible for poor nations to ‘catch up’ with the rich. This notion of ‘catching up’ with the
rich nations captured the essence of the conventional way of thinking that emphasises that developing countries might be able to narrow the gap between them and the developed world, if not reaching the same standard of living as the latter, with a high enough growth rate (see Parmar 1974:38). Yet, in the ecumenical consciousness, this would be regarded as an impossibility that does not take into account the reality of limited resources and a comprehensive notion of human well-being. Parmar summarised this as follows:

The fallacy of the “catching-up” concern in development has become apparent. The gap between rich and poor nations has widened. Preoccupation with keeping up with developed nations has made us neglect the more important question of reducing domestic inequalities. Development means to be like the developed nations. In terms of the resource availability in the world today this is not possible; moreover, human welfare has not been furthered by the path that the industrial nations have followed. Hence, both on grounds of feasibility and desirability, developing economies would be wise to charter a different course. (1975a:13)

This critique of the possibility of poor nations ‘catching up’ with the rich, more specifically introduces the ‘alternative’ concept of ‘qualitative growth’. Growth, as pointed out earlier, was seen as vital to development (Parmar 1975a:10) and as a means to overcome poverty. Yet, the rejection of a zero rate growth did not imply that developing societies should pursue the same patterns and policies as those of the industrial countries. The quantitative aspects of development, such as concern about GNP, had to be subordinated to qualitative goals (Parmar 1974:42).

As the focus of development strategies would now be on those below the poverty line (Parmar 1975a:14), it held that the contents of production ought to become more important than its quantum (Parmar 1975a:10). Determined further by the regulation of a permissible maximum (as counterpoint to the already mentioned principle of a desirable minimum and as laid down by a still very relevant limits-to-growth debate) and the impediment of a limited resource base in developing societies (see Parmar 1975a:15; 1974:44-45), this perspective on production would be articulated by the determination that an available resource base has to “be applied to the production of essentials and withdrawn from the less essential” (Parmar 1975a:14, italics added). In terms of a concrete policy framework this implies: (i) that slum clearance and low-cost housing will take priority over high-cost housing, (ii) coarse and medium cloth over fine textiles or synthetic materials, (iii) an increase in production of essential commodities over the expansion of a luxury goods sector, (iv) small irrigation schemes that reach the low-income groups over huge multipurpose projects, (v) training for basic rural health services over the concentration of medical facilities in urban
areas, (vi) the increase in health and educational facilities over, for example, night clubs, and (vii) small viable projects over prestige projects (Parmar 1974:37; 1975:14).

From another angle, it can be said that the concept of qualitative growth views cost-benefit relations in social rather than in sectional terms. It determines that development has taken place in cases where social benefit exceeds social cost, where net economic welfare increases and the wellbeing of the poor has been enhanced. As such, it counters the generally narrow, micro view of cost and benefit in conventional growth strategies, where a project is regarded as beneficial if the value of output exceeds the cost of input. It determines that such strategies do not as a rule take into account the cost to society (as a qualitative approach does). It does not make an assessment of negative consequences such as industrial pollution, the spread of slums, the evils of urbanisation and industrial expansion (crime, alienation, the sub-culture of poverty, unemployment) and the export of exhaustible resources (Parmar 1975a:11).

Contrary to the quantitative approach to growth, it could be pointed out that the most significant feature of qualitative growth is the fact that it brings into account cultural, human and social factors as fundamental co-determinants of welfare and development. This means a new consideration for the place of values as the ultimate factor in development, that is, values that through the attitudes of people, socio-cultural norms and ethical consciousness determine the nature of social institutions and structures (ibid.). Expressed in the positive sense by a qualitative approach’s emphasis on the essentiality of modest or simple consumption patterns in order to bring about an institutional and structural arrangement through which the poor might become the co-stakeholders of the limited resource base in developing countries (see Parmar 1974:44-45; also 1975:14-15), the institutional and structural aspect is, in the negative sense, indicated by a quantitative approach’s undermining of the values that development stands for. Far from being a merely narrow-focused, a-structural and a-institutional strategy of development, the quantitative approach enhances a structural and institutional arrangement upheld by the values of excessive consumerism, profit seeking and personal advantage at all cost, also including exploitation and aggrandisement (see Parmar 1975a:10), as described in the following quote:

Many developing countries are facing an unprecedented upsurge of corruption, hoarding, profiteering, and illegal domestic and foreign transactions, which are eating at the very vitals of society. These reprehensible forces have found sustenance in the process of quantitative growth. While basic needs remain unfulfilled, the quest for luxuries gains momentum. There is a steady erosion of
social commitment and responsibility. Such tendencies create values and social attitudes that jeopardize development. We have, therefore, to discard the narrow idea of a high rate of growth in favour of a value-oriented qualitative approach under which the struggle against poverty will from the outset be based on social justice and people’s participation. (Parmar 1975a:11-12)

2.3.2.2 Social justice

The ecumenical definition of development would, as an important corollary of what has been spelled out under the first principle of qualitative ‘economic growth’, determine that the application of social justice has to “precede growth and be considered a necessary precondition for growth” (Parmar 1974:43). In this sense, it involves the question of value change as much as of institutional transformation, which go hand in hand as is evident from the final section on ‘economic growth’ above (see Parmar 1975a:11). It is governed by the realisation that achievements of growth coincide with increased economic inequalities rather than vice versa. Increase in GNP is accordingly to be regarded as a delusive indicator as this ensures no automatic ‘trickle-down’ of the benefits of increased production to the poor - an outcome clearly not brought about by a mere market mechanism, as the latter rather favours the higher-income groups of society possessing adequate purchasing power (Parmar 1975a:10; 1974:39).

On the basis of the above critical assessment of existing institutional and policy regulation (predominantly against the interests and well-being of society’s poor), a social justice framework in ecumenical development thinking emphasised the necessity of an alternative system of regulation. In this system the notion of distribution ought to be the governing principle. Based upon “the acceptance of egalitarian values which … [are to] be realised in institutions relating to property, power and opportunity” (ibid.), this denotes a system of institutional and policy regulation that has to work not only towards an increase in production to specifically meet the needs of those below the poverty line (thus giving expression to the priority placed on the production of essentials within the imposed parameters of a national maximum in consumption patterns), but also to draw this social group into the mainstream processes of production and give them a stake in growth (Parmar 1974:40, 41).

In the ecumenical definition of development, this principle of equitable distribution also rejected the traditional view of welfare in which distribution is seen as a consequence of growth and, consequently, in which production takes precedence over distribution (as the inverse would rather be a case of ‘distributing poverty’) (see Parmar 1974:43). In this sense the ecumenical position rejected the mainstream rationale that policies of social justice would act as a

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25 See also footnote 14 again and the first quote in 2.3.1 in which the ecumenical movement’s critical position towards the GNP-biased view of economic growth is formulated.
disincentive to capital and enterprise. Here the counter-argument would be that it is rather the “stoppages and disruption of production caused by lack of people’s participation [that] damage the interests of these factors more than a decrease in their immediate share” (1974:41). It takes the stance that policies of social justice, of a more egalitarian pattern of distribution, will in the longer term become a promotive factor of growth rather than the opposite:26

Most Asian economies have a small saving class and a large non-saving class. This results from maldistribution of income and is an obstacle to growth. Measures of social justice should, by drawing the non-saving class into the mainstream of production, redress the pattern of distribution, increase the productive capacity of the people and transform them into a saving class. Such measures should be looked upon as investment to make our human resources more efficient. That is how social justice can become a promoter of growth. (Ibid)

In the preceding two paragraphs the notion of participation has been touched on as another fundamental determinant in the ecumenical understanding of development. More than indicating an important factor of production and growth (Parmar 1974:40), the concept of participation became the crucial ethical and political indicator in the ecumenical concern for social justice (see Dickinson 1991:271; 1983:56; also Parmar 1975a:15). It denotes the “visible element in the vision of an emergent society” (ibid; see also Arce Martinez 1978:268). As the prevailing mainstream development reality is associated with the lack of the popular sector’s participation in the decision-making processes of development, ‘participation’ denotes the distinct repoliticisation of the development agenda vis-à-vis an exclusively economic and technocratic approach (Dickinson 1975:70; Parmar 1975b:170-171, 175-176; De Santa Ana 1975:143-147). In the most profound sense, this meaning of participation introduces the leitmotif of ‘solidarity with the poor’, which makes the churches’ assistance of the poor in

26 At this point a meaningful parallel can be drawn between ecumenical development thinking and South Africa’s own Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). It is also stipulated in the RDP document that the integrated development process inherent to this programme opposes the conventional approach that holds growth and development, or growth and redistribution, as processes that contradict each other. Similar to ecumenical thinking, it also goes on to proclaim a strategy of redistribution that should be regarded as basic to a process of inclusive growth and development for society at large: “Growth - the measurable increase in the output of the modern industrial economy - is commonly seen as the priority that must precede development. Development is portrayed as a marginal effort of redistribution to areas of urban and rural poverty. In this view, development is a deduction from growth. The RDP breaks decisively with this approach. If growth is defined as an increase in output, then it is of course a basic goal. However, where that growth occurs, how sustainable it is, how it is distributed, the degree to which it contributes to building long-term productive capacity and human resource development, and what impact it has on the environment, are the crucial questions when considering reconstruction and development. The RDP integrates growth, development, reconstruction and redistribution into a unified programme.” (ANC 1994:6)
their own struggle for participation and liberation the most concrete and conscious expression of their (the churches') involvement in development (see Linnenbrink 1975:271). This view was expressed by C I Itty, one of the prominent formulators of the ecumenical understanding of development, as follows:

Development is essentially a people's struggle in which the poor and oppressed should be the main protagonists, the active agents and immediate beneficiaries. Therefore, the development process must be seen from the point of view of the poor and oppressed masses who are the subjects and not the objects of development. The role of the churches and Christian communities everywhere should be essentially supportive. (Itty quoted in Dickinson 1991:272)

At this point, as far as the churches' solidarity with the poor is concerned, the ecumenical understanding of development most clearly converges with the message of the theology of liberation. It was explicitly stipulated at the ecumenical consultation at Montreux in 1974 that 'liberation' represented a new word for 'development' (Linnenbrink 1975:271). This word most powerfully expresses the ultimate goal of the alternative ecumenical understanding of development, and exposes the inherently biased nature of mainstream capitalist development, serving the status quo and sustaining the subservient position of dominance and dependence in which the poor find themselves. However, this is an understanding of development that does not simply denote the adoption of Marxist doctrine: "it was more basically a result of the effort to reread the

27 In his book entitled Poor, Yet Making Many Rich: The Poor as Agents of Creative Justice, Richard Dickinson indicates how the following five modes of being in solidarity with the poor could be identified in the work of the WCC:

(1) Helping the poor to meet their immediate needs through relief and modified project assistance (1983:73; Chapter 4).
(2) Development education or "consciousness-raising for global justice" (1983:73; Chapter 5).
(3) Systemic (structural) analyses of basic social systems (1983:73; Chapter 6).
(4) Theological and ethical reflection on major cultural values and myths that govern societies, especially influential societies (1983:73; Chapter 7).
(5) Working alongside groups of the poor on local levels who are working towards their own emancipation (1983:74; Chapter 8).

28 This was the second ecumenical consultation at Montreux, which significantly shaped the ecumenical understanding of development. It followed upon the first important consultation at Montreux already referred to earlier in the discussion.

29 In their opposition to the reigning capitalist system ecumenical writers on development would come to express clear socialist sentiments. "There is an expressed conviction", Richard Dickinson wrote in his entry on 'poverty' in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, "that some form of socialism … is the system most likely to overcome poverty." (See Sergio Arce Martinez's explicit equation of development with socialism in his 1978 article in The Ecumenical Review (Vol. 30, No. 3)). Yet, as Dickinson suggests, in the larger corpus of ecumenical literature a position more sophisticated than a mere identification with socialism is to be encountered. Pointing out "the failure of both capitalism and communism", it is a position that rather adopts the fuller and more sophisticated language of what might be called "(a)n alternative 'third way'" - a
biblical materials and to see Christian theology with new eyes, from the angle of vision of the poor and oppressed, ‘from the underside of history’\(^{30}\) (Dickinson 1983:59). In terms of an authentic development praxis, it assumes that the poor will take “control of the process of development” (Linnenbrink 1975:271). In this sense it also requalifies the merely supportive role of the churches as indicated previously. In cases where the poor accept their lot of poverty and misery in passive resignation, the churches have the clear task of conscientisation.\(^{31}\) In the words of Itty, they have the task of assisting “the masses to recognize the roots of their plight, to acquire a new awareness of themselves and the possibilities for changing their situation” (Itty quoted in Dickinson 1991:272).

For the churches, this identification with the poor, in their struggle for development, at the same time implies an unequivocal self-critique. It implies the conscious and deliberate action of the churches to free themselves from the structures of wealth and power in which they might find themselves entangled (see Linnenbrink 1975:272). It assumes the extension of an authentic ecumenical development involvement to direct its role of conscientisation to the churches and Christians living in the rich industrial states (Linnenbrink 1975:273) (but, one may add, not omitting their counterparts in developing countries). This means bringing rich Christians and churches to the point of critically self-examining their own power base and ideological self-interests from which they render development aid (see Linnenbrink 1975:273-274).

In conclusion, this task of conscientisation has to be seen as the “constitutive factor for the unity of the Church” (Linnenbrink 1975:274). It should be stressed that, in the ecumenical consciousness, development was only authentic where it unifies rich and poor around the single denominator of a “Church of the poor, a poor Church” (see Linnenbrink 1975:272; italics in original); where it rules out any “neutral, arbitrator’s rôle ... from both oppressed and oppressors” and where it involves “taking an unequivocal stand on the side of the oppressed and the

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30 In a southeast Asian context this theological underpinning of development would significantly come to be known as ‘A Theology of the People’ or minjung theology, meaning theology of alienated or marginalised people (Das 1987:211-216; see also the numerous references to such theological expression in footnotes 25-32 in this section of the discussion by Das). In this theological expression, another writer from India meaningfully wrote that theology is not the main subject of people’s struggle for liberation, but justice is. It involves “the struggle of the people, especially the struggle of the poor, for their life”. It is therefore not the task of theologians to theologise this struggle, but their task could, at most, be a supportive one: “It is not we who should theologise this struggle. God himself has chosen sides. He has chosen to liberate the poor by delivering them from their misery and marginality, and to liberate the rich by bringing them down from their thrones. We are invited to take the side of the poor, to claim solidarity with them in their struggle.” (Mar Polouze 1983:88)

31 Cf. the concurrence between this perspective on conscientisation, as defined in the following two paragraphs below, and the perspectives on conscientisation in Chapter Three of this study, that is, at the end of 3.2.2 and especially in 3.3.2.
disinherited whenever they are denied the social, economic and political conditions necessary for effective participation in the social processes of development and decision-making” (Linnenbrink 1975:274).

2.3.2.3 Self-reliance
In the ecumenical consciousness, the structural and policy-making element of an authentic development process is most clearly described by the third determinant concept of self-reliance. Here the deficiency of mainstream dominant strategies to bring about a process of authentic development was pointed out. It was stressed that such strategies do not take the distinctive and peculiar situation of developing countries into account and that they remain structural and policy frameworks that are imposed upon these societies from outside. As this is most clearly to be recognised in the problem of modern technology as a strategy for developing societies, such a technological arrangement conforms to the pattern of supply in industrial nations. It is capital-intensive and labour-saving, while economic conditions in developing societies are very different. In these societies the situation is one of a scarcity of capital and a relative abundance of labour. Consequently, the influx of capital-intensive technology causes the distortion of the patterns of utilisation in these societies. It uses more of what these societies lack and less of what they actually possess, especially labour (Parmar 1974:45-46).

In the ecumenical perspective, the most suitable technological arrangement could (to adopt Parmar’s perspective) best be described as an intermediate technology. Here the prevalent quest has to be for a labour-using technology (contrary to a labour-saving one) that takes into account the distinctive socio-economic realities and conditions of developing countries. In spite of the fact that the system of modern technology by and large represents the opposite of such a (labour-using) technological arrangement, this perspective would not be inimical to the adoption of a modern technological arrangement. In practice, it proposes the implementation of “a politico-economic system that would allow for the co-existence of two basically divergent technologies”. It proposes the co-existence of a capital-intensive system of technology utilised by a smaller sector of society,32 while the rest of the economy is geared towards intermediate technology. As the essence of such structural and policy regulation was furthermore described by Parmar:

We need not shy away from the dualism inherent in a two-technologies social system. Economic dualism has been a

32 In this perspective the defence sector and part of the industrial sector are identified as utilisers of capital-intensive technology. Yet this statement can be regarded as a contradiction in terms, particularly with regard to the former sector, as it is acknowledged that the real solution to the problem of development entails the issues of peace and disarmament. As the notion of intermediate technology highlights the violent impact of modern technology upon human beings and nature, it points to disarmament and antimilitarism as integral parts of an authentic development strategy (see Parmar 1974:48).
characteristic of many Asian countries. It still continues. A small organized sector exists alongside a large traditional sector. Of course, in the past the former has exploited the latter and contributed to underdevelopment and inequality. An important aim of developmental efforts is thus to end this kind of dualism. Technological dualism could also present similar dangers, with the modern sector dominating the one which uses intermediate technology. To safeguard against such possibilities it would be necessary to undergird any experiments in two-tier technology by appropriate political and ideological supports. (1974:47-48)

In the above description the predominant orientation of an intermediate technological arrangement for traditional or indigenous societies is clearly spelled out, but also its definite political determination,\textsuperscript{33} that is, that this kind of society and arrangement has to be safe-guarded from exploitation and domination by the dominant modern sector through a system of clear structural and policy regulation. This does not only entail a fundamental perspective on employment and labour (that is the aspect already pointed out), but it also considers the environmental and limits-to-growth factor. While the ecumenical perspective on development emphasised the need for a particular measure of qualitative economic growth as indicated earlier, it simultaneously took full consideration of the limits-to-growth debate and ultimately the necessity for a zero rate of growth in the economic arrangement as this is the only safeguard against environmental and, for that matter, human destruction. Demanding the device of an intermediate technology this perspective furthermore qualified that:

\begin{quote}
Intermediate technology can maintain harmony between man and nature. In that case it will not exploit nature as advanced technology is doing. It could, therefore, be considered non-violent in character. Precisely for that reason it can develop and flourish in a climate of peace. The limits-to-growth discussion is of great significance in this context. It exposes the rapacious nature of technology. The suggestion of zero rate of growth and equilibrium, if put into practice, would reduce the exploitative attributes of technology and divest it of its inherent violence. (Parmar 1974:48-49)
\end{quote}

Related to the problem of technology, the ecumenical development perspective of self-reliance also extended to the debate on trade. Existing trade arrangements between developing and developed nations, which are upheld in this perspective, have to be regarded as part and parcel of the problem of

\textsuperscript{33} Thus, as under the heading of economic justice (see 2.3.2.2), the inherent political dimension or nature of an authentic development practice once again becomes evident.
mainstream development. These existing arrangements have to be seen in an historical light as the preservation of relationships from the time of colonial domination by which “capital and technique have moved from the dominant nations into the weaker ones to foist on the latter a pattern of specialization and trade that would serve the interest of the former” (Parmar 1974:50). As “a double movement of factors” is basic to this process leading to the constant draining of labour and raw materials out of the so-called developing societies to serve as inputs to the dominant countries, it reflects “the prevalent trade policy of export promotion and import substitution” in the contemporary context. Its objective is aimed at achieving self-reliance in the foreign exchange sector (Parmar 1974:50-51). In terms of the prevalent predisposition to imitate the dominant countries in all aspects and sectors, the rationale is to achieve the desired balance in the foreign exchange budget through enough export, to import the capital, goods and services necessary for the growth of a distinctive modern, industrialised sector without external financial assistance34 (see Parmar 1974:36-37, 51).

In the ecumenical debate on trade, based on the above critical perspective, “change in the existing pattern of international division of labour, terms of trade, and trade policies” was, however, demanded (Parmar 1974:51). Development would here take on the clear meaning of structural reform. It requires that “reforms of the international economic system [are] just as imperative as those required within the poor countries and within the developed countries” (Grant 1974:26, 27). As this once again introduces the notion of justice, “(i)ts expression would be social justice in the domestic economy and international economic justice in the world economy” (Parmar 1974:52). In terms of existing socio-economic relations, it implies a global structural and policy regulation in which primacy is given to the interests of the weaker sections, a policy according to which the industrial nations would “give up their present hold on the world’s resources” (ibid).

Yet in the ecumenical development debate the perspective on alternative trade regulations and structures would undergo further deeper qualification through the notion of self-reliance. It would go beyond the mere emphasis on just and fair international economic relations. It would propagate the principle of far less trade. However, by this the ecumenical perspective did not imply self-sufficiency, autarchy or delinking (Robinson 1994:320; Das 1987:206; Dickinson 1983:32). As this concerns the question of trade and the interrelated quest for intermediate or appropriate technology, the ecumenical perspective wanted rather to apply explicit qualitative consideration of the nature of what is exported and imported (Parmar 1974:50). The concern would here be with redressing the serious drain of scarce resources induced by a current export

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34 In his exposition Parmar called this kind of autonomy a “narrow, functional” self-reliance, as it considers the “blind imitation” of the “concepts and policies borrowed from industrial countries” a necessity (1974:36). Hence the clear linkage between the debates on technology and trade in the critical ecumenical perspective at this point.
policy, because this poses the real danger of their depletion in the long term at the cost of local people striving for self-reliance (*ibid*).

However, self-reliance was not only to be seen as an economic concept, but had to be applied to the whole of a society and culture. It relates to the collective cultural psyche of a people and to their liberation from the cultural imperialism imposed on them by the political, economic and technological (Western) structures and powers of domination (Dickinson 1983:32-33). Consistent with the denial of autarchy or self-sufficiency as a viable strategic option, self-reliance implies a strategy of development that “would not eliminate all vertical dependencies”. It would rather seek to minimise these vertical dependencies as far as possible (Dickinson 1983:33). The ecumenical understanding would relate here to a meaning expressed in the 1974 Cocoyoc Declaration, whereby self-reliant development means a new affirmation of a people’s *self-confidence*, of reliance primarily on their own resources, human and natural, and on their capacity for autonomous goal-setting and decision-making. “It excludes dependence on outside influences and powers that can be converted into political pressure” (Robinson 1994:320).

Self-reliance, in the ecumenical understanding, was all about affirming a local people’s *self-respect* and *dignity* (Das 1987:206). Formulated differently, it can be said that a development strategy of self-reliance indicates a fundamental reorientation ‘from below’ (see Fernandes 1991:303-304). It denotes the structural and policy regulation to ensure the authentic participation of local people. As this carries an explicit social and cultural meaning, it means that the process of development would evolve into an “indigenous movement for development” (Das 1987:207). It opts, on the broad socio-economic level, “for local grassroots initiative and innovation yielding results compatible with local conditions, tastes and culture” (Dickinson 1983:33).

It is appropriate to conclude here that much of what has been described above, particularly under the rubric of self-reliance, captures the essence of a *critical modernisation* perspective in the ecumenical debate on development. Not surprisingly, it would be made clear by writers from the Southeast Asian representatives of this debate that this perspective does not imply an anti-modernist approach. Congruent with what has been stated above, it does not mean a delinking from a modernist world. It wants rather to emphasise that modernisation is not a self-evident process that can be equated mechanically with Westernisation (Das 1987:207).

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36 At this point the interrelatedness of self-reliance with the second fundamental concept of social justice can be clearly drawn. As the notion of participation was indicated as inherent to the meaning of social justice earlier in our discussion (2.3.2.2), self-reliance here comes to represent an important concept to further qualify the meaning of social justice and, for that matter, the notion of participation.
Self-reliance, in the critical ecumenical perspective, would rather come to be associated with what M M Thomas called the “space and support in the global processes of modernisation for the Third World’s own experiments” (1991:33). Self-reliance, accordingly, comes to stand for a new meaning of modernisation, one in which the element of diversification is central. It denotes the means by which to bring into the process of development traditional or indigenous society’s contribution towards bringing about a new pattern of modernisation that needs “to develop not only an ideological alternative to Capitalism and Communism but also an alternative technology appropriate to a human mode of modernisation” (Thomas 1991:37). If only called ‘traditional society’ for the sake of distinguishing it from what can be called Western modernisation, we may here conclude with the following appreciation by Thomas of the ideological, value, spiritual and social contribution that those sections of humanity have to make to a new human mode of modernisation (that is, a general mode of social existence applicable to all of humanity):

It seems to me that all these call for a philosophy of modernisation which goes beyond the materialistic worldview and respects the organic and spiritual dimensions of human community life. Actually all religions and cultural traditions of the Third World are quite sensitive to these dimensions through their reverence for nature and concern for the primary communities like the family; and therefore any emerging new socialism needs to assimilate some of the traditional spirit and values in their renewed form. This will also help to give modernisation indigenous cultural roots, without which it often brings demoralisation. (1991:38)

2.4 Beyond charity

In the foregoing discussion the broad parameters of the ecumenical discourse on development, as it originated and reached a level of sophistication from a particular point in time onwards, has been set out. Having indicated how this discourse, from an early stage in its development, pretended to critically challenge both the church sector in general and a secular development discourse and practice, a point has now been reached where we can reconsider, in a better way, the meaning of that discourse in the light of the definitions of charity in the previous chapter.  

It should be concluded that the exercise undertaken in this chapter, that is to synthesise the various strands of the ecumenical discourse on development, cannot but lead us to extract a positive meaning from that discourse in view of

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38 We here refer to the three definitions or statements on charity stipulated in the previous chapter as the critical points of reference for evaluating the ecumenical discourse on development.
the critical position taken in the previous chapter. If only denoting a particular (progressive) discourse, which as the critical perspective in the next chapter will aim to make clear, not necessarily implies a corresponding progressive praxis, a meaning of theological-ecclesiastical discourse can be extracted here that has clearly progressed beyond the first stage in the growth of awareness of contemporary social and economic problems (as described in the previous chapter).

A development discourse, as evident in the ecumenical understanding, would clearly not take the existing order of things at face value - as occurs in the case of a charitable mode of understanding. It exceeds the boundaries of traditional theological and ecclesiastical language and adopts a distinctly critical social-theoretical content. Taking on a far more anonymous identity in this sense - by speaking to a far greater extent a development discourse proper and falling back far less onto traditional theological and ecclesiastical metaphors - it is nonetheless a discourse profoundly normative in nature. In other words, it displays a clear ethico-political agenda, articulating through its central concepts of (qualitative) economic growth, social justice and self-reliance, a vision of definite structural and policy change if the chronic problems of poverty, inequality and environmental degradation are to be redressed in a sufficient and satisfactory way.

In the very normative and ethico-political sense just mentioned, the ecumenical discourse on development could perhaps be best described as a discourse from below, which has made the poor, the environment, but also human (holistic) well-being in general its central concern. It has come to regard the latter category as a concern or perspective that opposes the imposition from above by the dominant ideology of a narrow-minded economic meaning onto human well-being. It has come to rethink structures and policy - economic, political and social - to enable poor and hitherto marginalised societies and people to become centres of direct participation, to sustain a new responsible stewardship of nature and to foster holistic well-being of human persons in general.

As a discourse or perspective from below, we have come to see how the political term of distribution became central to ecumenical understanding, that is, distribution of property, power and opportunity. Thus, as the central concept of a politicised ecumenical understanding of development, it is the principle of distribution that would, from an ecumenical point of view, give clear guidance about the kind of structural and policy changes that ought to take place within and amongst nations.

As a discourse from below, we have come to see how the ecumenical perspective also introduced a particular perspective on labour into the framework of development, which as indicated in the previous chapter, is absent in a charitable mode of understanding. The ecumenical development perspective, as such, has taken on a clear social meaning by criticising the salient
feature of modern technological devices to exclude a large majority of the world’s population - especially those in the so-called Third World - from meaningful and creative labour. It has drawn into the semantic constellation of development the notion of a labour-using technology, a kind of device that, in an alternative political and economic consciousness, puts far greater value on the contribution of indigenous culture and knowledge to the problem of labour. As an ecological and environmental consideration also figures notably here, it has, under the rubric of an intermediate technology, come to emphasise the need for the steering of a collective human energy towards a technological device, conducive to environmental and human social well-being - meaning in the latter case creative and participatory human beings.

It can be said that an ecumenical development discourse has clearly distinguished itself as an exponent of an alternative development corpus. It has come to denote an idea movement as much as indicating an actual theory-praxis corpus to intervene in existing social, political and economic arrangements to enhance human socio-economic well-being. It has come to constitute a value-centred and normative discourse challenging existing structural and policy arrangements. Moreover, it has incorporated an ideological meaning critically disposed towards modernist society in terms of structure, policy and worldview. As this meaning of development clearly separates itself from the meaning of charity, development, as a discourse composed of structural, normative and ideological meaning, ought to appeal in the ecumenical understanding to the conscience of both the poor and the rich. For the poor, development ought to mean liberation from their own passivity and oppression, the ability to recognise the nature of their predicament, and the confidence and will to become the subjects of their own struggle for emancipation and development. For the rich, in turn, it ought to mean the adoption of a critical self-awareness, the ability to recognise their own psychological comfort and position of power (to use the description applied in the previous chapter) and the moral will to engage creatively and constructively on a path of liberation of themselves and their poor fellow human beings.

We should end our positive assessment of the ecumenical development discourse at this point by referring to development (in terms of it being an intellectual enterprise) as a comprehensive set of normative, ideological and socio-critical ideas - an idea movement. In the next chapter we will focus more specifically on that particular offshoot of the ecumenical development debate that has already been identified in this study as the ‘Pragmatic Debate’. We will come to see how this debate juxtaposes a progressive discourse, that is, a set of normative, challenging ideas, with the reality of an actual (conservative) ‘development’ praxis. It will bring us back to what is referred to, at the very outset of the next chapter, as the return to a basic consideration, the question of how a prevailing social praxis of the churches has responded to the challenge of a progressive development discourse, essentially an idea movement.
Chapter Three

THE PRAGMATIC DEBATE

3.1 Introduction

Indeed there is not just one spectrum; rather there is a family of spectra. For example, there is a range of opinion that stretches from the cautious operational agencies whose major focus is still in works of a caritative nature, to the analytical, social science trained Christian who takes a much more ‘progressive’ view of the nature of poverty and the Church’s role in eradicating it.

...we are likely to find a large discontinuity between, let us say, the major papers at a World Council of Churches conference on the one hand, and the working hypothesis of a Church development agency in the US or the UK or Germany on the other ... Put concretely, we should not regard WCC statements (and a fortiori consultation papers) as descriptive of how Church development activists thought - or think.

...it comes as no surprise to find formal declarations and publications from the Church - both Protestant and Catholic - using a different language and addressing a different problem to that of the Church development agencies on the ground. To put it crudely, a gap exists between the rhetoric of the Church’s thinking bodies and the actions of the Church’s acting bodies. Charles Elliot (1987:29-30)

In the above extract from Charles Elliot’s book, Comfortable Compassion? Poverty, Power, and the Church, a significant continuation can be found of what this author, at an earlier stage of the ecumenical development debate, came to label as “The pragmatic debate”.¹ As suggested in this extract, through this debate a distinct tension would be introduced in the larger ecumenical development debate between theory and praxis, between theological and ecclesiastical development discourse as conceptualised in the realm of the World Council of Churches (WCC), on the one hand, and what the churches and their related bodies were in actual fact doing in the area of development, on the other (that is, development work being done on the ground by a wider and diversified church sector).

¹ This term is the heading of the final chapter of Elliot’s book, The Development Debate, which was published in 1971.
It can be said that the pragmatic debate indicates the return to a basic consideration. It poses the question whether the churches’ so-called development activities do in fact articulate something different from the works of charity of old. As the churches and church-related development agencies are now (that is, in the new dispensation of development) engaged in various kinds of development projects, in which they want to emulate the reigning secular views and models of development, the question is asked in the pragmatic debate whether such a ‘development’ engagement does in fact represent a different ideological, operational and relational framework from the works of charity in which the churches were previously involved. Or, to take it a step further, it is asked in this debate whether the development praxis of the churches does in fact reflect the critical development discourse that has emerged in the theoretical reflections of Christian theology and the churches (as we came to witness in the previous chapter).

Apart from institutions for service and charity, C T Kurien, another eminent Indian economic scholar participating in the ecumenical development debate, wrote in his 1974 reflection on the theme of “The Church and Development”, the churches’ response to the challenge of development also involved their sponsoring of projects specifically intended to increase productivity, such as in agriculture. Numerous schemes to provide assistance to small farmers and to encourage farming in drought-ridden areas would be undertaken by church-related agencies. In the domain of education new emphasis was placed on technical and vocational training. In the field of health some Christian hospitals were also taking up community health as a matter of high priority. In a general socio-economic sense, various forms of village upliftment projects and community development schemes became part of the churches’ societal service (1974:202-203).

Having mentioned the above modes of project engagement by the churches, Kurien conceded that some of these projects could be regarded as “of a pioneering nature and that most of them represented new areas of service for the church” (1974:203). Yet this author simultaneously qualified such observation by questioning the presupposition that most of the churches’

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2 As will be pointed out in more detail under the sub-heading of the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate (3.3) in this chapter, this is a point of view highlighted and criticised by Charles Elliot in his book, Comfortable Compassion?

3 While no specific reference is made in the pragmatic debate to the work explored in Chapter One of this study, the theme of charity constitutes the clear backdrop in this debate. In anticipation of the discussion of the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate mentioned in the previous footnote, see how a reference to the charity work of the Christian missionaries constitutes the clear point of departure in the discussions of the pragmatic debate by Charles Elliot (1987:17-25; 1971:110-113) and C. T. Kurien (1974:201-202).

4 In the pragmatic debate ‘charity’ not only indicates a historical mode of social engagement by the churches (with reference to the previous footnote), but also an ongoing mode of engagement up to the present, paralleling and overlapping with a so-called development involvement by this sector. See in this regard the first chapter of Charles Elliot’s Comfortable Compassion? (1987:9-16).

5 This is the topic of the postscript in Kurien’s book, Poverty and Development, which was published in 1974.
projects were reflecting the progressive principles that characterise the theological-ecclesiastical discourse on development:

But it is very doubtful whether these [projects] measure up to the standards of self-reliance and social justice that the church has accepted as new dimensions in development. (Ibid)

In substantiating his argument, and by referring particularly to the case of India, Kurien pointed to the external factor characterising the development work of the churches. This was, according to him, first of all illustrated by the fact that this work reflects an outside process in which the initiative comes from donor churches abroad and in which the local churches and their agencies are little more than local agents and administrators on behalf of “many overseas contributing churches and bodies”. Consequently, it would in this sense be possible to say that “many ‘development projects’ were initiated solely because finances from outside were readily available” (ibid).

No less significant is a second meaning. While it could be said that numerous individuals and special agencies were involved in the designing and execution of the projects (and one presumes here also local Christians), the actual state of affairs was that most churches and the majority of their members had no ownership of these development activities, as they were neither aware nor involved with them. In the words of Kurien:

Most of the so-called ‘church development projects’ did not have any contacts with the churches and had little to do with development except the names that they carried. They have also created the impression that dependence on foreign resources is the easiest way to achieve development. (Ibid)

As Kurien ultimately concluded, projects of the above-mentioned kind could hardly be regarded as making a positive contribution to the cause of social justice. Already suggested by the above-mentioned observations, this was in a further interrelated way reflected by the nature and impact of the churches’ projects. Their impact had to be seen as quantitatively very limited in relation to the vast problems of poverty, hunger and unemployment inherent in rural areas. By their very nature most of the projects were also incapable of reaching the poorest sections of the population, namely, the landless agricultural labourers in the rural areas and the destitute in the cities. In all, it could be said that these projects, as part of a larger collective effort, had fallen short of bringing about

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6 It can be said that the above-mentioned external factor (in the twofold sense mentioned) largely neglected the aspects of participation and liberation (of the local people and the poor) that were recognised in critical ecumenical development discourse as inherent in the central principle of social justice outlined in 2.3.2.2.
the fundamental structural changes that are required to alter the livelihoods of the latter social groupings on a long-term basis:

...it is becoming increasingly clear that justice for these sections calls for radical changes in our basic socio-economic structure and not just a few projects here and there, however thorough and adequate they may be as far as projects go. (Kurien 1974:203-204)

The above perspectives from the writings of Elliot and Kurien introduce us to the scope and contents of the pragmatic debate. Also referred to as the ‘project debate’, we may recognise through the brief exploration above how it is, in particular, through this debate that fundamental questions have been posed with regard to the development praxis of the churches in the wake of an apparently critical ecumenical development discourse. If only undertaken by a very small group of writers in the ecumenical development debate,\(^7\) and if already conveyed to some degree in this introductory discussion, the aim of the rest of this chapter is to explore the meaning of the pragmatic debate. This will be done by distinguishing between a moderate and radical account of the pragmatic debate. Pointing out how each account has, in its own way, come to call for a rethinking and reorientation of the churches’ involvement in development, the discussion will conclude by considering the way in which the pragmatic debate represents the ambivalent point of both an impasse and renewal in the ecumenical development debate.

3.2 The ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate

3.2.1 Historical review

In the few historical accounts at our disposal, it is pointed out that the churches’ development involvement through projects faced continual criticism and review (Dickinson 1983:77; also Itty 1974:11). In his concise but meaningful overview of the earlier period of project involvement, C I Itty, for instance, referred to “several new sets of criteria for projects” (ibid.) that had been devised from an early period in the realm of the WCC.\(^8\) In this regard he specifically referred to the contributions that were made at a consultation sponsored by the WCC’s Division on Interchurch Aid, Refugee and World Service at Swanwick in 1967 and the Council’s Fourth Assembly at Uppsala in 1968. Amongst a

\(^7\) Amongst this small group of writers and as reflected in our discussion of the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate in this chapter, Charles Elliot and C T Kurien distinguish themselves as representing the most critical position.

\(^8\) Itty (1974:11) pointed out how a special body was established in 1965 within the WCC to assist churches to meet the criteria set by the Council and its working bodies. Initially called the Committee on Specialised Assistance to Social Projects (SASP), this body later became the Advisory Committee on Technical Services (ACTS).
comprehensive list of new criteria devised at the latter occasion, the following, according to him, deserve special mention:

- Projects which aim at the ‘root causes’ of underdevelopment rather than treating its symptoms;
- Projects which have a comprehensive character, which attack the diverse and relative problems of a community in a coordinated and strategic manner;
- Projects which arise out of long-range planning;
- Projects which complement national or governmental planning;
- Projects which reflect technical viability and competence (Itty 1974:11).

Itty indicated that it was at the Uppsala Assembly that the new emphasis on structures highlighted at the 1966 Church and Society Conference, was sustained. It would uphold the latter conference’s view that structural factors are to be seen as the primary cause for underdevelopment in world society. It also reflected in its own discussions the ecumenical development debate’s increasing juxtaposition of the churches’ development involvement through micro projects (also called the ‘project system’) against what was seen as the macro structural factor in development (that is, micro projects versus macro structures) (Itty 1974:11-12). Yet – and this is the central point to be made in what we have come to recognise as the ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate – in spite of the prominent place given to the churches’ participation in structural changes at Uppsala, this assembly would nevertheless maintain the value of the project approach on the local level. Itty quotes from the document, Uppsala 68 Speaks, which clearly illustrates the dual position taken at Uppsala (that is, one that maintains the value of the churches’ development projects over against the problematisation of the project approach):

The churches are already engaged in mission and service projects for economic and social development and some of these resources could be used strategically on a priority basis for pioneer or demonstrative projects as an important response to the most acute needs of specific peoples and areas. (1974:12)

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9 See again the beginning of this study (page 1 and footnote 1) where the central place of this conference in the ecumenical debate is indicated.

10 At this point Itty referred to the Uppsala Assembly’s adherence to the pronouncement of Samuel Parmar, who declared that development in fact means disorder and revolution, that is, a dynamic process that ‘changes existing social and economic relationships, breaks up old institutions to create new, brings about radical alterations in the values and structures of society’ (1974:12).

11 In radical circles in the ecumenical movement in the early 1970s, as Itty pointed out, the criticism of the project approach would in fact reach the point of its complete rejection, most notably by Christians in Latin America belonging to the ‘structuralist’ school of thought. As source in this regard Itty referred to: “A Pastoral Letter from Concerned US Missionaries in Chile”, October 1972, CCPD documents No. 2, Churches and Development (see 1974:12, footnote 24).

12 A position, it may be observed, which clearly distinguished itself from more ‘radical’ positions such as that mentioned in the previous footnote.
Articulating a central aspect of the ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate, it is proclaimed in this extract that there is still a meaningful place for the project system besides a more overt structural approach to development. It suggests that there is the remaining factor of people and local societies’ fundamental needs, which cannot be neglected amidst the concentrated participation in programmes for structural change. In this light the development projects of the churches are to be positively viewed as serving as a meaningful and qualitative effort to meet these needs.

In the 1968 publication by Richard Dickinson, *Line and Plummet. The Churches and Development*, we can find a further elaboration of precisely this line of thinking. In this work, which served as an important preparatory document for the discussions on development at Uppsala (see Lacey 1968:7), Dickinson defended the churches’ project system. Sustaining in his own argumentation the tension between the project and structural approaches, or what he in the case of the latter also called “preventive work” (see 1968:78-79), Dickinson proclaimed that this could be regarded as a most creative tension. From the dynamics of such tension new modes of creative action could be developed by the churches:

But there is a growing uncertainty about the adequacy of traditional involvement of churches in development and social service projects. Many Christians today ask whether, given the radically new environment of the 1960s, a new approach is not demanded. We believe that this is a most significant doubt, laden with potential creativity as Christians seek new and more effective forms of service. (1968:76)

Dickinson argued that what was required was not the abolishment of projects, but rather the need to clarify and re-interpret the development objectives of the churches, and especially also to bring an administrative machinery into place that expresses and achieves these objectives (*ibid*). Most fundamental in this regard is the challenge to relate more fully the churches’ service efforts to the Christian ethos. Rather than discriminating between different modes of action, it is this ethos that in fact upholds the belief that all aspects of human life are potential “expressions of God’s redeeming action, and ... important for individual fulfilment and the achievement of a fuller koinonia” (1968:77). What matters to Christians is all activity that can collectively contribute to the emancipation of every human person, be it “from crippling disease, from deprivation and hunger, from ignorance, from the prejudices of others which keep one in an inferior position, from narrow horizons and parochial visions” (*ibid*).

In the Christian approach to development there could be “no hard and clear line of distinction between works of charity and those of justice” (Dickinson 1968:78). The former engagement could at a particular moment just as much be
an expression of the Christian ethos, of Christian love, as of justice (cf. 1968:79-80). In fact, there is a case to be made for the Christian sector to work “primarily on the level of symptoms - to trouble-shoot rather than diagnose and prescribe - as they have neither a “Christian” blue-print for society, nor the technical competence to make diagnoses and prescriptions for complex social, economic and political questions” (1968:79). Moreover, there is the argument that secular agencies are already engaged in preventive work and that the churches are most needed in curative and remedial work (ibid).

It was between recognising the need for a greater structural approach in the churches' development work, on the one hand, and the defence for the churches' project system and participation in works of a more curative and remedial kind, on the other, that Dickinson's argumentation continued to fluctuate. This way of reasoning would be characterised by the demand for a renewal and rethinking of the churches' development work. Yet it simultaneously did not want to totally disapprove of the churches' traditional mode of involvement. There was no plea for the disposal of a project approach, but for its continued qualitative innovation towards work of a more preventive kind:

Some believe that churches should muster all possible help for the present and visible victims of disaster, while others argue for greater efforts in race relations, international affairs, economic integration, government-sponsored relief programs, etc., to ward off social disasters and make advance provision for caring for the victims of natural disasters in future.

These are tortuous and agonizing questions which push us to the depths of our spiritual and theological understanding; they require decisions as to which groups among the needy will be helped. But in the final analysis we believe that churches should give much more attention - even if this entails the elimination of some relief programs, if that proves necessary to anticipating and preventing the eruption of man-made disasters. But we do not make a facile distinction between the two types of work because the churches' work among the needy remains and is a witness and sign in and to the world, as well as an opportunity for the churches' own spiritual growth. (Dickinson 1968:79)

This is the line of thinking that continued in the 1970s and 1980s in the mainstream ecumenical development debate. In the final section of his already mentioned discussion, Itty briefly pointed out that conscious efforts continued in the early 1970s to bring the development projects of the churches into line with
the fundamental principles of justice, self-reliance and people’s participation\(^{13}\) (see 1974:13). It is, however, to Richard Dickinson’s later important work, *Poor, Yet Making Many Rich: The Poor as Agents of Creative Justice*,\(^{14}\) that we can turn for a more substantial review of the project system within the WCC in the period referred to.

In a chapter in this work entitled “Relief and modified project assistance” Dickinson pointed out how, on the basis of recognised shortcomings\(^{15}\) of the project system, efforts prevailed to transform the project system in the 1970s and 1980s. By way of summary, we can point to the following units and initiatives within the WCC that, according to Dickinson, made noticeable attempts towards transforming the project system.

Firstly, there were the efforts of CICARWS (the Commission for Interchurch Aid, Refugee and World Service) to devise a new ‘Project List’ that could assist the churches in moving away from a predominant preoccupation with material sharing to a greater focus on *personal* and *spiritual sharing* (which would reverse the position of the poor churches from being mere recipients to actors who, from the point of view of the rich churches, have much to offer in terms of personal and spiritual enrichment). As Dickinson quoted one particular source,\(^{16}\) the emphasis would increasingly be on the *enlargement* of the Project List to include activities that focus on the development of human resources, make much more of ecumenical dialogue on witness and service and establish new forms of solidarity not articulated in terms of money, “but in common commitment to issues of justice and human fulfilment, communication and mutual support” (1983:81-82).

Aiming through its endeavours to transform the project system in a way that would found the churches’ project activities on a much more *theologically* and *holistically* grounded understanding of the witness and ministry of the churches, Dickinson furthermore pointed out how CICARWS attached greater importance to *networking* strategies on local and regional levels, a process initiated far more ‘from the bottom up’. In such a process there could be an expanded role for local, national and regional church groups in the articulation of priorities and the selection of projects. It also envisaged that the practice of networking would stimulate a deeper and new process of dialogue amongst groups as well as new patterns of partnership, not only between the so-called recipient groups, but also with funding partners. As a significant extension of this, regional and national groups were asked to create relationships *also* with

\(^{13}\) Itty pointed out how the micro/project approach adopted a people’s movement approach that recognises the poor as the subjects and as autonomous, active agents of development (1974:13).

\(^{14}\) Published in 1983 by the WCC’s Commission on the Churches’ Participation in Development (CCPD).

\(^{15}\) See the list of shortcomings stipulated by Dickinson (1983: 80, 81).

\(^{16}\) ‘Project List Review’ drawn up by the Central Committee of CICARWS at their meeting in Dresden in 1981, p. 3 (Dickinson 1983:91, n. 7).
non-institutional groups, such as the base ecclesiastical communities of the poor (1983:82).

Secondly, there were the efforts of CCPD (the Commission on the Churches’ Participation in Development), especially through the Ecumenical Development Fund (EDF) that was established by this commission after the Montreux I conference in 1970. Through this fund CCPD allocated block grants to partner groups in selected countries and regions that would go beyond a fragmented project approach. The difference was that block grants were now allocated to groups rather than individual projects. It made these groups the real subjects who could, to a far greater extent, determine the nature and contents of their own development processes. It also made more integrated and holistic efforts possible, as it allowed for longer-term and sustained processes that would not suffer from the uncertainties of year-to-year project funding (Dickinson1983:84).

One striking example of the block grant initiatives by CCPD was also this unit’s so-called ‘motivators training programme’, by which young volunteers were selected and trained to live and work in the poorest of villages. A clear conscientising strategy was to be followed through which the motivators would assist poor villages “to discover and mobilize their own resources for self-reliance” and “to make themselves less vulnerable to decisions made outside of their village” (Dickinson 1983:84). Dickinson concluded about the success and impact of the motivators programme as follows:

It illustrates one effort and approach by a WCC branch to be in solidarity with the poor by experimenting with new forms of resource transfers and the sharing of power. The evaluation team noted that the programme is people-centred and comprehensive. “The base is not a methodology of outside capital, but a drawing out of the people themselves.” Not least important, of course, is the impact of the programme on the motivators themselves. “We have seen ex-motivators at work in strategic places - in government agricultural schemes, in theological colleges, as village pastors. They are all a core of future leadership in church and society.” (1983:87)

Finally, there were the loans and investment programmes launched through the Ecumenical Loan Fund (ECLOF) and the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society (EDCS). Through these initiatives the WCC not only made loans available to small-scale operations on a low-interest and long-term repayment basis (through ECLOF), but also larger and more comprehensive block loans (through EDCS). The aim was to achieve, through this kind of inexpensive, low-interest loan (contrary to outright loans), a still greater sense of responsibility and
ownership by the local people. Dickinson quoted a source that stipulated the outstanding criteria for projects to be funded; foremost had to be the direct and radical participation of the poor and powerless in indigenous projects or programmes to meet their basic needs. They also had to be allocated direct ownership of the projects or programmes, which had to show the potential for achieving long-term, self-sustaining activity and growth. In an integrated manner, the projects or programmes also had to contribute to the social, economic and political advancement, not only of the direct participants, but of the larger surrounding community in order to avoid the unsustainable use of non-renewable resources and unsustainable impact on ecological systems (1983:87-89).

To end off this historical review of the project system in the ecumenical movement, we have thus been presented with the image of an initiative that appeared to be consistently aware of and sensitive to the development relationships it sustained. It was an initiative that, through its spokespersons, appeared to be concerned about the dominating relationships that it might sustain (that is, rich Christians and churches determining the development processes of poor people and Christians). It also appeared to signify a conscious mutual effort by the rich and poor counterparts to constantly transform and enhance the quality of activities; or as Dickinson would phrase it, “to find more adequate ways of making the sharing of financial resources more effective, efficient, and expressive of true ecumenical sharing” (1983:89).

As Dickinson went on to indicate, the “commitment to discover new forms of sharing within and among the churches” (ibid) became a trademark within the project initiative of the ecumenical movement. This refined initiative was not so much characterised by propositions of specific and concrete actions that the churches could undertake (that is, beyond the specific projects it financed) to foster the structural and institutional transformation that could bring about true development. But it may be said, however, that this initiative points to a progression at least on the ideological level. It indicates the search for new relationships of mutual sharing and collective action among rich and poor, which no longer constitute a one-way movement from the materially affluent to the less affluent, but one in which the latter also have much to offer in terms of relationships, information, experience and values. If still countered by the reality of the churches’ failure by and large to achieve such relationships of authentic mutual sharing, it was nevertheless anticipated that the seeds of such

17 Dickinson also pointed to the excellent repayment record of loans, as well as the steady expansion of the loan programme. This was evident in the number and total amount of loans from 1979 to 1980 (89 to 118 loans, $1.4 to $1.9 million) and the overall growth rate of 33% (1983:88).


19 For Dickinson this was the frustrating part of WCC documentation dealing with the issue of the sharing of resources. While radically challenging existing forms of sharing, it still to a great extent lacked giving more concrete suggestions for practical sharing of resources, especially in the context of WCC programmes (1983:91). See in particular Dickinson’s reference to the 1980 publication, Empty Hands (1983:89-91).
relationships of sharing were already visible in the project system that, through its vision for transformation, was moving in this direction (see Dickinson 1983:89-91).

3.2.2 Relational perspective

The above historical review ought to earmark Richard Dickinson as the most prominent exponent of the ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate. Having to a certain extent outlined his thinking in this review, it can be noted how this debate would still take on a more clear-cut angle through Dickinson’s formulation of a relational orientation in church development work. Articulated to some extent in his publication, Line and Plummet (see 1968:77-78), this writer’s argument would be conceptualised in a most focused and well-thought-out manner in an article, “Toward a New Focus for Churches’ Development Projects” (published in 1970 in The Ecumenical Review).

In the latter article Dickinson, in another focused reflection, again came to review the project system of the churches. At the beginning of this article Dickinson suggested that the prevailing points of criticism against the project system of the churches had to be taken seriously. These points of criticism were that the project system actually serves as a vehicle for a Western mode of development and worldview, that it makes Third World people and churches dependent on rich Europe and the West, and that it as a whole has little impact on large-scale transformation and change (see 1970:210-211). Accordingly, Dickinson also rejected the principle of a mere multiplication of church development projects to increase their impact. For him a more profound deliberation was called for regarding the actual impact and nature of the churches’ development projects:

...but the central issue remains, viz., what is the real impact of these efforts and what should be the core or focal point in church-sponsored development projects? It is alarming that, in many of the more materially affluent countries, concerted efforts are being made to increase the quantum of aid through the churches, without a probing of new analysis of how these new resources are to be deployed. (1970:211)

However, in the immediately following discussion Dickinson again clearly revealed the position taken in the ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate, namely that the churches’ development projects remain significant and should continue:

20 See again the identification of Dickinson as a central figure in the ecumenical development debate in footnote 2 of the previous chapter.
21 See our discussion of this book in 3.2.1.
To ask what should be the core or focal point in church-sponsored projects assumes that there should be church projects at all. I make that assumption. Elsewhere I have argued the validity of church projects as adding to the total quantum of assistance; as providing independent, non-governmental centers of initiative and effort; as exploiting the long experience and contacts of the churches in social service programs; as of continuing importance for the churches’ own progressive self-affirmation, self-discovery, and spiritual growth. (1970:212)

For Dickinson, it was not an abandonment of the project system that was called for, but a rethinking, a renewal, a redirection of the churches’ projects. In his own words, there was the important need to bring “the diffused and refracted church-sponsored projects ... into some coherent strategy” (ibid, italics added). Yet, having said this, more was needed. Such a coherent strategy had to be created on the basis of a particular philosophy and direction that would take a number of factors into account, namely i) the institutional characteristics and sociological realities of the churches, ii) the ethos of the Christian community, and iii) the social situation in which the churches endeavour to work, each with its own unique character (ibid).

For Dickinson this could be captured in what he called the “relational element”, or in what could be called “relational projects”. The relational element most significantly captures the nature and existence of the churches as a social institution. It also most appropriately conceptualises the ‘specialised’ terrain of the churches and distinguishes them from other actors or institutions in the development field. Through such relational orientation more creative and effective modes of engagement by the churches are likely to emerge (see 1970:212-213; also 219, 221).

What then is meant by the notion of ‘relational projects’? According to Dickinson, they are projects that focus on groups rather than on individuals, on interaction rather than on an attainment of living and material consumption. Here the emphasis is on how “sub-cultures of a national society” can be brought into a relationship of creative rather than destructive interaction. As this particularly concerns the many dispossessed and powerless groups in socially divided societies, the focal point has to be on how such groups can be brought into the cultural and political processes of those societies (1970:212). Here the focus should not only be on individual groups, but on the possibility of creative interrelationships between different groups. As Dickinson, at a number of places in the discussion, applied the theologically familiar notion of reconciliation (1970:214, 218, 220; also 1968:77), the emphasis should be on how to bring estranged groups of a population “into a community of recognized common
interests and mutual appreciation” (1968:77; also 1970:212-213). Summarising the essence of such a development approach, Dickinson stated:

All societies, and especially vulnerable less materially developed ones, are threatened by religious, racial, tribal, class, caste, linguistic, ethnic and other rivalries. Relationist projects would promote the interpenetration of these sub-cultures in the interests of how attitudes and actions of one group militate against the well-being of another, of mutual discovery of overarching and common aspirations. (1970:213)

From this point onwards Dickinson gave further meaning to the idea of a relational orientation to church development projects through a discussion of the apparent advantages and liabilities of such an approach. The various internal frictions mentioned in the latter quote had to be regarded as a serious impediment to development. It is also such a recognition of the value of a relational orientation that identifies a first point of advantage for the churches. As few other agencies conceive of their development function along the lines of reconciliation (because, it can be added, they do not have the expertise and vision for this on an institutional level), it suggests that the churches could, on this level, fulfil a significant and pioneering role in the area of development (1970:214; see also 218-219).

There were also a number of other points of advantage marked by a relational approach. A second advantage is that the relational perspective has the potential of making the churches important participants in the deepening and broadening of the concept of development. Dickinson argued that it was through the aspect of conceptualisation, namely their interpretation of the meaning of development (in the relational sense) and “their dialogic relationship with governmental and intergovernmental agencies in refining and maturing the conception of development and humanization”, that the churches could make a more significant contribution than through the traditional projects that they were sponsoring (1970:214-215; see also 1968:94-97).

22 With reference to the quoted passage, Dickinson’s formulation in his earlier definition of the relational orientation in Line and Plummet (see again the first paragraph of 3.2.2) is here preferred as it better expresses the interrelational aspect emphasised at this point.

23 Admitting at this point that the notion of “relationist projects” might still appear to be an abstract concept, Dickinson (1970:213) went on to provide a number of examples of already active projects by the Christian churches that more concretely illustrate this concept. These were projects such as Target Lengo, a newspaper that gave news and views on social developments in Eastern Africa, the studies of Hinduism sponsored by the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society in Bangalore, the Paulo Freire method of literary education in Brazil and Argentina, the studies and projects on private colleges and national development directed by the National Board for Christian Higher Education in India, the development of Dom Helder Camara’s co-operatives in northeast Brazil aiming at the political conscientisation and active political participation of the participants, the Quaker programmes of international residential conferences and seminars and the Latin American Church and Society proposal to establish social justice training institutes.
Dickinson pointed out a third advantage, namely that a relational approach also sharpens the churches’ and the larger constituency’s awareness of the psychological and social dynamics of developing countries. This awareness introduced into the playing field of development such non-material factors as the various sub-cultures in developing societies’ strivings for social justice, dignity, personal and cultural identification, and overall emancipation (1970:215). These factors, in turn, could be related to a fourth advantage: It was pointed out by Dickinson that a relational approach helps the churches to shift from a pre-occupation with individuals alone to a greater concern for the structures of community. This gives the churches not only a far better understanding of how structures and power groupings in fact constitute the formative forces in a given society, but it also brings them to a point where they can see as their primary role the task of bringing the disadvantaged and excluded individuals of that society into new relationships of participation and interaction with the existing power groupings:

These power groupings cannot be ignored. Part of the task for the future is to learn how to relate individuals to them in such a way that there is responsible participation, and to relate them to one another in creative rather than destructive interaction. (1970:215-216)

Dickinson points out as a corollary a fifth advantage of how a relational approach can help Christian communities, especially minority communities in developing countries, to escape their ghetto mentality and become less self-centred with regard to preserving their rights, institutions and integrity (1970:216). Dickinson also identified two further points that more closely reflect the ideological aspect of development. Relational programmes bring forward the insight that fewer investments in brick and mortar efforts are required (ibid.). Development is, in relational terms, not so much only a question of the materially affluent giving to the less affluent. It also involves a non-material, relational factor, which is fundamental to its success.

A relational approach seventhly demonstrates that, in terms of a general concern for humanisation, all countries are in fact developing. The fact that so-called developed countries are grappling with problems similar to those in the so-called ‘less developed’ countries (such as divisions of race, class, religion and language) suggests that “(q)uestions of international development and humanization apply to all nations, and the interrelationships between all countries” (1970:217). This calls for the following relational role by the churches:

24 At this point Dickinson pointed to the examples of Third World societies and leaders, such as Nyerere’s emphasis on ‘standing-on-one’s-own feet’, Latin America’s rejection of the Yankees, Sukarno’s rejection of foreign aid, Frantz Fanon’s plea for Africa’s psychological emancipation from Europe, and the black person’s struggle in the USA for dignity and psychological freedom (1970:218).
Thus all countries are potential donors, and all countries are potential recipients of aid. If churches and church-sponsored projects can help us to focus on that reality, avoiding the paternalism of the givers of material assistance, and the sense of subservience and resentment of material aid, they will have helped to de-fuse an explosive situation within the world community, as well as within nations. (Ibid.)

Finally, it could be said that relational-type projects are closely related to the ethos of the churches. In emphasising notions such as liberation, justice, reconciliation and koinonia, they stand at the heart of the mission of the churches. They are a mode of engagement that expresses to the full the interrelational, communitarian and social emphasis of the Christian ethos. They convey an authentic perspective on humanisation beyond a narrow material and economic meaning. They represent an approach to development that aims to bring the poor and exploited of society into the centre of the overall processes for reconciliation and participation (see Dickinson 1970:217-218).

Dickinson finally also addressed the criticism that might be directed against a relational approach. It could, for instance, be said that this approach constitutes a gross neglect of basic economic and physical needs. 25 In addition, there is also what he called “the psychological problem”, namely that the relational approach can be perceived by developing countries as a convenient strategic instrument wielded by the developed countries to undermine any competitive economic progress that might be achieved by them (that is, the former):

An emphasis on the relational type project is not without its limitations. There is the basic physical problem that many people in the two-thirds world desperately need health care and food; it would be hollow to speak of human dignity with these basic necessities unmet. There is also the psychological problem that already people in the less materially developed countries allege that the Western countries, and the churches in collusion with these Western governments, have not stressed economic material development for fear of competition with Western industries. (1970:218)

In his response to such points of critique, Dickinson pointed out that the relational approach does not call for the end to all economic-centred engagement by the churches. Whereas we may, at this point, recall other pronouncements by this author in which he argued for the retention of the social and charity services

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25 This is in accordance with the position in the ecumenical debate that wanted to retain the economic entry point to development. See 2.3.1.
of the churches,²⁶ Dickinson confirmed in a more moderate way in this particular formulation that there was a special role for the churches “to stimulate among governments a greater sense of their basic responsibility for economic development”. Moreover, there is scope for a number of economic development projects by the churches with a strong relational component (such as projects through which individual farmers might be assisted to relate to the total village community) (ibid.).

Yet, and this expresses Dickinson’s ultimate position, beyond this kind of ‘economic initiatives’, primacy has to be given to relational kinds of development engagement. As it could rather be left to institutions such as governments to take responsibility for economic development at large, the relational element indicates an area in which the churches specifically can really excel. The relational perspective raises for the churches the question whether they are not called upon to “work in more pioneering areas, doing what others cannot or will not” (1970:218-219).

Contrary to narrow-minded economic views of development, Dickinson maintained that a relational approach does not constitute a mere by-product of development (see 1970:220), but stands at the very centre of development. This is a conviction driven by the perception that the relational approach is just as much a meaningful promoter of material well-being as economic development efforts themselves, as it fosters the goals of self-reliance and inter-group cooperation (1970:219).

For Dickinson the case for the churches’ preferential option for relational-type projects ultimately brought him to adopt a perspective on conscientisation, namely that the need to change people’s attitudes, thinking and values has to be seen as fundamental to authentic development. Here the meaning of relational projects does not lie in the quantum of their efforts (as in the case of economic-centred projects), but in their ability to influence the thinking and attitudes of people, as the ultimate requirement for a decisive development process:

> It is not the projects in and of themselves which will radically affect development; rather it is the influence which projects have upon the thinking and attitudes of those connected with them. If this is true, then relational projects have a great advantage over many of the traditional types of church sponsored activities. The major advantage of this re-orientation would be the sensitizing of people in both the “recipient” and “donor” countries ... to dynamic social realities. Not the least would be the new and renewing understanding which the Westerner would get through his involvement in the fluid dynamics of a less materially developed

²⁶ See 3.2.1.
and politically coherent nation - perceptions of inestimable value for him as he reflects on the social forces at work in his own society ... Thus, while relational type projects do not have direct applicability to international disparities, it is difficult to imagine a better means for sensitizing people of less and more materially advanced countries to the basic human meanings of development and humanization. (1970:220-221)

3.3 The ‘radical’ pragmatic debate

3.3.1 Modernisation critique

In the ecumenical development debate the ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate does not constitute the sum of the pragmatic debate, but should be, in a most critical way, supplemented by what may be called the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate. Taken up by one or two critical writers perhaps less affiliated to the centre of the mainstream ecumenical debate27 (as opposed to the central figure of Richard Dickinson), a fine line at first glance appears to separate this perspective in the pragmatic debate from the former. According to the point of view stated in the introduction of this chapter, the churches’ development praxis through development projects is juxtaposed with the far-reaching principles of social justice and self-reliance in critical ecumenical development discourse. Both the radical and moderate versions would seem to accentuate such a contradiction. Viewed from the point of view of the ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate, it can be observed how this debate, similar to the radical account, in its own pertinent way also pushes for the reform and transformation of the project system to work towards and meet the very principles of social justice and self-reliance. In this account of the pragmatic debate, the vision is also held that the churches’ development projects have to become authentic instruments of social justice, self-reliance and people’s participation.

Where then do the two accounts of the pragmatic debate separate? With a view to answering this question this section will focus on the work of Charles Elliot, who can be regarded as the main exponent of the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate. He is the person who has sustained the most critical and substantial discussion of the project system of the churches,28 which in this study embodies the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate to its full extent. We may here return in more detail to Elliot’s

27 We are speaking here of Charles Elliot and C T Kurien, who have both in their own way been important contributors to the ecumenical development debate since its early stages.

28 Whereas the contribution of C T Kurien, the other exponent of the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate, consists only of a number of pages (which have largely been dealt with in the introduction to this chapter), Elliot has more fully worked out this debate in a whole chapter and a monograph, as indicated in the main discussion above.
already mentioned earlier book, *The Development Debate*, in which he introduced the concept of the ‘pragmatic’ debate.

In the chapter entitled “The pragmatic debate”, Elliot argued that the so-called development efforts of the churches were generated within the same ideological setting that sustained and promoted the *paternalistic* social service activities and attitudes of the Christian missionaries (see 1971:110-113). Elliot proclaimed that it was the earliest so-called ‘development’ efforts of the churches and their agencies in the 1950s and early 1960s that “perpetuated both an inadequate understanding of development and an inadequate basis for the relationship between the wealthy West and the starving millions” (1971:114). It was an enthusiasm for development that started with the “starving baby” syndrome and in a renewed way strengthened the ideological position of the rich West and the Western churches:

> No great theological education was required to see that the parable of the Good Samaritan, for instance, applied directly to the starving babies of Africa. At a time when traditional missionary enterprises and institutions were threatened and discounted by the rise of nationalism in Africa and colonial Asia, the churches’ flagging interest in the former colonies found a new focus in the brilliantly managed publicity campaigns of Oxfam, Freedom from Hunger and War on Want. (1971:113-114)

From this point onwards Elliot also focussed on the later refined project system of the WCC that was discussed earlier. In this further deliberation Elliot acknowledged that “some small progress” had been made vis-à-vis the charity and missionary modes of engagement of the churches (1971:115-116). Going so far as to refer to those projects that aim at manifesting the goals and vision of social justice and Richard Dickinson’s concept of ‘relational projects’ as a *media via* (‘middle way’) between the mission and charity services of the churches (see 1971:117), Elliot, in the final analysis, doubted whether the project system’s new arrangements of sharing and partnership between donor and recipient churches could be regarded as authentic expressions of a social justice framework. He contended that in the relationship set up in providing aid, all decision-making lay in the hands of the donor. Real partnership in decision-making, consequently, does not become possible by a mere “token acknowledgment by the donor that

29 See footnote 1 of this chapter.
30 See again the beginning of this chapter (3.1 and footnote 1).
31 As concluded at the end of this subsection, we can note how Elliot’s notion of paternalism resembles the third meaning of charity formulated in chapter one (1.3.3).
32 See again 3.2.1.
33 In footnote 13 of the above-mentioned chapter by Elliot (see 1971:123), he refers in particular to the article by Dickinson that also constitutes the focus of the discussion in 3.2.2 (‘Towards a new focus for churches’ development projects’).
the recipient must be allowed a greater share in decision-making”. It can only become possible where the donor transfers all decision-making power to the recipient and he/she in turn also receives back “a proportion of decision-making power from the hands of the recipient” (1971:118).

In this sense Elliot concluded that the refined project system, with its determination of ‘progressive’ arrangements of sharing and partnership, can still be regarded as conservative. As this brings us to a sustained assumption in the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate, it is argued that the project system, albeit in its refined form, in essence retains the relationships of power that were characteristic of the missionary and charity services of the churches. It is a mode of engagement that cannot be transformed to the extent that there is no relationship of dependence from the side of the receivers. In essence, it remains a one-way activity in which the privileged donor reaches out to the poor recipient:

Radical as this approach may be - and the evidence at the time of writing is that it will prove too radical for the constituency of the World Council of Churches - there is an important sense in which it is still conservative. Though it aims to transfer power, it does so by transferring resources to be used for the social and economic development of groups ... in the poor countries. There is still, therefore, what we could call without disparagement some missionary flavour: the rich are encouraged to give a little to help the poor ... However well intentioned and carefully circumscribed with non-discriminatory provisions, aid is aid and an agent of the maintenance of a dependent relationship. Therefore, the best aid that can be given to the poor countries is the means of breaking that relationship. And that means starting with the marginados. (1971:119)

Having seen how Elliot, in the last two sentences of the above critique, also suggests a different mode of engagement by the churches, a different starting point, this is the appropriate point in the discussion to turn to his later work, Comfortable Compassion? Poverty, Power, and the Church. Contrary to the complacency that has often surfaced in the writings of representatives from the ecumenical movement,34 of which the ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate can be taken as an example, Elliot in this book calls for a radical reorientation of the churches’/ecumenical movement’s actual involvement in development (see 1987:16). In this continuation of his earlier critical account, Elliot also approached such reorientation from the point of critically reviewing the project system of the churches. There was one addition, though, that constituted the

34 See here again the pronouncement of Richard Dickinson quoted at the beginning of Chapter Two.
crux of Elliot's argumentation: his review of the project system was now framed in terms of a critical modernisation perspective.

Elliot contended that the project system of the churches had been nothing more than an uncritical imitation and embrace of the Western modernisation paradigm of development. However, there is far more to this than a mere rendering of development services and the creation of development structures according to a particular ideologically confined model or paradigm of development. The project system of the churches not only signifies an act of paternalism through which the recipients or the poor are denied full participation and ownership of the development process, as Elliot argued in his earlier critique, but is also co-instrument of a larger development enterprise that imposes a whole model of society on other societies, a model with its particular worldview and thinking, its structuring and regulation of society. It creates a state of dependence on the part of the recipients, compelling them to abandon all indigenous systems of knowledge and living.

In his discussion Elliot again (as in his earlier critique) pointed towards the churches' conscious separation of their development activities from their missionary and charity activities. By doing so they wanted to shed the colonial image that had become attached to the latter services and activities in the now politically independent developing countries. Yet, as Elliot indicated, this predisposition in actual fact provided the impetus for the churches' embrace of the modernisation paradigm (see 1987:17-23). While the churches, through a newly defined ecumenical initiative, wanted to escape the missionary ways of doing and thinking, they identified themselves with the secular paradigm of development.

We shall not be surprised to find, therefore, that the Church's involvement followed - both chronologically and in many respects ideologically - fashions dictated by the secular world. (1987:25)

Elliot argued that there was a kind of historical inevitability about this identification. Sensing the need to produce results (that had to be different from those produced by the missionaries and that had to be the concrete manifestation of the new ecumenical impetus to be engaged in the contemporary socio-economic realities in world society) and starting their work with virtually no theoretical background in development, the churches were under great pressure to pick up ideas, plans and programmes from wherever they could (1987:25). For a number of reasons they conveniently found these in

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Footnote 35: Elliot pointed out how the churches' involvement in development originated through the ecumenical movement/WCC. Elliot argued that this was an ecumenical initiative through which the churches' new involvement in development obtained legitimacy in the eyes of political leaders and governments and countered the old denominational rivalries created by the missionary activities of the churches (see 1987:23-25). This particular point was also made in the introduction to this study.
the secular environment of government-driven development operations. They perceived such development operations as the appropriate sites to participate in a process of democratic development (cf. Elliot 1971:116). Through linking up with these operations, they were now also receiving substantial funding that legitimated their own position in development (see 1987:25-26, 43). No less important, they were, through such engagement, also not required to acquire any critical competence in development, but only to channel resources and aid through their development projects to developing communities (see 1987:37, 47-48, 63-70).

From the point of view of mainstream secular development enterprises, Elliot pointed out how this mode of development work gave a central place to the notion of economic growth. In such terms development is understood “as economic growth plus some improvement in social conditions, e.g. education, health, housing and employment” (1987:31). It stipulates that improved living conditions require higher income, that higher income can in turn only be achieved by improved productivity and that greater productivity, again, requires higher investment.

It is, according to this mode of thinking, the task of international cooperation - and thus of development projects - to contribute to such a process of development to start the ‘engine of growth’. It is furthermore the perception that this ‘engine of growth’ will bring about the required social change, namely urbanisation, a new class structure and a new range of tastes and expectations (ibid.). Yet – and this brings us to the central point of thinking about modernisation – inherent in this way of thinking is the belief that the institutions and thought-patterns of people in developing countries are unsuitable for achieving the level of economic growth that is required to transform them into the kinds of industrialised societies that are idealised. Therefore the institutions, perceptions, attitudes and ways in which people relate to each other need to be modernised. This would lead to the high rates of economic growth required and, ultimately, the levels of consumption similar to those in the developed countries (1987:32).³⁶

According to Elliot, the churches’ thinking was deeply permeated with the ideology of modernisation (ibid.). It is a feature that could clearly be recognised in their projects of development. It could be recognised in the vocational schools that they established to produce ‘modern’ apprentices and partisans. It is also illustrated by the model farms that they established to produce ‘modern’ agricultural techniques to ‘modernise’ the farming system of peasants. It is evident from the ‘modern’ forms of economic organisation, such as cooperatives and

³⁶ At this point Elliot pertinently referred to the book by Gunnar Myrdal, Asian Drama (published in 1968), which was very influential in framing a mode of development thinking along the lines of the need for modernisation.
credit unions, which they introduced to bring incentives and discipline to the (presumed) backward peasantry (1987:33).

According to Elliot, projects such as these indicated the implicit racism of the modernisation paradigm. It implies that what exists is backward, inferior, in conflict with progress and generally lacking all the positive attributes that enabled the industrial countries to be successful. It denies the positive dynamics that are also at work in the societies targeted for development:

It ignores, for example, the subtlety of social organisation in an Indian village or an African tribe. It ignores the astonishing knowledge of many indigenous people of their environment and its constraints. It ignores the delicacy of personal relationships and the wisdom of rural people in every continent. (Ibid.)

Modernisation theory, furthermore, is built on the rationale that it is the low-income societies that need to be changed if living standards are to rise. The problem, consequently, is ‘out there’ and change needs to take place ‘out there’. It conveniently assumes that the rich, developed countries can only have a beneficial impact on the poor, developing societies through their development assistance. This brought Elliot to a renewed structural and political perspective: modernisation theory denies the fact that through such factors as trade, investment and the communication of inappropriate consumption patterns and technologies, the rich countries might also be highly destructive of ‘traditional’ societies, or otherwise obstructive of the necessary changes. It is a mode of thinking and action that is not concerned about process, that is, processes of enrichment and impoverishment, participation and exclusion, access and control. It abstains from questions that are necessarily political and directs itself exclusively to technocratic questions about the implementation of projects. It assumes that, given enough successful projects, development will be achieved (1987:35-36).

In conclusion, it can be said that with this perspective of Elliot we have come full circle. As his critique of a contemporary development enterprise would be applied to the project system of the churches, it very well resembles the critical ecumenical perspective that was set out in Chapter One of this study. It closely correlates with those three meanings of charity formulated in Chapter One, suggesting that the churches’ engagement in development through projects in many ways reveals the same ideological, political, structural and social theoretical deficiencies as their works of charity did in an earlier historical period. Although a different kind of project was presumably being mediated by the churches in the new era of development (contrary to the traditional charitable activities of the missionaries such as building schools, hospitals, orphanages and homes for the elderly) (see Elliot 1987:33), and although the
churches’ efforts were now also part of a far greater national and international initiative determined by the secular world of power, Elliot’s critical perspective presumes that the churches’ development projects were exposing an ideologically and socially uncritical engagement similar to the churches’ works of charity.

Thus the first critical meaning of a charitable mode of engagement outlined in Chapter One is echoed by Elliot when he, in a way somewhat contradictory to his whole argument, acknowledges that the churches have over-invested in approaches to development that are not necessarily destructive or unnecessary (1987:117) and in certain contexts represent an important and appropriate area of work (1987:179; also 13). But he immediately qualified this statement by noting that they constitute approaches to development that are inadequate by themselves and are easily subverted into countersigns. They were activities that more often become services for the elite and middle-class (1987:117). As in the case of charity, these approaches by and large neglected the factors of structures and power inherent in the problem of poverty. Elliot stated this, from the starting point of the project approach of the churches, as follows:

If poverty persists, it is, one supposes, because insufficient projects or the wrong bundles of projects have been implemented. The remedy is more projects, more money, more professionals, more agencies. The fundamental relationships of power and wealth extraction are simply never faced. (1987:48)

The approach of the churches to development through projects also resembles the second critical meaning of charity discussed in Chapter One. Elliot argued that it was structural factors such as the international trading system, the international monetary system, foreign investment, the transfer of technology, access to information, the role of the military and the creation and maintenance of a sub-class of permanently poor that have a far greater impact on the developing world and the living standards of poor people than international aid (project) efforts. Yet these areas were almost by definition beyond the technical competence and sphere of action of the churches and reflected their inability to undertake critical social thinking. They are areas which the clergy have not been trained to address, while only a very small group of lay people are close to these matters to be helpful in any way (1987:63). Such incompetence was conveniently disguised and not challenged by the project involvement of the churches.

There is a still more significant point to this neglect, which highlights the ideological aspect of the churches’ bondage to the modernisation paradigm. This

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37 Cf. the meaning of charity in 1.3.1.
38 Cf. the meaning of charity in 1.3.2.
is the fact that many of the lay Christians who have been involved in international trade, technology transfer or banking find it very difficult to subject their area of daily concern (which was also the source of their daily bread!) to the radical critique of a structural approach. Not only do these Christians tend to be politically conservative, but they also tend to perceive capitalism as a morally good, even divinely sanctioned, form of organisation that also has to be the remedy of the poor. In Elliot’s words:

Within capitalism, they tend to regard the function of the market, whether for capital or technology or manufactured goods or raw materials, as the ‘invisible hand’ that guides human society to the greatest happiness of the greatest number ... It is asking a very great deal ... of such people to make the perceptual leap from the snug commercial environment in which they are embedded, to the perspective of the Kingdom of God in which the rich and powerful are brought under judgement, and the Kingdom is proclaimed to the poor and lowly and the meek ... That perspective is so far out with the normal mind-set of those who operate the structures that it is not hard to understand why most Churches most of the time have remained mystified at, confused by, and therefore negligent of the central issues involved. (1987:64)

As suggested by much of the discussion in this subsection, it is also possible to equate Elliot’s criticism of the churches’ project system with the third meaning of charity offered in Chapter One.39 Elliot held that the development projects of the churches naturally presume a movement from the rich to the poor. It is an irreversible reality; the project system cannot be otherwise! Projects mean tasks to be executed amongst the poor and underprivileged. They represent an act of clear paternalism.

As in the case of his earlier work, Elliot again emphasised the essential one-way direction of the churches’ projects.40 They represent a kind of operation that cannot be reversed by an emphasis on social justice, such as in the ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate. In addition to his earlier criticism, Elliot now also cast this particular point of his argument in terms of the critical modernisation perspective referred to above. Although the argument has – through the emphasis on justice – come to be that the rich and powerful have used their wealth and power in a way that makes poverty inevitable and that justice can only be implemented by the rich rendering reparation to the poor through a transfer of resources, the assumption remains that these resources are used in ways consistent with modernisation thinking. It is a case in which the nature of

39 Cf. the meaning of charity in 1.3.3.
40 We are referring here to the argumentation in his earlier 1971 work discussed in subsection 3.3.1.
development, in essence, retains its Western meaning. Only this time it is demanded that the rich give to the poor on a far greater scale (see 1987:52-53).

3.3.2 Conscientisation

Having pointed out the apparently common ground between the ‘moderate’ and ‘radical’ accounts of the pragmatic debate at the beginning of 3.3.1, it is important to also discern the continuous thread that separates the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate from the ‘moderate’ account. It can be said that the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate’s critique of the project system (and, for that matter, an apparent progressive ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate) is that it sustains the dominant position of the rich and powerful. As is observed in the last paragraph of 3.3.1, this is a line of assistance (from the dominant to the subordinate) that cannot be reversed. The very notion and reality of development projects indicate that this is an impossibility. A reversal of direction, with a starting point from the position of the poor and subordinate, a radical breakthrough and transformation, therefore, demand at least the abandonment of a project vocabulary. It demands, in fact, a profound reorientation.

It may be observed how both the ‘moderate’ and ‘radical’ accounts of the pragmatic debate emphasise the concept of conscientisation in their respective perspectives on strategic reorientation. Having already indicated how the notion of conscientisation takes a central place in Richard Dickinson’s formulation of a relational reorientation of the churches’ development projects, it would here for a start be possible to say that both accounts appear to conceptualise the development role of the churches along the lines of what has been formulated, at a number of points in this study, as an idea- and value-centred approach to development. Accordingly, it seems that both accounts have come to define the actual role of the churches as one of conscientisation, value transformation, sensitisation, and changing the minds, attitudes and behaviour of people.

Yet at this point it can be indicated how the above determination of a decisive separation between the two accounts of the pragmatic debate also indicates the fundamental difference between the two perspectives on conscientisation. As suggested by Elliot’s critical assessment, the notion of conscientisation in the ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate rather reinforced the assumption that development was a matter for the developing countries. Through the medium of the project system, it sees the support of the efforts of the church development agencies in the developing countries with money, training and manpower for conscientisation work as the prevailing role of the churches in the developed countries. This is a case where the paradigms of modernisation and conscientisation overlap to a considerable extent. Both situate the most effective

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41 See here again the final two paragraphs of 3.2.2.
point of engagement for the metropolitan churches in the developing countries (1987:117).

This brings us to the culminating point of the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate. Through the writing of Elliot this debate has come to propagate a far more radical and profound meaning of conscientisation. At the basis of this is the perception that processes and programmes of conscientisation are not reducible to projects. It points to complex, organic and autonomous processes that sharply contrast with the traditional top-down, modernising, neatly planned projects favoured by donors.

It is simply not open to the managerial manipulations of Western categories of thought. It has to be organic, inevitably slow, uncertain, unpredictable, in many senses uncontrollable. Because it is essentially about freeing people in a number of dimensions of life that are complex, inter-active and hard to get, it is an approach that has to be lived experimentally, experientially and always provisionally. It is therefore an approach that is always opaque and untidy for those outside it. (1987:90)

Indicating a complete shift from a project to a conscientisation vocabulary, one can note how the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate, through Elliot’s perspective, highlights a full-fledged idea- and value-centred role for the churches in development. This perspective wants to convey that the explicit and distinctive role of the churches in development is the creation of an alternative consciousness in society at large. It is this mode of involvement that is the authentic task of the churches, not the execution of projects. In contrast to the ‘moderate’ pragmatic debate, the point of departure is radically reversed. It is a double entry point in which the rich and powerful are to be brought to an alternative consciousness determined by the interests, self-expression and point of view of the poor and powerless. Capturing the essence of such a conscientisation of the rich, Elliot wrote:

What is definitive is the level and nature of the consciousness that informs the actions of the rich and the powerful in their dealings with the relatively poor and relatively powerless ... It is the creation of an alternative consciousness, which in the spirit of magnificat and beatitude puts the poor and powerless at the centre, that is the true task of the Church in development. This alternative consciousness is not paternalistic or condescending; it is a consciousness that turns upside down the priorities and assumptions of twentieth-century

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42 We may here also compare the two other earlier, less elaborate accounts of the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate referred to in this chapter, namely that by C T Kurien (see 1974:206-209) and in the earlier chapter by Elliot (see 1971:119-122), in which a similar radical meaning of conscientisation is propagated.
industrialised, secularised acquisitiveness ... and judges relationships, structures, and economic ties not by what profit it brings to the dominant partner but by how much it enlarges the life chances of the subordinate partner. That means the judgements have to be made by the subordinate partner - which in turn means that the subordination is ended. The interests of the poor and powerless, as formulated and expressed by they themselves, thus become definitive of the alternative consciousness. The rich and powerful, in other words, have to learn to use their wealth and power not for their own aggrandisement, but for the goals set by the poor and powerless. (1987:117-118, italics added)

Following from such a basic formulation of what is to be viewed as the churches' actual role in a process of authentic development, it should be pointed out how Elliot would ultimately draw on more traditional theological metaphors to further deepen this particular understanding of the churches' development role. For Elliot, conscientisation in terms of the above formulation entails a 'pedagogy of the oppressed'. This is a meaning that he derives largely from the theories of Paulo Freire, the well-known Brazilian Roman Catholic educationist. For the churches this means that development has to start with the empowerment and critical conscientisation of the poor (see 1987:85-87). As this is a process in which poor people take charge of their own empowerment (1987:86) and in which the churches from poor societies and countries may participate, Elliot argued that the conscientisation of the poor could ultimately be seen as meaningless if it does not attend to the wider relationships and structures of power (economic and political). Elliot commented that the 'subjectification' of poor people that Freire had been attempting was unlikely to mean a great deal unless it was accompanied by the control of productive assets (1987:98). This obliges the poor and powerless and those who work with them to admit that the category of power is central to the process (1987:101).

This realisation of the centrality of power (1987:102) brings us to the renewed theological understanding of conscientisation that is referred to above. Propagated as the central argument of Elliot's book, the use (or misuse) of power is essentially a religious question. It is an issue that includes, but also goes beyond, the economic, social and legal aspects of power. The exploitation of the weak by the strong is an issue fundamental to human well-being and occupies a central position in the Christian message (1987:15). It pertains to the deepest "inner or spiritual essence" of human beings, that is, their natural tendency to dominate and exploit other fellow human beings, to seek their own self-interest (1987:126-127).
For Elliot, development, from the perspective of the churches, involves a fundamental *spiritual* dimension.\(^{43}\) It involves what he called the "dialectical relationship between the outward, material world and the inner spiritual world" (1987:119, italics added), or as he otherwise put it, between the "inner" and the "outward journey" (see e.g. 1987:130, Chapter 10). Manifested in the way that the conscientised oppressed would deal with their anger, frustration and resentment in their confrontation with the rich and powerful (see 1987:88, 95-99), development also points to a fundamental focus on the rich and powerful themselves, that is, people and systems. It follows that the mirror image of a 'pedagogy of the oppressed' is a 'pedagogy of the rich'.\(^{44}\) Unless the rich and powerful are liberated from their need to hang on to their wealth and power in an exclusive and defensive way, the process of confrontation is likely to lead to a (violent) clash between the rich and the poor as the latter demand a reorganisation of the social processes (1987:95).

The way to authentic development consequently calls for *metanoia*, conversion, directed first and foremost towards the rich and powerful (1987:118). It is ultimately also a question of the *conversion of the church* (1987:174). It points to the responsibility of the churches in the richer countries to confront the powers of corruption in their own societies, especially the impact of such powers on the poor locally and abroad. It likewise calls upon Christians in poorer countries to do the same (1987:173).

Elliot qualified this point by saying that conversion and spiritual renewal should not here be seen in the restricted individualistic sense traditionally emphasised by the churches (1987:152). It is something totally different. The reality of power and the consequent process of spiritual renewal imply *three* ontological levels: individual, collective and cosmic (1987:129). Translated into the terms of the dialectical nature of the inward and outward journey, conversion involves a *concrete* level of confrontation and focus. This does not nullify the aspect of critical social understanding and knowledge emphasised earlier in this chapter.\(^{45}\) It determines that the inner psychological/spiritual healing and growth and the reconstitution of consciousness ought to manifest itself in new *personal* lifestyles (less material and simpler, for instance) (1987:132-133). In the dialectical sense it also finds expression in the further *collective* outward journey of a *concrete* confrontation of institutions and structures.

It follows that *systems* and *institutions* also need spiritual renewal and conversion. Of fundamental importance are the powers behind the system (1987:135, 153), something Elliot calls "its inner wells of motivation and consciousness which

\(^{43}\) We can conclude that it is this spiritual aspect of conscientisation that was still undeveloped in the earlier accounts of the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate by Elliot and Kurien referred to in the previous footnote.

\(^{44}\) Elliot pointed out that Paulo Freire had also been working on ‘a pedagogy of the rich’ as a fundamental complement to ‘a pedagogy of the oppressed’ (1987:95).

\(^{45}\) See 3.3.1.
make it use its power in a given (egocentric) way” (1987:126). This points to a recognition and approach that confront and identify the outer expressions of such inner corruption and self-centredness. He insists that “the powers of corruption, of moral disintegration, of undisguised evil have to be overcome in the essence of our structures if we are to begin to see in our institutions the possibility of covenant quality relationships” (1987:152). In concrete terms, this approach focuses on the demonic nature of an arrangement such as the international monetary system that continues to drain a continent such as Africa, for instance, of over thirty percent of the value of its exports to service its debts. Elliot sums this up in terms of a perspective on the conversion of the system at work, which dialectically ought to involve all three the ontological levels mentioned above:

Certainly one can identify a dozen key actors, but in no sense are they free agents, by whose fiat the whole structure could be changed. Those individuals and the bureaucracies and powersystems they represent are trapped, not only in the sense that they cannot change the system, but in the deeper sense that they are ideologically blinded to the fact that it needs to be changed. For they are caught in a web of value systems and explanations that ‘justify’ the present arrangements by which Africa is systematically impoverished - and all for the sake of her own poor! (1987:154)

3.4 Impasse and renewal

We are concluding our discussion of the ecumenical development debate with a discussion of the pragmatic debate in this chapter. We started off by setting out a most critical perspective on the notion of charity in the ecumenical development discourse and, secondly, pointed out how a contemporary ecumenical development discourse poses a critical challenge to the meaning and ecclesiastical practice of charity. The discussion indicated how the pragmatic debate captures a prevailing tension in the whole ecumenical debate on development. Indeed, it can be concluded that the pragmatic debate, in both its moderate and radical manifestations, has come to indicate the continual struggle of the Christian churches in the field of socio-economic and socio-political praxis. While the new notion of ‘development’ (we have indicated how ‘development’ represents a concept only recently applied by the churches) promised much with regard to a new mode of social engagement by the churches, the pragmatic debate stressed the need for a continued rethinking and

46 In the final chapter of his book Elliot identifies in a most concrete way four examples of collective Christian action world-wide that serve as models of how the powers behind institutions and structures might be challenged. They are the Witness for Peace in Nicaragua, the peace movement in the United Kingdom, the Christian Institute of Southern Africa and Solidarity in Poland (see 1987:157-173).
transformation of the churches’ actual involvement in the domain of development.

We could therefore conclude here with the following two somewhat contradictory observations, namely that in the context of the wider ecumenical development debate the pragmatic debate represents an impasse, but also a prospect for renewal in terms of the churches’ participation in development. It would first of all be possible to say that the pragmatic debate indicates an enduring divide between theory and praxis, between what has been aspired to and formulated by a relatively small group of progressive thinkers in theological, church and wider social theoretical circles, and what the majority of church people and agencies were and are in actual fact doing in the name of development.

We have seen how both accounts of the pragmatic debate, moderate and radical, have been calling for a reorientation of the churches’ involvement in development. We might even say that there appears to be a considerable overlap between these two critical accounts, as both point to a reorientation of the role of the churches in development along the lines of values, ideas, relationships and conscientisation. Both these accounts seem to represent a theoretical perspective through which the gap between development praxis and the critical discourse on development that was set out in Chapter Two is substantially closed - between what has been put forward as a idea- and value-centred development praxis and our own description of the critical development discourse in Chapter Two as an ‘idea movement’.

But – and this is an important distinction – in the case of the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate a far more radical, profound and convincing perspective on an idea- and value-centred development praxis has been articulated. It is a perspective emphasising the impasse of a prevailing project-centred approach by the churches, exposing the ideologically limited and biased nature of that approach and calling for a profound reorientation, a radical new mode of involvement in development.

At this point it is important to note how the pragmatic debate remains an unresolved aspect of the ecumenical development debate. Having come particularly through the radical account to represent a most meaningful and fruitful problematisation from which new innovative conceptualisations of the churches’ strategic involvement in development might emanate, it can be observed how this debate coincides with the overall decline of the ecumenical development debate. Indeed, Charles Elliot’s Comfortable Compassion? signals the last important and substantial publication in that branch of the ecumenical
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development debate associated with the WCC. It would be followed by only a small number of scattered writings, in contrast to the rich stream of publications on the subject of development during the 1960s, 1970s and to a lesser extent the earlier part of the 1980s. With the exception of a small number of articles published in The Ecumenical Review in the late 1980s and the 1990s, we do not encounter any significant attempts towards a continuing problematisation and rethinking of the churches’ role in development along the critical lines of the pragmatic debate. We find no reference particularly to Elliot’s above-mentioned book, no indication that this work and the critical debate that it represents is taken seriously in the overall theological-ecclesiastical debate on development.

We might go so far as to state that the pragmatic debate, in more ways than one, anticipates a fatigue in theological-ecclesiastical thinking on development, an inability to move creatively beyond the impasse spelled out by this debate. As an overview of the small corpus of ecumenical writings on development over the last decade suggests, recent ecumenical reflection on the theme of development seems to follow old, familiar tracks. This is, for instance, evident from a number of contributions in a 1994 issue of The Ecumenical Review that focus rather on the subject of ‘ecumenical diakonia’ (Vol. 46, No. 3). In these reflections the issue for representatives of the WCC is still what Elizabeth Ferris formulated as the question of how “to relate the emergency phase of assistance more closely with longer-term development goals” (1974:274). As also evident

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47 See in this regard again our distinction at the beginning of this study between the two branches of the ecumenical development debate, namely that branch directly associated with the WCC and a related southeast Asian branch.

48 Taking the publications in The Ecumenical Review as a case study, it can be noted how only three articles were published in this periodical throughout the 1980s that deal pertinently with the subject of development. In the 1990s the total was only four articles, of which the most recent was published in 1996. Regarding the latter group of four articles, in fact only the article by Gnana Robinson, “Christian Theology and Development” (1994), addresses the subject of development in terms of the nexus of religion/theology and development. While referring in one way or another to the concept of development, one of the remaining three articles deals mainly with the topic of ecumenical diaconal work and relief services (that by E Ferris in 1994), another with an organisation such as the United Nations’ relationship to development work (that by J Dias in 1995) and the last one with the subject of development per se, thus not in any way reflecting the nexus of religion/theology/church and development (that by J Ramalho in 1996).

49 Whereas the 1980s marked the decline of the ecumenical development debate (see next footnote), two important exceptions in this period prior to the publication of Comfortable Compassion? are Richard Dickinson’s already mentioned book, Poor, Yet Making Many Rich. The Poor as Agents of Creative Justice (published in 1983) and Ans J Van der Bent’s already mentioned chapter in her book, Vital Ecumenical Concerns (published in 1986).

50 As we are taking the WCC branch of the ecumenical development debate as our case study, it should be mentioned that it is still possible to trace a steady stream of articles on the subject of development during the late 1980s and early 1990s in those southeast Asian journals mentioned in the introduction. Yet this group of writings is scattered over various journals rather than concentrated in a particular journal or two in this period, which shows a marked decline in publication in comparison to the rich stream of articles and other publications on the subject of development in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s.

51 The exception is Richard Dickinson’s entry on ‘development’ in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement (Geneva: WCC) that was published in 1991.
from an article by Martin Robra in the same series of reflections, the issue of WCC diakonia service at the beginning of the 1990s still involved a serious grappling with the question of a just sharing of resources, or what he calls an “ongoing discussion of sharing in solidarity” (an issue very similar to what has been a central point of critique and reflection from an early stage in the ecumenical development debate/pragmatic debate) (see 1994:283-285; cf. also 279-283).

However, it should be acknowledged that the broad ecumenical debate in this period of decline of the ecumenical development debate still allowed important scope for reflections on themes such as ‘civil society’ and ‘sustainable society’, themes that can in an important way be related to the subject of development and consequently make an important contribution to a deepening and renewal of the theological-ecclesiastical debate on development. Having made this observation, it should at the same time be noted that the subject of development in no way explicitly figures in the discussions of the latter themes. Whereas such connections have been made in the formal (secular) field of development studies in the 1980s and 1990s, no real attempt has been made to also creatively and innovatively reconsider the theological and church sector’s own understanding of, and engagement in, development through the above-mentioned themes. In sum, it remains that case that ecumenical thinking on development has been restricted to the few scattered contributions already referred to.

It should be said that, in the final instance, the pragmatic debate does not only present us with the problematisation of, and impasse in, a current theological-ecclesiastical development debate and praxis. As already concluded in this chapter, particularly under the headings of ‘Relational perspective’ (3.2.2) and ‘Conscientisation’ (3.3.2), both moderate and radical accounts of the pragmatic debate have in their own respective ways also begun to embark on a constructive road of renewal. This perspective on renewal is closely related to our own perspective on strategic renewal that is spelled out in the introduction of this study and it emphasises an authentic role for the churches in development along

52 These themes constitute the focus of reflection in two issues of *The Ecumenical Review* in the 1990s, respectively in Vol. 46/1 (1994) and Vol. 48/3 (1996).

53 It should be obvious that the theme of civil society would be especially important to the alternative perspective of the pragmatic debate, as it could give crucial political, normative and strategic momentum to the value-centred, idea-centred and relational orientation of this debate.

54 The exception here is J Ramalho’s article in the issue focusing on sustainable development. However, see our evaluation of this article in footnote 48.

55 In this period the concept of ‘sustainable development’ articulated a growing environmental and ecological concern in development thinking. Especially important in this period, however, is also the concept of ‘civil society’, which has increasingly come to articulate the conceptual and strategic essence of a new stream of people-centred theories on development, a movement in development thinking characterised by a juxtaposition of state- and government-centred versus civil society-centred strategies of development (see e.g. Korten (1990:28-29)).

56 See footnote 48.
the lines of values, ideas, conscientisation, human behaviour and relationships – in short, what we have come to call a ‘politics of ideas’.

Stated differently, it can be said that the pragmatic debate (in which the radical account represents the chronological progression as opposed to the moderate account) presents us with the historical culmination of a movement in the ecumenical development debate that has constantly pressed for a reorientation of the churches’ role in development similar to our own expectation. This movement of thought presents us with the critical conceptual, strategic and ideological basis from which to develop our own basic argument. From this basis we will, in the next few chapters of this study, develop our argument, in accordance with the wider interdisciplinary and solidarity framework set out in the introduction. Exploring the perspectives of a broader NGO and alternative development debate in this further discussion, we will come to see how this debate, in a similar way to the ecumenical development debate, comes full circle by starting off with the problem of charity and progressing to a more sophisticated strategic perspective that advocates a value- and idea-centred approach to development. It is a perspective that in a significant sense also identifies religion and its institutions as an important (if not crucial) actor in development.
Chapter Four

CHARITY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NGO DEVELOPMENT DEBATE

4.1 Introduction

A striking feature of the ecumenical development debate focused on in the first three chapters of this study is its general neglect of a concurrent NGO debate on development.1 Yet it can simultaneously be noted how, from the point of view of the NGO development debate, a number of perspectives have emanated that call for a closer identification and comparison with the ecumenical development debate presented in the first three chapters of this study. The perspectives that reflect a charity-development juxtaposition, similar to that in the ecumenical development debate are:

Firstly, the historical perspective in the NGO development debate that relates the origins of development-oriented NGOs from both the North and the South,

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1 (1) By the NGO development debate is meant a growing and substantial corpus of literature in the broad field of development that today has come to focus on the contemporary phenomenon of development-oriented NGOs or what might otherwise be called non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs). While the concepts ‘NGOs’, ‘development-oriented NGOs’ and ‘developmental NGOs’ are more commonly used in this debate (see e.g. OECD 1987:4-8), the critical point has also been made (in this debate) that, given the broad and diversified range of institutions/associations that are covered by the term non-governmental organisation (NGO), the ‘concept NGO is wrongly used to denominate non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs): namely one form of NGO devoted specifically to the design, study and/or execution of development programs and projects in Third World countries, with the support of international development cooperation institutions and the direct involvement of the popular sectors’ (Padron 1987:70, italics added). Taking the latter as an important distinction that also informs the discussion in this chapter, and acknowledging the usefulness of the concept ‘NGDO’ that is used by some writers in the NGO development debate (see e.g. Padron 1987:69-74; also Fowler 1998:136-155; Wils 1994:1-7; Verhagen 1989:2-6), the more commonly used concepts of ‘NGOs’ and ‘development-oriented NGOs’ will nevertheless still be applied in this study.

(2) This statement echoes recent critical voices in the ecumenical movement that have recognised Christian theology’s general neglect of the theme of civil society to date, in contrast to the social sciences (see e.g. Batista 1995:246). In an important article in the already mentioned Vol. 46/4 of The Ecumenical Review (see footnote 52 of the previous chapter) Konrad Raiser put this critical observation into perspective when he argued that, contrary to a civil society model or paradigm, the basic models for the structure of the church have historically rather mirrored developments in the organisation of the state and today increasingly also those in business corporations (1994:42). See also the articles by De Santa Ana (1994:3-11), Batista (1994:12-18), Duchrow (1994:21-27) and Ichiyo (1994:28-37) in the same issue, which together with Raiser’s contribution, mark the beginning of a more explicit and systematic civil society orientation and awareness in the ecumenical movement/WCC.

(3) Thus the argument here, in accordance with the observations in point (3), is that a civil society orientation or paradigm should necessarily have brought a theological and ecclesiastical debate on development to at least some kind of identification with the NGO debate on development and the [civil society!] organisations (that is, development-oriented NGOs) on which this latter debate has come to focus. See in addition to this argument our connection of the notion of ‘development’ to that of ‘civil society’ at the end of the previous chapter (see in addition to the main discussion footnotes 52, 53 and 55).
The Churches and the Development Debate

developed and developing worlds, to a definite welfare or relief approach. Development-oriented NGOs are a post-World War I and II phenomenon, and this perspective points to the gradual progression of development-oriented NGOs from their initial starting-point of a relief-oriented involvement. It portrays development-oriented NGOs as a special category that, from a historical point of view, did not start as development agencies, but were drawn to development by first providing relief in emergency situations, after which they started to recognise that, in developing countries, relief was not enough. Particularly significant in this perspective is its recognition of the NGO sector's close proximity to the Christian churches, both in the North and the South. This indicates the clear church and Christian presence in the phenomenon of development-oriented NGOs, not only during the initial stages of their evolution, but in fact until the present day. It holds that the churches did not only substantially contribute to the voluntary and morally committed character of the NGO sector through their initial relief and welfare services, but that they at later stages also served as the indispensable supporters of NGOs' political activities (e.g. in Latin America). Not ignoring the fact that the NGO sector may have taken on an increasing secular identity, this perspective maintains that the phenomenon of development-oriented NGOs cannot be understood apart from their religious roots and also maintains that church-related bodies, churches and Christian NGOs still make out a substantial part of the contemporary NGO movement.

Secondly, the perspective in the NGO development debate that sustains or reiterates the welfare, relief/development dichotomy in the reflections on development-oriented NGOs as a more recent and present-day phenomenon. Related to the first perspective, this second perspective concerns itself with the question of the ‘scaling-up’ and institutional transformation of development-oriented NGOs towards more sophisticated modes of development activity that would have a more long-term, emancipatory and structural impact on the lives of the poor and beneficiaries. Recognising the more ‘complex’ nature of many development-oriented NGOs by which other orientations (e.g. advocacy, advocacy, advocacy,

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2 As is evident from the discussion in this chapter, preference is generally given in the NGO development debate to the terms 'relief' and 'welfare', rather than to the term 'charity' commonly applied in this study.


4 See here especially the article by Leilah Landim, "NGOs in Latin America", which points out how the churches represented the fundamental political space through which NGOs could carry out their activities during the periods of political authoritarianism in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s. It was their close proximity to the churches in this period, Landim concluded, that left its mark on the NGO sector until the present day (1987:32).

development education) might coexist with a welfare approach, this perspective highlights the distinctive internal organisational and ideological/mental constraints within NGO ranks that complicate their surrendering of a welfare/relief orientation and character. One author’s articulation of the particular difficulties and challenges encountered by NGOs to transform themselves from relief- to development-oriented organisations sums up this perspective well:

This presents a particular difficulty and challenge to NGOs whose initial entry and activities have been in relief and refugee assistance. To move from relief to development means much more than just starting development projects in refugee camps, because the basis of the interaction and relationship between NGOs and intended beneficiaries must change. This has consequences for field staff, their selection, values, incentives and training, as well as for the structure of the NGO itself and its systems of financing. (Fowler 1988:21)

Thirdly, the perspective in the NGO development debate that stresses the deficiency of the project-centred approach in NGO development activity on the strategic and ideological level. As in the case of the second perspective, also concerned with the issue of strategic renewal in the NGO sector, this perspective bears close resemblance to the critical position in the ecumenical development debate that regards the project approach as the inadequate media via between welfare/relief and authentic development. It denounces the predominantly technocratic and linear (blueprint) approach in mainstream development that treats development as a set of predictable outcomes to be achieved through the ordering of predetermined and logical inputs and outputs. It rather portrays development as the product of complex and contingent processes that can only be partially predicted and controlled. It introduces the notions of empowerment,

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6 Identifying, for instance, six categories of ‘orientation’ amongst development-oriented NGOs in her recent contribution to the NGO development debate, viz., welfare, development, advocacy, development education, networking and research, Anna Vakil furthermore noted that many NGOs are in fact displaying more than one orientation and in some cases as many as four or five out of the six today (1997:2063).


8 (1) See again 3.3.1.
(2) With this comparison between the NGO and ecumenical development debates the contribution of Charles Elliot can again be noted (as in the case of the ecumenical development debate discussed in Chapter Three). As the most important exponent of the ‘radical’ pragmatic debate, Elliot delivered a similar ‘project critique’ in a paper at the important symposium on NGOs and development in London in 1987. See the supplementary issue of Vol. 15 (1987) of the journal World Development in which Elliot’s paper (1987:57-68) was published with the other symposium papers under the theme, “Development Alternatives: The Challenge for NGOs”.

9 Here we may note, for instance, how Charles Elliot came to associate the project approach to development with a Western-dominated neo-modernisation paradigm in development thinking, a paradigm devoid of any critical political meaning and ideological self-critique (see 1987:58-68).
democratisation and development education/conscientisation as an ‘alternative’ development vocabulary and captures development as a (political) process by which the poor and hitherto subordinate/the South/target groups constantly negotiate and break through the relationships of dependence and subordination to become co-creators and owners of the process. In this sense, it also redirects the problem of development to the society of the sender/donor/the North/the rich. The following quote presents a powerful articulation of the underlying principle of the third perspective, stating that the lack of people’s participation in development:

...is not a problem unique to research, education and training. It also underlies the dangerous obsession with ‘projects’ that characterises the work of most development agencies. The logical corollary of a world-view which sees development as a series of technical transfers mediated by experts is that, given a sufficient number of situations, or projects, in which these transfers can be made, ‘development’ will occur. But, as Sithembiso Nyoni has pointed out, no country in the world has ever developed itself through projects; development results from a long process of experiment and innovation through which people build up the skills, knowledge and self-confidence necessary to shape their environment in ways which foster progress toward goals such as economic growth, equity in income distribution, and political freedom. At root then, development is about processes of enrichment, empowerment and participation, which the technocratic, project-oriented view of the world simply cannot accommodate. (Edwards 1989:119-120)

Fourthly, the perspective in the NGO development debate that overlaps with the first three perspectives in its recognition of the imperfection of past and present welfare/relief, project, localised and isolated efforts in development, but that, more fully than the former three, concentrates on the question of strategic innovation by propagating and problematising a broad theory of scaling-up and mainstreaming. Reflecting various types of scaling-up in its framework, but also many different

(2) While it does not reflect the NGO development debate in a direct way, we may here also refer to the book by Robert Cassen (and associates), Does Aid Work? Report to an Intergovernmental Task Force (1986). This work is an important source for writers from the NGO development debate critical of the project approach (see e.g. Chambers 1993:76; Fowler 1995:145). The observation in this book of the dominance of the economic and technical elements in project design and implementation at the cost of the institutional, social and political elements correlates well with the critical view in the NGO development debate (see 1986:117; also 105-117; 306-313).

11 In his meaningful synthesis of the different definitions of ‘scaling-up’, Peter Uvin identified four different forms or types, viz. quantitative scaling-up, functional scaling-up, political scaling-up and organisational
concepts such as development education, advocacy, empowerment, lobbying and networking, this perspective finds particular expression in the discourses of public policy-making, political democratisation and institutional/organisational transformation. Also referred to as the ‘New Policy Agenda’ in NGO development discourse, this perspective emphasises the need for ‘mainstreaming’, that is, for NGOs to become part of the official policy processes in order to convert their ‘alternative’ solutions and programmes into the general and official policy framework. In view of such an ‘agenda’ this perspective also problematises and complicates the prospects of NGOs in the policy arena by focusing on the internal organisational and external relational elements that confront NGOs as prospective political and policy actors. It emphasises the need for organisational transformation among NGOs (in terms of ‘accountability’ and ‘performance’) and the establishment of viable relationships with the other actors in the political or policy arena: their own clientele/the poor, local and Northern governments-states, donors, other NGOs and aid agencies.

We have attempted so far to show how a number of perspectives can be drawn from the NGO development debate, which reveals a remarkable parallel with the presentation of the ecumenical development debate in this study. We have also attempted to show how these perspectives, in terms of the interdisciplinary intentions of this study, demarcate the NGO development debate as an important source of learning for an ecumenical development debate in search of strategic renewal. In this sense, we have attempted to show how these perspectives come to suggest that such a mutual comparison and identification are more than coincidental and become possible not without good reason. To take the above first perspective here as the basic point of departure, these perspectives come to suggest that development-oriented NGOs stem from the same

12 For this particular definition of mainstreaming, see Wils (1995:53).

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vital sphere that also marked the initial attempts of the churches in the realm of development. They come to suggest that development-oriented NGOs originate from the same voluntary, civil society association as the churches, vis-à-vis and in relation to the domains of the state and government, and that they (the NGOs) have shared with the churches a similar, if not the same, moral, social and at times political commitment towards the problem of world poverty and human suffering. They come to suggest that, while development-oriented NGOs have, since their origins taken on a dynamics of their own and are today also separated from the religious and church sector, they (the NGOs) have likewise grappled and continue to grapple with the basic problem of charity (as the historical starting-point of their inquiry) and the consequent question of strategic innovation. It is an undertaking, these four perspectives suggest, that has brought the NGO development debate to pose similar critical ideological, operational and relational questions (e.g. with regard to the project approach in development, the relation between North and South in development). In sum, these perspectives come to suggest a debate on development that, as in the case of our own structuring of the ecumenical development debate in this study, has in the historical and strategic sense been necessarily and significantly framed by a similar charity-development juxtaposition. This point has to be qualified by stating that a stage has been reached in this frame of reference, and perhaps more so in the case of the NGO development debate, where the tension has to a greater extent shifted to a juxtaposition between ‘less desirable’ and ‘less sufficient’ modes of ‘development’ action and what is rather regarded as ‘authentic’ modes of development.

Against the background of this comparative view of the ecumenical and NGO debates on development, this chapter will focus on the perspective provided by David Korten. Having already indicated in the introduction how we want to develop a deepened perspective along the lines of Korten’s framework of four generations of NGO development action, the aim will be to discuss, in terms of the quest for theoretical and strategic innovation posed by the charity-development juxtaposition in the NGO development debate, the significance of Korten’s initially identified scheme of three generations of NGO development action. This will be done by drawing not only on Korten’s own writings, but

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14 Ben Turok, a South African scholar and politician, drew the following meaningful parallel between the churches and NGO sector under the rubric of civil society at a conference on the role of the churches and NGOs in development: “Civil society structures are voluntary and they have a high moral profile. NGOs are based on morality, or supposed to be, and the churches are based on morality, or supposed to be.” (1995:165)

15 Here we can speak of the ambivalent character of developmental NGOs today. Having taken on an increasingly secular identity, they also still have amongst their ranks a considerable number of organisations that in one way or another have a church/religious affiliation. See in this regard Landim 1987:32; OECD 1987:5, 10.

also on a larger corpus of literature that includes other complementary material from the people-centred theoretical point of view (that is, the point of view from which Korten also proceeds). In this latter category of other complementary material will finally also be those writings in the NGO development debate that have taken a critical position towards Korten and the so-called ‘New Policy Agenda’, that is, an agenda that, similar to Korten’s third generation perspective, has allocated an elevated democratising, institutional and policy role to development-oriented NGOs.

4.2 Three generations of NGO development action - David Korten

My own insights into the strategic choices facing NGOs began to take shape in 1985 while I was working with the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID). I had been looking primarily to the large donor agencies to serve as instruments for the institutional changes required to support the community-based management of development resources. In 1985 I came to the conclusion that the large donors were not the answer to this need ... The need for more basic institutional change remained as real as ever. If the large donors could not address it, then who would? Colleagues in AID who were also struggling to answer this question suggested that we should more closely look at the potential of NGOs to assume this role. As I began to look at the experience of NGOs in development from the perspective of this need, I was struck that there seemed to be a definite pattern of evolution within the community away from more traditional relief activities and toward greater involvement in catalyzing larger institutional and policy changes.

This pattern seemed to reflect the learning that many of these organizations had derived from the critical self-examination of their own experience. The pattern seemed to involve three identifiable stages or generations of strategic orientation, each moving further away from alleviating symptoms toward attacking ever more fundamental causes. I decided to identify these stages as generations. (Korten 1990:114-115)

In terms of the above-mentioned four perspectives, Korten’s contribution to the NGO development debate can be appreciated for integrating them into a single framework. The above introductory words from Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda orientate us towards this author’s particular appreciation of the role of NGOs in development. According to him, a definite pattern of evolution in NGO development activity may be recognised that in the historical and strategic sense extends across the extreme poles of an initial relief involvement, on the one hand, and a later engagement in affecting...
policy and institutional change, on the other. This indicates a span of progressing NGO development activity that can be best defined by various stages or generations of strategic orientation.

4.2.1 Generation one: relief and welfare

First generation strategies, according to Korten, grew out of a long tradition of international voluntary action aimed at providing welfare services to the poor and assisting the victims of wars and natural disasters. They involve NGOs in the direct delivery of services to meet immediate deficiencies that are experienced by the beneficiary population, such as needs for food, health care or shelter. Their focus is on individuals and families and the benefits delivered depend entirely on the resource capacity of the NGOs involved (1990:115; 1987:148).

Korten pointed out how, overlapping extensively with the first perspective in the NGO development debate stated above, many of the contemporary international NGOs, such as Catholic Relief Services, CARE, OXFAM UK, Save the Children, World Vision and the Danish Association for International Co-operation, originated during World Wars I and II to render relief and rehabilitation in the war-torn societies of Europe. They were full-fledged charitable relief organisations that started with an inward focus on the immediate needs of European societies. It was only in the following years, as recovery progressed in Europe, that they also directed their attention to new emergencies in Southern countries, particularly in assisting refugees from political conflicts in China, India, Korea and the Middle East (1990:116; also 1987:147-148).

According to Korten, in the case of NGOs indigenous to Southern countries, patterns similar to those of NGOs in the North existed. They were oriented towards charitable welfare actions, commonly depended on funds and commodities from the North, and were often church- or mission-related, such as in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s, and in Africa throughout the colonial era. In Asia (e.g. in Bangladesh) their proliferation could also be largely accounted to efforts to respond to the needs of victims of war and national disaster (1990:116).

In evaluating the impact of first generation strategies, Korten conceded that relief efforts remained “an essential and appropriate response to emergency

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17 In this regard Korten referred to a number of examples, mostly characterised by a significant religious (!) affiliation: the initiatives of Irish Protestants in 1647 to send food aid to settlers in North America who were victims of wars with the Indians; the assistance provided by private British charities through much of the 17th and 18th centuries to America to support missionaries and schools for Indians, Negroes and poor whites; the voluntary assistance provided by private groups in the United States in 1793 to refugees who fled revolutionary turmoil in Santo Domingo; and the establishment of several international relief and missionary societies in the 1800s in Europe and America, including the Red Cross (1990:115).
situations that demand immediate and effective humanitarian assistance”. Situations such as these are part of human reality and there will always be individuals within any community whose circumstances necessarily demand some form of welfare assistance. However, as a development strategy, first generation strategies of relief and welfare represent a contradiction in terms. Such approaches offer little more than a temporary alleviation of the symptoms of underdevelopment and should therefore not be confused with development assistance (1990:118; 1987:148).

While first generation approaches can be regarded as appropriate to emergency situations that create special temporary needs, they contribute little or nothing to the ability of poor people and countries to meet their own needs on a sustained basis (1987:148). They assume a kind of NGO that rarely theorizes about why the assisted people have unmet needs. For this NGO, it merely remains a case of responding to the immediate and visible needs of a particular individual or group. The NGO in all cases remains the doer and the beneficiary is the passive receiver. The management capability required by this NGO also primarily remains a capability in logistics management. It contributes little in terms of a critical development awareness besides its fundraising appeals to the general public:

They focus on dramatized presentations of starving children appealing from magazines and TV screens with sad and longing eyes for a kind person to help them by sending money to the sponsoring NGO. (1990:116)

4.2.2 Generation two: small-scale, self-reliant local development

According to Korten, second generation strategies anticipate a development approach conscious of the deficiencies of first generation strategies. While some of the NGOs engaging in second generation strategies have done so since their founding, a more common pattern has been for NGOs who have worked with the poor in Southern countries to start with first generation strategies. Generally speaking, their experience leads them only gradually to question the validity of relief and welfare activities (1990:118).

Second generation strategies, in particular, point to the period in the late 1970s when NGOs came to see the need for a more developmental approach. This is the period in the evolution of development thinking that became dominated by the welfare versus development debate. The pendulum had now swung to what is often referred to as community development strategies. In terms of NGO

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18 In this regard Korten (1990:118) referred to the influence of John Sommer’s book, Beyond Charity (published in 1977 by The Overseas Development Council), in changing the thinking of many NGOs in this period.
development activity, these strategies involve village-level self-help actions in areas such as preventive health, improved agricultural practices, local organisation (e.g. the formation of community councils) and local infrastructure (e.g. the digging of wells, the building of feeder roads, etc.) (1990:118; 1987:148).

Following from the above examples it can be said that Korten’s notion of second generation strategies corresponds with the third perspective above on the project-centred approach in NGO development activity. As Korten would also come to use the notion of “village development projects” to describe the second generation development activities of NGOs, this might first of all be understood in the more progressive sense of the word. Second generation strategies are, according to him, clearly developmental in concept. What distinguishes them from first generation relief and welfare approaches is the stress on local self-reliance, with the intention that benefits will be sustained beyond the period of NGO assistance. The notion of empowerment has now become the guiding principle whereby the energies of NGOs shift to developing the capacities of local peoples to better meet their own needs (1990:118; 1987:148).

Second generation development strategies, therefore, call on NGOs more and more to take on the role of mobilisers rather than that of actual doers. The role of NGOs is seen as an intervening one to activate the potential that lies dormant in the community and individuals.¹⁹

Second generation strategies involve an implicit theory of village development that assumes local inertia is the heart of the problem. According to this theory the potential for self-advancement rests within the village community, but remains dormant because of the inertia of tradition, isolation and a lack of education and proper health care. The theory suggests that this inertia can be broken through the intervention of an outside change agent who helps the community realize its potentials through education, organization, consciousness raising, small loans and the introduction of simple new technologies. (1990:119)

With these words Korten ends his assessment of the progressive nature of second generation strategies of development. Having hinted in this passage at a remaining paternalistic attitude and outside agenda on the part of the NGOs, Korten’s further evaluation of second generation development strategies largely overlaps with the position in the second perspective in the NGO development

¹⁹ At the level of the individual Korten more particularly referred to second generation strategies’ focus on human resources development as the central issue. This approach to development, in line with the communal perspective highlighted in the quote that follows above, assumes that the problem lies exclusively in the individual’s lack of skills and physical strength. It is therefore a matter of developing the economic resource value of a person, which will naturally lead to opportunities for gainful employment in the economic system (1990:119).
debate above. Whereas second generation interventions assume a progressive empowerment approach, they, according to Korten, often in practice constitute “little more than handouts in a more sophisticated guise”. They bring a long-term dependence on the assisting NGO to effect and give little more than lip service to the principle of self-reliance (*ibid*).

In essence, the underlying assumptions of second generation strategies often remain overly simplistic, even of those of a more political nature that attempt to confront local power relations. Whereas NGOs, in this frame of reference, view the problem as resulting from a combination of a lack of development of the individual and patterns of exploitative power relationships at the local level (according to this approach the problem of poverty thus also has a distinct political dimension), they neglect the larger picture. Commonly assuming that village organisations of the poor can, by their own initiative, mobilise sufficient political resources to change the relevant political power structures, these NGOs as a rule fail to relate the local power structures of society to the larger institutional and policy context. They fail to take into account the factor of larger national and international systems through which local structures of power are maintained and against which even the strongest village organisations are relatively powerless (1990:120; also 1987:148). Their scope of attention remains limited to individual villages and neighbourhoods and the specific local groups they come to assist (1987:148).

### 4.2.3 Generation three: sustainable systems development

Against the background of a critical view of second generation development strategies, third generation strategies can be closely identified with the notions of ‘scaling-up’ and ‘mainstreaming’ in the fourth perspective in the NGO development debate above. Third generation strategies, according to Korten, “look beyond the individual community and seek changes in specific policies and institutions at local, national and international levels” (1990:120, italics added). They represent a strategic orientation that often grows out of NGOs’ frustration with the limitations (unsustainability!) of second generation strategies and are based on a growing realisation that: (i) the benefits generated by its village interventions depend on a continued (unsustainable!) NGO presence and availability of donor subsidies, and (ii) acting on its own, the latter interventions can never hope to benefit more than a few favoured localities. The conclusion that can be drawn here is that “(s)elf-reliant village development initiatives are likely to be sustained only so long as they are linked into a supportive national development system” (1990:120, italics added; also 1987:148-149).

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20 As in the case of second generation strategies that more often build on NGOs’ experience in first generation strategies (see again the beginning of 4.2.2), third generation strategies are thus also more likely to presume NGOs’ experience in second generation strategies.
Table 1: Strategies of NGO action in development: Korten’s initial identification of three generations (Korten 1990:117; 1987:148):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining features</td>
<td>relief &amp; welfare</td>
<td>community development</td>
<td>sustainable systems development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem definition</td>
<td>shortage</td>
<td>local inertia</td>
<td>institutional and policy constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time frame</td>
<td>immediate</td>
<td>project life</td>
<td>ten to twenty years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>individual or family</td>
<td>neighbourhood or village</td>
<td>region or nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief actors</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>NGO plus community</td>
<td>all relevant public and private institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO role</td>
<td>doer</td>
<td>mobiliser</td>
<td>catalyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management orientation</td>
<td>logistics management</td>
<td>project management</td>
<td>strategic management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development education</td>
<td>starving children</td>
<td>community self-help</td>
<td>constraining policies and institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Korten, the underlying theory of third generation development strategies is thus grounded “in an assumption that local inertia is sustained by structures that centralize control of resources, keep essential services from reaching the poor, and maintain systems of corruption and exploitation” (1990:121). This recognition brought a growing number of NGOs, most notably in the mid-1980s (see 1987:150), to the realisation that they need “to exert greater leadership in addressing dysfunctional aspects of the policy and institutional setting of the villages and sectors within which they worked”. It means moving to a third generation strategy in which the focus is “on facilitating sustainable changes in these settings on a regional or even national basis” (1987:149).

Third generation strategies, therefore, imply less direct involvement at village level and greater involvement with a variety of public and private organisations that control resources and policies that have a direct impact on local development (ibid.). This requires NGOs to work in catalytic, foundation-like roles, rather than as operational service providers at the local level (1990:121; 1987:149). Taking on various forms, this may broadly speaking involve NGOs in working with major national agencies to assist them in reorientating their policies and work modes in ways to strengthen broadly based local control of

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21 Whereas it is possible, according to Korten, to recognise a longer history of NGO activity influencing policy and institutional changes (see 1987:150), he more pertinently pointed to the mid-1980s as the period that saw a substantial shift of NGOs to third generation modes of involvement (ibid.). See his list of NGOs, particularly in the context of Asia, which, according to him, had in this period progressed to third generation development strategies (1990:120-121; 1987:150).
resources”; moreover, it may also involve them in the creation of new institutions of meaningful size “to provide essential local services on a sustained, self-financing basis” (1990:120, italics added).

Ideally, as it becomes possible for NGOs in third generation strategies to influence rather than control the organisations with which they are working (1987:149), their success hinges on a number of factors. Firstly, it compels them to acquire in-depth knowledge of the system at work. Secondly, it compels them to build relationships with the system’s key players and develop the necessary technical and strategic competence to establish their credibility with them. In this relational sense, it also requires of them (especially those that have historically worked independently) to develop skills in working collaboratively with both public and private organisations. It challenges them to work in one way or another with government, with whom they (that is, NGOs of a more critical disposition, particularly in the South) have more often stood in relationships of mutual suspicion, if not outright hostility. Thirdly, and importantly, it requires of them the skilful management of their limited resource base, positioning and repositioning such resources where they may have the best prospect of changing system dynamics in the desired direction (1990:121; 1987:149).

4.3 Theoretical and strategic innovation

4.3.1 People-centred development agenda

Tim Brodhead argues that it is impossible to be a true development agency without a theory that directs action to the underlying causes of underdevelopment. In the absence of a theory, the aspiring development agency almost inevitably becomes instead merely an assistance agency engaged in relieving the more visible symptoms of underdevelopment through relief and welfare measures. The assistance agency that acts without a theory also runs considerable risk of inadvertently strengthening the very forces responsible for the conditions of suffering and injustice that it seeks to alleviate through aid ... For the same reasons, an organization cannot have a meaningful strategy without a development theory. To maintain that an organization has a strategy is to claim that there is a well thought out logic behind the way in which it positions its resources. This logic must make explicit the organization’s assumptions regarding the forces that sustain the problem condition it is addressing, and the points of system vulnerability at which an

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22 See Korten (1990:128, n. 2).
intervention will create a new and more desirable equilibrium of forces. (Korten 1990:113-114)

Korten significantly introduced his outline of three generations of NGO development action with the above argument. He proclaimed that NGO strategic development action could not be viewed by itself. It necessarily implies a particular theory of development or logic that informs the strategic thinking or way of intervention. It is the absence of such a theory that results in NGOs' confinement to first generation strategies of relief and welfare interventions, the latter being a mode of action that cannot assume the qualification of being development action as it is not informed or guided by any critical theoretical input on the causes of persisting underdevelopment and poverty in society and the systemic and policy changes required to overcome such problems.

As implied by Korten, the question of critical and appropriate NGO development strategy goes much deeper to also assume the question of a critical, appropriate and general theory of development (that is, a theoretical framework and contents that give the substance of the strategic considerations in the NGO development debate). In terms of Korten’s own generational framework, whereas no meaningful theory of development can be assumed in the case of first generation strategies, it can be only partially assumed in the case of second generation strategies. Second generation strategies, in contrast with third generation strategies, lack a wider orientation, a critical development theory that might orientate the NGOs that are involved in linking their local development efforts to larger processes and structures that directly influence such efforts. As Korten suggested in one of his most recent writings, second generation strategies assume an incomplete and restricted theoretical perspective that fails to move the NGOs involved to adopt strategies that are necessarily of a wider policy-oriented nature:

Some NGOs have equated ... development with participatory village development interventions. Such interventions are important, but in themselves are generally inconsequential ... We now realize that in one respect the World Bank and the other big donors are right. Policies are important ... Without the right policies, irrespective of how many village development activities NGOs carry out or how many courses they offer with titles such as consciousness raising or empowerment, there will be no consequential change. (1995a:178)

Against this background Korten’s thinking about third generation development strategies can be identified with a wider corpus of theoretical reflections on
development known as *people-centred development*.\(^{23}\) Restricting ourselves in this subsection (4.3.1) largely to the writings of Korten, in which the focus has been on the strategic development roles of NGOs from a people-centred development perspective\(^{24}\) and on the notion of people-centred development *per se*, this concept of development indicates, according to Korten, “a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations” (1990:67, original italics). As evident from this definition, people-centred development can be defined as fundamentally value-oriented and includes in its framework the principles of *justice*, *sustainability* and *inclusiveness* (1990:67-68; see also Korten 1995a:173). Its explicit goal is that of “human growth defined in terms of greater realization of human potentials” (Korten 1984:300) that demands the authentic *participation* of every human being in the productive activity and decision-making processes in his/her immediate society (1984:300-301). It is “grounded in a world view that perceives earth to be a life-sustaining spaceship with a finite store of physical resources” (1990:68). Its dominant logic is one of a “balanced human ecology” (1984:300), which determines that the quality of life of the earth’s inhabitants “depends on maintaining a proper balance between its solar energized regenerative systems, its resource stocks and the demands that its inhabitants place on these systems and resources” (1990:68). It pertains to a notion of development in which the principles of human participation and self-reliance, on the one hand, and environmental sustainability, on the other, mutually determine each other. This is set out as an ideal by Korten in the following way:

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\(^{23}\) This is a theory of development that was conceptualised firstly in Korten’s own writings, but that can also be applied more widely to a substantial series of other writings on development that (i) in some cases assume the concept and idea frame of people-centred development, and (ii) in other cases again directly and explicitly relate to this concept and idea frame. In the case of the first category of a wider corpus of writings, the important publication is the book, *People-Centred Development: Contributions toward Theory and Planning Frameworks*, edited jointly by David Korten and Rudi Klauss, and published in 1984. Rather than constituting a compilation of essays written in view of a specific occasion or publication, this book draws on the writings of numerous authors that had already been published as chapters and essays in books and articles in journals. As the subtitle of the book might also suggest, these contributions constitute writings of note in the field of development studies and related social sciences. Although in most cases not explicitly applying the term people-centred development, these writings are taken by the editors of the book as making an important contribution to the theoretical and planning framework of people-centred development thinking. In the case of the second category, the publication of note is the book, *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-Centred Development*, edited by Noleen Heyzer et al. in 1995. Consisting of essays by various writers, including Korten, this publication focuses on the important theme of government-NGO relations in development work, notably from the point of view of a distinct people-centred development agenda.

\(^{24}\) The two important publications here are Korten’s article, ‘Third Generation NGO Strategies: A Key to People-centred Development’, and his book, *Getting to the 21st Century*, which were taken as the initial basis of the discussion in this chapter. See, however, also the last part of Korten’s essay, “Steps Toward People-Centred Development: Vision and Strategies’, in Heyzer’s book mentioned in the previous footnote in which Korten again discussed the NGO sector’s contribution to a people-centred development agenda (see 1995:182-189).
Our challenge is to create a global system that is biased toward the small, the local, the cooperative, the resource-conserving, and the long-term - one that empowers people to create a good living in balance with nature. (1995b:270)

According to Korten, people-centred development thus represents an “alternative development paradigm” (1984:299; cf. 1987:146). At the very core of its understanding, as meaningfully captured in the preceding quote, is what Korten and others refer to as a territorial perspective. It involves a perspective that stands directly opposed to what can be called the functional perspective in reigning transnational capitalist organisations and conventional growth-centred development policies, in which the emphasis falls on economies of unlimited scale that transcend national interests and commit themselves primarily to the search for new profits and market share in the name of economic progress and development (Korten 1995a:170; also Korten and Carner 1984:208; Korten 1984:306).

Against such functional disposition showing little loyalty to either place or people (Korten 1995:171; Korten and Carner 1984:208; see also Korten 1995b:249-257), the territorial perspective in the people-centred development theoretical framework can be defined as the logic of local self-reliance, that is, “the logic of place, people, and resources bound into locally, self-sustaining human ecological systems” (Korten 1984:307). In the people-centred framework, this logic presents the only solution to what is to be seen as the “threefold crisis” of ongoing and escalating poverty, environmental destruction and communal violence/social disintegration in contemporary global society (see Korten 1995a:165-167; 1995b:18-23, 261-262; 1990:13-16). The concept of development highlighted here, consequently, is that of maximum differentiation and diversity vis-à-vis the standardisation and uniformity associated with economic globalisation. Stressing

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26 For an identification of the principle of territorialism specifically with the notion of ‘alternative development’ or ‘another development’ (i.e. a notion of development that, as suggested by Korten above, presumes the concept of people-centred development), see the references in footnote 34 below.

27 It is pointed out from a critical people-centred development point of view that in the functional perspective the phenomenon of the transnational corporation can be taken as the ultimate expression or point of reference (Korten and Carner 1984:208). See in this regard also Korten’s latest book, When Corporations Rule the World (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1995), a work that Korten defines as representing the culmination point of his own intellectual journey (see ‘Prologue: A Personal Journey’, pp. 1-14).

28 In all the writings of Korten referred to here, the 1980s are indicated as the period of substantial intensification of the mentioned threefold crisis.
that the former arrangement of development can be the only foundation for true human flourishing and developmental (evolutionary) progress, Korten wrote:

It appears to be a near universal truth that diversity is the foundation of developmental progress in complex systems and uniformity is the foundation of stagnation and decay. Standardization and uniformity seem to be almost inevitable outcomes of a globalized economy dominated by massive globe-spanning corporations geared to mass production and marketing in a culturally homogenized world ... The processes of economic globalization are not only spreading mass poverty, environmental devastation, and social disintegration, they are also weakening our capacity for constructive social and cultural innovation at a time when such innovation is needed as never before ... By contrast, economic systems composed of locally rooted, self-reliant economies create in each locality the political, economic, and cultural spaces within which people are able to find their own paths to the future that are consistent with their distinctive aspirations, history, culture and ecosystems. A global system composed of localized economies can accomplish what a single globalized economy cannot - encourage the rich and flourishing diversity of robust cultures and generate the variety of experience and learning that is essential to the enrichment of the whole. (1995b:269, italics added)

However, Korten stresses that people-centred development goes beyond a mere decentralisation of economic and political structures (1987:147; 1984:301). Its emphasis on local decision-making and control (Korten 1984:301) and the need to create conditions of production that would enable people of a particular area to meet their own needs by using local resources and local control (Korten 1984:307; also 1995:179-180) is not to be confused with self-sufficiency, isolation or the closing of local borders. Nor does it involve a denial of modern technology per se (1984:307; also 1995a:180).

People-centred development, on the contrary, seeks to build a global system of interlinked diversified local economies that will be largely economically and ecologically self-reliant in meeting their own basic needs, but that would also function as elements of a larger whole. Rather than seeking to optimise impersonal economies of scale, the designed system would seek “to optimise the release and

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29 For Korten an important source in this regard is Arnold Toynbee’s study of the growth and decline of the world’s great civilisations. According to Toynbee’s finding, civilisations in decline have been consistently characterised by a “tendency toward standardization and uniformity”, whereas civilisations during stages of growth have rather been characterised by “the tendency toward differentiation and diversity” (Korten 1995a:268-269).
application of the creative and social energies of people who work together and with a shared sense of community and mutual contribution”. In this arrangement the primary role of the links between local self-reliant economies would be to facilitate the free flow and sharing of information and beneficial technology (Korten 1995a:180). It points to a local-global arrangement that can, according to Korten, be very well captured along the following lines of advice that were once put forward by John Maynard Keynes, one of the fathers of modern economic theory:

Ideas, knowledge, art, hospitality, travel - these are the things which should of their nature be international. But let goods be homespun whenever it is reasonably and conveniently possible; and above all, let finance be primarily national.30 (in Korten 1995a:180)

Seen from a different angle and clear structural and policy perspective, a central aim of people-centred development can furthermore be defined to overcome the urban bias in world development (see Lipton 1984:152-156). It points to what John Friedmann called agropolitan development: a territorial approach to development deliberately aiming to overcome the contradictions between city and countryside through the diversification of area economies, the redirection of basic infrastructure and resources to the countryside and the development of domestic (local and regional) mass markets (1984:215-217). Also appropriately defined by Korten as an equity-led sustainable growth strategy (see 1990:72-82), the essential logic is here to be found in the “choice of priorities for the sequencing of development interventions” (Korten 1990:81). The aim here is to radically reverse the sequence followed in conventional export-oriented growth strategies. It implies that domestic mass markets are to be created, not by foreign demand for the products of low-cost labour, but by increasing agricultural productivity and industrial diversification in decentralised locations with an emphasis on labour-using and capital-saving technologies (Friedmann 1984:217; Korten 1990:76). Involving what Korten called “a broadly based integrative approach to rural development that avoids the creation of economic enclaves” (ibid.), the following sequential pattern (stages) is to be followed in which urban industrialisation and export promotion only represent the last stages in the development process on the basis of substantial increases in rural productivity, incomes and industry (ibid.).32

30 Quoted originally in the book by Herman Daly and John Cobb, For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future (published in 1989 by Beacon Press), p. 209.
31 The reference here is to Michael Lipton’s essay, “Urban Bias in World Development”, in People-Centred Development: Contributions toward Theory and Planning Frameworks, which meaningfully complements those essays listed in footnote 25 and also published in the latter book.
32 According to Korten, the economic successes of the three ‘Asian Tigers’ - Taiwan, South Korea and Japan - were based on such a model of development (see 1995:181-182; 1990:73-77). The arguments that attribute
Stage I: Preparation for change - the creation of a political and institutional context that allows for the successful implementation of the asset reform measures to be introduced in Stage II.

Stage II: Asset reform and rural infrastructure - giving people access to productive resources through the implementation of a redistribution of productive assets, especially land reform, massive investments in basic education, investment in the basic infrastructure to open up remote rural areas and reduce communication costs, strengthening rural communication links to reduce rural isolation, etc. (This stage is, according to Korten, to be regarded as the heart of the overall strategy of equity-led sustainable growth.)

Stage III: Agricultural intensification and diversification - increasing rural productivity and incomes, whereby local markets are strengthened for basic products that are within the production capacity of small rural industries.

Stage IV: Rural industrialisation - the stage in which the rural economy moves from a primary reliance on agriculture to a more sophisticated rural economy able to capture a large portion of the value-added potential of agricultural production.

Stage V: Urban industrialisation - the gradual shifting of priorities to expanding urban industries that have strong backward and forward linkages to the rural agricultural and industrial sectors, the consolidation of a country's technical base and strengthening of its competitive efficiency (that is, the production of more sophisticated products by using advanced technologies that, by this stage, the domestic economy should be able to command).

Stage VI: Export promotion - encouraging the use of residual production capacity for export to foreign markets with products that have a high value-added relative to their content of physical and environmental resources (1990:78-81; see also 1995a:182; Friedmann 1984:215-218).

It is clear from the above that people-centred development is not to be conceived in a kind of other-worldly language that cannot be translated in terms of conventional development and modernisation discourse. Korten concluded in one of his reflections on this notion of development that if people-centred development was to emerge, it will be “as an offspring of the production-centred industrial era”. It will be “conceived in the knowledge, possibilities, and necessities created by that era” (1984:309). Yet, it will redirect and apply these their successes to export-led growth, Korten argued, are based more on misrepresentation to bolster an ideological position than on reality (1995:18; also 1990:73). While the experiences of these countries provide only a partial model for a people-centred development strategy, as they do not serve as models of environmentally sustainable development and democratic political process, they nevertheless provide “a useful framework for making growth more broadly-based, integrated, equitable and economically sound” (1990:74). Capturing the essence of such a growth strategy, Korten observed: “Well before the ‘Asian Tigers’ became successful exporters, each instituted radical land reform, made massive investments in basic education, created dense networks of rural organizations, and stabilized their populations with effective family planning programmes. These actions integrated their economies and provided the foundation for broad-based participation in the benefits of economic growth.” (1995:182)
human achievements in an alternative policy and structural framework and in terms of alternative ideas, values, social techniques and technologies (see *ibid.*) to bring about what the conventional paradigms of development and modernisation have fallen short of: creating truly people-centred, humane, just and sustainable societies without forsaking the ideals of a modern world. In the words of John Friedmann, an exponent of the people-centred development theoretical framework,\(^\text{33}\) whose following exposition of agropolitan development well captures the conceptualisation of an *alternative* notion of development (in the structural and policy sense) within a remaining *modernisation* paradigm:

If the countryside is endowed with basic infrastructure - for instance, if an internal communications and transport network is built up that will connect agropolitan districts and regions with each other - large cities will lose their present overwhelming advantage. The economy will then turn inward upon itself, discover its hidden energies and assets, and, in a “natural” learning progression, modernize itself from within.

Manufacturing industry will be second in a logical sequence of steps. The first is the continuous upgrading of agricultural productions, starting with overall increases in the physical volume of food and basic fibres, followed, in due course, by increases in the productivity of farm land and the productivity of workers.

The development industry will be tied into this sequence, beginning with agricultural processing and going on to the manufacture of tools and other equipment of use to peasants and workers in their daily lives. Dispersed among the villages and fields, small industries will provide a source of work and income, in a mode of production that is intimately related to the emerging agropolitan structure of society in which the contradictions of industrial capitalism - between city and countryside, production and consumption, work and leisure - are progressively resolved. (1984:217-218)\(^\text{34}\)

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33 See again the discussion earlier in this section and footnote 25.

34 While taking a central place in an explicit people-centred development corpus, it can be noted that the ideas akin to agropolitan development have in fact been part of a longer and broader intellectual history in development and socio-economic thinking. See e.g. Björn Hettne’s identification of the principles of territorialism, cultural pluralism and ecological sustainability as the dimensions central to the broader intellectual movement of ‘Another Development’ in his book, *Development Theory and the Three Worlds* (see 1995:199-206). As important additions to Hettne’s reference list, see also Trainer (1995:58-73), Kothari (1995:128-131) Omo-Fadaka (1975:23-52) and Schumacher (1993:chap. 13). See also a further article by John Friedmann, “Modular Cities: Beyond the Rural-Urban Divide”, which was published in the special issue on the theme of “Future cities” in the journal *Environment and Urbanisation* (Vol. 8, No. 1, 1996, pp. 129-131) in preparation for Habitat II, the second UN conference on Human Settlements in 1996. See in this article, furthermore, Friedmann’s reference (notes 1 and 2, p. 130) to a longer history of thinking along the lines of an agropolitan development: Kropotkin, P, *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1898); Howard, E, *Garden
4.3.2 Politics of scaling-up and mainstreaming

Following from the discussion so far, a people-centred development agenda clearly anticipates Korten’s notion of third generation development strategies. It is an agenda that requires from its development actors, in this case most notably NGOs, to *scale up* and *mainstream* their development activities in order to make a decisive impact on the policy and institutional environment in favour of a people-centred development policy and institutional regulation. As formulated in one of Korten’s most recent discussions of the people-centred development theoretical framework, “(a)n integral part of the policy agenda of people-centred development ... [is] to reverse the tendency toward concentrating power in impersonal and unaccountable institutions, returning it to people and communities and assuring its equitable distribution”. It emphasises *local organising* and aims at advancing the empowerment process through the development of “member-accountable institutions and strengthening local resource control and ownership” (1995a:178-179).

Korten furthermore determined that progress toward people-centred development at the same time required “fundamental structural reforms at *national* and *global* levels” (*ibid.*, italics added). At the national level it requires “breaking down dualistic economic structures, integrating the modern and traditional sectors and melding, redistributing and reallocating the use of their assets”. At the global level it means “breaking the unchallenged and unaccountable power of transnational capital and bringing transnational corporations under a system of controls and incentives that make them useful, accountable contributors to the creation of a just, sustainable, and inclusive human society” (1995a:179).

It is significant that the above perspectives on scaling-up and mainstreaming in NGO development action come from an essay by Korten in the already mentioned book, *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-Centred Development*. As the title of this book suggests, the prospects and challenges for people-centred development have come to be viewed by adherents of this theoretical framework in terms of the question of government-NGO relations. Stated differently, these authors, who have come to favour the NGO sector as *primary* actors in the people-centred development agenda (see Heyzer 1995a:1, 5; Korten 1995a:182-188; Korten and Quizon 1995:131-132; Riker 1995a:15-16, 52; 1995b:94, 114, 124-125; 1995c:192), identified *government* as a central actor in the national and international development arena that cannot be side-stepped in NGOs’ endeavour towards what may be called third generation development strategies. The quest for this mode of involvement inevitably

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35 “Steps toward People-Centred Development: Vision and Strategies”.
36 See footnote 23.
brings NGOs to the challenge of engaging themselves in the harsh world of official politics and development policy. He outlines the following perspectives in this publication:

Firstly, a central perspective to emerge from the collective set of essays in this book is that government has to be regarded as an actor of crucial importance in development, not least in a people-centred development agenda. As various authors in this collection have come to a similar conclusion, NGOs cannot be considered as “a replacement for government delivery systems” (Bhatt 1995:88); government also has an essential role to play in a just, sustainable and inclusive society (Korten and Quizon 1995:161); the ideal of people-centred development can only be realised in the case of a collective and collaborating effort between government and the NGO sector (Heyzer 1995:12; Riker 1995b:121; 1995c:198):

In order to realize at least a more conducive, if not a potentially more enabling policy environment for people-centred development, it is imperative that joint action by institutional actors from both state and civil society be fully explored. Thus, this task requires a fresh look and analysis of the state-of-the art in terms of government-NGO relations. (Riker 1995b:95)

However, this view does not do away with the fact that existing NGO-government relationships and the current role of government in bringing about people-centred development have to be seen as considerably problematic. As stated by Korten and Antonio Quizon, while the idea is not to do away with government, the purpose of third generation strategies is to reduce government’s “pervasive presence and control, gradually absorbing it into new systems of relationships consistent with the people-centred vision that assures its accountability and responsiveness to the people from which it derives its authority” (1995:160). These two authors and other contributors to the present volume concluded that the current role of government in development had to be seen as being, from a people-centred development perspective, far from ideal. Government’s basic impetus has rather been to control, manage and co-opt the development process37 (Riker 1995a:19, 34-36; 1995b:105-106; 1995c:196).

Consequently, although representing a prevailing force in any development agenda, it was doubtful whether, in current collaborative arrangements, a common vision of development could really be assumed between governments and donors and those NGOs that aspire to bring about people-centred development. Korten and Quizon well captured this problematic in their essay by suggesting that the former (that is, governments and donors) acted rather as

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37 See also Korten’s notion of the ‘dominant state’ in Getting to the 21st Century? (1990:50-51, 156-161), which correlates well with this description of the general nature of government’s participation in development.
proponents of the *growth-centred vision* of development, as opposed to the people-centred development vision:38

Any effort to improve working relationships between NGOs, governments, and donors must eventually come to grips with their different perceptions about the nature of development. To what extent are NGOs, governments and donors actually working toward the same goal? Should NGOs accept official commitments to human resource development strategies as a demonstration that governments and donors have accepted a people-centred philosophy? As NGOs become more dependent on official donors and more active in relations with governments, which agenda is likely to prevail? How can NGOs broaden official acceptance for their alternative agenda? (1995:131-132; see also 141; Korten 1995a:173; Riker 1995c:203-205)

Following from Korten and Quizon’s last question, a central strategic concept in all the essays in the above-mentioned book is James Riker’s recognition of the need for NGOs, people’s organisations and other groups in civil society to create *political space* for independent initiatives vis-à-vis government and the state (1995:23). Not discarding the ideal of authentic cooperative NGO-government relationships, and the reliance on government itself to bring about the above-mentioned political space, this concept presumes a development and policy environment in which the former group of actors organises and operates freely and increases political participation to (successfully) influence and press this environment (including government) towards people-centred development (see Riker 1995a:23-24, 36-40, 42-48; 1995b:94-95, 123-125, 127-128; 1995c:201-205; Korten and Quizon 1995:160-161).

We may close our exposition of this first perspective by referring to the authors of the above-mentioned book’s observation of the NGO sector’s *partial success* in obtaining such actual political space (thus akin to Korten’s conclusion with regard to third generation NGO development strategies). Chandra de Fonseka and James Riker concluded in their respective essays that the growing dissatisfaction of international funding and large donor agencies (notably the World Bank but also USAID, CIDA, etc.) with Third World government performance and capability, and these agencies’ demand for greater direct involvement by NGOs in development in the 1980s and 1990s (vis-à-vis governments), were raising significant challenges to expand the social and

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38 In accordance with the basic distinction between ‘growth-centred’ and ‘people-centred’ approaches to development in people-centred development thinking (as should be evident from the discussion in 4.3.1), the notion of growth-centred development also constitutes the counterpoint to the idea of people-centred development in the book under discussion here. For more detailed juxtapositions of the two paradigms, see besides Korten and Quizon’s essay (1995:134-141) the essays by Heyzer (1995:8-10), Korten (1995:167-180) and Riker (1995b:203-204).
political space for people-centred development (this notwithstanding the fact that there are prevailing ideological differences between agents of a people-centred development vision and governments and donors as mentioned earlier) (De Fonseka 1995:64-75; Riker 1995b:94-95; 1995c:194; see also Korten 1995a:165; Riker 1995c:204). As Anil Bhatt also concluded in his essay on “Asian NGOs in Development”, “if influencing government policies, laws and legislation ... [could be] considered a political role, then NGOs particularly in the latter half of the 1980s ... performed this role too, with some notable success” in Asian countries. These included NGOs’ success in influencing government to adapt policies on women, forestry and drug prohibition (1995:86).

Yet, Bhatt expressed a common consensus amongst the authors of the above-mentioned book. NGOs’ role in influencing development policies remains limited and of recent origin. Most organisations in this sector, despite the above-mentioned progress, are still preoccupied with their grassroots work (that is, Korten’s second generation strategies - cf. Heyzer 1995:7) and hardly have “the time, resources or inclination to go beyond their projects and micro-level issues”. Bhatt continued to list the following criteria that necessarily have to be taken into account in the quest for scaling-up and mainstreaming NGO development activity: influencing policy requires “careful data collection and analysis, expertise in alternative policy formulation, coalition-building with other NGOs, campaigning, advocacy skills, and a willingness to confront vested interests and the establishment, as well as to withstand the allegations that they are getting involved in politics” (Bhatt 1995:86).

The challenges faced by development-oriented NGOs in scaling-up and mainstreaming towards third generation development strategies could therefore be considered as vast and by no means a concluding fact. It is in this regard that a second perspective can be linked to Korten and Quizon’s self-critical statement that the focus of the above-mentioned book on government, NGOs and donors is in fact inappropriate, given the inherent nature of people-centred development. As this statement can be critically related to the above first perspective, the quest for people-centred development calls for a strategic orientation focusing on a range of actors wider than the limited triangle of government, NGOs and donors:

Indeed, it might be argued ... that the focus of this book on government, NGOs and donors is inappropriate. The primary actors are people’s organizations, with the government, business and voluntary sectors playing supporting roles. Yet people’s organizations are not even mentioned in our agenda, nor are they represented here. We have also left out the business sector altogether. Donor roles and involvement, which we have chosen to
highlight, are decidedly residual and temporary in a people-centred development strategy. (Korten and Quizon 1995:157)

Mentioning two further actors in the development process, namely people’s organisations (POs) and business, Korten and Quizon (and other authors in the volume) highlight the central place of POs, or what Korten in a subsequent essay in the volume called the fourth sector (see Korten 1995a:187-188), as the actual primary actors in the development process. These authors emphasised that NGOs, along with government, could only be regarded as secondary actors in people-centred development. They need “to be accountable to the people, who are simultaneously the principal players and beneficiaries of development” (Riker 1995c:196). This is defined best by De Fonseka: In people-centred development POs constitute the principal actors, and NGOs secondary, intermediate, supportive and catalytic entities. It furthermore implies that NGOs are dispensable entities and that the role of an authentic NGO is “to work itself out of its role by investing its powers, capability and expertise in its wards, the primary organizations” (1995:70). It spells out the following twofold role for development-oriented NGOs in their relations to POs: (i) They are challenged to help prepare and build the POs to which they relate “as small democratic self-managing units able to emerge from their conditions of semi-marginalization into the mainstream market economy” and (ii) they are challenged to bring these organisations into the political life of the community where, as part of civil society, “they could exercise democratic control and mastery over their leaders at local and national levels” (1995:70-71).

According to Korten and Quizon, the primary importance rendered to people’s organisations or the fourth sector in people-centred development ultimately requires of NGOs to participate in what can be called movement building. Anticipating in this regard Korten’s conceptualisation of fourth generation NGO development strategies, which will be the focus of discussion in the next chapter, it can be said that the idea of development-oriented NGOs’ participation in ‘movement building’ is closely related to the notion of third generation development strategies in two ways. It firstly calls on such NGOs to transcend the concentration on isolated community development projects, which have traditionally been highly operational with little concern for or awareness of policy issues. Secondly, in so far as a (fourth generation) movement politics can be reconciled with the policy emphasis in third generation development strategies, it calls on NGOs to actively support, build and participate in a transformative people’s movement against what Korten and Quizon refer to as the current mainstream “policies defined within a self-destructive development system” (1995:159-160). Seeing the realisation of such a transformative movement as an emerging reality, in which concepts such as

39 See inter alia 5.3.1.2 and 5.3.1.4.
networking, coalition-building, relationships and organising structure now take central stage, Korten and Quizon stated:

They [the NGOs] are beginning to join forces within ever-growing and evolving networks and coalitions in what is emerging as a social transformation movement. These involvements are pushing the more forward-looking NGOs beyond project-oriented, dependency creating relationships with individual villages toward the development of networking structures that link both NGOs and people’s organizations as interdependent, self-reliant partners in complex patterns of lateral relationships in pursuit of major national and global agendas. The very formation of these networks and coalitions is creating a new social reality as NGOs experiment with the creation of new organizing structures based on consensus, equality and mutual accountability. (1995:160)

Closely related to the above second perspective, but also to the first perspective, a third perspective to emerge from the volume under discussion is the emphasis placed on global or transnational strategic orientation for those NGOs adhering to a people-centred development agenda. In this perspective, the concept of ‘nation-building’ is to be seen as “outdated and incomplete as it is conceived largely as a state project” (Riker 1995c:197; see also Bhatt 1995:87). Contrary to the concentrated focus on merely government and the state, the emphasis has now come to be on building community and (national and global) civil society. “This new conceptualization means shifting the development and political discourse toward civil society and the vital actors (e.g. NGOs, social movements, people’s organizations) that shape it.” (Riker 1995c:198)

Yet it is particularly in terms of the first perspective that the global or transnational strategic orientation of the third perspective acquired special significance for authors of this volume. As pointed out by Riker, the formation of transnational networks by NGOs and other international actors in areas such as the environment, human rights and international development policy “presented a new mode for international politics” (1995c:199). As a strategy of new alliances across national boundaries, it not only serves as an important protecting measure for NGOs (Heyzer 1995:12) in their confrontations with governments and states, but also enables them to present an efficient force to counter mainstream, government-dominated development policy supported by major international donor institutions (e.g. the World Bank40). As argued

40 Bhatt and Riker argue in this volume that the effect of transnational or global strategic linkages was evident from the success of combined advocacy efforts of NGOs in the developing world with citizen groups and NGOs in the West in prompting the World Bank to re-examine and reorientate its own development policies and programmes (especially in the area of the environment and its support for dam and resettlement projects) and, as a result, in pressurising the Bank not to give funds to national governments for particular projects (Bhatt 1995:86-87; Riker 1995b:199).
eloquently by Noeleen Heyzer, it has become obligatory for NGOs “to go outside the boundaries of the nation state and form alliances with powerful actors on the international development scene with a similar vision of people-centred development and rely on shifts that have occurred in world public opinion on these issues”. This has come to constitute the domain where NGOs could participate in international inter-governmental forums (e.g. the United Nations) and through which they could “lobby, embarrass or dialogue with governments on an equal footing” (1995:12).

4.3.3 **Macro- versus micro-policy reform**

An aspect of third generation development strategies that cannot be neglected in this chapter is Korten’s distinction between the notions of macro- and micro-policy reform that he developed in a number of his earlier writings (see Korten 1986a:309-313; 1986b:1-6) and especially in his article, “Third Generation NGO Strategies: A Key to People-Centred Development” (see 1987:150-156).

In these publications Korten argued that *macro-policy reform* indicated a reform action “that can be accomplished through pre-emptive central action - the stroke of an authoritative pen - with minimal requirement for the development of new institutional capacities as a condition for implementation” (1986b:1). Typically involving the many policies relating to pricing decisions, subsidies and trade regulations in the official policy arena, it usually points to a fairly clearly defined and specific decision. Once formally endorsed by the appropriate political authority, its implementation, at least from an administrative point of view, can be taken as relatively straightforward (1987:151; 1986a:309; 1986b:1-2).

Macro-policy reform, according to Korten, is to be directly associated with what has come to be called the ‘policy analysis school of planning’. In this approach expertise has been concentrated on projecting the consequences of alternative policy choices in order to estimate which will produce the most favourable outcome (1987:151; 1986a:309; 1986b:2). In contrast, *micro-policy reform* denotes a kind of reform that depends on the accomplishment of often highly complex and difficult institutional changes for its implementation. It commonly involves the development of significant new institutional capacities and norms, a redefinition of institutional roles and relationships, and even changes in deeply held personal and professional values. However, the most complex of all are likely to be those micro-policy reforms that demand a sharing of power between national and local levels, and the creation of self-reliant beneficiary organisations (1987:151; 1986a:310; 1986b:2).

For Korten, while not disregarding the importance of macro-policy reform to achieve people-centred development (Korten 1987:152), micro-policy reform captures the heart of third generation people-centred development strategies. Congruent with the movement presumed by the notions of scaling-up and mainstreaming from the grassroots upwards, micro-policy reform indicates a
bottom-up process of changing policies, rebuilding institutional structures and supporting norms that place control in the hands of communities and develop their capacities to manage local resources and reap their benefits (see Korten 1987:152; 1986a:310; 1986b:3). It points to a kind of reform that cannot merely be achieved by political leaders, top administrators and large donors in their position ‘from above’ (see Korten 1987:152, 153-154; 1986a:310-311; 1986b:2-3). It requires processes of profound value transformation to infiltrate institutions and the consciousness of people related to those institutions. It presumes a mutual process not only focusing on building the skills and capacities of communities ‘from below’, but also on bringing people in governing positions to “a reversal of existing professional and managerial practice” (Korten 1986:311), implying practices that are necessarily supportive of the former communities.

Micro-policy reform can thus be defined as a process of achieving transformation in human and institutional orientation and capacity both on centralised and decentralised levels. As a process pertaining to the level of ideas and values (thus very much in line with the approach or mode of development involvement emphasised in this study!), it belongs to what has come to be called the social learning school of planning (Korten 1987:151; 1986a:310; 1986b:2). Korten points out that, as this approach emphasises expertise in facilitating the processes by which complex institutional changes are achieved, policy analysts now have relatively little to offer, at least in their traditional individual and technical capacities. Instead, performance in the micro-policy arena now rather depends on the exercise of creative initiatives by many individuals on the ground in the processes of social learning in which they collectively engage (1987:151-152; see also 1986a:311; 1986b:3).

Korten emphasised that micro-policy reform and the social learning processes that it presumes depend on “the involvement of one or more catalyst organisations with a sustained commitment to facilitating coalition building and institutional learning” (1986a:311, italics added). Favouring the potential of NGOs to fulfil this type of catalyst role (see 1987:154; 1986b:6), Korten pointed out the following two key elements of this role: (i) the formation of a coalition of individuals committed to change and who also bring with them the resources of a number of relevant institutions, and (ii) the introduction of a variety of resources to provide feedback on operational experience as an input

41 While not neglecting the need for serious capacity-building in the NGO sector (see further below in the main discussion), organisations able to meet the requirements of institutional catalysts can, according to Korten, more likely be found amongst the thousands of development-oriented private voluntary organisations/NGOs (both international and domestic) working in Third World countries. Amongst the latter a number of organisations are to be found that “have a natural interest in micro-policy reform, view development as primarily a people to people process, and lack the inherent structural constraints faced by the large donors” (1987:154; 1986:313; 1986a:6). In other words, it could be claimed that NGOs (as institutions of civil society) are perhaps the best suited to fulfil the role of development catalysts as they are by nature the intermediary institutions between the people (that is, their constituency) and the official development institutions such as those of government/the state and donors.
to institutional learning (1987:152). Giving some idea of the accumulated process envisaged here, based on an actual prototype third generation strategy, Korten wrote:

As understanding of the resource management problem increases and possible ways of dealing with it using community management approaches are identified, one or more pilot projects are established under agency auspices to serve as learning laboratories in the development of new approaches. The pilot projects may involve one or more non-governmental development agencies assisting in the training and supervision of agency field staff - plus social scientists from one or more in-country institutions who develop site assessment methods and document implementation processes. The experimental field activities are intensively monitored by the working group, so that approaches may be modified and implications for the larger organization assessed. Through workshops, conferences, and training programs, the experience base of and the number of persons engaged in the review of these experiences is expanded. Gradually, additional learning laboratories are established that build from the experience of earlier efforts. (1987:153; also 1986b:4)

For Korten, however, the anticipated role of NGOs as catalysts for people-centred development and micro-policy reform can by no means be taken as self-evident. Striking a note that has been heard a number of times in this chapter, Korten emphasises the need for new types and levels of technical and strategic competence among the NGO sector itself. In the same vein he observed that this sector seemed to be characterised rather by a disdain for more hardcore managerial approaches to development, which many NGOs traditionally viewed as lying outside their orientation and approach to development:

Most NGOs have developed primarily in response to the altruistic desires of one or more individuals to contribute toward making a better world. They have relied on high moral purpose, good will,
hard work, and common sense to make them successful. Until recently the application of effective professional management techniques, and in some instances even the acquisition of technical competence, has not been seen as relevant to their purpose. These particular NGOs are best described as being at a pre-bureaucratic stage, lacking adequate development of basic management systems and procedures. Increased budgets, geographical spread, and growth in staff are in themselves forcing many NGOs to come to terms with such deficiencies, but often with considerable reluctance ... Some NGOs actively espouse an ideological disdain for management of any kind, identifying it with the values and practice of normal professionalism, and placing it in a class with exploitation, oppression, and racism ... Often the distrust of management comes from associating it with centralized control-oriented bureaucratic forms of organization.44 (Korten 1987:155, 156)

Thus, Korten’s fundamental point is that NGOs’ aspiration to act as systems catalysts to reform micro-policy has to be guided by more than good intentions. Scaling up to this mode of engagement means that NGOs are now to enter the world of hardcore and skilled professionalism, notwithstanding their possible critical disposition to the underlying values of such professionalism. They are to recognise that “(s)ome of the most important of the organizations with which they work will be large, influential, and staffed by highly credentialed professionals” (1987:155). Hence, they need “to obtain the respect of those who control the relevant technologies” - doctors, engineers, lawyers, politicians, administrators, village leaders - by showing them that “they offer a useful technical and political resource” (ibid., italics added).

Drawing in particular on Robert Chambers’s innovative distinction between “normal development professionalism” and a “new development professionalism”,45 such a mode of scaling-up does not mean the identification of NGOs with the narrow disciplinary specialisation associated with the former kind of professionalism. On the contrary, it can be conceptualised in terms of the latter kind of professionalism that, according to Chambers, has come to denote “the emergence of a new development professionalism based on

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44 Following from this particular characterisation of the NGO sector by Korten, we may (complementary to our comparative view in the introduction of this chapter) identify the following common characteristic between these two sectors: both can be defined as development actors that are strong on moral inclination and commitment, but weak on socio-economic skills and social-technical competence. See in this regard also footnote 14.

45 The paper of a distinguished specialist in the field of rural development, Chambers, used here as source by Korten, has been published as a discussion document of the Sussex-based Institute of Development Studies, “Normal Professionalism, New Paradigms and Development” (1986). This paper represents ideas that would be more fully developed in his later books, Rural Development: Putting the Last First (1989) (see esp. Chapter 7), and Challenging the Professions: Frontiers for Rural Development (1993).
alternative values and offering a variety of alternative technologies, organizational forms, and management and research methods appropriate to a people-centred development” (ibid).

These are not necessary less sophisticated, less effective, or less disciplined. To the contrary, in many respects they represent advances over normal professionalism based on a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of social and development processes. They are well suited to the purposes of most development-oriented NGOs. (Ibid)

Stating the possibility of reconciling NGOs’ moral disposition to development with particular managerial and technical emphases, a further profile of the organisational forms and management methods to be pursued by NGOs under the umbrella of the new development professionalism could, according to Korten, be defined as post-bureaucratic or strategic by nature. This points to approaches to development that discourage central control and actively support self-assessment, self-correction and a well-defined sense of mission in the institutional learning process on the basis of rich information flows. Without neglecting the complexity and prolonged nature of the process, as it works for change in complex and dynamic institutional systems, this aspect of the new development professionalism fundamentally demands from NGOs (as catalysts of the process) basic skills in social analysis complemented by skills in process facilitation and coalition-building (1987:156). Identifying the above-mentioned competencies of the new development professionalism as a constant challenge (both in terms of capacity building and time investment) for the NGO sector as it seeks to implement third generation strategies, Korten concluded:

(C)onsciously working to achieve a restructuring of social institutions is a role that remains unfamiliar to most NGOs. It represents a third generation of NGO strategic orientation, and calls for serious investment in developing the organizational capacities required to be effective in implementing such strategies. Since quick results cannot be anticipated, the NGO undertaking a third generation strategy must have the staying power to remain at the task for 10 or even 20 years if necessary. Capable leaders who

46 That is, values alternative to the values and methods of normal development professionalism that, according to Chambers, favour the powerful over the weak, rich over poor, urban over rural, industrial over agricultural, things over people, standardisation over diversity, the controlled over the uncontrolled, quantitative over qualitative, precise measurement over visual assessment, project blueprints over adaptive learning, large scale over small scale, market-oriented producers over subsistence producers, modern technology over traditional, laboratory studies over field experience, control-oriented organisations and technocratic decision-making over people-centred organisations and decision-making (Korten 1987:155).
combine a long-term vision with well developed skills in strategic management are essential. (Ibid.)

4.4 Critics of Korten and the ‘New Policy Agenda’

We started this chapter by showing how the charity-development juxtaposition that was set out in the first three chapters of this study can significantly also be found in what can be called the NGO development debate. From this point we progressed by exploring the innovative conceptual meaning of David Korten’s notion of third generation development strategies in overcoming the problem of charity and what we termed ‘insufficient’ or ‘less desirable’ modes of development action47 (that is, in terms of Korten’s notion of third generation development strategies, a problem that first of all and directly concerns the NGO development debate’s focus on NGOs as actors of development, but that we also relate in this study to the ecumenical and general theological debate on development theory’s quest for conceptual renewal of ecclesiastical development action).

But the discussion in this chapter remains incomplete unless we finally address critical assessments of Korten’s generational perspective (in particular on third generation strategies) and the so-called ‘New Policy Agenda’ in the book, Non-Governmental Organisations - Performance and Accountability: Beyond the Magic Bullet (edited by Michael Edwards and David Hulme, and published in 1995 by Earthscan). In this book, as the title suggests, the various authors set out to critically assess the performance and accountability of development-oriented NGOs in the light of what they call the ‘New Policy Agenda’ in current official development politics. This, in short, is an agenda that, as authors Edwards and Hulme indicated in their introductory essay, is organised around the two reigning ideologies of economic neo-liberalism and political liberal democracy. It has increasingly come to view NGOs as preferred channels (vis-à-vis the state48) not only for providing welfare services to the poor, but also for promoting processes of democratisation that are to be considered as indispensable to the ideal of economic growth and development49 (see 1995a:4).

47 See again our highlighted conclusion at the end of 4.1.
48 See also the reference in 4.3.2 to this turn in current official development policy as a positive factor in allowing greater ‘political space’ for NGOs to achieve the people-centred agenda in development.
49 For a more comprehensive explanation of the rationale at stake here, complementary to the rather condensed exposition by Edwards and Hulme, we may refer to Alan Fowler’s important article on ‘Non-Governmental Organizations as Agents of Democratization: An African Perspective’. In this article Fowler meaningfully indicated how a Western form of democratic representation is in fact implied in current mainstream official development policy, which is seen as condition for market capitalism to provide the economic growth and division of benefits required for the sustainable alleviation of poverty (1993:326). In this rationale, furthermore, the empowerment of people and civil society (that is, the task especially entrusted to NGOs) in relation to the state is seen as fundamental to the regulations of privatisation and economic liberalisation. According to Fowler, this is well explained by current World Bank policy (in which NGOs have accordingly been favoured as agents of democratisation vis-à-vis the
Proceeding with our argument, the latter, second role of democratisation allocated to NGOs in the ‘New Policy Agenda’ can be taken as particularly relevant to the discussion in this chapter. While the underlying ideological differences between Korten and the people-centred development understanding and mainstream development policy are not to be ignored here, it can be said that the role of democratisation in the ‘New Policy Agenda’ in principle anticipates Korten’s definition of third generation strategic development action - that is, the creation of political space for people's communication and participation (see Edwards and Hulme 1995a:4) that assumes the tasks of institutional and policy democratisation /transformation/reform. However, and this brings us more to the focal point of our argument in this closing section, against the background of such an identification of Korten’s notion of third generation NGO development strategies with the democratisation role allocated to development-oriented NGOs in the ‘New Policy Agenda’, the following problematisation of the ‘New Policy Agenda’ (that is, both the above-mentioned two roles in this agenda) and a third generation development role (by implication but also explicitly) can be found in the book under discussion.

Firstly, in this book, by means of a general overview of NGOs’ performance and accountability in development, the perspective is to be found that effectively dismisses the claim of NGOs’ successful adaptation to the modes of development involvement anticipated in the ‘New Policy Agenda’. It is claimed that NGO development activity has as a general rule not met the expectations that are anticipated in the ‘New Policy Agenda’. Whereas they (NGOs) have had some success in the area of micro-policy reform and in providing some services more cost effectively than government could, it can be confirmed that NGO service provision, as a general rule, usually fails to reach the poorest people (Edwards and Hulme 1995a:6). Stipulating the moderate success that NGOs have had, particularly in the second of the above-mentioned roles (that is, democratisation), Edwards and Hulme stated:

state/government): “(E)mpowerment … [is seen] as a process by which ‘ordinary people, and especially women … take greater responsibility for improving their lives’ … In other words, a process that unburdens the state and reduces its role and some responsibilities towards citizens. This interpretation must, however, be placed within the economic emphasis of the Bank’s report where people as entrepreneurs, rather than the state, are regarded as the economic motor of society.” (1993:332, italics added)

It can be said that in the ‘New Policy Agenda’ the notion of democratisation takes on a predominantly (neo-liberal) economic meaning, that is, the rolling back of the state, privatisation and economic liberation to successfully and efficiently enable export-led economic growth development strategies (see again also the previous footnote). In the people-centred development framework, on the other hand, democratisation rather takes on a political meaning, that is, the implementation of institutional and structural transformation based on the principle of territoriality (see again 4.3.1) to enable the viable introduction of alternative economic arrangements and strategies (that is, alternative to the former strategies).

In line with the distinction made in the previous footnote, the notion of political space here, however, should not obscure the predominant and restricted economic meaning/ideology that the ‘New Policy Agenda’ impresses on the democratisation process. See also footnote 49.
There is increasing evidence that NGOs and GROs do not perform as effectively as had been assumed in terms of poverty-reach, cost-effectiveness, sustainability, popular participation (including gender), flexibility and innovation ... Evidence on the performance of NGOs and GROs in democratisation is more difficult to come by, except in the area of ‘micro-policy’ reform where a growing number of case studies demonstrate that NGOs and GROs can influence governments and official agencies, especially where they come together to form a united front ... However, there is little evidence that NGOs and even GROs are managing to engage in the formal political process successfully, without becoming embroiled in partisan politics and the distortions that accompany the struggle for state power. In both Latin America and Africa, evidence shows that NGOs have had little impact on political reform, partly because NGOs themselves (as non-representative organisations) have failed to develop effective strategies to promote democratisation. (1995a:6, 7)

It can be said, if only in an indirect way, that the above assessment also raises serious reservations about the actual and successful involvement by NGOs in third generation development strategies as conceptualised by Korten. Yet at this point we may secondly notice how authors of the above-mentioned book, in the context of their critical appraisal of the ‘New Policy Agenda’, in a direct way also problematised Korten’s generational perspective (as a particular contribution to the conceptual framework assumed by the latter agenda). In their own quest for conceptual clarity concerning the authentic role or roles of NGOs in development, these authors expressed their concern “about the stages ... [Korten] suggested and the linear progression they supposedly represent” (Biggs and Neame 1995:35). Stated differently, for these authors the linear view represented by Korten’s generational framework poses a false dichotomy that they regard as untenable. The set categoric distinctions that it proposes are regarded as seriously contradicting a comprehensive approach to development and human well-being.

The latter argument is more specifically cast in terms of the debate on social justice in development by authors Edwards and Hulme in their concluding essay in the volume. According to them, social justice requires the capacity of people to organise themselves to defend their rights. However, it also requires that people are liberated from the conditions of material poverty. Given the scale of material poverty and the size of the gaps in access to basic services in many countries of the world, NGOs are required continue playing a significant role also in service provision and welfare. At the same time, according to Edwards and Hulme, it remains perfectly possible for NGOs to “innovate, and to retain a sense of mission, a high level of independence, and an attachment to values and
principles”. Hence the conclusion by them that the goals of social improvement are best served by an involvement of diversified and combined stratification, as in fact suggested by actual practices:

There are many NGOs which play a major role in social organisation, awareness raising and advocacy; just as there are many GROs [grassroots organisations] which aim to support material improvements in their members’ lives. Indeed, there are strong arguments to suggest that these functions are best combined together. (1995b:225)

From a somewhat different angle, Stephen Biggs and Arthur Neame presented a complementary argument in their contribution to the debate. According to them, a historical overview suggests that “NGOs have [in fact] sought to change institutions for at least a century” (the suffragette movement for the emancipation of women and the Anti-Slavery Society in the UK could, according to them, be taken as cases in point). On the basis of this historical fact they reject Korten’s generational perspective, in which an institutional approach to development rather indicates a relatively recent mode of NGO involvement; they also point out the counterpoint of the latter historical category of NGOs. As an example one could take the case of many NGOs (such as in the Philippines) that, while characterised by their long-standing commitment to fundamental change, have again moved from concentrating on political mobilisation to the provision of welfare and relief (in the Philippines, for instance, as a response to militarisation in 1987). This brought Briggs and Neame to the crux of their argument, in that the latter shift in emphasis does not again indicate a ‘backward’ move on the part of those particular NGOs, as Korten’s typology suggests. It simply means performing a humane action that suits the needs of the context! (Cf. 1995:35.)

The above twofold problematisation should necessarily be taken into account in our own adherence to Korten’s generational framework. Stated from an appreciative point of view, first of all, this problematisation offers important qualifications to our appreciation of that conceptual framework. These qualifications in an important way reflect the reality of NGOs’ performance in development (vis-à-vis the euphoria of a third generation of NGO development activities that apparently are accumulating and successfully under way today) and should serve as a corrective to a one-sidedness that may become the weakness in Korten’s generational framework (or rather a straightforward reading of this framework). However, having said this, we want to close this chapter by stating the following in defence of Korten’s model and our continuing appreciation of it as representing a most useful and appropriate framework for defining new, innovative modes of development action for those institutional actors on which this study mainly focuses, namely the churches:
Firstly, and somewhat contradictory to our appreciation of the above-mentioned qualifications, we claim that the authors of the volume under discussion may well have presented us with an inaccurate reading of Korten. While we do not have any problem with the qualifications presented by the authors of this volume per se, it is necessary to ask whether Korten in fact presented a perspective or framework so very different from the one they are proposing. There in fact appears to be no real difference between these authors' requirement for diversified and combined stratification in NGO development activity and Korten's own emphasis on the necessity for the co-existence of the various strategic or generational orientations in contemporary NGO development action, not least his recognition that relief efforts remain an essential and appropriate response to the emergency situations that human societies are continuously faced with today (1990:118, 1987:148). Korten's following statement clearly goes against the linear approach which his critics accuse him of adopting:

These three generations do not represent precisely defined categories and are more appropriately applied to individual programs than to whole organizations. A given NGO may find that one of its programs is characterized by a third generation orientation, whereas others may be dominantly first or second generation - each responding to different needs ... In any given setting it is most likely that the needs addressed by the different strategies will be met by different NGOs representing different purposes, constituencies, and competencies. NGOs pursuing third generation programming strategies will often need to give explicit attention to the development of capacities of collaborating NGOs to meet essential first and second generation needs as part of their larger system development strategy. (1987:149)

Secondly, we fully adopt the bias that, as Korten acknowledges, ultimately defines his own position. He responds to his critics in a note in Getting to the 21st Century, and indeed goes along with their view that few NGOs in fact fit purely into one generation or another (that is, a mere linear articulation) and that there is a need for all three types of programmes. “I have responded by stressing that each generation meets an important need and has its important place within the NGO family, much as the generations in a human family.” (1990:129, n. 5) Yet, despite this acknowledgement, he remains convinced of the validity of the generational framework and in particular this framework's stress on the need for third and fourth generation type strategies. Korten argued that it was on these strategic modes that development as a long-term and global enterprise ultimately depends:
I do believe that the future of development, perhaps global society, depends on many more VOs engaging boldly and effectively in the third and fourth generation type strategies discussed in this chapter than is currently the case. (Ibid)

This position taken by Korten is also supported by the larger discussion in this study. As we have attempted to show with regard to the churches, charity and local project and community development work (which correlate well with Korten's notions of first and second generation development strategies) imply much more than a merely innocent and committed outreach to the poor. Involved here are also critical questions relating to ideology, power and the lack of more sophisticated social-theoretical capacities, the need for critical self-examination and the quest to conceptualise new modes of strategic development action that might break through prevailing problematic modes of engagement.

In addition to the recognition of the prevailing inadequate and problematic strategic orientations by development actors (especially in this case civil society actors such as the churches and NGOs), we may also state the fact that the moderate success of the modern enterprise of development so far provide fundamental grounds for the conceptualisation of new strategic development orientations. To rephrase the words of one critical development writer not directly linked to the people-centred development debate, we are indeed a long way from an aid-free society, which is the true barometer of successful development and true community control (Dudley 1993:161). Hence the crucial challenge to conceptualise and apply modes of strategic development action that go beyond relief and unsustainable community development orientations and work towards that goal.

In this study we are emphasising that the role of value- and idea-centred approaches to development, ‘a politics of ideas’, is crucial to the task of achieving far-reaching development and transformation. It can be concluded that Korten's conceptualising of third generation development strategies has already to a substantial degree steered us in that direction. From the basis of this appreciation we now take the discussion further to focus on his notion of fourth generation development strategies in the next chapter. Although the chapter cannot neglect the necessity of third generation strategies and thus assumes their continuing application, we propose that a fourth-generation strategic development orientation represents the ultimate expression of the value- and idea-centred approaches to development mentioned above.
Chapter Five

THE DAWN OF A 
FOURTH GENERATION APPROACH

5.1 Introduction

The critical deficiency of the third generation strategy parallels at the macro-level the deficiency that the second generation strategy displays at a more micro-level. The second generation strategy’s critical flaw is that it requires countless replications in millions of communities, all within a basically hostile political and institutional context. It is much the same with third generation strategies, only at a more macro-level.

Thus it is not surprising that almost since the first workshop in which I articulated the concept of the third generation strategy, thoughtful colleagues have suggested that something is missing. There had to be a further step, a fourth generation.

Isagani R. Serrano of the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) is among those who have struggled with the issue. Arguing that the unequal distribution of power and wealth at national and international levels carries major responsibility for the multiple crises gripping Southern countries, he wrote a paper suggesting that third generation strategies are only a partial answer.

Where do NGOs go from here (from the third generation)… Development theorists and practitioners must think beyond “repair work” addressed to the components of interdependent systems although they can build up from there. Their efforts at re-examination should help enable the whole international NGO community to effectively promote what the watershed NGO conference in London called the Alternative Development Paradigm.

Serrano suggests that this should be the central concern of a fourth generation NGO development strategy. (Korten 1990:123-124)

In Korten’s thinking on strategic NGO development action, the concept of a fourth generation strategy or approach would eventually be added to his initial framework of three generations of NGO development action.1 Korten referred

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1 By way of recapitulation (see footnotes 12 and 13 in the introduction), this is the distinct difference between Korten’s discussion in his earlier article, “Third Generation NGO Strategies: A Key to People-Centred Development” (1987), and that in Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global
to his own intellectual itinerary in the above extract from *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda* and it is clear that, at an early stage in the generation debate, he and other critical exponents of the NGO development debate had recognised the need for further conceptual innovation beyond the third generation strategy or approach. Whereas the latter remains an essential dimension to a development strategy of transformation, the central concern was (akin to the case with second generation strategies) that an infinite number of interventions are required in the third generation mode to achieve the desired object of overall transformation. Furthermore, it is questionable whether third generation interventions have enough mobilising power to match the countervailing forces of dominant national and international institutions that operate on the basis of “an invalid development vision” (Korten 1990:123). Korten and others therefore argued that the third generation strategy or approach needed to be complemented by a fourth generation strategy or approach that can compensate for the third generation’s prevailing deficiencies. It represents a mode of more sophisticated thinking that articulates what has been termed the ‘*Alternative Development Paradigm*’ in the NGO debate.

In this chapter the aim will be to explore the meaning of the fourth generation development concept presented in the writings of David Korten. As this chapter constitutes the culmination point of our exploration into innovative strategic development conceptualisation in this study, in accordance with the development of Korten’s own argument, its contents must be read as part of a cycle that also includes the discussion in the next chapter. Thus, our exploration of a fourth generation strategic development meaning will eventually also relate to a wider intellectual circle that can be taken as a further complementary articulation of a growing fourth generation approach to development and the question of overall (global) transformation. Traced as a discernible normative set of discourses in the social sciences that, in the historical and conceptual sense, goes beyond the work of Korten and the NGO development debate, the discussion in the next chapter will draw on discourses of development and transformation in which features of the fourth generation approach highlighted by Korten are central. In accordance with Korten’s own adherence to the concept of

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2 See in this regard the observations made in the introduction of this study.

3 Thus, whereas the notion of ‘an alternative development paradigm’ previously defined the concept of ‘third generation development strategies’ in Korten’s earlier writings (see 4.3.1), this notion has now come to define the fourth generation (as evident from Korten’s adherence to Isagani Serrano’s perspective stated in the quotation heading this chapter).

4 In this chapter, as in the previous one, Korten’s discussion in *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*, will be taken as basic point of departure. In addition, aspects of the meaning of fourth generation development will also be derived from a limited selection of Korten’s writings that were used as sources in the previous chapter, particularly his essay, “Steps Toward People-Centred Development: Vision and Strategies”, in the book edited by Noeleen Heyzer et al., *Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-Centred Development*. 

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‘alternative development’, it will be possible to connect such further exploration of the meaning of a fourth generation strategy to the notions of ‘alternatives’ or ‘alternative development’. This can be done on the basis of a direct adherence to these notions by the debates/perspectives that will be explored, but more importantly also the various debates/perspectives’ affiliation to a ‘transformative political’ discourse in which features and actors similar to what can be called the counterpoint to mainstream development thinking are highlighted.

For now, however, the discussion will remain with Korten and the NGO development debate. It will be shown how, in Korten’s fourth generation strategic framework, the relational orientation and organisational definition of development-oriented NGOs are still further refined in relation to the meaning of third generation development. Whereas the theoretical and strategic principles that were highlighted in the meaning of third generation strategic development are fully assumed in the meaning of the fourth generation, it can be noted that the people-centred development concept is still further radicalised in the fourth generation strategic orientation. Here we are entering the terrain of the new social movements, whereby individual persons and collectivities of people, marginalised by mainstream development but also conscientised and committed to the values and ideas represented by the new social movements, shift to the forefront and truly become the agents of development. Here the emphasis falls on a ‘value’ and ‘idea politics’ that rises above the third generation strategic orientation in terms of its natural reach, the areas or elements of social life that are prioritised for transformation, the strategic orientation and skills that are required, and the kind of actors that are to be involved (such as religious actors).

It will be shown how, in this mode of development, the phenomenon of NGOs is restricted to what Korten has referred to as Voluntary Organisations and People’s Organisations. They are organisations that act as service organisations to the new people’s or social movements and that realise the radical democratic principle of people-centred development by becoming the owned organisational space of people and the people’s (grassroots) movements themselves. Moreover, they are organisations that do not retreat into isolated spaces, but are politically and ethically oriented, committed to what Korten calls a global people’s movement that, through networking and interaction among the diversified range of like-minded NGOs, movements, individuals and other actors, is mobilising into the synergetic force that seeks to bring about people-centred development (in the comprehensive sense implied by the participation/interaction of the diverse range of actors referred to here) on a global scale. In sum, they are organisations for whom interaction with the government and business sectors becomes secondary (which does not mean the latter are regarded as unimportant, however), as their primary concern becomes promoting what Korten calls people-to-people interaction.

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5 See the discussion in 4.3 of the previous chapter.
5.2 The fourth generation: a social movements approach

According to Korten fourth generation strategies look beyond the focused initiatives of third generation strategies to change specific policies and institutional sub-systems (1990:127). They are motivated by the perception that there is “a need to energise decentralized action toward a people-centred development vision on a much broader scale than is possible with the more focused interventions of either second or third generation strategies” (1990:124, italics added).

It follows that the fourth generation strategic development orientation is informed by a theory of action that identifies an inadequate mobilising vision as the root cause of contemporary development failure (1990:127). The breakthrough of people-centred development to become the dominant, global paradigm (see 1990:124) can, according to this recognition, only be achieved through processes that might influence the public consciousness towards “an alternative vision adequate to mobilise voluntary action on a national or global scale” (1990:127). A process of transformation is emphasised that “must be achieved primarily through the power of ideas, values and communication links” (ibid., italics added). The fourth generation orientation highlights a communication strategy in which the modern system of communication is utilised as a primary instrument:

The focus is on the communication of ideas and information through the mass media, newsletters, recorded media, school curricula, major media events, study groups and social networks of all types to energize voluntary action by people both within and outside their formal organizations in support of social transformation. (Ibid.)

For Korten such an idea- and value-centred perspective points to a social movement approach to development. Development, in so far as it aspires to ideals of large-scale transformation, can find in the communicative power of the contemporary people’s or social movements the greatest potential for social change. In the field of development, however, such an identification constitutes a neglected terrain. Despite the success of people’s movements in the last few decades in reshaping thought and action on such issues as the environment, human rights, women, peace and population (1990:124), development has generally not been viewed as a movement6 (1990:127). There is a striking

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6 For Korten this does not mean that prototypes of development-oriented people’s movements cannot be found in history. According to him, the literacy movement/Mass Education Movement in China in the 1920s and 1930s, and the world population movement that mobilised itself under the banner of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) in the early 1950s represent powerful examples of national and global achievements in people-centred development (see 1990:124-125).
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separation between Voluntary Organisations (VOs), or NGOs that work in support of the new social movements, and those involved in development. The issues still appear very much separated (1990:127-128).

Table 2: Strategies of NGO action in development: Korten’s addition of the fourth generation (Korten 1990:117):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fourth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defining features</td>
<td>relief &amp; welfare</td>
<td>community development</td>
<td>sustainable systems development</td>
<td>people’s movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem definition</td>
<td>shortage</td>
<td>local inertia</td>
<td>institutional and policy constraints</td>
<td>inadequate mobilising vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time frame</td>
<td>immediate</td>
<td>project life</td>
<td>ten to twenty years</td>
<td>indefinite future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>individual or family</td>
<td>neighbour-hood or village</td>
<td>region or nation</td>
<td>national or global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief actors</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>NGO plus community</td>
<td>all relevant public and private institutions</td>
<td>loosely defined networks of people and organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO role</td>
<td>doer</td>
<td>mobiliser</td>
<td>catalyst</td>
<td>activist/educator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management orientation</td>
<td>logistics management</td>
<td>project management</td>
<td>strategic management</td>
<td>coalescing and energising self-managing networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development education</td>
<td>starving children</td>
<td>community self-help</td>
<td>constraining policies and institutions</td>
<td>spaceship earth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Korten, the need therefore exists also to “mobilize a people’s movement around a people-centred development vision” (1990:128). Whereas this would highlight the issue of development as such, a closer analysis of Korten’s argument suggests that development is not to be viewed in isolation from the existing new social movements. The challenge here is to build “alliances with other people’s movements that deal with related elements of the global crisis” (ibid., italics added). Development is to be seen as a matter integrated with the other pressing issues/values/concerns that drive the contemporary social movements.7 While not losing its specific identity as a

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7 Such an integrated meaning is suggested by Korten’s repeated reference to the new social movements (environment, human rights, women, peace, population, consumer affairs) in his exposition of the concept of fourth generation development (see 1990:124-128), while his more detailed discussion of the movements mentioned in the previous footnote is clearly applied to the concept of (people-centred) development (see 1990:124-125). This reading of Korten is also clearly confirmed in the introduction of Getting to the 21st Century?, where he states that: “…a people-centred development vision ... seeks a synthesis of the change objectives of the environmental, human rights, consumer protection, women's and peace movements. It
development movement, the considerable overlapping with the other new social movements must be recognised. These movements constitute the most important allies of a fourth generation people-centred development movement. The various issues around which they are mobilised comprise aspects of people-centred development and secure its sustainability. In this sense people-centred development can be taken as the overall and integrating term for the separated issues that define the various movements. There is a common denominator shared by all the new social movements, including an anticipated people-centred development movement: they all represent value- and idea-centred processes directed towards the well-being of people and the environment; they represent processes in which people are the actual subjects (owners) of change.

With the latter description we touched on what might be taken as the outstanding feature of social movements, namely their voluntary character. To recall a point made in a quotation from Korten’s discussion in the introduction of this study, social movements reveal a special quality. They constitute the domain of ordinary, committed people who are driven by ideas and shared visions of a better world, and not by budgets or organisational structures. They move on social energy able to mobilise independent action by countless individuals and organisations across national boundaries (1990:124).

Paramount in the fourth generation orientation is that the “reinforcing synergy” generated in the sphere of the new social movements also has to be tapped by the field of development. Korten defined the benign character of this sphere as constituting the “dynamic network of dedicated volunteers” that offer “mutual inspiration, political support, and exchange of experience and technology” (1990:125). It constitutes a sphere of ‘free space’ through which development actors may participate, find numerous allies for their cause and achieve people-centred development on a global scale (ibid.).

8 Here Korten upheld the historical example of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) movement referred to in footnote 6 of this chapter. According to him, this movement achieved “one of human history’s most extraordinary public policy reversals, as family planning was moved from a forbidden topic to a global public policy priority” (1990:125 - italics added).
5.3 Fundamental components

5.3.1 Central actors

5.3.1.1 Voluntary organisations

Korten’s discussion of fourth generation development strategies did not mean the end of the NGO development debate, as the absence of reference to this institutional sector in the previous section (5.2) might suggest.9 Yet, in the discussion of this mode of strategic development action, reference to the NGO sector would undergo greater refinement (in accordance with the voluntary principle spelled out in 5.2).

According to Korten, the term ‘non-governmental organisation’ embraces such a wide variety of disparate organisations that it is impossible to identify a distinctive developmental role for an ‘NGO’. Consequently, a framework is needed “that would have more meaning in defining the distinctive nature and development roles of the organizations commonly referred to as NGOs” (Korten 1995:183). To define such a framework, the following basic classification of the institutional division in society needs to be made:

- **Government**: This sector “has the distinctive ability to demand resources through use of threat, power or coercion”. In the idealised view of this sector, these special powers are exercised “to defend the law and to maintain social justice through the transfer of wealth from the rich to those in particular need” *(ibid)*. In reality, however, this sector has shown itself to be most responsive to the perceived needs of the political and economically powerful, thus often acting as a vanguard for escalating injustice, exploitation and corruption (Korten 1995a:183; 1990:99).

- **Business**: This sector specialises in the use of economic power and obtains its resources through the sale or exchange of products and services. Its distinctive role is to create new wealth through value-added activities, which should be regarded as an essential function in any society. Yet, because of its orientation to market forces, this sector tends to be most responsive to the needs of those who have money and, as a result, gain control over the exchange processes (Korten 1995a:183; 1990:99).

- **Voluntary sector**: This sector specialises in the use of “integrative power” or “power of consensus” and succeeds in mobilising human and financial resources on the basis of the shared value commitments of its participants (staff, citizen volunteers). This value orientation gives the actors or organisations in this sector their particular strength and makes them an important innovative *counter-force* to the political and economic power

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9 See, in contrast to this absence, the frequent references to this sector in the exposition of first, second and third generation strategies in 4.2.
agendas of government and the business sectors (Korten 1995a:183, 185; 1990:97-98). Korten had spelled this out earlier:

> They serve as forums for the definition, testing and propagation of ideas and values in ways that are difficult or impossible for the other two sectors. Their commitment to integrative values, over political or economic values, gives them a natural orientation to the perceived needs of politically and economically disenfranchised elements of the population that are not met through the normal political processes of government or the economic processes of the market. (Korten 1990:98)

On the basis of such a threefold distinction the nature of development-oriented NGOs may be defined more closely. According to Korten, not all NGOs belong to the voluntary sector. A more correct view is to allocate to each of the above sectors its own distinctive type of NGO (1995a:185). Here the following distinctions can be made:

- **GONGOs**: Known by the anomalous term ‘governmental non-governmental organisations’, this is a type of NGO that should rather be seen as a creation of government to serve as instruments of government policy (Korten 1995a:185; 1990:2, 104-105). They are the creations of more sophisticated governments that respond to official donors’ desire to channel funding to NGOs (1995a:185). In practice “(t)heir existence depends on state sponsorship and resources, their leaders are subject to government appointment or approval, and ultimately they are accountable to the state rather than to their members or an independent board” (1990:104-105).

- **Public Service Contractors**: While they are non-governmental and often non-profit organisations, this type of NGO is driven by market considerations more than the values of the voluntary sector spelled out above (Korten 1990:102). Their function is that of “market-oriented nonprofit businesses serving public purposes” (1990:2, italics added). Because they are highly adjusted to donor preferences and priorities, they are, on the basis of their greater technical and managerial specialisation, the NGO-type that is traditionally favoured by donors (Korten 1995a:185-186; 1990:103).

- **Voluntary organisations**: This is the type of NGO that fits the profile of the voluntary sector set out above. They are organisations that “range from Mother Theresa-type charities to social activist organizations that are on the front lines of such causes as environmental protection, women’s rights, human rights protection, peace, and land reform”. They are organisations that “may or may not accept official donor funding, but when they do it is on their own terms and only to serve activities integral to their self-defined mission” (Korten 1995a:186).
It follows that all three the above sectors, and by implication NGO-types, ought to be regarded as indispensable to meaningful development. All three sectors and types are by nature ‘third-party’ organisations\footnote{According to Korten, ‘third party’ organisations are those that base their social legitimacy on the assumption that they exist to serve the needs of third parties, that is, persons who are not themselves members of the organisation (1990:95-96).} that “have distinctive competencies essential to a dynamic self-sustaining development process”. Excessive emphasis on any one to the exclusion of the others would, therefore, pose a serious threat to long-term, authentic development (Korten 1990:98).

Yet, as suggested by the above profile of the voluntary sector, in the accomplishment of fourth generation development goals, NGOs more closely defined as voluntary organisations (VOs) have a special place. In contrast to the government and business sectors, which tend to define their strength in terms of the size and financial resources of their constituent organisations, the strength of VOs can be found in their diversity and capacity for independent action (delinked from the sectors of government and business). They are organisations that, based on their voluntary nature, can reach out and form alliances more easily than other organisations. Through this ability, combined with their value- and idea-centred focus, they are able “to achieve scale and leverage through joining in ever shifting coalitions - constantly defining, elaborating and redefining social issues, expanding political constituencies supporting their agendas of choice, promoting experimentation and advocating political action” (Korten 1990:99).

In essence, VOs orientated towards fourth generation strategies are service organisations to the people’s or social movements they support. This requires them to have managerial skills that go well beyond those normally associated with strategic management. Their job is to generate self-managing networks that will stimulate action beyond their own range of vision and control (Korten 1990:127). Related to such escalating dynamics, they serve as important mechanisms of democratisation through which people define and voice their interests, meet local needs and make demands on government. But they also fulfil important educational roles through which “they provide training grounds for democratic citizenship, develop the political skills of their members, recruit new political leaders, stimulate political participation, and educate the broader public on a wide variety of public interest issues” (Korten 1990:99).\footnote{Here Korten also referred to the “watchdog role” of fourth generation VOs. Along with the press they serve as checks on “the relentless tendency of the state to centralize its power and to evade civic accountability and control” (1990:99).}

5.3.1.2 People’s Organisations

According to Korten, “(t)he people’s sector is the fourth and most important of all the institutional sectors for people-centred development” (1995a:187, italics added). Where the first three sectors identified so far constitute ‘third-party’
organisations in which action and thought are initiated by actors from ‘outside’, POs, by contrast, represent the most basic principle of social movement theory. They are by nature ‘first-party’ organisations that embody people’s direct and radical participation in events. They are the potential and actual manifestation of fourth generation development. They “are membership organizations that exist to serve their members, have membership accountable leaders, and are largely self-reliant in their generation of resources” (ibid.; see also Korten 1990: 100).

According to Korten, a unique characteristic of POs is their ability to combine all three types of power competence represented respectively by the sectors identified in 5.3.1.1: threat, economic and integrative. Identifying various types of POs, such as self-reliant cooperatives, landless associations, irrigator associations, burial associations, credit clubs, labour unions, trade associations and political interest groups (Korten 1990:100), for Korten a good example of a PO that embodies the mix of the different types of power competence is the cooperative business association. While the primary function of the cooperative is economic, it is much more than a business. In its governmental role the members of the cooperative “establish rules that they mutually agree to observe on threat of fines, expulsion or other sanctions” (ibid.). Yet, they are simultaneously “bound together by shared values that may lead them to direct their business to the cooperative even when they might find better prices elsewhere” (Korten 1990:100-101, italics added). In this association the officers may “contribute substantial time to the organization without compensation. The cooperative itself may engage in community service activities purely for the community good, or it may assist the formation of other cooperatives as a public service, purely for the good of the cooperatives’ cause.” (Korten 1990:101; see also 1995:187, italics added)

POs, then, may be regarded as another special type of NGO (see Korten 1990:2) that integrates aspects of the above-mentioned three types of NGOs in its organisational structure. However, in Korten’s definition a certain tension is sustained between the concepts of ‘NGO’ and ‘VO’, on the other hand, and ‘PO’, on the other. Korten pointed out the aspect of organisational conversion that defines the commitment of NGOs/VOs in the ideal setting of fourth-generation development. According to this aspect, the central commitment of fourth generation NGOs/VOs is not only to create new POs and convert the first two sectors of government and business into POs,12 but to let the VOIs themselves be transformed into POs (1990:101).13 This transition, in fact, spells out the

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12 For Korten the transformation of local governments into POs occurs when they are made truly elected representatives of the people, their revenue base is built on locally levied tax revenues and strong direct citizen participation in their affairs is developed. Similarly business corporations become POs when employees of a publicly owned corporation buy their shares and become owners through an employee ownership stock plan (1990:101).

13 According to Korten (1990:101), such a conversion happens when the staff of a VO is brought within the governance structure of a PO. It may then reconstitute itself as a paid secretariat of the PO that provides
necessary progression towards authentic people-centred development, that is, to truly transfer power into the hands of people.\(^{14}\)

One might well ask why a people-centred development vision should favor POs over third-party organizations, since by definition the latter are supposed to be serving external constituencies. The answer is that irrespective of whom an organization is supposed to serve, there is a considerable tendency for the people who actually exercise control over an organization to put its resources to their own service first. Thus the more that people can be placed in control of the organizations that presumably exist to serve them, the greater the probability that those organizations will fulfill their true function. (\textit{Ibid})

It can therefore be said that POs, more than any other organisation, constitute the building blocks of people-centred development, that is, of a just, sustainable and inclusive society (Korten 1995:187, 188). In terms of Korten’s conclusive profile of them, they are the authentic instruments for redistributing power in society by strengthening the economic and political power of the previously marginalised, the training grounds for democratic citizenship and institutional building blocks for democratisation, the expressions of grassroots concerns that provide the collective bargaining power to enable landless people, small farmers and urban squatters to negotiate on more equal terms with the politically and economically powerful (Korten 1990:101-102).

5.3.1.3 Citizen volunteers

In Korten’s scheme of fourth generation actors, the organisational level would not be emphasised at the cost of the individual or personal level. At the heart of fourth generation development action for him is the citizen volunteer, the \textit{personification} of this mode of development.

For Korten, in line with the free idea flow of social movement dynamics that accomplishes connections and associations across boundaries of place, space and identity, citizen volunteers come \textit{from all spheres of life}.

They are those countless individuals who bring the spirit and action of committed citizenship to their communities and to the
organizations in which they work - irrespective of the sector to which that organization belongs. (1990:106)

Thus the citizen volunteer should not be perceived as belonging only to the group of persons that are directly involved with the two central organisations of fourth generation development identified above, namely VOs and POs. Whereas these organisations should be seen as providing the organisational support system for fourth generation development activity, the means for individual actors to obtain identity, legal recognition and aggregate resources for endeavours (Korten 1990: 108), the span of citizen volunteers stretches far beyond their immediate activity. Korten observed that a (fourth generation) people-centred development agenda was “a human agenda that unites the interests of all people, irrespective of class, race, religion, nationality - or the institutional sector on which they depend for their daily bread”. In this all-encompassing sense, “(i)t is an agenda that must unite businessmen, religious leaders, newscasters, labourers, teachers, farmers, the unemployed, homemakers, politicians, bureaucrats, technicians, volunteer workers and countless others” (1995a:189, italics added).

For Korten the achievement of fourth generation development and transformation hinges greatly on the commitment and ability of people to carry fourth generation values into the occupations in which they work (see 1990: 107). In the respective occupations “the volunteer spirit is actualized when the individual acts as a responsible values-driven human being in ways that go beyond, or even conflict with, defined bureaucratic roles”. Characteristic of this behaviour is the fact that it is not motivated by any kind of reward,15 or sanctioned by the organisation that employs the person (1990:106). It is the behaviour of full persons, citizens who are open to the conflicts, processes and values that shape society, who apply a certain critical consciousness in carrying out their organisational duties and not simply bureaucratic procedures (1990:107). Ultimately, it is the behaviour of persons who, although filling occupations in the sectors of government and business, give precedence to the integrative values that are associated with the voluntary sector over the values of coercion and economic profit commonly associated with the first two (1990:108).

According to Korten, different levels of citizenship can furthermore be identified: the community citizen, national citizen and global citizen. Yet, in achieving the transformation envisioned in fourth generation development, the global citizen has primary importance (ibid.). This is the person who commands a critical consciousness that allows him/her to transcend the institutional and cultural conditioning of the first two levels of citizenship for the greater good of

15 In his exposition of the nature of the voluntary sector, Korten particularly pointed to the aspect of financial reward. He emphasised that the surest way to kill a movement was “to smother it with money” (1990:124, 126).
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society. As such this kind of person has “the ability to think independently, critically and constructively, to view problems within their long-term context, and to make judgments based on a commitment to longer-term societal interests that are distinct from, and, in fact may conflict with short-term interests” (1990:107).

5.3.1.4 A global people’s movement

In Korten’s identification of the central actors in fourth generation development, individual citizen volunteers and the organisations working towards fourth generation development (NGOs, VOs, POs) find their collective identity in the notion of a *global people’s movement*. For Korten, the realisation of such a movement poses the ultimate challenge in fourth generation development:

The task is daunting. Since the forces that have captured the land and the sky are global in their scope, our vision must be global as well as local. Obviously this is beyond the capacity of any individual NGO. As individual people and organizations we must work to meld ourselves into a global force through the formation of coalitions and alliances that ultimately meld millions of people into a global movement for change. Those of us who have defined our roles in terms of projects and the internal management of individual organizations will need to expand our perspective and become adept at new modes of working. We must be willing to take risks, to reach out beyond the circle of like-minded organizations and individuals to build alliances with concerned citizens in business and government, to engage the mass-based social movements, religious groups and institutions, and the mass media. (1995a:188)

It follows that the objective of global change in the people-centred development agenda can only be achieved through the formation of *alliances across people’s movements* (Korten 1990:200). In this sense a global people’s movement represents the ultimate driving force to carry forward the dynamics of a social movement approach to development that is spelled out in 5.2 of this chapter. It embodies the ultimate integrating and synthesising force through which the various organisations and movements in fourth generation development can present their overlapping interests as a shared people-centred development agenda.

Korten, in this regard, would refer to the *reactive* and *proactive* thrusts of the various social movements. In a contemporary social movement dynamics the reactive thrust seeks to block harmful actions, such as the “abuse of human rights, discrimination against women, regulation of dangerous products, increased arms expenditures and the cutting of forests”. The proactive thrust, again, seeks
“the creation of new and more positive social institutions: the strengthening of democratic institutions, introducing a stronger feminist perspective into public policy, promoting citizen diplomacy through sister city programs and developing markets for sustained yield forest products” (1990:200). Irrespective of the movement in question, the various proactive thrusts could, according to Korten, all be viewed as supporting elements of the transformation agenda consistent with the people-centred development vision. On the basis of this perception, it would therefore be natural for the respective movements to build interlinking alliances with one another around common interests in proactive transformation (1990:200-201).

It can be concluded that, on the strategic level, the impact and realisation of a global people's movement can best be envisioned by the concept of global citizen networking. Korten commented that the power of civil society rested in its extraordinary capacity to "rapidly and flexibly network diverse and dispersed individuals and organizations that are motivated by voluntary commitments" (1995b:297). Here the role of modern communication technology to place members of civil society on an equal footing with the powerful global corporations of the world can be emphasised. The same electronic communications technologies - phone, fax and computer - that have been used by corporations to extend their global reach hold the same potential for civil society actors aspiring to the formation of a global people's movement. The strategic implementation of these technologies would also allow these actors “to move quickly and flexibly in joint actions at local, national, and global levels” (ibid; see also Korten and Quizon 1995:160).

5.3.2 Key elements

Korten observed that in fourth generation development the priority becomes “the transformation of our values, technology and institutions - in both North and South”. Yet, this must not be seen “as a prelude to setting a new pattern for the restoration of growth consistent with justice, sustainability and inclusiveness”. On the contrary, in fourth generation development it is transformation and not growth that defines the essential global development priority and represents the only path to resolving the contemporary global crisis (1990:133).

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16 Cf. here the first two paragraphs of 5.2.
17 While placing the role of modern communication technology and a communication strategy at the centre of fourth generation development (see the first quote in 5.3), this theme is nowhere in the writings of Korten presented as a broader and more fully worked out theory of communication and development. On this basis the discussion of 'an alternative communication dynamics' in 6.4 can be taken as an important complementary framework to Korten’s basic framework of a fourth generation development strategy.
18 In this regard we may recall Korten’s identification of a contemporary “threefold crisis” of world poverty, environmental destruction and communal violence/social disintegration that was indicated in the previous chapter (see 4.3.1).
Against this background Korten prioritised the following seven key elements (or areas) as central to a fourth generation global transformation agenda for the 1990s:

- Reconciliation and demilitarisation;
- Lifestyles and technologies;
- Spiritual development;
- The family;
- Political democratisation;
- Economic democratisation;

It is possible to say that the various elements or areas identified by Korten could clearly be taken as belonging to the realm of the idea- and value-centred domain emphasised in the fourth generation development orientation. Indeed, here we are presented with areas of transformation that are first and foremost defined by the various new social movements (peace, ecological, environmental, consumer, women’s, human rights, democratic, economic) in which the participation of the latter three actors identified in the previous section (POs, citizen volunteers and a global people’s movement) becomes determinant and the role of an overlapping and explicit idea- and value-centred actor such as religion\(^{19}\) can be emphasised, while third-party actors such as VOs/NGOs (that is, the first actors identified in the previous section) rather fulfil a supporting and catalysing role.\(^{20}\) Here the participation/role of these actors can be highlighted in areas of transformation that are clearly global in scope, spell out the fundamental foundations for long-term, sustainable people-centred development and, for its positive outcome, hinge on large-scale idea, value and relational changes in society.

*Reconciliation and demilitarisation:* It can be said that this element captures the fundamental basis of people-centred development. According to Korten, there is “no greater contributor to human suffering and no more significant barrier to effective development action than the violent conflicts that are tearing apart communities and societies throughout the world” (1990:163). For the forces of reconciliation and forgiveness to excel demands particularly a movement towards global demilitarisation. This means “the reallocation of military resources to alleviate poverty and to convert the global economy to sustainable modes of production”. It means that military assistance has to be limited to helping Southern countries to establish small and disciplined military forces that are committed to the principles of democratic civilian rule (1990:164).

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\(^{19}\) Religion is an actor that by nature overlaps with all four categories of actors identified in the previous section. The reference to religion can here be made on the basis of Korten’s explicit identification of religion as an important fourth generation actor in the third key area that he identifies (see the discussion below).

\(^{20}\) With regard to this supporting and catalysing role see also the discussion in 5.4.
Lifestyles and technologies: As radically directed to the human will and consciousness as the first area, this area calls for a strategic impact that would appeal to the over-consumers of the world and lead them towards ecologically more sustainable lifestyles\(^{21}\) (see 1990:164-167). This must lead humanity, and in particular the rich, to redefine “the good life, with less emphasis on the material and greater emphasis on the social, intellectual and spiritual quality of life” (1990:165). It must lead humanity to revisit current manifestations of economic growth (1990:164-165), direct its energy towards the devising and application of environmentally sound technologies (as the basis for future improvements in the well-being of particularly the under-consumers of the world) (1990:165-166) and, finally, bring under control as rapidly as possible the continued explosive growth of the world’s population (1990:166).

Spiritual development: Particularly relevant to our thesis in this study of the strategic role of the churches in development, this element constitutes, according to Korten, one of the most basic dimensions of fourth generation development and relates to questions of “the uses of power, values, love, brotherhood, peace and the ability of people to live in harmony with one another” (1990:168, italics added). Moreover, in relation to these aspects an actor or actors such as religion and the churches\(^{22}\) (at their best) can truly excel and become central to the achievement of fourth generation development. On the basis of a theoretical concept of change that holds structural change to be dependent on the emergence of an alternative human consciousness,\(^{23}\) here religion and the churches can truly make a contribution on the structural level:

> Unjust structures are the creation of people and are products of the greed and egotism that are deeply imbedded in human nature. The human spirit must be strengthened to the point that greed and egotism play a less dominant role. This is perhaps the most central of religious missions, and a far worthier challenge for religiously oriented voluntary development organizations than the distribution of charity to the victims of the failure of spiritual teaching. (Ibid.)

\(^{21}\) Korten (1990:165) would put this statement in context by applying statistics of the International Institute for Environment and Development and World Resources Institute. Based on the years 1984-1985, “four countries - the United States, Soviet Union, Japan and West Germany - with 14 percent of the world’s population, accounted for 53 percent of the world’s consumption of commercial energy and a comparable share of important metals”. Applied to the rest of the world’s population, this meant that total world energy production and resource extraction had to increase by more than \(250\) percent if they were to equal the per capita consumption standards of the above-mentioned four countries.

\(^{22}\) It is significant that Korten refers here not only to the more general denominator of religion, but that he specifically also highlighted the role of the churches as a specific institution of religion.

\(^{23}\) Significant here is Korten’s reliance on the perspective of Charles Elliot (see 1990:168) on ‘conscientisation’ that was discussed in 3.3.2 of this study and that confirms a direct line between the perspective highlighted in that particular point of the discussion and our discussion in the present chapter of fourth generation development.
For Korten, however, in contrast to narrower, conservative views of the spiritual, such a ‘spiritual’ engagement takes on a distinct ethico-political dimension. It makes the aspect of power the heart of its concern and particularly sees its role as the conscientising of the power holders of the world with regard to their “stewardship responsibility” (ibid.). From a different angle, it leads ‘enlightened’ religion to challenge the “dominance of traditional masculine consciousness” that is institutionalised by growth-centred development and impresses the ideals of competition, empire and conquest. As positive counterpoint, it seeks to instil into the human consciousness more feminine values “of a nurturing family and community, place, continuity, conserving, reconciliation, caring and reverence for nature and the continuous regeneration of life” (1990:169).

The family: For Korten this element constitutes “the most basic unit of human society ... essential to the construction and maintenance of strong integrative social structures” and the individual’s most important source “of economic and psychological security” (1990:169-170, italics added). This insight requires a new approach in tending to the deprivations and exploitation of women and children. Contrary to the traditional separation of these groups from the family in social development programmes, the social agenda has to be the restoring and strengthening of the family “in ways that increase equality, love, mutual respect and responsibility” (ibid.).

Political democratisation: According to a statistic presented by Korten, more than 50 percent of the South still lived under non-elected governments at the beginning of the 1990s. This situation has suppressed the creative social energy of civil society, the matrix of people-centred development (see 1990:171). As this ongoing suppression ought to make the issue of human rights and democracy central to the global prospects of people-centred development, new guiding principles in the area of international development assistance to promote human rights and democracy are called for. Firstly, assistance is to be provided to non-elected governments only in instances where they clearly and directly contribute towards democratisation. Secondly, non-governmental organisations are to be made the primary channels of other aid intended to benefit people.

24 Korten’s emphasis here on the notion of ‘power’ constitutes a further direct reliance on the perspective of Charles Elliot. See in this regard 3.3.2.
25 Cf. in this regard also the discussion of the notion of reconciliation in 5.4.
26 What is referred to here by Korten as ‘feminine values’ will be further elaborated on in 7.4.4 of this study under the heading of ‘soft culture’.
27 For Korten (1990:170-171) this kind of separation is, for example, well illustrated in programmes for street children. It means treating the symptom of the problem rather than its cause.
28 Such a positive pronouncement does not mean that Korten merely romanticises the family. He recognises that the family belongs to the list of contemporary human institutions that should be the subject of transformation, as it often serves as a mechanism of suppression and subordination, particularly for women and children. However, this does not deny the fact that the family remains one of the most basic units of society and, potentially and actually, a primary source to nurture the values mentioned by Korten (see 1990:169-171).
who live under authoritarian governments (1990:172). To enforce such measures, this arrangement anticipates the preparation of a universal bill of rights for voluntary and people's organisations. Such a bill would be based on existing international legal documents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and would “set forth universal standards by which governmental compliance might be assessed by monitoring bodies” (1990:172-173).

**Economic democratisation:** For Korten this is an element that “goes hand in hand with political democratization as the foundation of an equity-led sustainable growth strategy” (1990:173). As much a *political* as an economic strategy and fitting into the realm of political economy, many measures of a political nature could be identified that support democratisation: land reform, agrarian reform, the formation of member-owned and controlled cooperatives, the implementation of stock ownership plans that give employees a strong voice in management and a share in profits, policies that favour a strong small business sector, and guarantees of the right to unionise (*ibid*). Economic democratisation thus emphasises the *participation* of particular groups and organisations in society (in accordance with our earlier observation) and the achievement of policy change; but it is also an area to be challenged, especially on the *ideological* level. This ideological challenge calls for a critical reconsideration of the commitment of the two grand economic ideologies, capitalism and socialism, to the ideal of broad economic participation and ownership by people:

Socialism and capitalism, in practice, have both failed seriously in this regard. Socialism has concentrated productive asset in the hands of those who control state power, though these people are neither owners nor workers in any meaningful sense. In a parallel fashion, capitalism has concentrated control in the hands of financial managers, and particularly investment bankers, who leverage large sums of other people’s money to gain control over corporate assets for their personal benefit. As in the practice of socialism, these people are neither owners of the capital they control nor are they workers who depend on this capital to produce useful outputs. (1990:173-174)

However, in his call for innovation, which clearly begins at the idea level, Korten does not propose a new grand economic ideology. While global in scope, Korten’s framework for innovation rather corresponds to the people-centred development theoretical framework spelled out under the discussion of the third generation development strategy in the previous chapter.29 By way of a final observation, Korten commented that the question of *who* should control the productive assets remained “central to current policy debates, but not as the

29 See 4.3.1.
question has been defined by traditional socialists and capitalists”. The challenge here is “to achieve true economic democracy based on meaningful participation in the ownership and control of productive assets for reasons of equity, productivity and environmental responsibility” (1990:174, italics added).

Trade and investment relations: As in the case of economic democratisation, it can be said that this element closely overlaps with the theoretical framework and principles spelled out under the understanding of third generation development. To recall a central concept in this understanding, current international trade and investment relations could be seen as the major force sustaining the principle of functionalism.30 Korten comments that contemporary development wisdom focuses attention on foreign financial resources. However, to meet the repayments of loans and foreign investments of international development assistance required a country in turn to generate foreign exchange through exports. This means “diverting resources away from meeting the needs of its own citizens to meet the needs of foreign consumers”. It means serving “the interests of the international bankers and corporations who advocate such policies” (1990:174-175, italics added).

Existing trade and investment practices could also be regarded as unjust and unsustainable in the light of the reigning terms of trade by which “the export earnings of Southern countries are heavily dependent on exporting environmental resources … [and] are then used to pay for imports from Northern countries that derive their value from non-depleting information inputs” (1990:176). Korten spelled out the bottom line of this arrangement, saying that to speak of the ‘development’ of a non-renewable resource is a contradiction in terms. A non-renewable resource can be exploited or expropriated. But it cannot be ‘developed’. “Development must, at least by a people-centred definition, be sustainable.” (1990:177)

Recalling a second central concept in third generation development, this understanding of transformation in the area of international trade and investment relations could be best conceptualised by the principle of territoriality.31 Determined by the core people-centred development values of justice, sustainability and inclusiveness,32 the underlying vision here is the featuring of local communities as diversified local economies that are relatively self-reliant in meeting basic needs, controlling their productive resources and technologies, and absorbing their own wastes. The intent, here, however, is not to terminate international trade and investment,33 “but rather to moderate and restructure it

30 See 4.3.1.
31 See 4.3.1.
32 See 4.3.1 where these three principles are highlighted as decisive in people-centred development.
33 See also the identification of ‘export promotion’ as a final, sixth stage in the equity-led sustainable growth strategic framework set out in 4.3.1.
in ways that reverse the tendencies toward absentee ownership, concentration of economic control and the export of environmental costs” (1990:179).

5.4 Third and fourth generation action: an overlapping and complementary unit

We have reached a point in the discussion where fourth generation development can be identified as a value- and idea-centred approach to development and transformation that clearly goes beyond the third generation development strategic orientation that was discussed in the previous chapter. By prioritising particular normative actors and key elements of transformation, it can be said that development is now equated with a higher level of conscientisation and ethico-political discourse that cannot be pinned down by the more formal policy-making, organisational and learning processes in third generation development action. By contrast, development ultimately coincides here with the ‘value’, ‘idea’ and ‘democratic politics’ of the new social movements, a dynamics that penetrates through and links up beyond set places and spaces. As such, more radically than in the third generation orientation, development actors in the fourth generation orientation share the radical democratic and participatory principles of social movement theory. Ranging from third-party NGOs/VOs (as in third generation development) to first-party POs, citizen volunteers and actual movement formations whose identities are all shaped by – and who are themselves expressions (collectively and separately) of – the new social movement dynamics, it can be said that their participation and ownership of the development process (that is, particularly the latter three categories of actors) capture the condition for the actual realisation of development.

However, such an identification of fourth generation development again calls for a requalification. As the numerous cross-references to Chapter Four of this study in the footnotes in the previous section (5.3) of this chapter suggest, fourth generation development in many instances overlaps with and refers back to meanings in the third generation orientation. It fully adopts the principles of people-centred development that determine third generation development action and shares the latter’s value orientation and vision of transformed societies. Stated differently, fourth generation development does not undervalue the policy and organisational processes that define the decentralised and local level, and is itself biased towards the local.34

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34 We may, for instance, note how this becomes the ultimate reference point for Korten in his book, *When Corporations Rule the World*. Under the final heading in this book, “Localizing the Global System”, Korten states the purpose of global action as being to create a multilevel system of institutions through which unnecessary interdependence can be reduced and the remaining interdependence can be managed in ways that maintain a persistent bias in favour of the following processes: (i) The empowerment of the local to control and manage local resources to local benefits; (ii) The elimination of production or consumption costs beyond the borders of given localities; (iii) The encouragement of cooperation among localities in the search for solutions to shared problems (1995a:320).
Viewed from the third generation perspective set out in the previous chapter, we may also observe how this orientation impinges on the domain of fourth generation development. Although not to the same radical extent as we stipulated in the first paragraph of this section, it may be observed how the fourth sector of people’s organisations are already prioritised as primary actors in development vis-à-vis secondary actors such as NGOs and government. In this regard, we may point to the perspective, albeit adopted by a minority of authors, which criticises the lack of concentration in the third generation orientation on the fourth sector. We may observe how, on the strategic level, the third generation orientation already extends to a perspective on movement building and how concepts such as ‘networking’ and ‘coalition-building’ (especially between civil society actors) enter the framework. In close adherence to such concepts, we may observe how the third generation perspective, albeit in a less elaborate manner, also begins to adopt a global or transnational strategic orientation. The need for the mobilisation of what is recognised as the vital actors of people-centred development (NGOs, social movements and POs) beyond confined local and national borders and the formal policy processes seems to be recognised, if not already adopted as a crucial strategy.

In view of the foregoing observations we may turn our attention to the final chapter in Getting to the 21st Century. Following on the chapter in which Korten sets out the seven key elements listed in 5.3.2 (that is, a clear fourth generation agenda), we may notice how, in his last chapter, he highlights and discusses the following four critical roles for voluntary action:

- Catalysing the transformation of institutions, policies and values;
- Monitoring and protesting abuses of power;
- Facilitating reconciliation;
- Providing essential community services (1990:185).

We can assume, in the larger context of Korten’s discussion, that these four critical roles spell out for him the fundamental modes of action by the various central actors identified in 5.3.1 to achieve the transformation of the key elements described in 5.3.2. Yet, and this is the main purpose of the discussion in the remaining part of this section, we may, in addition to acknowledging the contents of these roles, apply Korten’s discussion of them to illustrate our argument of the overlapping and complementary relationship between the third and fourth generation modes of action.

Fourth generation development, Korten’s discussion of the first critical role of catalysing systems change suggests, requires the specialised catalytic and advocacy skills of professional VOs. A mode of action in which the emphasis falls on “pro-action to create positive change more than re-action to police negative

35 See here in particular the final two perspectives set out in 4.3.2.
36 See 4.3.2.
behaviour” (1990:186, original italics), it closely overlaps with the organisational and policy skills emphasised in the third generation development strategic orientation described in Chapter Four of this study. It calls for specialised third-party voluntary agents to help people to “define, internalize and actualize a people-centred development vision” (1990:186). In sum, it calls for specialised and skilled third-party voluntary agents to activate, stimulate, inform and change the consciousness of the first-party agents identified in fourth generation development, whose advancement and orientation towards the fourth generation development vision cannot be assumed out of hand.

It thus follows that fourth generation development in the above proactive sense does not imply bypassing the skills emphasised in the third generation development orientation, but builds on them. Korten stressed that the VO seeking to catalyse systems change needed “a change theory that provides a basis for focusing its interventions”. It needs “skills in social and policy analysis, political strategy, and public education, and it must be able to define and articulate policy issues clearly to lay audiences” (1990:192, italics added). As on the level of third generation development involvement, it calls on VOs/NGOs to develop new competencies. It requires them to scale-up to a level of policy education and advocacy that goes beyond mere lobbying to protect or increase levels of foreign development assistance (1990:193).

However, and this brings us back to the difference between the two orientations, here, more than in third generation development action, policy education and advocacy take on a global orientation. It becomes a question of involvement in what Korten calls “the larger policy issues” that have traditionally been left (by the VO/NGO sector) to global role players such as the World Bank, IMF and bilateral donors (1990:193). It becomes a question of education for global citizenship whereby people of both North and South are brought to an understanding of the actions required to eliminate the causes of human suffering, particularly in the South, and whereby they are prepared “for active participation in a global transformation” (1990:187). In this latter sense, fourth generation strategic development orientation to a far greater extent makes an appeal to the conscience and value orientation of people. It follows that policy and institutional change are not so much achieved as a result of the interventions of professional agents that act in isolation from ordinary people, but by a mass of critical, conscientised people. Here, more than ever, the focus falls on the free space of what Korten calls people-to-people linkages that, through processes of (global) networking and alliance-building, lead to mobilised vision, action and ultimate change. Korten puts the concept at stake here in a nutshell in the following statement, which describes the role of the third-party VO/NGO as the catalyst and not the achiever of change:

37 See the whole of 4.3.3, as well as footnote 43 of Chapter Four for the references to this aspect.
38 See in addition the definition of the ‘global citizen’ in the last paragraph of 5.3.1.3.
The challenge is to reach out through human networks, study groups and forums where people can engage and dialogue on critical development issues. There is a need to seek more opportunities for true people-to-people linkages, bringing together community level environmental activists, cooperative leaders, women’s rights activists and organizers of farm laborers from North and South for mutual exchange to build a shared vision and put their efforts in global perspective. It is appropriate that VOs of both North and South give more attention to strengthening and engaging their natural citizen constituencies in ways appropriate to their nature. These would all be positive steps toward transforming private international assistance into a people’s international development cooperation movement.

In the effort to develop engaged constituencies, lessons might be found in the experience of the international issues network campaigns that have been organized over the past few years, the best known of which was the campaign against the promotion of infant formula as a substitute for breast milk. There have been others in seeds, pesticides and pharmaceutical drugs that have brought together global education and citizen action in the fullest sense. (1990:204)

We may observe that it is also appropriate to understand Korten’s second critical role of monitoring and protesting abuses of power as not lying outside the domain of third generation development action. Korten pointed out that the latter role was an essential dimension of the transformation agenda (1990:187). By implication, it constitutes an essential complementary action to the first role of catalysing policy, institutional and value change, which is a defining aspect of the third generation orientation, as we have indicated. Thus, it is a role that can be well perceived within the wider networking, coalition-building and relational dynamics of the third generation orientation pointed out earlier in this section. While it is less to be understood as a people-to-people interaction, and more a people/NGO-to-government interaction (cf. 1990:146-147), in the third generation mode of involvement information vital to the role of monitoring and protest (as pointed out by Korten) can be gathered (see 1990:195). Moreover, and given the focus of its interaction, in the third generation mode capabilities and experience not so readily available in fourth generation orientations - such as hard core dealings and confrontations with government and the state - can be tapped to fulfil the role of monitoring and protest.39

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39 As argued by Korten, the second role of monitoring and protest does not to a lesser extent assume the need for VOs/NGOs to develop new competencies. In this role, as in the case of the first, it is equally essential that the organisation has “the capacity to use the gathered information in ways that lead to specific political, judicial or administrative action”. It requires “capabilities in political lobbying, litigation
We may view Korten’s fourth critical role of implementing large-scale service programmes to similarly overlap with third generation development action. Defined by Korten as a kind of service very different from the temporary nature of short-term delivery of relief services (first generation) and the implementation of conventional development projects (second generation) (1990:196), Korten furthermore highlighted the systemic, sustainable and widespread nature of this mode of service delivery. In this manner Korten’s definition spells out a level of involvement that has much to gain from and overlaps with the third generation social learning experiences in organisational and institutional change referred to in the previous chapter. It is a mode of involvement that concentrates on such aspects as sustained self-financing, effective resource management, local ownership and control of resources, and the development of new types of technical, strategic and social skills.40

For Korten the delivery of large-scale service programmes constitutes an indispensable part of a sustainable equity-led growth strategy of development. The aspect of immediate material, social and economic needs is thus not neglected in fourth generation development and is integrated with the larger issues of institutional and value transformation. He stressed that it was a service mode able to function on a national scale.41 It goes beyond what governments can achieve and brings new and more innovative approaches to such vital areas as family planning services, reforestation, basic education, small-scale credit and farmer’s union and cooperative organisations. While best carried out on a decentralised basis (as also upheld in third generation action), “more focused and coordinated action than characterizes the episodic, scattered and ad hoc service delivery activities of many NGOs” is required (1990:191, italics added). Ultimately, in this service mode the NGO positions itself for a long-term implementation role and seeks to institutionalise itself and its functions. This kind of strategic involvement, again, fundamentally assumes the question of sustained financing and how the permanent service-delivery NGO should

and mobilization of public protests through the media, demonstrations and letter-writing campaigns” (1990:195, italics added).

40 See 4.3.3.

41 For Korten (1990:191) significant examples of large-scale programme implementation by NGOs that have managed to spread their services across wide areas and to large groups of the population on a sustainable basis, even on a national scale, are: CARE in Bangladesh, which through its food for work programme supports the construction of nearly 10,000 miles of road a year; Bangladesh Rural Advance Committee (BRAC), which has given training to approximately 90 percent of the households in the country in oral rehydration; the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, which has established itself as a permanent banking institution and extends credit to some 589,734 members, mostly women; the Sarvodaya Shrama Movement in Sri Lanka, whose programmes reach over 5000 villages in Sri Lanka; PROFAMILIA in Columbia, whose comprehensive national-scale programmes of family planning service delivery includes supplies and services rendered to nearly every family in the country.
organise its own governance structures in order to be held accountable for performance by the *people* who depend on its services\(^{(42)}\) (1990:196).

Thus Korten identified four critical roles for voluntary action in a fourth generation development context. In our closer reflection on three of the four roles so far, we indicated that no clear distinction can be made between the fourth and third generation modes. In fact, our discussion should have made it clear that in many instances the distinction between third and fourth generation action becomes blurred, that the two modes are overlapping and complementary units, that fourth generation development action rather builds on the perspectives, competencies, arrangements and processes in the third generation.

However, this statement should not be seen as a contradiction of the initial statement in the first paragraph of this section about the distinctive nature of fourth generation development activity and its progression to a higher level of conscientisation and reorientation of human will and behaviour. This would be the meaning especially of Korten's third critical role of *facilitating reconciliation*. A mode of action is conceptualised here that *lies absolutely on the idea and value level of the fourth generation orientation*. It represents a perspective on transformation and mode of interaction that cannot be captured by the third generation meaning. Although it constitutes only one conceptualisation of a value- and idea-specific role that falls completely in the fourth generation mould (in our assessment the seven key elements of transformation prioritised by Korten should make it possible to formulate further roles of this kind), it should be viewed as a role that is indispensable to the achievement of people-centred development. By implication, it is a role that becomes *conditional* to the successful execution of third generation action.

As suggested by Korten's discussion, such an explicit fourth generation role brings into consideration *other actors* of development - actors who are rather marginalised and neglected in third generation development. In this regard, and in close relation to Korten's third key element of spiritual development set out in 5.3.2, Korten once again highlights the role of *religion* in achieving the goal of reconciliation:

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The need for reconciliation is one of the most fundamental development needs in our contemporary world. Religion, which commonly presumes to be society's arbiter of the values that govern human behaviour and relationships, must surely play a central role. While religion is all too often invoked as the rallying cry of the intolerant and hateful in the cause of violence, the basic

\(^{(42)}\) One can assume that this will, as aspired to in both the third and fourth generation development orientations, imply an increasing movement towards the organisational conversion of NGOs/VOs into POs, whereby the people that are served truly become the primary actors of the development process. See 4.3.2 and especially the discussion in 5.3.1.2.
message of all of the world’s great religious teachers has been one of love, brotherhood and tolerance. Those who follow in the tradition of these great teachers are among the most important development workers of our day because they are attacking a root cause of human suffering. (1990:189)

We may note how Korten in his further discussion significantly gives a still sharper edge to his perspective on religion by juxtaposing such a reconciliatory role with the traditional inclination of a religious institution such as the church to seek its development involvement in relief and project work. This point recalls the charity-development juxtaposition that frames this study, as well as the mutual affiliation that has been described in Chapter Four between the churches and the NGO sector, which presents the possibility – particularly for the churches – of innovation in the realm of development; Korten makes the point as follows:

The reconciliation agenda presents a particular challenge to religiously affiliated VOs. These organizations have often developed agendas that are indistinguishable from those of their secular counterparts, even while attempting to work through local churches as the instruments of implementation. *Seldom have they asked whether local churches are the most appropriate organizations to implement well digging, food storage and road building projects. Nor have they asked what might be a distinctive role of the church in addressing the realities of underdevelopment.*

If the church as an institution is not being effective in this role, then a priority concern of religiously oriented development VOs should be to help it rediscover its mission. If the institutional church is incapable of this role, *then the religiously oriented development VOs should themselves accept a responsibility to play the role of teacher in carrying forward the universal messages of love, brotherhood and reconciliation as central to their own missions.* (1990:190-191, italics added)
Chapter Six

A BROADER ARTICULATION OF ALTERNATIVE IDEAS

6.1 Introduction

We will focus in this chapter on relating the concept of fourth generation strategic development action to a broader corpus of thinking that may complement, enrich and add to this concept; this will entail going beyond the work of Korten and the NGO development debate as stated in the introduction (5.1) of the previous chapter. The focus here will be on debates on development and transformation that highlight or prioritise central aspects in Korten’s debate, such as the new social movements, ethics and values, communication and, significantly, religion. The debates on these themes in the interrelated circle of the World Order Models Project (WOMP) and the journal Alternatives will be taken as the point of departure. While they certainly do not exhaust the historical debate on ‘alternatives’ and ‘alternative development’, in the debates of this circle an interpretation can be found that, similarly to Korten’s, assimilates the concept of development, more specifically the concept of alternative development, into wider (alternative) discourses on social movements, values and ethics and a global transformative politics. The following appreciation of this intellectual circle in an earlier Alternatives article by the political scientist, Bob Stauffer, which, significantly, is entitled “After Socialism: Capitalism, Development, and the Search for Critical Alternatives”, puts our focus in this chapter in perspective:

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1 This chapter draws selectively on perspectives which have been set out by the present writer in the article: “Toward a Normative Politics of Global Transformation: Synthesizing Alternative Perspectives”, in Transnational Associations 1/97: 2-20 (1997).
2 It can be said that the aim and scope of WOMP and Alternatives basically overlap (that is the conceptual advancement of a just, alternative world order) and that the latter journal serves as a primary vehicle to promote the views of WOMP.
3 A demarcation of the ‘alternative development’ discourse by Jan Nederveen Pieterse, for instance, views it as travelling under many aliases: ‘appropriate development’, ‘participatory development’, ‘people-centred development’, ‘human scale development’, ‘people’s self-development’, ‘autonomous development’ and ‘holistic development’; as well as under specific headings such as participation, participatory action research, grassroots movements, NGOs, empowerment, conscientisation, liberation theology, democratization, citizenship, human rights, development ethics, ecofeminism and cultural diversity (1998:351-352). For historical overviews of the origins of ‘alternative development’ approaches, which also give an indication of this intellectual tradition in the thinking on development’s relations to a wider range of sources, see furthermore Friedmann (1995:1-13) and Hettne (1995:160-206).
4 At the beginning of Chapter Five we noted Korten’s identification with what he calls an “alternative development paradigm” (see specifically the quotation at the start of the chapter) and his claim that his theoretical framework of a fourth generation development approach, which can otherwise be called a ‘social movement approach’ to development (see 5.2), articulates this ‘paradigm’.
There have been ... some new alternatives advanced in the 1980s that fall outside either of the old polarities, do not represent the middle approach just discussed, and do in fact see themselves as filling the space seemingly vacated by the left. Emblematic of this new approach is the perspective articulated by the network around the journal *Alternatives*. The journal itself publishes a variety of points of view, and is committed to advancing a just world order. No other group (with the exception, possibly, of the International Foundation for Development Alternatives) standing in opposition to the mainstream model has such a global network of contributors and participants in alternative development activities. Within its wide network, which includes the United Nations University system, it has sought to contribute “to the development of an ideology and the praxis that local grass-roots activists and social movements might find useful in their struggle for social transformation, humane governance, and a just peace,” by linking those involved at that level with “groups working on global problems in a variety of settings throughout the world.” (1990:420)

It should be emphasised here that what is extracted from *Alternatives* publications below - at its core the journal constitutes the perspectives of writers intimately associated with the WOMP itself⁵ - can at most be viewed as *selective aspects* of the debates by this intellectual circle. Taking these aspects as the starting-point for our exploration, the discussion will go on to draw on ever-widening circles of debates that bring to the alternative and fourth generation framework further broadening perspectives, but also problematisations of central assumptions. Pointing here to the problematisation of social movement approaches in particular, but ultimately also civil society approaches to (global) development and transformation, the discussion will, finally, draw on new communication perspectives to (global) transformation. It will be proposed that these new communication perspectives should redefine the latter approaches and, for that matter, constitute the ultimate defining notion of the fourth generation and alternative strategic orientation (that is, more profoundly still than is the case with Korten’s presentation of a communication perspective, which does not represent a fully worked out theory of transformation⁶).

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⁵ See footnote 2 of this chapter. See furthermore the essays and fragments of essays that make up the second issue of *Alternatives* 19 (1994). Written for a special WOMP workshop held in Kadoma, Zimbabwe from January 28 - February 1, 1993, these essays give an indication of the core group of writers and the interrelationship between *Alternatives* and WOMP.

⁶ See footnote 17 of Chapter Five, as well as the first quote in 5.2 and the final paragraph of 5.3.1.4.
6.2. Aspects of the World Order Models Project / Alternatives debates

6.2.1 Development: assimilated into a wider political and value dynamics

The outstanding characteristic of WOMP/Alternatives debates on development is the assimilation of this concept into wider political and value discourses. It follows that we may, from this basic definition, extract two meanings of development that seem to stand at the centre of these debates.

Similarly to the emphasis in Korten’s fourth generation development perspective on the fourth sector, on ordinary people and POs as the primary actors of development, so development discourse, in the first meaning, appears to be assimilated into wider political discourses of radical democratisation. This becomes clear in an article by D L Sheth, “Alternative Development as Political Practice”, which can be regarded as foundational to the concept of alternative development in the WOMP/Alternatives circle. Suggesting with the title that development takes on a distinct political meaning, we may note how Sheth in this article distinguishes between two approaches to alternative development: the alternative ‘structuralist’ approach and the alternative ‘normativist’ approach (see 1987:156-162).

For Sheth, however, both these alternative approaches fall short of a political theory and praxis by which non-state social and cultural movements/groups, or as Sheth also calls them, the victimised populations and their own organisations (1987:158), become the centres of transformative action. It follows that both alternative approaches have failed to disengage themselves from the mainstream model of development. Whereas the alternative structuralist approach can be appreciated for pointing out the structural injustice of the post-war model of development, it remains focused on the state as the primary agent to achieve systemic reform and transformation. Consequently, in its analytic and political framework the “ruling élite of the Third World countries remain, for good or bad, the only relevant actors for any strategy of action” (1987:158).

In a similar way, the alternative normativist approach can be appreciated for bringing normative issues into the framework, such as basic human needs, alternative life-styles, self-reliance and ecological appropriateness (1987:160). Once again it remains an elitist endeavour “confined to the narrow circles of the counter-élites in the North and their jet-setting counterparts in the developing countries” (ibid). Having, as in the case of the first approach, also no political scope beyond changes that are to be made in state policies (1987:162), it ultimately represents an approach devoid of a theory of political action that can make its alternative values “a basis of new consensus in the various national societies of the North and the South and at the micro-level of the local communities” (1987:160).
It follows that, not unlike conventional development thinking (which is informed by positivistic social science), these alternative approaches present themselves as *global* models of alternative development that assume *universality* for the alternative value system. Like conventional development thinking, they “posit another centralizing universal principle” (1987:160, original italics) that “ignore the vital points of *difference* in the existential conditions of different societies” (1987:162, italics added). As further argued by Sheth:

> [I]nstead of viewing alternative development as a process through which a plurality of competing models can emerge and coexist, current thinking on the subject views it in terms of the emergence of one universal model of alternative development which would replace the conventional one. The implied shift turns out to be from one kind of linear universalising principle (embodied by modernity) to another such principle embodied in a vision of the ‘post-industrial’ or ‘post-modern’ society. The quest for universality ignores the fact that the historical, cultural and civilizational continuities that characterize different societies throw up different *universal* models around which their respective development may be shaped; and that it is through the interactions based on these empirical experiences of development that a new perspective on alternative development has to emerge ... Yet, without reference to the empirical facts and processes that have a role in shaping norms, the whole exercise only reinforces the traditional norm-setting activity of the élites - however benevolent and radical they may be ... The fact of the matter is, the consumers of development cannot be kept out of the process of formulation of norms of alternative development - however convenient this might prove for the theorists’ own critical reason. (1987:162-163, italics added)

The above concept of plurality, which is fundamentally focused on the grassroots level and rejects any claim to universality, can be taken as the basis for the understanding by Sheth and other writers from the WOMP/Alternatives circle of the meaning of alternative development. Going for the moment beyond Sheth’s formulation to the understandings of other writers in this circle, it becomes more appropriate to speak of the notion of alternative development as a misnomer itself.7 Instead of using any language of ‘development’, Gustavo

7 With these other writers we are in fact crossing the fine line between alternative development discourse and what is called ‘post-development’ discourse (see e.g. Nederveen Pieterse 1998:360-364). Whereas they, unlike Sheth, have been arguing for the abandonment of the whole idea of ‘development’ and, thus, should more correctly be placed under the banner of ‘post-development’ thinkers, we nevertheless draw here on what can be taken as the common element between them and Sheth: the emphasis on radical democracy, popular participation, alternative community values and grassroots/people’s movement actors. Cf. here e.g.
Esteva, for instance, claimed that it becomes preferable to speak of a *regeneration of people’s space*, whereby they “carry out their projects, which are nothing else than to lead their own lives” (1987:147, italics added). Instead of continuing to theorise about development as a Third World problem, Bob Stauffer ended his article on the search for critical alternatives by stating that it would be much more viable to shift to a global theorising “that attacks the basic premises upon which modernisation rests, and raises a series of objections to capitalist development on the basis of justice, treatment of women, minorities, indigenous people, etc.” (1990:125-426).

In the same vein as the former two writers, and bringing us explicitly to the defining concept of *democracy* that we pointed out at the beginning of this section, is Douglas Lummis’s contribution to the WOMP/Alternatives debate. This author argued in his article, “Development against Democracy”, that economic development is by nature an anti-democratic force that generates inequality. As a working principle, instead, ‘democracy’ promises much more in achieving justice, equality and diversity in the domains of economic and social life. Contrary to development’s homogenising impressions, it generates new meanings of prosperity, beyond the merely economic and one’s determined by different communities (see 1991:59-61).

Coming back to Sheth, we may note how he would also apply the notion of democracy as a defining concept. While not as radical as the above-mentioned three writers in the sense of rejecting outright the concept of ‘development’, he observed that “(t)he crux of any politics for alternative development ... [lies] in integrating into its theory an empirical model of democracy which treats the legitimisation of values and institutions as an open process” (1987:164). In contrast to the alternative approaches referred to earlier, in which the dominant or counter-elites act as the legitimisers of the institutional and normative structures in a society, this democratic model always presumes a society that allows the interplay of various legitimisation processes - “through critical analyses as well as through real-life conflicts, struggles and integrative movements of ideas and action” (*ibid*).

For Sheth the *grassroots movements*, as the representation of the concrete struggles of the people, are the locus from where a theory of action for alternative development will emerge. A basic condition for this to happen is for the activists of the movements to “become their own theorists and the theorists to find authentication of their thinking through their own role located within the movements” (1987:165). Sheth distinguishes between two broad types of grassroots movements, namely non-political developmental and non-party
political formations, and, according to him, it is in the activities of organisations of the latter kind that the seeds of an alternative development politics are visible. However, while they invest their energies in issues that affect the poor, that is, issues that are usually not taken up by political parties, for Sheth the crucial question remains whether such actions can move beyond the conventional political arena “of pressure groups, away from the power of the state and towards the creation of people’s own power and organizations” (1987:166-167, italics added). Drawing on the experiments of grassroots movements in Latin America and Asia he continues by stating that:

Creative action for alternatives is most unlikely to come either from experts or expertise-oriented developmental groups or from any kind of political mobilization active within the state system. In my view, it can come only from non-state actors operating at the interface of the state and the society, the interface between politics and culture. Some experiments in this direction are being undertaken by various groups in Latin America and Asia. They focus primarily on generating new social knowledge for alternative development, and on activating networks of people’s organizations for working out their own solutions for the problems they face. The method employed is of dialogues, interactions and participative action research (PAR). (1987:167)

In a concluding note Sheth observed that the existing grassroots movements for alternative development, such as those in Latin America and Asia, were consequently shifting their battleground to a larger arena of society and culture. Their political agenda, beyond mainstream politics, “is of further democratization not only of the political institutions but of the family, the community, the workplace and society at large”. Their political thinking does not stop at transforming the structures. It goes beyond this aspiration to achieve integrity of values and action at a personal level; the practice of life-styles appropriate to their idea of alternative development. A ‘life politics’ that can best be described as societics, it constitutes the political activity of individuals and organisations directed to the transformation of consciousness and organisations, especially of the non-state organisations in society (1987:168).

For Sheth, however, the proliferation of such actual movements for alternative development does not constitute the only remaining challenge. Striking a note that runs as a core through the WOMP/Alternatives debates, and that links the

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9 Cf. here Gustavo Esteva’s identification of “hospitality” as the normative concept that ultimately defines his alternative community of peasants, urban marginals and de-professionalised intellectuals (see 1987:137-140). Consequently, this similar emphasis on alternative community values also suggests the thin line distinguishing alternative development and post-development discourses in the context of WOMP/Alternatives debates.
first meaning of development in these debates with the second meaning set out below, he finally pointed out the need for a far more coordinated coalition politics between the grassroots movements for alternative development. The reason for this was that the grassroots movements for alternative development were still very embryonic and dispersed in character. For these movements the challenge remained to work their new politics from the bottom up in order to let their impact be felt at the national and global levels. In other words, a macro theory of transformative political action was required, “based on the values and practice of democracy and which has the synthesising potentials for integrating the perspective and actions of various issue-based movements in a larger framework of transformation” (1987:168-169).

The second meaning of development in WOMP/Alternatives debates again shows a close similarity with Korten's understanding of fourth generation development in the sense of integrating development discourse into global social movement and value discourse, but also goes beyond Korten to focus more on the question of world order. Here, almost to the same extent as in the first meaning, development discourse appears to be assimilated into wider political discourses of global governance and global institutional and structural transformation.

We can begin by observing that it is a meaning that is well formulated in the editorial statement by Rajni Kothari in the first issue of Alternatives. In this statement, which set out the scope of the new journal and WOMP, Kothari made it clear that the concept of ‘alternatives’ goes beyond development discourse when he stated that:

Alternatives is a conception not just in the theory of development. It entails a model of and a perspective for world order and the transformation entailed for such a world order. It is an exercise in values and their realization at various levels of reality, always taking account of cultural diversities but also of the unities that inform these diversities. It is not just a different kind of model for China or India or Tanzania (or Brazil) that one is seeking out though no doubt these and other models provide a very large scope for learning and criticism and action. One is also concerned about the making of a different kind of world conceived as a set of interrelationships. Without seeking to alter these interrelationships the effort to alter individual societies is not likely to go very far. This is the great change that has taken place in human affairs, the global setting in which they have to be conducted. (1975:5, italics added)
Following from Kothari’s initial formulation, in WOMP/Alternatives debates the question of global structural and institutional transformation would thus take precedence over the issue of development. In this sense, it could be taken as a response to D L Sheth’s above-mentioned recognition of the need for a macro theory to address the need for change at the global level. In close resemblance to the principle of radical democracy spelled out in the first meaning above, it ought to be an approach to world order transformation – as was spelled out some twenty years later by one of the prominent spokespersons of WOMP – that acknowledges and celebrates difference and resists “totalizing modes of thought, organization, and technological capability, whether these are rooted in secularisms of the West or in the fundamentalisms that hide out in the traditions of the great world traditions” (Falk 1994:146). In other words, in terms of Sheth and the other writers of the first meaning’s concern with the issue of transformation, it is an approach that aims to achieve institutional and structural change at a global level, precisely to complement, protect and sustain the multiple of different spaces at the local level.

It would, however, be stated in WOMP/Alternatives debates that the emphasis on difference does not mean the discontinuation of all descriptive and predictive discourse. World order discourse (in the alternative sense) indeed implies some descriptive and predictive element pertaining to the social totality and aggregate common good of humanity as a whole (political, economic, social and cultural) (Falk 1994:146). To reflect on a political project to constitute a global polity could very well be regarded as “necessary to the construction of a radical imaginary” (Ruiz 1994:254).

It can be said that in WOMP/Alternatives debates the descriptive and predictive element is, ultimately, rather to be found in these debates’ drawing of the contours of the alternative world order that they envision, based on the guiding principle of plurality. As evident from an article by Lester Ruiz, in WOMP discourse the affirmation of plurality has a two-fold significance. Ruiz pointed out that the principle of plurality, on the one hand, presupposes the recognition of different centres of power10 challenging the centralising logics in many of modernity’s projects. These different centres of power function as dislocatory practices that put in question the institutional logics that are hegemonic, and they underscore the historical and contingent character of these logics and practices. On the other hand, plurality also points to different constructions of community and identity, alternative forms of knowledge and being, and different political strategies (1994:254).

10 From a constructive/proactive point of view, David Held, another writer from the WOMP/Alternatives circle, emphasised the need for a “politics of empowerment” (1994:221). He subsequently identified “seven clusters of rights” that “are necessary to enable people to participate on free and equal terms in the regulation of their own associations: health, social, cultural, civil, economic, pacific, and political rights” (1994:228).
But, and this can be taken to be the ultimate drift of Ruiz’s analysis, drawing the contours does not mean spelling out the contents of an alternative world order. Whereas (as suggested by the above description) the functioning and nature of the existing order clearly points to what an alternative world order should not be, the principle of plurality spells out the limits to any attempt to determine the contents of an alternative order. As Ruiz pointed out, this principle underscores “not only the impossibility of a fixed positivity but of genuinely other spaces for the construction of transformative cultural practices”. For here, similar to the principle of radical democracy in the first meaning above, all fixed imaginaries can only be defined by the yet undefined specificities of the multiplicity of subjects (in a world of difference) and their dislocatory practices:

Precisely because of this multiplicity of subjects and subject positions, which function as dislocatory practices, we understand that our frameworks and perspectives - indeed, our preferred worlds and transition strategies - are radically contingent, precarious, historical. We are brought face to face with our end, with our limits ... the fact of our limits puts us in proximity with what might be called the constitutive outside of the limit itself, which is an absence. But, this absence is not a lack. In fact, it is the dimension of mystery - of the nonconceptualizable, of the unimaginable - that is the condition for articulating transformative cultural practices that are fundamentally new and better. (1994:254-255)

From a different angle Richard Falk, in particular, came to define the contours of an alternative world order in WOMP/Alternatives debates in terms of a discourse on values. In contrast to what he referred to as the hegemonic and totalising nature of post-Cold War geopolitics, which is also referred to as the ‘new world order’, Falk emphasised the different category of world order thinking to which WOMP belongs (1994:145-146). Whereas the WOMP cannot escape a certain descriptive and prescriptive element, as indicated earlier, it according to Falk remains in essence a normative project and not a hegemonic one (in the totalising sense). It is normative in the sense that it has in view a “(n)ew world order ... to be created by a combination of social forces acting effectively and on behalf of such world order values as non-violence, economic and social justice, human rights and democracy, and environmental quality”. It is also normative in the sense that it is informed and inspired by a moral “desire to improve the human condition by direct political action, deploying means that reject violence, respect truth, and rest their confidence upon democracy as both process and outcome” (1994:146).

It thus follows from Falk’s definition that in WOMP/Alternatives debates the contours of an alternative world order is most pertinently defined by a particular
set of global values. As these values are global or universal in nature, the multiple actors for an alternative world order must overcome their 'politics of difference' through these values and find a common political purpose, but without forsaking their different identities and localities again.

Consequently, in the context of such a global values discourse 'development' (in accordance with Rajni Kothari's initial statement) would still be taken as a defining concept in WOMP/Alternatives debates, albeit as only one element of a broader, integrated package. We may note how this is, for instance, clearly illustrated in an article by Roger Coate, Chadwick Alger and Ronnie Lipschutz, which presents a rather favourable picture of an ongoing process towards a new global values construct. According to these authors, new nations, states and movements, in the context of UN fora and elsewhere, had increasingly gained access to an ongoing dialogue on global values in global governance, thereby shaping definitions of values that have acquired growing global relevance and legitimacy. According to Coate et al., it is now possible to summarise this dialogue in terms of four widely accepted global values: peace (non-violence), development (economic well-being) human rights and ecological balance (1996:102-103).

They point out that in recent years the latter four values had in fact been integrated into what is, by now, largely a single dialogue. They argued that peace movements increasingly accepted that the full meaning of peace does not only pertain to the notion of non-violence, but also to development, human rights and ecological balance. At the same time, it was increasingly accepted that human rights must include not only civil or political rights, but also economic, social and cultural rights, and environmental justice. But significantly, the notion of development had also gone through a continual process of redefinition, from Western economic growth models to self-reliance of Third World states, to fulfilling the basic needs of people, to people deciding for themselves what their basic needs are (that is, local self-reliance). And to this a fourth significant development towards a single values construct could be added, namely the integration of ecological balance into a single dialogue. Coate et al. argued that, as a consequence of ongoing dialogue about its meaning, ecological balance had subsumed the dimensions of development, human rights and peace. But also, as significant as the latter ecological determination had been, the tendency by many involved in the present effort to define global values is to use a broadly defined notion of peace as a paramount global value that is inclusive of all the above-mentioned four value dimensions (ibid).

Thus, in WOMP/Alternatives debates development has come to be referred to as a global value, shaped by but also shaping other global values. This observation, as in the case of Korten's depiction of fourth generation development, brings us finally back to an integration of development discourse into social movement discourse. Viewing 'development' as an explicit value would at first glance
appear to contradict the assimilation of this concept into democratic discourse in the first meaning set out above. At the same time, this tension between the two meanings would seem to be dissolved, at least partly, by the direct link that is made in WOMP/Alternatives debates between values and the new social movements.

The case in point is well made in an article by Richard Falk on “The Global Promise of Social Movements”, in which he identifies the following “mutually reinforcing set of predominant features” to shape a transformed world: security, development, environment, governance and worldview (or ethos). Thus, as in the case of Coate et al., ‘development’ would be identified by Falk as one aspect of a broader ‘value package’ that is to define the contours of an alternative world order. In addition Falk relied on the new social movements to actualise the different aspects or values, including development. For him these movements presently embody “our best hopes for challenging established and oppressive political, economic, and cultural arrangements at levels of social complexity, from the interpersonal to the international” (1987:173). Moreover, and particularly hopeful for the actualisation of the above-mentioned aspects or values, according to Falk, a process (very similar to the identification by Coate et al. of a single, integrated dialogue on values above) has evolved by which “the new social movements are losing some of their particularity by expressing a certain overall commitment to the future that draws on common elements” (1987:189).

In WOMP/Alternatives debates, following Falk’s perspective, it can therefore firstly be said that the new social movements have been valued as the primary actors or carriers of the core values framing their world order perspective. Secondly, and derived from the first point, it can be said that a core ‘alternative’ value such as development has come to be reinterpreted in terms of the new social movements politics. For Falk, it is by means of such a reinterpretation that there is no longer any need “to conceive of development in an austere form that reduces the world to a common subsistence standard, an ordeal of grayness” (1987:191). He further explained:

Development can be shaped in many satisfying, acceptable directions, but the constructive use of resources for positive human needs is a unifying theme. This ideal contrasts with current actualities: wasteful resources, and environmentally-destructive patterns of production; dedication of resources to military and paramilitary purposes, and to luxuries despite large sectors of acute poverty within existing states and in certain regions. The prevailing forms of social accounting and market mechanisms allocate resources in a manner that frustrates efforts to use resources for human betterment in an ecological-
sustainable manner ... It seems possible to conceive of the emergence of developmental pluralism that is constrained by a shared cultural notion of human need and dignity. Without sentimentalizing the distant past, indigenous peoples seemed to achieve such developmental balance in a variety of societal and tribal forms, in settings informed by reverence for nature and by an underlying ethos of stewardship and conservation. Whether post-modern society, and societies at various stages of industrialization, can reconstitute such a cultural grounding for positive development is uncertain. At the very least, social movements seem alive to this crucial reorientation based on values, not on lifting encumbrances from the operations of the market or assuring that production processes are nominally controlled by the working class. (Ibid., italics added)

It follows that, in Falk’s interpretation, the notion of development does not completely dissolve in democratic and other socio-political discourse as in the first meaning set out above. It is sustained as an economically and politically specific concept that, in terms of Falk’s definition, indicates the constructive use of economic resources for positive human ends. Thus, in this sense, development acquires universal meaning and is applied to human society as a whole. At the centre (for Falk) of this redefinition of development, which is both potential and dormant, are the new social movements. They are the agents of a new ‘value politics’ that, through their converging and mobilising dynamics, are also reorientating the meaning of development (such as informing it with the value of ecological sustainability). At the same time, however, they do not contradict the pluralistic principle that determines the first meaning set out above. They represent, in their transnational and global manifestations, a continuation of the non- or anti-statist politics in the first meaning (see Falk 1987:175). They represent a ‘globalisation from below’ and depend on the democratising struggles in local spaces for their fuller articulation (ibid.). They incorporate into their ideological and political struggles the pluralistic cultural, social and ecological meanings in local spaces and make them the basis of their global articulations. Moreover, in their converging dynamics they shape (or are envisioned as shaping) the meaning of development.

6.2.2 New religious appraisal

In what can be nothing more here than a brief overview of such expressions, we may note how a positive reappraisal of religion as a force of transformation also constitutes a significant feature of WOMP/Alternatives debates.11 As in the case of Korten’s perspective on fourth generation strategic development, writers of

11 The bulk of articles from this circle that focus on religion are found in the second issue of Alternatives XIII (1988).
these debates have likewise been confronted with the question of the actors that will promote and establish the new global values construct that they envision. They, as in the case of Korten, have appreciated the role that religious traditions and institutions at their best\(^{12}\) can play as allies and expressions of the new social movements, the primary agents of the values that are appreciated.

At the WOMP workshop mentioned earlier,\(^{13}\) Robert Johansen, for instance, expressed the positive inclination towards religion in WOMP/Alternatives circles well. In a fourth of six suggestions for strengthening the implementation aspects of the Project’s past focus on preferred worlds, he focused on the role of religion. In Johansen’s evaluation the participants in WOMP needed “to give more attention to the role of religious traditions in resisting and in promoting the implementation of preferred values” (1994:158). Johansen argued that religious traditions had enormous assets at their disposal - material, organisational, educational and spiritual - that can be employed for good or ill in shaping a new world order. Many affinities also existed between religious groups and the Project that had not been utilised. He explained:

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Religious traditions are value based, as is WOMP. Religious traditions at their best extol the value of human life and justice, despite the tendency of political and religious leaders to use their own traditions to deny the implementation of those values for others. The major religious traditions preach against viewing the state as the highest authority, as does the Project. At their best they stand above or against national parochialism; in this posture they parallel the transnational emphasis of the Project. Religious leaders are often experienced in calling for major attitudinal change, which the Project also seeks. Both attempt to develop support for doing what is “good,” even when the political effectiveness of such actions is not immediately evident. (1994:159)

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In an earlier Alternatives article Richard Falk, in a similar positive way, drew the link between the new social movements and contemporary progressive religion. According to Falk, the efforts by social movements to reshape the cultural ground of politics not only offered new challenges and opportunities for churches to join in the process of resistance and renewal, but churches and clergy themselves had, throughout the 1980s, provided resources, facilities and crucial encouragement to the social movements. For Falk, furthermore, a religious element could also be seen as “congenial with the anti-materialist, anti-secular character of the new movements, as well as with their universalistic

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\(^{12}\) As the discussion has indicated to a limited extent in this subsection (6.2.2), such positive appraisal of the role of religion by no means implies that the writers concerned are underplaying the countervailing effects of religion as a powerful source of fundamentalist thought, conflict and violence.

\(^{13}\) See footnote \(5\) of this chapter.
sense of human identity” (1987:185). Pointing in a later article to the role of the churches in democratic and political struggles in, amongst other countries, Nicaragua, El Salvador, South Africa, South Korea and the Philippines, Falk concluded that a Christian presence had in fact emerged “at the centre of radical opposition politics” in many contexts of the Third World. Yet, it was not only in the Third World that a constructive pattern of religion and political interpenetration had occurred. Falk subsequently pointed to the case of the Solidarity Movement in Poland, but also to a less focused, “yet ... definite reassertion of religious presence on many political battlefields” in Western Europe and the United States (1988:383-385).

For Falk, then, the present-day “extraordinary recovery of religious ways of understanding human experience” could be understood as a dimension of a new postmodern societal condition or awareness (1988:379-380). Although he himself distinguished between varieties of postmodern expressions,¹⁴ postmodernism could, according to Falk, also be understood as an emerging new sensitivity and political dynamics that are reacting against “the destructiveness and spiritual dryness of modernism” (1988:381) and, consequently, are seeking “to recreate a human future by introducing considerations of ecology and spirituality” (1988:380). In terms of a broad categorisation, postmodern religion could be viewed as existing in two forms. Firstly, it had manifested itself within the main religious tradition through new interpretations of the ‘spiritual’ that emphasises the liberation of individuals and groups from oppressive conditions (such as in liberation theology,¹⁵ of which the above-mentioned participation of churches in political and democratic struggles in Third and First World contexts can be taken as expressions). Secondly, it had also asserted itself outside of formal religious traditions through a new overall interpretation of the meaning of life, one that goes beyond rationalist inquiry and derives significance from its close connection with nature (as expressed in ‘deep ecology’, for instance) (1988:381).¹⁶

We may conclude this brief overview with a more pertinent statement by writers of the WOMP/Alternatives circle of what the nature or profile of the religious formation they recognised as an important partner in a ‘project’ of global transformation (following Johansen’s statement above, but also Falk’s

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¹⁴ Another type or variety of postmodernism, which underlines our comment in footnote 12 of this chapter, is, according to Falk, one that reasserts the centrality of literal readings of religious interpretations of human experience. A primary example of this kind of postmodernism was the theocratic regime in Khomeini’s Iran (1988:380).

¹⁵ See in this regard Pablo Richard’s reflection (that is, in an Alternatives article in the same issue mentioned in footnote 11 of this chapter) on the significance of the Ecclesial Base Communities (CEBs) in Latin America, which is discussed in more detail in 7.3.1.

¹⁶ Elsewhere in this article Falk also defined this second form of religious postmodernism as predominantly anti-ecclesiastical and nontheistic in its expression and belief, but which nonetheless “tap[s] into religious feeling in the sense of confirming the sacred and viewing human destiny in nonmaterialist spiritual respects”. He furthermore referred to the Green Movement as a good example of this kind of religious postmodernism (1988:380).
positive appraisal) should be and should not be. Adamant that the dark side and countervailing effects of religion should be clearly spelled out, a fundamentalism was obviously excluded, that is “those religiously-oriented initiatives that rely on violence, seek to transform the state into a theocracy, and fail to incorporate the whole of humanity into their professed imagery of salvation” (1987:185). Adhering to such an all-inclusive incorporation, the religious ideal thus pertains to an anti-imperialist and non-expansionist religious attitude and practice that, in the words of Ashis Nandy, involves “the recovery of religious tolerance” that sustains “diversities and co-existence in the matter of faith”. Accordingly, it points to a rediscovering of the non-Western meaning of “secularism” of “equal respect for all religions”, implying a “space for a continuous dialogue among religious traditions and between the religious and the secular - that, in the ultimate analysis, each major faith ... includes within it an in-house version of the other faiths both as an internal criticism and as a reminder of the diversity of the theory of transcendence” (1988:180-181).

We may finally point to Lester Ruiz’s notion of theology as a critical theory and practice of transformation for an understanding of religion in the positive sense (that is, in the context of the WOMP/Alternatives understanding). Making a fundamental distinction between religion per se and theology (the latter denoting critical reflection on the religious and human totality), Ruiz’s positive conception relating to religion pertains to a critical theological discourse that “is at once public, critical and transformative”. It rejects the uncritical identification of theological and political discourse, while at the same time “celebrat[ing] their inextricable relatedness”. In this sense, it expresses itself as a ‘politics of transformation’ that, ultimately, is directed towards the “creation and nurtur[ing] of “fundamentally new and better relationships””, that is, relationships between human beings, between humanity and nature, and between the human and the sacred (1988:156-157).

6.3 The ‘beyond a social movements approach’

The special place allocated by David Korten and the writers from the circle of WOMP/Alternatives to the role of the new social movements in global transformation - into which the question of (local and global) alternative and people-centred development has largely been assimilated - has clearly been spelled out up to this point in the chapter. Yet this cannot be a complete analysis of the perspectives coming particularly from the latter circle, as we may also find amongst its writers a broader perspective that emphasises what writers

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17 See footnote 12 of this chapter.
18 This subsection to a great extent represents a continuing discussion of WOMP/Alternatives perspectives. However, the reliance on publications outside the journal Alternatives and perspectives by writers who are not necessarily directly associated with the intellectual circle of WOMP/Alternatives (see next footnote), make it necessary to separate the discussion here from the discussion of the aspects in 6.2.
outside this circle have come to formulate as the need to move “beyond a social movements approach” (Shaw 1994:647-667; see also Finger 1994:48-65; Walker 1994:669-700).

Martin Shaw, who is one such writer outside the direct circle of WOMP/Alternatives, contends that, while the study of social movements is indeed important, a ‘social movements approach’ that privileges social movements as uniquely important social phenomena for transformation, “has serious limitations for the study of global and interstate politics”. As a corrective it is argued, instead, “that a broader and more complex ‘civil society’ approach is likely to be more theoretically adequate and empirically sustainable” (1994:665, italics added; see also 651-653).

With reference to the intellectual circle of WOMP/Alternatives, it can be said that Shaw’s and other writers’ concept of a civil society approach, or rather a global civil society approach to transformation, has come to problematise the prospects of a new and alternative world order and values construct envisioned and worked for by this circle (cf. e.g. Walker 1994:669-700; Lipschutz 1992:389-420). Without totally neglecting the claims that such a process (of realising a new and alternative world order and values construct) has in fact developed a momentum of its own, particularly through the dynamics of the new social movements, a civil society approach otherwise emphasises the fundamental need for a more effective and deliberate coalition of progressive, alternative actors or forces to push forward the true global reach of the alternative agenda.

In accordance with our observation in the first paragraph of this section, at this point it should more pertinently be pointed out how writers from the circle of WOMP/Alternatives in fact articulate the need for a coalition politics that encompasses more than the sum total of social movements. They conclude that global transformative action “will have to come from global civil society - from all its levels” including the United Nations system (Coate, Alger and Lipschutz 1996:118), and propose a “global political party” of issue-specific oppositional institutions and organisations (Kreml and Kegley 1996:123-133).

A more explicit problematisation of the new social movements by Rajni Kothari, a central figure in WOMP/Alternatives debates, furthermore illustrates the point. Kothari concluded that “the biggest failure of what are known as new social movements … [lies] in their inability to become part of a united political movement” (1993:134, italics added). Instead, the new social movements have been incapable of defying the basic establishment and have been coopted by the mainstream system (1993:131-133). Elsewhere in this writing, Kothari reiterated

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19 Of the three writers referred to here, the latter two have also published in Alternatives and Walker, in particular, can be associated with the closer circle of WOMP. However, in this case they constitute a distinguishable group together with Shaw, as the references here represent publications in the journal Millennium rather than Alternatives.

20 See in this regard also footnote 24 of this chapter.
his point that there is a need for a more effective global counter-politics, adding that for him:

...the real answer to the present turbulence is the only civilized alternative to both the globalizing and ethnicizing trends, namely a worldwide federal democratic movement, both political and social, which alone is capable of responding to the demands for the self-determination of regions and ethnic groups as well as the struggles for equity and justice. Only such a movement can respond to the genuine need of transcending national boundaries and experimenting with various supranational formations that can deal with new socioeconomic needs, new ideas of organizing human collectivities, and the growth of new identities. (1993:128)

Against this background we can return to the concept of global civil society as an expression of the ultimate relational and strategic formation in the ‘alternative project’ for transformation. Taking firstly as our guiding framework perspectives from publications outside the journal Alternatives, but secondly also from Alternatives publications, we propose that the perspective on a global civil society approach can be summarised in the following points:

(i) It appears in this approach that an emphasis on social movements – at grassroots, national and transnational levels – remains vital. It is argued that the contemporary social movements do not only represent a transformative ‘politics of difference’. In terms of R B J Walker’s identification, these movements also represent a “politics of connections” and a “politics of movement” that are to be regarded as absolutely crucial to a transformative, normative global politics. As Walker pointed out, while a “politics of connections” does not necessarily indicate a “politics of a united front or a counterhegemonic strategy”, social movements do indeed connect, converse, learn from each other, and sometimes develop partial solidarities. Moreover, these movements are the embodiment of a “politics of movement” that cannot be fully captured by territorial form and transcends the spatiotemporal relations and identities of modernity (1994:699). As such, these movements represent a politics that may be located in a particular space and place, but which, at the same time, are also in a process of constant dislocation, always on the move, always expanding, always linking somewhere, while also dislocating and moving elsewhere/somewhere/everywhere. In Walker’s words:

A politics of movement cannot be grasped through categories of containment. A politics of connections cannot be grasped through a metaphysics of inclusions and exclusion, whether of insides and outsides or aboves and belows ... An empirical analysis of social movements, and an interpretation of their significance for what a
world politics might become, does not have to be bound by the prejudices of modernity. On the contrary, these prejudices can only ensure that the fine lines separating us from them can never be transgressed. An empirical reading of social movements might show that these fine lines are being transgressed all the time. (1994:700)

It can thus be suggested that Walker’s notion of a “politics of movement” and a “politics of connections” may well be extended to our defining concept in this study of a ‘politics of ideas’, whereby social movements in their local, national and transnational manifestations are in fact spreading and establishing a new construct of common values and ideas throughout the world, which is to be seen as the ultimate determining factor for positive structural change. Moreover, notwithstanding the absence of apparent links among social movements, such a ‘politics of ideas’ can be said to constitute a ‘politics of connections’ in the strongest sense of the word, as it slowly brings into existence a new global values construct (together with other actors from civil society!), the ultimate binding factor of a decisive global transformative politics.

(ii) It appears in a global civil society approach that the actual transformative role of social movements must also be problematised. In this sense a ‘global civil society approach’ directly challenges the overestimation of social movements in what has been identified above as a social movement approach. More specifically, the former approach challenges and problematises the notion of a grand political strategy of transformation with which social movements might be associated. It appeals to Walker’s rectification of what a ‘politics of connections’ and a ‘politics of movement’ are not:

It makes intuitive sense to countenance the spatial extension of a movement here to a movement there, to envisage a convergence of progressive forces acting across those merely artificial boundaries that offend planetary integrity and species identity. Similarities and connections are all too readily translated into grand philosophies of history that point upwards to the projected vision of a global civil society, a global governance, and a properly world politics. (1994:699)

Following from this qualification by Walker, it can therefore be said that a global civil society approach raises some doubts about the actual impact of social movements in a world politics. In reaction to those points of views favouring or emphasising the significance of social movements, a global civil society approach

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21 See the introduction of this study.
22 We are here again referring to our point of departure in this study that values and ideas are to be seen as the determining factor in achieving structural change.
asks whether social movements are in fact challenging “the constitutive practices of modern politics” (Walker 1994:672). To quote Walker again:

Judged from the real heights of statecraft, social movements are but mosquitos on the evening breeze, irritants to those who claim maturity and legitimacy at the centres of political life. Some mosquitos, of course, can have deadly effects. Some movements, it can be claimed, have had tremendous impact on states, societies, economies and cultures. But even large movements are difficult to take seriously once compared to the might and reach of a properly world politics. (1994:669)

As a series of further negations of an absolutised social movement approach, a global civil society approach similarly comes to ask: (i) whether many of the movements (such as the green movement, Green Peace) have not been coopted by the system (Kothari 1993:133-138); (ii) whether social movements are in fact political actors at all (Shaw 1994:652; Kothari 1993:134; Sheth 1987:166-167); (iii) whether social movements are in fact instruments of mass mobilisation (Shaw 1994:653) and in any way representatives of a focused and central politics of transformation, that is given the “specificity of locations and traditions” characterising them (Walker 1994:690), their episodic, and in many cases, narrow ‘political objectives’, and their tendency towards a middle-class bias particularly in the North (Shaw 1994:653-654); and (iv) crucially, whether they (social movements) are not dependent on the other actors of civil society as well as formal political parties for their impact, for bringing about the world of transformed relations, policies and structures that they are envisioning. It is in view of such a problematisation that we can find important guidance in the following concluding statement by Martin Shaw of social movement's dependence on a wider range of actors and institutions for their meaningful political articulation:

Social movements depend closely on the other institutions of civil society. On the one hand, although they are widely seen as bypassing traditional institutions such as parties, churches and trade unions, they also exist in relation to these. They are often dependent on political parties, in particular, in order to translate social movement demands into political agenda items which have a serious chance of turning into state policy. Social movements also depend on a wider ideological discourse, which develops through university intellectuals but also through interchange with Green and traditional left-wing parties, through the mass media, and through other networks in civil society. In this way, as in others, social movements cannot be seen as completely distinctive social
phenomena, but are embedded in the larger complex of relationships in civil society. They overlap and share many characteristics with other civil society institutions. (1994:666)

(iii) It follows from the second point above that a global civil society approach thus recognises the dependence of social movements on a wider range of civil society and political actors for meaningful political articulation. Stated differently, it follows that this approach is characterised by the basic principle of interdependence, whereby it is acknowledged that all actors or institutions of civil society, including states and political parties that are seriously addressing the question of a new sustainable and just world, are dependent on each other to obtain their common goal.

In stipulating this interdependence, however, we are reminded by Martin Shaw that the existence of global civil society is still more potential than actual and that it is (regrettably) only following relatively slowly on economic globalisation, which has gathered momentum very rapidly (1994:655). Nevertheless, at the same time Shaw also identified at least three major types of institutions that comprise an emergent (albeit not yet fully developed) global civil society. Being expressions of already transnational (global) linkages, networks and collective organisations, they are: (a) formal organisations linking national institutions (organisations of parties, churches, unions, professions, educational bodies, media, etc.); (b) linkages of informal networks and movements (e.g. women's and peace groups/movements); and (c) globalist organisations that are established with a specific global orientation, global membership and activity of global scope (e.g. Amnesty, Greenpeace, Medicines sans Frontières) (1994:650).

In a global civil society approach, however, the quest for greater political action remains. As evident from Shaw's perspective, this approach does not disregard the fact that a mobilising process towards a global civil society - a collectivity of interlinking groups of actors in globalised political, economic and social processes - may have come into motion already. But it otherwise poses the remaining challenge for movements and institutions of civil society to purposefully and strategically work for more effective and binding relationships, networks and coalitions that may ultimately capacitate them to influence meaningfully and in a decisive way (as a collective force) and change interstate relationships and the process of global governance. Coate, Alger and Lipschutz make the the point as follows:

What remains a major challenge is how such bodies [from civil society aspiring/pursuing a sustainable development approach], as well as other even more amorphous collectivities such as scientists and opinion communities, can be integrated effectively into global governance processes and the work of IGOs. In addition, global
norms as they relate to people-centred development need to bloom from the roots up, not from the top down. For this actually to happen, the numerous and varied social groupings with which people most closely identify in the context of any particular issue setting - whether they be transnational social movements, religious orders, economic groupings, legal/political units, or whatever - need to be viewed and treated as acceptable partners for transnational cooperation and collaboration. (1996:111-112)

### 6.4 An alternative communications dynamics

The key point is that electronic media (including not only television and radio, but all forms of communication, such as newspapers and the Internet) have become the privileged space of politics. Not that all politics can be reduced to images, sounds, or symbolic manipulation. But, without it, there is no chance of winning or exercising power. Thus, everybody ends up playing the same game, although not in the same way or with the same purpose. Manuel Castells (1997:311)

This chapter cannot be complete without returning to the issue of communication, an aspect that we have seen stands at the centre of David Korten’s perspective on fourth generation strategic development but which he does not present as a broader and more fully worked out theory of communication and development.23

We have focused so far largely on perspectives from the intellectual circle of WOMP/Alternatives, but the intention here is to focus more specifically on the aspect of communication, which is absent from WOMP/Alternatives debates. In fact, instead of bringing this aspect into its debates, it appears that attempts at further innovative conceptualisation of the question of coherent political activity (such as expressed in the global civil society approach) have in this circle rather gone in the opposite direction.24 In contrast to Korten’s emphasis on the aspect

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23 See footnote 6 of this chapter.
24 This is, for instance, well illustrated by an Alternatives article in which William Kreml and Charles Kegley address what we pointed out in the previous subsection to be at the centre of a ‘global civil society approach’, namely the remaining problem of coherent political activity by ‘alternative’ actors in the quest for global transformation. Their proposal is the constitution of a “global political party” that will consist of “issue-specific oppositional groups” (such as Greenpeace, Sierra Club International, SANE, the Rainforest Action Network, Conservation International, the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, Survival International, Save the Children, Habitat for Humanity, Physicians for Social Responsibility, and similar organisations) along with nation-states and regional political organisations that are prepared to participate in creating a more democratic world (1996:124-133). With reference to their project of constituting a “global political party” as the “next step” (they entitle their article “A Global Political Party: The Next Step”) in achieving the coherent political opposition that has been envisioned in WOMP/Alternatives debates (see 1996:124-133), Kreml and Kegley’s article presents a good example of the continued efforts toward
of communication - which refers to the means of interaction, to strategy as well as to the new technologies of communication – there is a complete lack of this perspective in the WOMP/Alternatives debates.

With a view to expose and address this lack of perspective, but also to complement and further work out Korten’s emphasis on the aspect of communication, the discussion in this chapter draws finally on new communication perspectives in the social sciences. Constituting a theoretical strand or grouping that clearly stands separate from the circle of WOMP/Alternatives, these writers are not less ‘alternative’, in the sense of being in opposition or critical towards the mainstream, of favouring the new social movements as central actors of (alternative) transformation, and of being interested in the construction of a global civil society similar to what has been expressed in 6.3. Yet their angle or approach to these components of the alternative debate is different. They present a social-theoretical understanding that can be taken as most appropriate (authentic) in terms of the dynamics that determine contemporary global society, and a strategic (fourth generation) mobilisation around the new social movements and a global civil society in embryo. Their vital contribution to the alternative debate can be highlighted by means of the following points:

Firstly, in the new communication perspectives writers emphasise to the broader ‘alternative’ intellectual circle the need to reorientate itself in terms of the new social structure or dynamics that characterise contemporary society. This is a new understanding of society, both in view of its actual nature and in view of effective strategic mobilisation by alternative actors in this society, which Manuel Castells, in his recent profound social analysis, labels The Network Society.25 The vital point of Castells’s analysis is that traditional statist and modernist readings have become obsolete in any attempt to understand contemporary society sufficiently. Modern society has undergone a far-reaching paradigm change from being an industrial society to becoming an informational society:

This new social structure is associated with the emergence of a new mode of development, informationalism, historically shaped by the
It follows that the new informational society sustains a close relationship with *capitalism* and, in essence, represents the *consolidation* of the capitalist mode of production in reconstructed form (Castells 1996:18-20; see also Dawson and Bellamy Foster 1996:42-54; McChesney 1996:2-7). As a result of its merging with the new information technology, it now becomes possible for the capitalist mode of production, for the first time in history, to shape “social relationships over the entire planet” (Castells 1996:471). It is a brand of capitalism that is profoundly different from its historical predecessors in two ways: it is global and structured largely around a network of financial flows (*ibid*). In this global network capital operates within a cycle of investment and profit extraction, which, in turn, is reverted back to the meta-network of financial flows, “where all capital is equalized in the commodified democracy of profit-making” (Castells 1996:472). Characterised, furthermore, by its utterly *arbitrary* character, in the sense of the constant change of winners and losers in the economic cycle, this mode of capitalism greatly relies on knowledge and information generated and enhanced by information technology (*ibid*). In turn, as communication becomes the heart of global capitalism (McChesney 1996:5), there is what Michael Dawson and John Bellamy Foster call the “scramble for control of the new communications system” (1996:51). In the words of Cees Hamelink, the communication industry takes on “economic significance” (1994a:58) and consolidates itself through mega-merging in the global capitalist market (1994a:80-92; see also Dawson and Bellamy Foster 1996:44; McChesney 1996:2-7). A relationship of *interdependence* and *mutual reinforcement* between capital and the new high-technology exists, which Castells points out:

...is the concrete meaning of the articulation between the capitalist mode of production and the informational mode of development ... It is in the interaction between investment in profitable firms and using accumulated profits to make them fructify in the global financial networks that the process of accumulation lies. So it depends on productivity, on competitiveness, and on adequate information on investment and long-term planning in every sector. High-technology firms depend on financial resources to go on with their endless drive toward innovation, productivity, and competitiveness. Financial capital, acting directly through financial institutions or indirectly through the dynamics of stock exchange markets, conditions the fate of high-technology industries. On the

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26 Given the primary role which the process of capitalist restructuring has played historically in accelerating, channelling and shaping the information technological paradigm, this paradigm can, according to Castells (1996:18), be adequately characterised as *information capitalism*.
other hand, technology and information are decisive tools in generating profits and in appropriating market shares. *Thus, financial capital and high-technology, industrial capital are increasingly interdependent, even if their modes of operation are specific to each industry.* (1996:472-473, italics added)

Secondly, in this world of information capitalism politics and its actors have to find themselves anew. Consequently, this does not mean the end of politics, but the restructuring of politics in accordance with the dynamics of the information capitalist system (see Castells 1997:310-312). This is a mode of regulation in which politics and people are, at first sight, subservient to the interests of the capitalist system. While not unimportant actors in this new dispensation, nation-states, for one, are compelled to ally themselves closely with global economic interests (Castells 1997:307-308; 1996:88-90) and “accommodate the claims of the large corporate users of world communication” (Hamelink 1994a:109). In the process their relation to their own communities and citizens remains ambivalent, as they find themselves in a catch-22 situation:

(T)he more states emphasize communalism, the less effective they become as co-agents of a global system of shared power. The more they triumph in the planetary scene, in close partnership with the agents of globalization, the less they represent their national constituencies. (Castells 1997:308).

Castells concluded that in the new informational society power still rules society; it still shapes and dominates people. Yet, and this is the important point, it is no longer concentrated in institutions (the state), organisations (capitalist firms), or symbolic controllers (corporate media, churches). “*It is diffused in global networks of wealth, power, information, and images, which circulate and transmute in a system of variable geometry and dematerialized geography.*” (1997:359, italics added)

It is exactly this diffused network character of the new global society that captures its infinitely complex nature. As Castells pointed out, networks are open structures, able to expand infinitely through shared communication codes (e.g. values or performance goals). As the new structural formation of society, they capture “a highly dynamic open system, susceptible to innovating without threatening its balance” (1996:470). Consequently, they are appropriate instruments not only for a capitalist economy based on innovation, globalisation and decentralised concentration, but also constitute the “new material basis for the performance of activities throughout the social structure” (1996:470-471).

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27 See the previous footnote.
Continuing with Castells’ analysis, this open, dynamic and infinite nature of the global ‘Network Society’ leads us to recognise that processes of social transformation in this society “go beyond the sphere of social and technical relationships of production: they deeply affect culture and power as well” (1996:476, italics added). The world is undoubtedly, first of all, one of global capital and the actors buying into it (states, a global elite, etc.). It is a world that at first sight is “exclusively made of markets, networks, individuals, and strategic organizations, apparently governed by patterns of ‘rational expectations’ (the new, influential economic theory)”. It is, in fact, a world without identity, of individual power politics and gain beyond any borders:

No need for identities in this new world: basic instincts, power drives, self-centred strategic calculations, and, at the macro-social level, “the clear features of a barbarian nomadic dynamic, of a Dionysian element threatening to inundate all borders and rendering international political-legal and civilization norms problematic.”28 (1997:355)

Yet, and this is an integral aspect of Castells’ analysis,29 the new ‘Network Society’ is a world that also “triggers its own challenges”, in the form of what Castells calls communal resistance identities and project identities (1997:359; see also 6-12). While the “(n)ew information technologies are integrating the world in global networks of instrumentality” (1996:22), the reverse side of this is a new ‘identity politics’ by different collectivities that challenge the contemporary movement towards globalisation and cosmopolitanism, as well as the democratic principle upheld by the modern nation-state, on behalf of cultural self-expression and people’s control over their lives and environment (cf. 1997:2). Being multiple, highly diversified in nature as they follow the specificities of each culture, and of historical sources of formation of each identity, these collectivities include, in Castells identification, especially two categories. They are, firstly, the new proactive movements (that is, ‘project identities’) such as feminism and environmentalism, whose aim is the transformation of human relationships at their most fundamental level. But they, secondly, also include a whole range of reactive movements (that is, ‘resistance identities’), that under the combined assault of techno-economic forces and transformative social movements,30 build

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28 Castells is here quoting Alexander S. Panarin.
29 Volume II (The Power of Identity) of Castells’s three-volume series deals with the aspect of new identity formation in the ‘Network Society’.
30 Whereas Castells views the relation between ‘resistance identities’ and ‘project identities’ in a positive light, in the sense that he sees the former as a primary source from which the latter does and will emerge (see 1997:11-12, 357-358), he also identifies ‘project identities’, in the form of the proactive social movements, as a possible cause for the resistance politics of reactive movements/communities. Thus, the outgoing dynamics of proactive movements, as they seek to transform human relationships and social structures, and ultimately construct new identities, can also be seen as an important cause, in addition to
communities of resistance on behalf of God, nation, ethnicity, family and locality \textit{(ibid.)}.

It is important, then, to point out the ambivalent relation of these ‘identity projects’ to the new information technology. They are, and this is particularly the case with ‘resistance identities’, expressions of what Castells calls “the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded” \textit{(1997:9, original italics)}. Thus they compensate by building defensive identities \textit{in the terms} of the dominant institutions and ideologies, whereby they reverse the value judgement forced on them and at the same time reinforce the boundaries of separation \textit{(ibid.)}. Castells put this eloquently in communication terms:

\begin{quote}
There seems to be a logic of excluding the excluders, of redefining the criteria for value and meaning in a world where there is shrinking room for the computer illiterate, for consumptionless groups, and for under-communicated territories. When the Net switches off the Self, the Self, individual or collective, constructs its meaning without global, instrumental reference: the process of disconnection becomes reciprocal, after the refusal by the excluded of the one-sided logic of structural domination and social exclusion. \textit{(1996:25)}
\end{quote}

But as Castells also concluded, more often than not, new powerful technological media, such as worldwide, interactive communication networks, are used by ‘resistance’ and ‘project identities’ to sharpen their struggle and vision of a transformed society. He, in this case, pointed to international environmentalists, but also ‘resistance identities’ such as the Mexican \textit{Zapatistas}, as the foremost examples of ‘alternative’ actors who have come to use the Internet to challenge the dominant system on their own terms \textit{(1997:2)}. In the case of the \textit{Zapatistas}, they might be called “the \textit{first information guerrilla movement}” \textit{(1997:79, original italics)}. They did not merely resist, but used the media and modern communication technology to \textit{communicate} with the outside world, and by doing so, captured “the imagination of people and of intellectuals … [and] propelled a local, weak insurgent group to the forefront of world politics” \textit{(ibid.)}:

\begin{quote}
Essential in this strategy was the \textit{Zapatistas}’ use of telecommunications, videos, and of computer-mediated communication, both to diffuse their messages from Chiapas to the world … and to organize a worldwide network of solidarity groups that literally encircled the repressive intentions of the Mexican government … Extensive use of the Internet allowed the \textit{Zapatistas}
\end{quote}

the forces of economic globalisation, for the retreat of individuals and communities (cultural, religious, ethnic, etc.) into ‘resistance identities’.
A Broader Articulation of Alternative Ideas

to diffuse information and their call throughout the world instantly, and to create a network of support groups which helped to produce an international public opinion movement that made it literally impossible for the Mexican government to use repression on a large scale. Images and information from and around the Zapatistas acted powerfully on the Mexican economy and politics. (1997:80)

A similar case in point for Castells is the environmental movement's use of the modern communication system to further their aims. Viewed by him as one of the most successful 'alternative' movements of our time (1997:110), much of the success of this movement had come, according to Castells, from the fact that it has been able to, more than any other social force in recent history, “best adapt to the conditions of communication and mobilization in the new technological paradigm” (1997:128). They have been especially successful in using the media to “reach a much broader audience than their direct constituency”, which has also “lent them a legitimacy higher than that of any other cause”. This, however, is not only evident in the cases of global environmental activism (such as the public activism of an organisation like Greenpeace), but is also central to environmental struggles at the local level in which TV news, radio and newspapers have been utilised “to the point that corporations and politicians often complain that it is the media rather than ecologists who are responsible for environmental mobilization” (ibid).

According to Castells, environmentalists have indeed been “at the cutting edge of new communication technologies as organizing and mobilizing tools, particularly in the use of the Internet”. They have, in a sophisticated way, come to utilise the Internet to coordinate actions and information across boundaries and groups. Yet, while belonging to the category of proactive ‘identity projects’, Castells points out how environmentalists' relation to science and technology is

31 For Castells another example of a successful populist utilisation of the modern communication system, which has shown that “media politics does not have to be the monopoly of influential interest groups, or of established political parties” (1997:331-332), is the case of the political movement, Condepa, in Bolivia since the late 1980s. Built around the leading figure of Carlos Palenque and his experience of and relative position of power in the field of modern communication, the success of this movement represents, to Castells, a primary example of the way in which the modern media system has been used to establish a significant popular base (see 1997:328-333). As Castells made the point in short: “…Condepa’s influence is not just a media manipulation: its themes refer to the actual suffering of people in La Paz, and its language directly communicates to the cultural and local identity of popular strata in La Paz and El Alto … However, without the power of the media, and without a perceptive communication strategy mixing entertainment radio and television with a space for public complaints, and with the building of charismatic trust between the leaders and the audience, Condepa would have been reduced to a minor role, as happened to other populist movements in Bolivia … Indeed, in 1996, Bolivians trust the media more than they trust their political representatives.” (1997:331)

32 Castells speaks of the symbiotic relationship between the media and environmentalism, whereby the environmental movement has not only been dependent on the media for its cause, but the issues raised by environmentalists have also “provided a good terrain for the media to assume the role of the voice of the people, thus increasing their own legitimacy, and making journalists feel good about it” (1997:128-129).
not less contradictory than in the case of ‘resistance identities’. In the case of ‘resistance identities’, first of all, we saw how they, besides being marginalised in instances to the extent where they are totally excluded from the economic and power networks associated with the new communication technology, have in other instances also vindicated themselves in the new informational society. In Castells’s words, “(t)hey use informational technology for people’s horizontal communication, and communal prayer, while rejecting the new idolatry of technology, and preserving transcendent values against the deconstructing logic of self-regulating computer networks” (1997:358).

In the same but still more intensive way, a proactive group (collectively and generally speaking) such as the environmental movement displays what Castells calls “an ambiguous, deep connection with science and technology” (1997:123, original italics). Its ascendancy coincided “with the information technology revolution, and with the extraordinary development of biological knowledge through computer modeling, that took place in the aftermath” (ibid.). Science and technology, thus, play a fundamental albeit contradictory role in this movement. While criticising the domination of life by science, ecologists also “use science to oppose science on behalf of life” (ibid., italics added). As a movement, environmentalists rely largely “on gathering, analyzing, interpreting, and diffusing scientific information about the interaction between man-made artifacts and the environment, sometimes with a high degree of sophistication” (ibid.). They respond to the imperative set by Castells for ‘alternative’ actors, namely to act on the culture of real virtuality that frames communication in the ‘Network Society’, and to subvert this culture on behalf of alternative values by introducing codes that emerge from their autonomous projects (1997:361). In a nutshell:

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The advocated principle is not the negation of knowledge, but superior knowledge: the wisdom of a holistic vision, able to reach beyond piecemeal approaches and short-sighted strategies geared towards the satisfaction of basic instincts. In this sense, environmentalism aims at retaking social control over the products of the human mind before science and technology take on a life of their own, with machines finally imposing their will on us, and on nature... (1997:123)

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Thirdly, the reality of the new global informational society brings writers from the intellectual group that is discussed in this section to emphasise the necessity of not merely conceptualising a civil society/global civil society approach to transformation, but a civil society/global civil society approach in terms of the new information and communication dynamics that shape contemporary society.
It is an emphasis that is, for some, based on the perception that current trends in world communication are in fact forcefully converging “towards the disempowerment of people” and are contributing “to the establishment of a new world order that is inequitable, exclusive and elite-oriented” (Hamelink 1994a:121). They therefore call upon all social movements and other ‘alternative’ actors to make the issue of media and communication an integral aspect of their agenda, notwithstanding what their first issue of concern may be (McChesney 1996:16; see also Hamelink 1994a:147; Waterman 1996a:25). They call upon all these actors to mobilise themselves into a global civil initiative that not only reactivity challenges the world of global information capitalism, but proactively (see Hamelink 1994a:147) generates and compels new democratic and independent spaces through which people may assert themselves socially, culturally and politically on the basis of their access to the resources of modern communication (see Cassani 1995:217-218, 220--221; Hamelink 1994a:145-149; McChesney 1996:16-20; cf. also Stangelaar 1985:13-20).33

However, the emphasis on civil society/global civil society mobilisation in terms of the new information and communications dynamics takes on a still deeper meaning here. As other discussions suggest, it is an emphasis that is not merely born out of necessity and the disempowering nature of world communication. On the basis of what has been pointed out in the previous point, the emancipatory potential of the new information technology for ‘alternative’ actors is indeed recognised, whatever the nature of their struggle may be. It is recognised that the new communication technology potentially constitutes a medium of great opportunity for strategic mobilisation within civil society. In the words of Raymond Williams, this technology and the new system as a whole “offer opportunities for new cultural relationships, which the older systems could not”. These new technologies could make “a significant improvement in the practicability of every kind of voluntary association: the fibers of civil society as distinct from both the market and the state” (Williams quoted in Dawson and Bellamy Foster 1996:55, italics added).

From a somewhat different angle Peter Waterman has pointed out that the new informational society can be seen as the sphere most appropriate to the distinctive nature and dynamics of the new social movements. These movements are in large part “communication internationalisms” and (as we have also seen in the second point above) are making increasing use of “computer-mediated communications” (1996:51, italics added). Waterman makes his point in a way that should also be taken as very valid with respect to the value and idea

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33 Two concrete projects that are either proposed or under way in this regard are the “People’s Communication Charter”, which is discussed in the writings of Cees Hamelink, and an independent global “Civil Society Development Fund” (see Cassani 1995:215-221) that could meet the information and communications needs of civil society actors. In 7.4.2 these two projects will be considered more closely as projects through which the churches could make a meaningful contribution to the emerging new communication solidarities.
emphasis in the WOMP/Alternatives intellectual circle discussed earlier, and this circle’s search for further innovative strategic mobilisation:

There is considerable agreement on “the central importance of knowledge and information” ... in the current transformation of capitalism globally, even if the question of what the transition is to remains unclear or disputed. The growing centrality to social processes of the “mode of information ... - of data, ideas, values, images, theories, and cultures - makes it possible and necessary for life-asserting or emancipatory movements to operate on these terrains. Here they can reveal, as Amnesty International does, what is globally concealed, or suggest, as Friends of the Earth might, new meanings for what is globally revealed ... A global information capitalism would seem to provide far more favorable terrains for emancipatory movements than those of an internationalized industrial capitalism (industry, polity, nation, battlefield). It has proven extremely difficult to radically democratize these old terrains. (1996a:50, italics added)

For Waterman, thus, information capitalism constitutes “an eminently disputable terrain” (2000:137). “That this sphere is created and dominated by the logic of capital” can, according to him, not “conceal its contradictory nature: capital, capitalists, capitalisms, cannot simply control this sphere in the way they did the factory, the family, the state, the school and the gun” (Waterman 2000:142). It is “a non-territorial sphere, meaning one increasingly capable of that expanding growth, flexibility and democratization that the capitalism of industry and the nation-state has promised/denied” (ibid.). In this sphere it becomes possible to generate a space for the co-existence of what Waterman describes as “our networks” over against “their networks” (2000:144). Moreover, in this sphere the position of local actors and communities is redefined. Through the communication networks generated by this sphere, grassroots groups around the world are now suddenly enabled “to act globally, at the level where main problems are created” (Castells 1997:129, italics added). As a response, thus, also to what is recognised in WOMP/Alternatives debates as the remaining need for grassroots movements to mobilise into a more coordinated and effective political coalition at the meso and global levels34 - in the sense that the network model of the informational society might make such a coalition possible and effective - reference can be made here to Waterman’s notion of “multiple positions” to express the strategic position of activated ‘alternative’ actors in the ‘Network Society’:

34 See 6.2.1.
Any ‘alternative’ social movement, or related non-governmental organisation (NGO), can thus find itself in multiple positions, in local-to-global space, or at particular times. It is, for example, possible for a feminist movement, organisation or tendency (local-to-global) to be simultaneously self-isolated (within civil society, from other feminists or women, from men) and incorporated (into reform strategies or intermediating roles promoted by capital or state). A complex, interdependent, yet uneven and unbalanced global order, requires complex, interdependent global alternatives, which the alternative movements are beginning to offer. In so far as it is globalised, moreover, contemporary capitalism promotes communication and culture to increasing pre-eminence, this providing an eminently disputable terrain for such new emancipatory movements. Cultural globalisation makes an alternative global solidarity culture both necessary and possible. The form of the new global solidarity movements is, thus, increasingly that of ‘information internationalisms’. (Waterman 2000:137)

In this chapter we have basically identified and discussed two intellectual debates that enrich David Korten’s notion of fourth generation development. We have seen how these two debates converge on a number of issues: (i) their emphasis on the new grassroots and social movements as the determinants of development and a new identity politics; (ii) their emphasis on the need for such a social movement and identity politics to assimilate into a broader solidarity initiative that we may call the construction of a civil society/global civil society; (iii) their emphasis on an approach to transformation that, by implication, relies on the free flow of particular sets of ideas, values and information to achieve the desired results; and (iv) their similar critical disposition to the mainstream, which can also well be taken as their similar, shared vision of an ‘alternative’ society.

However, we have also seen how these two debates separate on the basis that the second debate has come to locate the ‘alternative’ debate in the socio-analytic context of the informational society and the actual resistance and strategic politics of ‘alternative’ actors in terms of the dynamics of this society. Hence our conclusion that it is this difference within the broader ‘alternative’ debate that should be taken very seriously in further theoretical and strategic considerations on alternative development, fourth generation development, the new social movement politics and civil society/global civil society. If this is not done, the danger may indeed be an ongoing intellectual effort that is inappropriate not only in terms of the changed social context and the new opportunities, but also in terms of the forms of injustice generated in this new
context, and the value- and idea-centred approach to transformation highlighted in fourth generation/alternative development perspectives.

In this regard we may well return to Manuel Castells’s analysis, specifically his distinction between two notions of civil society. In disregarding the new terms in which society is understood today (as set out in this subsection), it would seem that the ‘alternative’ debate rather adheres to a concept of civil society that is defined by Castells as outmoded in terms of the new social dynamics. Albeit that this may be a progressive meaning of civil society - in the Gramscian sense - which understands civil society to be formed by a series of “apparatuses (such as the churches, unions, parties, cooperatives, civic associations, etc.) constantly negotiating the position of people/citizens vis-à-vis the state”, it remains true in this particular understanding that the institutions of civil society cannot be set apart from the state that it seeks to conquer on behalf of the people (1997:8-9). “The conquest of the state by the forces of change … present in the civil society, is made possible exactly because of the continuity between civil society’s institutions and the power apparatuses of the state, organized around a similar identity.” (1997:9) Castells puts it still better elsewhere in his discussion, where he points out the lost legitimacy of the state and its civil society counterparts in the new informational society:

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At the dawn of the Information Age, a crisis of legitimacy is voiding of meaning and function the institutions of the industrial era. Bypassed by global networks of wealth, power, and information, the modern nation-state has lost much of its sovereignty … As a result of these convergent processes, the sources of what I call … legitimizing identities are drained away. The institutions and organizations of civil society that were constructed around the democratic state, and around the social contract between capital and labor, have become, by and large, empty shells, decreasingly able to relate to people’s lives and values in most societies. It is indeed a tragic irony that when most countries in the world finally fought their way to access the institutions of liberal democracy … these institutions are so distant from the structure and processes that really matter that they appear to most people as a sarcastic grimace in the new face of history. In this end of millennium, the king and the queen, the state and the civil society, are both naked, and their children-citizens are wandering around a variety of foster homes. (1997:354, 355)

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In the emergence of the new ‘project identities’ referred to earlier in this discussion, Castells sees the potential to reconstruct a new civil society and eventually a new state (1997:356, 362). However, the constitution of these new subjects “takes a different route to the one we knew during modernity, and late
modernity” (1997:11). They do not seem to emerge from identities of the industrial era’s civil society, which is in a process of disintegration, but from a development of the ‘resistance identities’ also discussed earlier (1997:11, 357). Beyond this, however, they are the new proactive movements in society that are managing to move “out from the trenches of resistance” to build new identities that redefine their position in society “and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure” (1997:8). They are integral actors of the new ‘Network Society’ that, in their networking, centred form of organisation and intervention, are “mirroring, and counteracting, the networking logic of domination in the informational society”. In this sense, they “do more than organizing activity and sharing information. They are the actual producers, and distributors, of cultural codes. Not only over the Net, but in their multiple forms of exchange and interaction.” (1997:362, original italics) Their ultimate meaning is well expressed in the following quotation:

They are the collective social actor through which individuals reach holistic meaning in their experience. In this case, the building of identity is a project of a different life, perhaps on the basis of an oppressed identity, but expanding toward the transformation of society as the prolongation of this project of identity, as in the above-mentioned example of a post-patriarchal society, liberating women, men, and children, through the realization of women’s identity. Or, in a very different perspective, the final reconciliation of all human beings as believers, brothers and sisters, under the guidance of God’s law, be it Allah or Jesus, as a result of the religious conversion of godless, anti-family, materialist societies, otherwise unable to fulfill human needs and God’s design. (1997:10, italics added)

Indeed, it would be possible to say that Castells’s identification of ‘project identities’ – that is, the new proactive social movements whose presence and participation in the new ‘Network Society’ are pointing to the possibility of a new (global) civil society in the making – closely resembles not only David Korten’s notion of fourth generation development strategies, but also much of the debate on alternative development and alternatives in the intellectual circle of WOMP/Alternatives. It would seem that we are encountering in all cases here a prioritisation of the same actors, whether they are referring to the grassroots and resistance movements highlighted in Castells’ discussion and WOMP/Alternatives debates, or the proactive new social movements highlighted in common.

Whereas Castells and the other writers who have been discussed in this section are, in a fundamental way, pointing out the new socio-analytic context in which the fourth generation/alternative development/‘alternative’ debate is to be cast
(which is still missing in this debate), it would also be possible to say that Castells's identification of a different civil society shaped by the new 'project identities' of the 'Network Society' does not have to be viewed in opposition to the 'solidarity' vision of the global civil society approach that has been set out in the previous section (6.3), in so far as the latter approach may represent civil society actors that belong rather to Castells's category of disintegrating 'legitimising identities' of the industrial age. Let it be stated emphatically that the reality of the new 'Network Society', the actual participation of 'alternative' actors and movements in this society today, the vision of a new and global civil society, and ultimately a new people-centred world more than ever assume the necessity and possibility of larger solidarity projects: on the local, meso and global levels of society. In these solidarity projects aimed at the construction of a new civil society the actors of Castells' old civil society could still play a vital role. What is required from them, however, is to be transformed inwardly by the values and worldview that are determining the alternative dynamics in the new 'Network Society', not so much in the sense of Castells's 'resistance identities', but in the sense of the new 'project identities' that he has identified. We will more pertinently consider the potential contribution of one such actor, namely the churches, in the last chapter of this study.
Chapter Seven

THE CHURCHES’ PARTICIPATION IN FOURTH GENERATION DEVELOPMENT: PERSPECTIVES AND POSSIBILITIES

7.1 Introduction

In the previous three chapters of this study we explored the landscape of the meaning of new strategic development. In this exploration we highlighted the meaning of fourth generation strategic development action but we also focused on the concept of a third generation development strategy. Thus, a meaning of fourth generation development action has unfolded in our discussion that, within an overall perspective, assumes the people-centred development theoretical and strategic underpinnings that guide the third generation orientation. Put differently, in this overall perspective a fourth generation development orientation fully shares the alternative societal vision of the third generation, and the emphasis on managerial, policy and other skills to realise that vision. Consequently, this orientation does not neglect the fact that in the real world of today, which is a world still ruled by governments and state-centred actors in addition to the new/other dominant actors of global capitalism, another level of engagement is required that will complement the fourth generation mode. Albeit cast in terms of alternative values and theoretical understanding, this is the level of reigning sophisticated policy, managerial and organisational application to which actors of a people-centred and alternative development must also adapt and on which they are to make an impact as well.

1 This chapter draws in part on ideas that have been developed in the present writer’s MA Research Paper, Towards a New Solidarity Praxis: Critical Reflections on the Churches’ Participation in World Transformation, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 1997.

2 This statement does not contradict what was said in 6.4. Having pointed out, in terms of Manuel Castells’s analysis, how power has shifted away from state institutions in the new dispensation of global information capitalism and the ‘Network Society’, and how the reconstruction of a new civil society should be sought with those new ‘project identities’ that are today representing a discontinuity with the state and the ‘legitimising identities’ that have constituted the ‘old’ civil society (given their loss of legitimacy), it would be wrong to understand by this that the institution of the state is to be disregarded as far as a contemporary ‘politics of power’ is concerned. Indeed, this is also not the meaning of Castells’s analysis, as our reading of him in 6.4 suggests. To elaborate here on his point of view, nation-states remain “strategic actors” of “considerable influence”, with the exception that today they are “playing their interests, and the interests they are supposed to represent, in a global system of interaction, in a condition of systemically shared sovereignty” (1997:307). In this sense of reconfirmed strategic importance, they thus also represent an actor that cannot be ignored by those ‘alternative’ actors that are interested in the construction of a ‘new’ civil society/global civil society.
Thus, it follows that a fourth generation strategic development orientation does not neglect the real world of policy and the managerial emphasis that the new world of global information capitalism seems to be emphasising more than ever. The new people-centred development world that this orientation envisions is also not a world without management and policy-making. Rather, it calls for counter-strategies also to be implemented on the operating level of the dominant actors and institutions of today, yet they must be counter-strategies that will in the process contribute to the new world for which the new social movements are exerting themselves. To state this emphatically: this is the same decentralised and sustainable world that is conceptualised in the third generation strategic orientation. Essentially, it is a new world that is at decentralised level also to be sustained and continuously shaped by the kind of theoretical and strategic input, institutional arrangements and policy processes that determine third generation strategic development action.

As already stated, fourth generation development strategies require the analytic, catalytic, articulation, technical and other skills of third generation development strategies. Furthermore, they do not despise the use of modern technology, but recognise their emancipatory potential for achieving their goals of development and transformation. Whereas fourth generation strategic activity seeks greater global penetration, in contrast to third generation strategies, it otherwise requires and applies these skills and technology in the same formal way as in third generation strategic action when dealing with the global policy-makers of development. However, it does not to a lesser extent require these skills and technology in the people-to-people interaction and conscientisation by which it is ultimately characterised. Rather, it calls on the new social movements and the organisations that articulate and support them (e.g. NGOs) to be more effectively organised and to engage in more informed conscientisation through their application and utilisation of such skills and technology.

Against the background of this summary of complementary third and fourth generation strategic development action (based on the discussion in the last three chapters), we can now shift our focus back to the churches. Having begun this study with the hypothesis that the churches (a distinct ‘idea’ and ‘value’ institution) could play a meaningful role and excel in the third generation and especially fourth generation modes of strategic development action, the question on the basis of our preceding exploration then remains: what should the concrete participation of the churches in third and fourth generation development involve? Furthermore, what is the nature of the discourse whereby the churches could meaningfully participate in these modes of development, given our conclusion in this study that the development praxis of the churches remains

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3 See 5.4.
4 See 6.4.
The Churches’ Participation in Fourth Generation Development

stuck in what David Korten identifies as first and second generation development strategies or approaches?

Indeed, parts of our discussion in the previous two chapters may well have suggested that we are entering an emerging post-secular (post-modern?) era in which the role of religion (and by implication an institution such as the churches) in development and positive transformation is beginning to be reappraised. Whereas this reappraisal is not unconditional, David Korten and authors from the circle of WOMP/Alternatives (on the basis of the discussion especially in 6.2.2) may be taken as clear examples of such a reappraisal, that is, of what we have indicated in the introduction as a growing normative social scientific movement that is also showing a new appreciation of the role that religion and its institutions can play towards realising their visions of normative change. In the case of Korten and the authors from the WOMP/Alternatives circle, it can be noted that their appreciation is none other than one that falls in the realm of the fourth generation development thinking. Clearly, they are calling upon religion to play a role or roles that are of a fourth generation developmental nature.

Coming back to our question above about the concrete participation of a religious institution such as the churches, the perspectives that we found in the writings of Korten and the authors from the WOMP/Alternatives circle already enables us to become more specific. In the case of Korten, we have seen how he called upon religion and the churches (which he also specifically mentioned) to play a definite reconciliatory role (thus to excel as a distinct actor within the contemporary peace movement!). In another sense, we have seen how he also highlighted the aspect of spiritual development and the role which religion and the churches should play in changing and nurturing people’s inner spirit and consciousness towards caring relationships and a sense of structural justice.

5 In addition to Korten and the writers from the WOMP/Alternatives circle that we have already identified, such a scholarly movement (which is characterised by its positive appraisal of religion and includes fields such as development studies, (humanistic) economics, future studies, environmental studies, political science, etc.) may, for instance, be identified also in the writings of Kenneth Boulding (see 1968:Part III), Simon Sui-cheong Chau and Fung Kam-Kong (see 1990:222-231), Bill Clark (see 1990:183-188), John Cobb and Herman Daly (see 1990:Chapter 20), Mawil Izzi Deen (see 1990:189-197), O. P. Dwivedi (see 1990:201-211), Paul Ekins (see 1992:194-199), Ronald Engel (see 1992:12-14), Johan Galtung (see 1996:408-413), Roger Garaudy (see 1983:47-60), Denis Goulet (see 1995:Chapter 16), Willis Harman (see 1984:10-11), Leilah Landim (see 1987:31-33), David Lehmann (see 1990:Chapters 3, 4 and 5), Marilyn Little (see 1995:31-134), Kate Manzo (see 1995:245-247), 1991:21-25), Robert Moore (see 1995:164-112), OECD (see 1987:8-11), Martin Palmer (see 1996:30-61), Susanne Hoober Rudolph (1996:314-318), William Ryan (see 1957:Chapters I and II), E. F. Schumacher (see 1993:Chapter 6), S. Sivaraska (see 1995:213-221), R. H. Tawney (see 1961:Chapter 11), Bart van Steenbergen (see 1983:140-141).

6 This is, for instance, clearly indicated by Korten’s discussion of the churches in the quote at the end of Chapter Five.

7 See 5.3.2. and 5.4.

8 See the entry on ‘spiritual development’ in 5.3.2.
Thus, in the case of Korten, we may find an appreciation of the churches that fully takes into account their distinctive nature as ‘idea' and ‘value institutions’, something which he contrasted sharply with their preoccupation with charity and so-called development projects.\(^9\) As such, it would be possible to say that all seven of the key elements that Korten has prioritised as central to fourth generation development (as set out in 5.3.2), could be taken as areas to which the churches might meaningfully contribute. Besides the elements of reconciliation and spiritual development that he has highlighted as especially applicable to religion and the churches, one can well see how the churches could make crucial contributions to Korten’s second and fourth element of lifestyles and the family, that is, elements or areas that have in fact always been a strength of the churches in one way or another.\(^10\) But also, it is possible to conceive how socially informed, ideologically critical and politically conscious churches could make meaningful contributions to Korten’s remaining elements of political democratisation, economic democratisation, and trade and investment relations on an idea, ethical and value level.\(^11\)

Indeed, an institution such as the churches fits Korten’s categories of central actors in fourth generation development very well.\(^12\) Thus we can say that the churches are in essence, and at their best, voluntary organisations (VOs) that operate and exist on the basis of the faith and moral commitment of their members. But they can also well be conceived as people’s organisations (POs) that are collectively run and owned by their members on the basis of a shared faith and values. Moreover, in the churches the concept of citizen volunteers also figures fundamentally: integral to their mission is preparing and sending out their members to live out their faith and values in the world. And last but not least, the churches are also no strangers to the aspect of movement formation: they have as ‘idea’ and ‘value institutions’ mobilised into different kinds of global people’s movements throughout their long history (such as the ecumenical and evangelical movements in contemporary history). It can be concluded that all these ‘fourth generation’ attributes of the churches could under certain conditions be utilised to the advantage of a fourth generation people-centred development and social movement agenda.

In the case of the writers of the WOMP/Alternatives circle, their more concrete appraisal of religion\(^13\) follows a direction similar to Korten’s. It is the voluntary and value-centred dynamics of religious traditions and the churches that these

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9. See the quote under ‘spiritual development’ in 5.3.2 and the quotes at the end of 5.4.
10. With regard to the element of lifestyles, we may recall how the conscientisation (‘pedagogy’) of the rich had come to be emphasised in the pragmatic debate on development in the ecumenical movement, especially in the radical account through the writings of Charles Elliot in particular. See 3.3.2.
11. These, in fact, seem to have been elements that the ecumenical development debate had aimed to address through their emphasis on the concepts of economic growth, social justice and self-reliance. See the discussion in 2.3.2.
12. See 5.3.1.
13. See 6.2.2.
writers view as potentially of great advantage to their own agenda of alternative values and a new world order, and in strengthening a social movements politics in various ways - material, organisational, educational and spiritual. For them, as for Korten, there is a pertinent ‘spiritual’ role for religious traditions and the churches to play, but then one that takes concrete effect in terms of the new social movement values and activities.

In addition to describing such first steps towards more concrete application, an attempt will be made in this chapter to work out a more concrete framework for the churches’ participation in the realm of fourth generation development. As the discussion above might suggest, it is possible to conceptualise various modes, elements or areas of fourth generation development action, also as far as the churches are concerned. On this basis our attempt towards formulating the moves towards concretisation and specification should not be taken as a recommendation of a complete or absolute package. It rather represents a conscious effort to conceptualise, on the basis of our exploration in this study, what we are calling beacons of fourth generation strategic development action - beacons that, in the broad sense in which they are formulated, reflect the concrete fourth generation meanings that we have been deriving from the formulations of Korten and the other alternative debates discussed in the previous chapter; yet beacons that also give an account of the complementary meanings of third and fourth generation development that we set out at the beginning of this chapter. In terms of the churches, whereas these beacons constitute guidelines predominantly towards outright or explicit fourth generation development activity, in the case of the third proposed beacon of alternative policy-making, the possibility of the churches’ meaningful participation as a third generation actor is also advocated (that is, a competency level that assumes skills and knowledge that are indispensable to meaningful fourth generation development action).

Having sustained the argument in this study that the participation of the churches in meaningful development is not self-evident, as they remain ideologically and conceptually limited to charitable and project-centred modes of action, it crucially follows that third and fourth generation action can only be undertaken meaningfully by a different kind of church and theological underpinning. Clearly, third and fourth generation development action presents the churches with the challenge of new social scientific insight and skills, and of participating in a new solidarity praxis. This challenge calls on the churches to adopt a new reflexive, collective, cooperative, dependent, relative and political outlook. Having already spelled out the theoretical and strategic contents of third and fourth generation development actions, as well as the actors that are central to an understanding of them, we will here, in so far as the churches are concerned, once again take the ecumenical development debate as our point of

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14 See especially the discussion in 5.4.
departure. By way of a recapitulation of our appreciation in the introduction and first three chapters of this study, we will reflect on the ecumenical development debate as a remaining incentive to theological-ecclesiastical participation in third and fourth generation strategic development action.

From this point we will then move on to a consideration of the beacons of fourth (and third) generation development action. For this section of the discussion we need to recall the ideals of interdisciplinarity and integration that were set out as aims in the conclusion to the introduction. As we are interested here in an extended formulation of the meaning of third and fourth generation strategic development - an extended meaning that is, however, aimed at the churches in particular - it is inevitable that we should not only rely on a wider corpus of complementary social scientific perspectives to serve this purpose, but also on perspectives from the best of the discipline of theology itself. It will become clear in the course of the discussion below how theological perspectives/discourses geared towards this purpose do exist, outside of, and complementary to, the foundational basis that we are finding in the ecumenical debate on development.

7.2 The ecumenical development debate: remaining incentive

This study should have made it clear that taking on third and fourth generation identities and roles (as opposed to first and second generation ones) is by no means self-evident. This fundamentally requires that actors aspiring to participate in such modes of action should be changed and capacitated by, and in relation to, particular external dynamics (that is, new skills/knowledge/values/ideas, other actors/collectivities). In addition to such external dynamics, the impact of progressive forces or elements within these actors’ own ranks to start a process of redefinition of existing (traditional) practices, thinking and self-identity is also required.

In terms of the latter internal requirements, we conclude that the ecumenical development debate, on which we focused in the first three chapters, remains a most important incentive to the churches’ participation in third and fourth generation development. Having concluded in 3.4 that this debate presents us with both an impasse and renewal as far as the issue of the churches’ participation in development is concerned, we are firstly to remind ourselves of

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15 Given the rich meaning of third and in particularly fourth generation strategic development action (as also evident from the beacons that we are identifying), it was envisaged in the introduction that this wider corpus will comprise additional perspectives (beyond the exploration up to Chapter Six) that are not only development specific, but also politically, sociologically, communication and culture specific.

16 Ulrich Duchrow’s perspectives on alternatives to global capitalism from a social theological point of view, the World Parliament of Religion’s ‘Declaration toward a Global Ethic’, perspectives from the WCC debate on civil society, debates on public theology/religion, feminist theological perspectives and Jürgen Moltmann’s perspective on a theological expression of joy have been mentioned as cases in point in the introduction of this study.
how this debate has come to indicate to us the still present dichotomy between ‘progressive’ discourse and ‘conservative’ praxis (thus pointing to a discourse/debate with relatively little practical impact), but also the ultimate erosion and fatigue of this debate itself.

However, these critical observations should not deny the positive contribution of this debate, as reflected in our earlier evaluations. Our analysis in Chapter One made it clear that the ecumenical development debate had posed a definite conceptual and ideological challenge to the prevailing charity-oriented mentality (first generation development strategies) in the churches. Those writings on a theology of development that were discussed in 2.2 also remain as important as ever. Although they are more often than not neglected in theological and ecclesiastical debates on development, the proclaimed “commitment to the unqualified solidarity of Christianity with the life problems of the modern world” (Rendtorff 1971:86, italics added) in those writings - their perspectives of cooperation, integration, limited competence and dependence17 - must be regarded as absolutely foundational to meeting the above-mentioned requirements for participation in third and fourth generation development strategies.

We have concluded on the basis of the exposition in 2.3 that a development discourse of a truly social theoretical nature has been constructed in the ecumenical development debate.18 Thus, not only does this discourse meet the criteria set in those foundational writings mentioned in the previous paragraph, but it has done so in a critical, uncompromising and normative manner that makes it an authentic exponent of an alternative development corpus.19 In this regard, it could be said that an ecumenical development discourse had come to challenge mainstream development theory and practice in a way that well matches the level of third generation theorisation described in 4.3.1. By way of further comparison, the thrust of the argument in the description of the three interrelated ecumenical concepts of economic growth, social justice and self-reliance in 2.3.2 has a people-centred development emphasis similar to that in third generation development theorisation. Richard Dickinson, in his review article in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement,20 confirms this observation: “the notion of people-centred development” soon became “the distinctive

17 The far-reaching nature of such a foundation for involvement in meaningful development is particularly well illustrated when contrasted with the approach (or paradigm) of those evangelical theologians and churches identified in footnote 3 in the introduction. Whereas the ecumenical development discourse, which is described in Chapter Two, takes on a proper social theoretical identity, one that is of a normative kind but devoid of explicit theological language (see the further discussion below), the latter evangelical grouping appears, in turn, to vigorously defend the theological and Christian foundation of development. Thus, it can be said that their aim has been to reverse the whole process again and convert the concept of development from its secular, Western origins to a meaning that is truly biblical and Christian (see e.g. Sine 1987:2; The Wheaton ’83 Statement in Samuel and Sudgen 1987:255-258).
18 See in this regard our concluding observations at the beginning of 2.3.1 and in 2.4.
19 See 2.4.
20 See footnote 2 of Chapter Two.
feature of the ecumenical understanding of development”. In this understanding “real social transformation was to be measured by what happens to people in the social change process, while the traditional notions of development tended to emphasize more abstract economic or political objectives” (1991:270).

Indeed, a fourth generation meaning could be recognised in the ecumenical development debate’s people-centred emphasis. We saw in 2.3 how this debate increasingly posed a critical ideological challenge to the meaning of mainstream development, on behalf of the poor, marginalised and oppressed. It had gone to that extreme where its emphasis on “the people” (see Dickinson 1991:271-272), what we have come to describe as ‘a discourse from below’, would take on clear liberatory overtones (that is, converging with the message of the theology of liberation). Thus, development would in this sense be understood in very much the same terms as the first meaning of development in the WOMP/Alternatives debates spelled out in 6.2.1, a meaning that can also be seen as akin to Manuel Castells’s notion of ‘resistance identities’. It would similarly be understood that development, or the liberatory politics that takes its place, is a process determined by the people, in which they truly take control. Moreover, here the place/role of the churches is seen, similarly to that of voluntary organisations/NGOs in fourth generation strategic development action, as essentially supporting/serving the people’s emancipatory struggles.

Finally, in the ecumenical debate the foundation has been laid for a fourth generation approach to development by the churches, also in the fuller sense that we found in David Korten’s exposition, the second meaning of development in WOMP/Alternatives debates and Manuel Castells’s notion of ‘project identities’. Having pointed out how the critical ecumenical development discourse that was set out in Chapter Two can in itself be seen as an ‘idea movement’ (a set of ideas that in a meaningful way renders specificity to the different value discourses in fourth generation development thinking), at this point the pragmatic debate that was discussed in Chapter Three is especially worth mentioning. A subsection or dimension of the wider ecumenical development debate, we have seen how an idea- and value-centred role for the churches in development was highlighted in the pragmatic debate, to the extent where the churches’ authentic role in development could be seen as lying explicitly on the level of conscientisation, of challenging reigning power and ideological formations. This role would first of all have in view the poor, marginalised and oppressed, and the transformation of their situation to the extent where they are the true beneficiaries and subjects of development; yet we also saw how the pragmatic debate, especially its radical manifestation,

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21 See 2.4.
22 See the second quote in 2.3.2.2, which clearly states this principle.
23 See 6.2.1.
24 See the final paragraph of Chapter Two.
The Churches’ Participation in Fourth Generation Development
directs such a role to a conscientisation of the rich and powerful themselves.  
Here development has become a question of transformed lifestyles, structures  
and institutions, beginning with the rich and their societies. In so far as the  
churches are concerned, their role would be seen as similar to that highlighted  
by Korten and in the WOMP/Alternatives circle, namely to devote themselves  
to the spiritual renewal and deepening on which such a comprehensive  
transformation depends. In addition, this would be a call for spiritual renewal  
and deepening that, as in the case of Korten and the WOMP/Alternatives circle,  
is far removed from the traditional notion of spirituality (within the churches).  
It would take (or ought to take) concrete, outward effect through the way in  
which people, especially the rich and powerful, review their relation to the  
poor, adopt alternative lifestyles and develop a new sensitivity to the need to  
transform unjust structures and institutions. It may be argued that such a  
perspective on spirituality and conscientisation should have found its logical  
continuation in the wider fourth generation strategic and value discourses that  
we have explored in this study (that is, contrary to the state of erosion/impasse  
that we concluded the ecumenical development debate had reached in the mid-  
1980s).  

7.3 New beacons  
7.3.1 The new social movements

[F]irst of all we must realise that all over the world, many people  
have actually got together in new social, environmental and  
democratic movements: women’s movements, homeless  
movements, farmer’s movements, indigenous movements,  
environmental movements, peace movements, and so on. Some  
have already formed international networks. They often work in  
close cooperation with the old social movements - workers’  
movements and trade union movements ... Working in cooperation  
with social movements - as was the case with the prophets and the  
(peasant) farmer’s movements [in the biblical tradition] - churches  
and communities must convince their members of the need for this  
political struggle on the basis of their faith. If they expressed  
dissent, symbolic difference and a clear identification with the  
social movements, churches and congregations would gain  
credibility, and so enjoy untold opportunities to prophetically  
challenge the power structures ... Only when the churches  
participate in a double strategy, and go about it seriously, by saying  
“no” where necessary and offering alternatives, thus participating in  

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25 See the discussion in 3.3.2.  
26 See 3.4.
the creation of social counterforces, can their “dialogues” take on a limited meaning within the strategy as a whole. Ulrich Duchrow (1995:281, 282-283)

Constituting perhaps the only explicit theological reference to the new social movements (in the sense that they are appreciated as actors of great significance that stand in an autonomous relation to the churches), the basic argument of this study is well summarised in the above extract from Ulrich Duchrow’s book, Alternatives to Global Capitalism: Drawn from Biblical History, Designed for Political Action. Thus we may propose, similar to Duchrow, that within the political, value and idea dynamics represented by the new social movements today (a value and idea dynamics that David Korten associates with fourth generation development strategies), the Christian churches could find new impetus in terms of their own quest for meaningful participation in the broad terrain of development. It is indeed here that the churches and an ecumenical development debate (whose ongoing relevance we have appreciated in 7.2) could find a new open-ended, normative and change-oriented concept of development, one not so much determined by set definitions or meanings of development (cf. Hettne 1995:11-1627), but by radical people-centred principles and global value discourses that one would assume the churches at their best, as progressive ‘idea’ and ‘value’ institutions, fully adhere to.

On the basis of such an identification of the new social movements as the basic point of departure for the churches in development, it is proposed here that Manuel Castells’ notions of ‘resistance identities’ and ‘project identities’, which were highlighted in section 6.4 of the previous chapter (which also correspond with Duchrow’s notion of “a double strategy” in the above quote), can be taken as working concepts to give clearer structure to the churches’ participation in fourth generation development strategies. To begin with, it may rightly be said that it is on the level of resistance identities that the churches (or a particular segment of the churches) have always been stronger and have partly excelled as fourth generation actors.28 This statement is supported by our positive evaluation of the ecumenical development debate above, as well as a number of social scientific appraisals of the contribution of liberation theology to the concept of ‘alternative’ development (see Lehmann 1990:88-147, 190-192; Little 1995:133-134; Manzo 1995:245-247; 1991:21-25). Someone like Richard Falk (whose appraisal of religion is reflected in 6.2.2) would significantly add to this appreciation his suggestion of three pertinent terrains on which religion and the churches in particular have been allies of the new social movements. According to Falk, religious institutions/the churches have firstly served as enclaves by

27 An understanding of the concept of development and development studies by Björn Hettne (ibid.) is here adopted and applied.

28 This is a mode of social movement politics that resembles the first meaning of development in the WOMP/Alternatives debate identified in 6.2.1.
lending their “symbols and facilities in support of democratizing social movements of a generally nonviolent character” in various contexts.\(^{29}\) Secondly, through their active support to such democratizing struggles, they have also contributed to a new kind (or revival of an old kind) of sacramental politics by which the values of peace and justice would become the trademarks of such struggles.\(^{1987:186-187}\) Thirdly, they have given expression to a new form of feminist religion that has become an important expression of the feminist movement, that is, particularly with regard to “(a) new language of the spirit [that] is needed, and being sought, as well as practices that accentuate nurturing and mothering, and that specify the sacred as a reflection of the feminine also”\(^{1987:187}\).

Returning to the contribution of liberation theology to development discourse, an appreciation of this mode of theology in an article by Marilyn Little, “The Liberation of Development”, is especially worth mentioning. A scholar from the field of geography(!), Little proposed the notion of “One World Development” as a working concept in her article. She pointed out that it was a concept or actual movement that articulates “a response to marginalization”. Moreover, it is a concept or movement that, through the two major motivators of religion and politics, has made a distinct impact in challenging the traditional economic growth model of development. This movement or concept has broken through the latter hegemonic concept of development and its consequent selective application to 'Third World' societies by promoting/establishing the recognition “that there are no automatic leader/follower positions in the development process”. It contends that “(t)he lack of human and social development in the ‘First World’, ‘matches if not surpasses the lack of economic development in the ‘Third World’”\(^{1995:131-132}\). For Little, then, the combined intellectual effort of liberation theology and multiculturalism constitute, together with the movement of voluntary simplicity and the establishment of alternative trading organisations, a third manifestation of such a ‘One World Development’ concept or movement. Proclaiming that it is through this third manifestation that the ‘One World Development’ movement is making/has made a universal impact, as “the attempt is to change the collective body of knowledge so that it includes all

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\(^{29}\) This reality – of the churches acting as enclaves for democratising movements – is also well recorded by Leilah Landim in the context of Latin America. In her already mentioned article on “Non-govermental Organizations in Latin America” (see footnote 4 of Chapter Four), she wrote that in some cases of political opposition: “...the Church became the main arena for the popular sectors, deprived of any political channels for expressing themselves and participating in society, for speaking out and articulating their needs. The consolidation in certain regions, during the 1970s, of the current that has been called “the Popular Church,” is of particular importance. Religious sectors - both clergy and laity - who embrace a common discourse (sociological, political, theological: the Theology of Liberation) and a series of practices with specific characteristics, left a profound mark on the social movements they supported, and alongside which they worked, through “capillary action,” attending to the everyday needs of the popular sectors. At a time of closed political space, the NGOs in many countries took shape with this fundamental relationship with the Church’s work: they operated under the auspices of the Church, carrying out their activities primarily alongside the pastoral work.”\(^{1987:32}\)
of the world’s people” (1995:133, italics added), Little concluded with the following appreciation of liberation theology:

In liberation theology, the two driving forces of One World Development have met and inspired millions to act upon a dream eloquently expressed by two Brazilian theologians. …Those committed to integral liberation will keep in their hearts the little utopia of at least one meal for everyone everyday, the great utopia of a society free from exploitation and organized around the participation of all and the absolute utopia of communion with God in a totally redeemed creation…

Multiculturalism and liberation theology shared an intellectual philosophy. They have influenced each other and are influencing international discourse on development. Their major impact has been to challenge the concept of the ignorant and pliable aid recipient. This concept is the center of the authoritative persuasive approach in development planning. When it was combined with the basic needs approach the result was the transformation of homo economicus to “homo systematicus” … People became “cases” whose needs are “systemic requirements” which must be professionally evaluated … Multiculturalism/liberation theology sees both history and current events as evidence that people are capable of analyzing their lives, determining choices and implementing solutions consistent with individual/group ethics. (1995:134, italics added)

Certainly, the message of the theology of liberation and the practices that it inspires should remain a basic point of departure of the churches when faced with the issue of development, particularly the notion of fourth generation development. In fact, it should be said that, based on a distinctive theological self-understanding, there can be no other point of departure but the theology of liberation: an unconditional option for the poor, marginalised and oppressed, for the popular and grassroots movements which they represent.

Yet there is at this point also a need for further progression and innovation, as suggested by the consistent problem of reconstruction with which the churches (and other actors) are faced in contexts where liberation and a political platform for democracy have been achieved, but also by the striving to give shape to and promote those kinds of ‘resistance identities’ that Castells has come to view as sources of the new ‘project identity’ constructions (see 1997:356-362). In the words of the South African theologian, Charles Villa-Vicencio, who appropriately captured the challenge facing the churches here:

31 See the final quote in Chapter Six (6.4).
Winds of change are blowing across large sections of the globe, with the political crises in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and South Africa presenting a new challenge for theology. Hitherto the task of liberation theologians has essentially been to say ‘No’ to all forms of oppression. The prophetic ‘No’ must, of course, continue to be part of a liberating theology. As the enduring struggle for democracy in some parts of the world begins to manifest itself in differing degrees of success, however, so the prophetic task of the church must include a thoughtful and creative ‘Yes’ to options for political and social renewal. (1992:1)

Thus, the quest is here for ‘resistance identities’ that anticipate, if not display, to a greater extent the qualities of Castells’s ‘project identities’. In view of this recognition, we may well remain within the sphere of liberation theology and propose as point of departure what has come to be known in Latin American liberation theology in particular as las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (CEBs), the Ecclesial Base Communities. Based on the description in an Alternatives article by Pablo Richard (which adds to the religious appraisal set out in 6.2.2), through this ecclesiastical structure one may see the churches giving authentic expression to David Korten’s notion of people’s organisations (POs) described in 5.3.1.2. Consequently, through the CEB model the churches become an extended community, built on what Richard pointed out as “a base, a neighborhood, hamlet, school, ethnic community, social movement” (1988:359).

An expression of the “Popular Church”, or “Church of the Poor” (ibid.), Richard furthermore pointed out that “[a] key concept to understanding the CEB … [was] that of ‘participation’” (1988:368). In the CEB the traditionally marginalised and oppressed, “the poor, the campesinos, the laborers, the indigenous people, the blacks, the women”, are given opportunity to participate. It is the place where they can begin to think, speak and organise their actions. In the CEB creative participation that accommodates the social totality of the people becomes possible: they “participate by creating a new language, a new symbology, a new thought, within the CEB”, which “is done from their own social, political, and above all, cultural situation” (ibid.).

(T)he Church, especially through the grassroots communities, presents itself as a place of creativity and life and popular participation. The CEB in this sense becomes a formative school for men and women who are creative subjects, who are creative leaders, and responsible citizens, who are in solidarity with the majority of the oppressed people. (1988:369, original italics)

Richard concluded that in Latin America the CEB was “thus part of what has been called the “irruption of the poor” …: a profound popular movement, an
“awakening of the masses”, an awakening of the peoples and cultures which have been secularly oppressed, an increasingly significant participation of the women in society” (ibid.). As such, the CEB embodies “a new and authentic democratic movement” in this society, not only in the sense that it is the result of this movement, but also to a large extent the cause of it (1988:369-370, original italics). “It is the power of the people which manifests itself in the economic, social, political, cultural and also religious life.” (1988:369, italics added)

Yet, it is in our opinion in Ulrich Duchrow’s above-mentioned book (Alternatives to Global Capitalism) that the CEB model, as an expression of the ‘project’ element in ‘resistance identities’, is taken to a still further level. In the penultimate chapter of this book Duchrow challenged the churches to move beyond political rhetoric and actively participate in the creation of a new life-sustaining economy. Based on the principles of the cooperative, people’s participation, creativity and ownership, and ecological sustainability, and given clearer direction by existing examples, the vision of a future life-sustaining economy, according to Duchrow, calls for experiments and enterprises in the following alternative micro-economic areas: (i) alternative companies and company networks;32 (ii) alternative technologies; (iii) alternative land use; (iv) alternative micro-financial systems;33 (v) alternative trade (see 1995:235-268). To this he would add the personal and communal commitment to an alternative consumption pattern and a fairer distribution of income (see 1995:268-274), that is, underlying value practices of the new economic system and the above-mentioned enterprises.

Thus, in Duchrow’s case, the emphasis has clearly shifted to the socio-economic level. As far as the churches are concerned, while they were still some way from making a large-scale contribution to the above-mentioned alternative practices,34 he otherwise pointed to “a broad diversity” of church base communities all over the world and in various parts of Europe35 fitting the latter alternative category. From a more pertinently European point of departure, he pointed out that

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32 Here Duchrow (1995:254) pointed to, amongst other things, the example of the Mondragon network of cooperatives in Spain, an initiative that was started by a priest(!).

33 With regard to this area the famous Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is upheld as example by Duchrow (1995:261-262).

34 However, examples of ecclesiastical participation could, according to Duchrow, be found in some of the identified alternative practices, such as the Development Commission of the WCC’s (CCPD’s) experimental study in the area of alternative technologies in the 1970s and 1980s (1995:255), churches in Germany’s participation in alternative trade through the political movement “Aktion Dritte Welt Handel” (1995:267), and churches in Germany’s attempts towards fairer income distribution through the Berlin-Brandenburg initiative “PfarrerInnengehalt - Ökumenisches Teilen” and the Baden initiative “Soldarischer Lohn - Ökumenisches Teilen” (1995:272).

35 Duchrow’s list of specific European examples includes the Sisters of Grandchamp in Switzerland, the Brothers of Taizé in France and various examples in Germany: the Christian communities in Wulfshagenerhütten, Wethen, Imhausen, the Mennonite community in Bammental, the traditional Hutterer brotherhood in the Eifel. He furthermore referred to the European Collective of Christian Base Communities, which has its small head office in Holland (1995:248).
examples of church-based communities acting as “germ cells” (see 1995:252) of the new life-sustaining economy envisioned did indeed exist.

As prototype Duchrow upheld the example of “La Poudrière”, a community or collection of five interrelated communities of over 100 people living in and around contemporary Brussels. Starting off as a group of homeless and unemployed people who got together to work on all kinds of waste produced by the ‘affluent society’, they are a group of people (community) that has grown in sophistication and self-sufficiency on the basis of their initial recycling efforts: selling repaired goods to other poor people; running a removal firm; renovating an old brewery and factory for their recycling activities, doing vehicle repairs and all kinds of manual jobs; renovating parts of the works premises for accommodation; and producing most of their food on their own farm (1995:246).

For Duchrow, then, this group of five communities, living in the city and the country, could be seen as “an autonomous cell of poor people for the poor in a totalitarian global economic system”. They have come to live “a life in community which is impressive in its wholeness, and marked by joy and healing”, a new beginning for many (1995:247). They express a new aesthetics of art, play and togetherness, and live according to clear communal goals. Importantly, they also have a clear religious base, but one that rather enhances the communal aspect and the value of equality. Their religiousness is rather a contributing factor in softening their ‘resistance identity’, as it emphasises voluntariness and an openness to outsiders. As captured in the following description by Duchrow of this community:

In front of the large kitchen there is a big terrace on the garage roof, so that children can play there in sight of their parents. Meals take place around one or two large tables, made from timber from the farm. In the house of the first community there are five artistic stained glass windows over the tables in the dining room. They depict the five goals of the community: presence, friendship, justice, utopia and hope, and self-discipline ... Besides its stated goals, the community tried to define the means by which these goals could be achieved: work; a shared life and communal use of goods; a simple lifestyle; trust in others and in the goals ... simple resources, available to everyone ... no-one is excluded, be it for reasons of their past, class background, religion, situation or job training.

Elsewhere in the discussion Duchrow pointed out how the religiously open character of the “La Poudrière” community goes to the extent where “(a)ll its members, whether they are Christians, Muslims, Buddhists or atheists, are independent and equal and participate in the fully democratic process of shaping their economy for life” (1995:277).
In such cases, there is no ethnic exclusiveness, no masters and no slaves, and no dominance of men over women. Everyone is involved in the decision-making process, everyone receives the same financial allowance, and everyone is free to go on the main annual holiday excursion and to participate in cultural events. A small group celebrate Mass every morning, a larger group every Sunday and everybody joins in the periodic celebrations. The houses are always open to guests - the modern-day equivalent of the Pauline messianic communities, as are monasteries. (1995:247-248)

In the last section of the chapter under discussion Duchrow further highlighted the ‘project’ element by emphasising the necessity of networking. He emphasised that, due to the enormous pressure applied by the current mainstream system, individual or isolated alternative groups had “practically no chance of survival” (1995:274). Again, the simplest form, and hardest for the system to get hold of, are what he called “reciprocal visits” or networking, as expressed by the following recent initiatives, including an initiative by the WCC:

Base groups working towards an alternative economy and democratic self-organisation visit one another, exchange information, support each other, strengthen each other through positive stimuli, and form loosely - or more tightly - organised networks: ecumenical networks, solidarity networks of all types, and research networks. This is happening at all levels: first locally and then at a national and European level, with countries always split into clear defined regions. During the UNCED in Rio in 1992, a large meeting of NGOs took place. In June 1993, the World Council of Churches hosted an international meeting of those networks which had carried out programmes of action marking “500 years of oppression and resistance”. The theme of the meeting was that of the Asian networks (People’s Plan 21): Alliances of Hope. There are innumerable examples, in many diverse forms, of such alliances. What unites them is a concept of a just, peaceful and environmentally friendly co-existence. (1995:275)

However, Duchrow also cautioned against complacency. According to him, existing alliances are not to be idealised, as they are often weak and fragile in the light of financial constraints, rivalries and personality clashes that develop, as well as the absence of better organisational facilities that leaves too much in the hands of too few people. Consequently, it remained easier for single-issue groups to network with each other than with groups dealing with different (but interrelated) issues (ibid.).
Despite such difficulties to construct larger networking relationships, it also remains true that economic transformation (in the alternative, people-centred sense) cannot be achieved “by an ‘economic policy from below’ alone” (1995:277). This is stipulated as a basic assumption by Duchrow: grassroots initiatives are indeed to be seen as the “seeds of a new economic policy at the micro-level”; yet, they can change general economic conditions only if they evoke change at the macro level. On the basis of this basic condition the networking of initiatives among small-scale alternatives themselves, and between themselves and institutions that in principle might be independent of capital forces (e.g. trade unions and churches), was viewed by him as “(t)he bridge between rejecting unjust global mechanisms and setting up small-scale alternatives, on the one hand, and the necessary political strategies [on the macro level], on the other” (ibid., italics added). In short, without such a bridge, the small-scale alternatives on the ground would lose their meaning in terms of the larger whole.

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On the level of praxis, it can be said that the discussion up to this point in the present subsection (7.3.1) pertains mostly to the local church’s participation in fourth generation development. Again, as Duchrow has pointed out to us, this does and should not neglect the factor of networking and cooperation at local and even wider levels among single churches or congregations, between such churches/congregations and broader communities/people’s movements/other actors. In line with the concept of ‘resistance identities’ that has been proposed, which consistently aims to move closer to the meaning of ‘project identities’, we can say that the discussion has come to challenge local churches/congregations and the larger networks in which they might be involved, to be more than voluntary organisations (to draw here on an earlier fourth generation concept37) that act as enclaves and voices for the democratic and resistance struggles of the poor and oppressed (although, one should add the qualification that such a role remains fully valid, necessary and meaningful in particular contexts). Inspired by the churches’ own message of liberation theology (which as a message has universal significance38) and the base model (CEB) that has become the practical expression of this message, the discussion has challenged the churches/congregations and their networks to become people’s organisations (to again draw on an earlier fourth generation concept39) that act as the base of people’s striving for political, social, cultural and, we should emphasise, economic emancipation, especially of the marginalised, the poor and the oppressed. It sees the local church/congregation as an extended community, as the springboard or base of people’s renewal, in the context of authentic participatory and

37 See 5.3.1.1.
38 See the quote from Marilyn Little’s article earlier in this subsection (7.3.1).
39 We have already applied this concept in the discussion of Pablo Richard’s perspective on the CEB model in 7.3.1. See also 5.3.1.2.
democratic values. It depicts the local church/congregation as a new community engaging in various new initiatives: spiritual, social, cultural, political and economic (the latter thus also denoting to the churches a new area of specialisation to be taken up by them). In contrast to first and second generation development strategies, it is not the church/congregation that goes out to render some project service for the people. Instead, it is a case of the church/congregation constituting the constant base from where people engage in a process of comprehensive and concrete renewal, which, in line with third and fourth generation development principles, ought to have sustainable, systemic, escalating and permanent effect within the local and regional community at large.\(^4\)

However, this can only partially be the social movement perspective that challenges the churches towards a meaningful participation in fourth generation development activity. This mode of development activity, as the exploration in this study has made clear, implies networking and communication, a ‘politics of ideas’, in the widest sense possible. Beginning with Korten’s perspective that was set out in Chapter Five, this mode of activity aspires to a people-to-people interaction going beyond local and regional initiatives. It is interested in a global people’s movement that will be the synthesising force of the various contemporary transnational social movements. It seeks value, structural and policy transformation in areas that have universal application. It is interested in the global citizen, in persons whose immediate acting and thinking relate to the larger reality of global values, survival, responsibility and transformation. In the extended meaning that we found in the WOMP/Alternatives and other complementary debates in Chapter Six, fourth generation development activity goes beyond local democratic discourses and practices to focus on wider political discourses of global governance and structural transformation, on the question of a new world order defined by the new transnational social movement values. In the light of this project (that is, the creation of a new world order), it goes beyond a social movements approach and emphasises a broader and more complex (global) civil society approach that draws on a diverse range of actors.

\(^4\) In terms of the complementary meanings of the third and fourth generation that is sustained in this study (see especially the discussion in 5.4 and 7.1), the principles and policy framework of the people-centred development agenda spelled out in Chapter Four (see especially 4.3.1) and the concept of essential or large-scale community services spelled out in 5.4 are assumed here.

\(^5\) The concept of Mondragon in Spain’s Basque Country furthermore serves as a concrete illustration here. Being an initiative that was initiated by a priest, it has had the multiple effects that we are speaking of. As Duchrow described the widening dynamics of this initiative: “In 1944 the priest Don José Maria Arizmendiarrieta, with the help of a population still recovering from the effects of the civil war, began building a technical college. The first self-managed cooperatives soon followed in the Leniz valley. A credit cooperative was set up to fund the venture. By 1986, the system of cooperatives in the region consisted of: 103 industrial cooperatives (with high quality research centres), 8 agricultural cooperatives, 4 service cooperatives (including medical care), 1 consumer cooperative, 17 housing cooperatives, and 46 education cooperatives with, in total, around 20,000 working members. All these workers and their families see themselves not only as owners but also as co-responsible creators of this continuously expanding enterprise, in which economic (wealth creating) and social components are integrated.” (1995:254)
Its orientation is ultimately the new informational or ‘Network Society’ and the system of world communication to realise its project of a new and global civil society solidarity. The working concept here is Manuel Castells’ notion of ‘project identities’, which takes as its point of departure the new transnational (proactive) social movements, that is those actors that should determine the identity of the new civil society solidarity.

Against the background of such a formulation of an extended fourth generation strategic development action, the document, Declaration toward a Global Ethic, becomes a meaningful case study to assess – amongst the different religions – the churches’ progression towards the kind of fourth generation activity indicated here. Characterised by a strong Christian influence,41 this document, which was endorsed at the 1993 meeting of the Parliament of the World’s Religions by 6500 representatives (Küng and Kuschel 1993:8), was a noticeable commitment to and recognition of the need for a global ethic, a binding values construct, by a substantial and widely representative group from the world’s religions.42

It can be noted how the declaration departs from the basic presupposition that a new global order cannot be achieved without a global ethic, without “a minimal fundamental consensus concerning binding values, irrevocable standards, and fundamental moral attitudes” (Parliament 1993:18, original emphasis in bold). While this does not imply forsaking religious plurality (Parliament 1993:21), the declaration identifies the need for a new recognition of fundamental interdependence, “practising a culture of solidarity and relatedness” (Parliament 1993:15). Again, it becomes clear in the document that such openness cannot be confined merely to the different religions. It implies a wider openness on the basis of a sense of humility that the world’s religions are not capable of solving the wide-scale and complex problems facing the world. At the same time, religion’s contribution is to be regarded as indispensable, in a concrete, spiritual sense. The document states:

We know that religions cannot solve the environmental, economic, political, and social problems of Earth. However, they can provide what obviously cannot be attained by economic plans, political programmes or legal regulations alone: a change in the inner

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41 The project leader and initial drafts-person of the declaration has been the distinguished Christian theologian, Hans Küng (on the historical origins of the declaration, see Küng (1993:43-73)). One may furthermore point to the substantial group of Christian religious leaders that signed the declaration (see Parliament 1993:37-38), as well as the continuing scholarly interest among Christian theologians in the project (as, for instance, evident in the 1996 publication edited by Küng, Yes to a Global Ethic. New York: Continuum).

42 The declaration was signed by such significant people as the Dalai Lama, the Cardinal of Chicago, the Vatican representative, the representative of the World Council of Churches, the General Secretary of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, the General Administrator of the International Baha’i Community, the spiritual head of the Sikhs in Amritsar, a president of the Lutheran World Alliance, the patriarch of Cambodian Buddhism, a leading rabbi and an Arab sheikh (Küng 1993:72).
orientation, the whole mentality, the ‘hearts’ of people, and a conversion from a false path to a new orientation for life. Humankind urgently needs social and ecological reforms, but it needs spiritual renewal just as urgently. As religious or spiritual persons we commit ourselves to this task. The spiritual powers of the religions can offer a fundamental sense of trust, a ground of meaning, ultimate standards, and a spiritual home. (Parliament 1993:22, original emphasis in bold).

Closer scrutiny of the document makes it clear that ‘spiritual’ is nowhere understood in a mystical or abstract sense. It is a kind of spirituality that is fundamentally relational, which orientates the human consciousness to a new way of relating to other beings. It wants to inscribe in the human consciousness a profound respect for all life, human and non-human beings and entities. On the human side it means bringing about a new cast of mind that recognises the “inalienable and untouchable dignity” of every human being, “without distinction of age, sex, race, skin colour, physical or mental ability, language, religion, political view, or national or social origin” (Parliament 1993:23). Moreover, it is a kind of spirituality that also requires the creation of a new sensibility for caring, protecting and preserving animal and plant life, a new sense of planetary care, “especially with a view to future generations - for Earth and the cosmos, for the air, water, and soil” (Parliament 1993:26).

Such a function of striving towards inner orientation or transformation is summarised at a number of places in the declaration, which also anticipates our fourth beacon of ‘soft culture’ below in which religion’s contribution to softer and gentler approaches to life is emphasised. The declaration concludes that the world religions are faced with the following challenges to give expression to a new ethos, the beginning and foundation of an alternative society:

• to develop a concerning and helpful spirit towards others and a spirit of tolerance and respect for every other person or group - racial, ethnic or religious (Parliament 1993:26);
• to develop a spirit of compassion with those who suffer, with special care for children, the aged, the poor, the disabled, refugees and the lonely;
• to cultivate mutual respect and consideration, in order to obtain a reasonable balance of interests, instead of thinking only of unlimited power and unavoidable competitive struggles;
• to value a sense of moderation and modesty instead of an unquenchable greed for money, prestige and consumption (Parliament 1993:29);
• to cultivate a spirit of truthfulness in all relationships, instead of dishonesty, dissembling and opportunism (Parliament 1993:32);
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- to create a sensibility for mutual respect, partnership and understanding in personal (sexual) and familial relationships, instead of patriarchal domination and degradation;
- to create a spirit of mutual concern, tolerance, readiness for reconciliation, and love, instead of any form of possessive lust or sexual misuse (Parliament 1993:34).

In the Declaration toward a Global Ethic, furthermore, the perspective and orientation on religion’s contribution to a global ethic are ultimately to be found in the so-called ‘Golden Rule’, that particular principle shared by many religious and ethical traditions and positively expressed in the words: What you wish done to yourself, do to others. The declaration determines that this rule or principle has to become “the irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families and communities, for races, nations and religions” (Parliament 1993:24). It is further spelled out and concretised by four broad, ancient imperatives for human behaviour that are found in most of the religions of the world, and which are to constitute the irrevocable directives of a new global ethos, a new society at large (ibid.). Hans Küng, in a later essay, indicated how these ancient imperatives had been contextualised in the declaration to constitute the basic framework for thinking and action:

(i) On the basis of the commandment or directive, ‘You shall not kill’: the commitment to a culture of non-violence and reverence for all life;
(ii) on the basis of the commandment or directive, ‘You shall not steal’: the commitment to a culture of solidarity and to a just economic order;
(iii) on the basis of the commandment or directive, ‘You shall not lie’: the commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness;
(iv) on the basis of the commandment or directive, ‘You shall not engage in fornication’: the commitment to a culture of equality and to the partnership of man and woman (1996:278; see Parliament 1993:Part III).

Hence we may begin to ask on the basis of this review: is it not in this declaration that we are finding much of what is asked from religion in the fourth generation realm? Is it not in this declaration that we are encountering the kind of spiritual contribution that David Korten, for instance, is asking of religion and the churches?43 Is it not in this declaration that we are finding religion’s clear commitment to playing the reconciliatory role that Korten is asking from them, which, in the first place, begins with a reconciliation between the different religions themselves and making the message of love, brotherhood and reconciliation a common project (based on their own reconciliation)?44 Is it not in this declaration that we encounter the kind of spiritual sensitivity and renewal that authors from the WOMP/Alternatives circle are speaking of, a spirituality

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43 See the entry on ‘spiritual development’ in 5.3.2.
44 See the end of Chapter Five.
that serves as the fertile soil for a new social movement consciousness and activity and that allows for the recovery of religious tolerance that one of the writers of that circle has particularly emphasised. Do we not have here a clear example of transformed identity, of Manuel Castells's notion of 'project identities' that he himself substantiates with the example of religious reconciliation and a new sense of religiousness?

As a positive confirmation of the above questions, we should conclude with others that the "declaration toward a 'global ethos' ... can serve as a pointer toward the new consciousness of human values that will be required" to achieve a more sustainable and humane world (Raiser 1996:4). It signifies a new "ecumenical understanding between world religions" (Küng 1996a:277, italics added), a "sign of hope for the future of religions and the peace of the world" (Küng 1993:73), "a sign of hope that a global change of consciousness is possible" (Küng 1996b:3). Küng furthermore pointed out the direct relation between religion, a global ethic and world peace:

With this "global ethic", the representatives of all the great world religions did not intend to establish a new world ideology or any unified world religion beyond all existing religions, and they certainly did not intend to establish the predominance of any one religion over the others. Instead, with this "global ethic" they wanted to bring to expression an already existing general consensus regarding binding values, fixed standards, and basic personal attitudes. For they were borne by the conviction that there will be no new world order without a global ethic. And without a global ethic, there will be no world peace. (1996a:277)

With regard to the churches in particular, we may conclude that by making the declaration their serious concern, by adopting it as a project of their own, they could come closer to fulfilling a fourth generation development role than through all their charity and so-called community development projects combined. Here they may excel on the basis of their true expertise. Here they may come a step closer to the world of new ideas, values and relationships that the new transnational social movements at their best are also exerting themselves for. Here it becomes possible for local churches to fully participate in a global project, to conscientise the kind of global citizen asked for in fourth generation strategic development action.

Yet, it must at the same time be concluded that the declaration by no means represent a fully-fledged fourth generation strategic development agenda. As a point of reservation it must be stated that the declaration could easily remain

45 See 6.2.2.
46 See the final quote in Chapter Six (6.4).
within a vacuum, devoid of a clear social and political meaning or strategy. Directly related to this point, fourth generation development action challenges the churches to go beyond the interreligious solidarity that the declaration essentially represents. It challenges the churches’ (and the other religions’) ethical agenda to take ground in the more specific discourses and strategic activities of the new social movements, to be integrated into a wider social movement and civil society politics for the cross-fertilisation of that agenda and the political and social praxis of the new social movements. In line with the declaration’s admission that it cannot solve the world’s problems, it asks of the churches (and other religions) to manifest this concretely by engaging in wider solidarities.

What we are trying to argue here is well reflected in Richard Falk’s Alternatives article on religion and politics in the contexts of the new social movements, when he stated that it was “not sensible to place our trust in any appeal that does not concretely and courageously respond to the actuality of suffering (past, present and future) in our world” (1988:390, italics added). For a new postmodern religious unfolding to succeed, Falk stated as the basic premise of his argument that it would “both have to clear a political path (to deal adequately with resources, relations among societies, group identity, human and nonhuman needs and aspirations) and facilitate an appropriate religious awakening (the release of spiritual energy associated with this readjustment of role and mission)” (1988:393). But significantly, elsewhere in his article he also seems to have reversed the order when he claims that the new, emerging religious reorientation of our time (which is grounded in the earth and is richly relational) was leading naturally to a political reorientation (1988:388). This is a case where the religious dimension dissolves in the new social movement politics:

The new religious sensibility endows all of nature with a sacred, privileged status. The political implications are acknowledged, and lead to new forms of struggle in which modernist centralism and violence is under assault from a variety of postmodernist sources. It becomes worth dying for the sake of dolphins, whales, perhaps even on behalf of rivers, mountains, and forests. (1988:389)

This point on political action is also clearly made by Ulrich Duchrow in the last chapter of his book. Duchrow points out that he favours a double strategy, which goes beyond the construction of small-scale alternatives (as pointed out earlier) to include “political intervention” (1995:279). For Duchrow, as captured in the quotation that heads this subsection (7.3.1), political intervention relates here specifically to the new social movements and to his statement that the churches’ own “dialogues” can only take on a limited meaning within the larger strategic dynamics represented by the new social movements (1995:283). As a clear transnational or global meaning is implied here, the churches are, according to Duchrow, challenged to engage actively in the international networks and
alliances that are made up, first of all, by the new (transnational) social movements, but also by like-minded actors such as the old social movements (workers’ movements and trade unions) and political parties (e.g. the Greens, democratic socialists) (1995:281).

Thus, Duchrow’s challenge to the churches is a clear outward-going involvement, which very much resembles the transnational or global civil society solidarity of the fourth generation strategic development framework. It is to participate with the other actors of this solidarity in the grand ‘identity project’ of working for a new economic and political dispensation, what he calls a socio-ecological economic democratic alternative to capitalism.47 In terms of concrete strategic action, it is to work with the other actors of this solidarity for alternatives “to the current world economic and financial (dis)order” (1995:288). From the point of view of the churches, they are challenged here to face a new terrain of knowledge and creative thinking, the world of those international economic and political institutions that directly influence the outcome of development policy on a global scale. For Duchrow taking up this challenge furthermore meant that the churches should exert themselves for practical action in the following four areas:

(i) Transformation of the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions (IMF, World Bank, GATT) to that point where the BW institutions will be integrated into the UN system on the basis of more democratic, pluralistic and universal principles (see 1995:288-294);

(ii) Ending the debt that Southern nations owe to the North, which will, amongst other things, lead to the implementation of structural adjustment “on a fundamentally different development model, that is, an approach based on people and the environment, not on financial and economic growth alone” (see 1995:294-297);

(iii) Combating capital and tax flight and all economic crime, which will lead to “new international regulatory and control systems, with the governments of the richest industrial nations taking the lead” (see 1995:298-300);

(iv) Bringing the behaviour of transnational corporations (TNCs) under control, monitoring their activities on a constant regulatory basis, and binding them to new social, environmental and economic principles (see 1995:300-301).

As clearly implied in the last part of Duchrow’s discussion, however, participating in solidarity strategies for global change is not to be seen as restricted to churches in their larger formations (such as regional and national

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47 As indicated by Duchrow (1995:283, 288), in this respect he follows an intellectual stream represented by new/humanistic economic thinkers such as W Kessler (Germany), W Hoogendijk (Holland), P Ekins and J Robertson (Britain), H Daly and J Cobb jr. (USA), as well as by a number of reports and studies on the topic of a global restructuring of the political economy, such as: the UNDP Human Development Report, the ‘treaties’ emanating from the conference of NGOs at the time of the UNCED Rio Summit in 1992; the study commissioned by the EC Commissions’ Fast Programme, Towards a New Bretton Woods (ed. S Holland), the study by the Transnational Institute/Amsterdam, Beyond Bretton Woods. Alternatives to the Global Order (ed. J. Cavanagh).
councils of churches, the WCC). Thus it can be said that in his perspective the double slogan, ‘Think globally, act locally; think locally, act globally’ (see Waterman 2000:148), is equally applicable. For Duchrow, it is vital that the churches engage in larger coalition and networking strategies with larger civil society at national, continental and global levels (see 1995:304-311). Yet he pointed out that action for global change could just as much be seen as the terrain of the churches at the local level (see 1995:302-304), as the relevant “place to link small-scale alternatives and political strategies” (1995:304). At the local level large-scale processes of pauperisation, exclusion and destruction are most noticeable (1995:301). This is where the new civil society solidarity and alliance with the new social movements ought to begin for the churches, ought to be a manifestation or duplication of the global solidarity dynamics, and ought to ripple outward in ever-broadening linkages and networking initiatives (see 1995:303).

Finally, among the more recent reflections on civil society within the ecumenical movement/WCC48 already mentioned, a further meaningful articulation of our present argument may be found - particularly in an article by Israel Batista. Concluding his article by identifying four challenges that a civil society “paradigm” poses to the ecumenical churches, Batista in the process offered a perspective on remaining challenges that well supplements our own argument on the limitation of a project such as the one on a ‘global ethic’, but also on the challenges that generally face the churches in their endeavour towards a fourth generation development involvement (in the sense of Castells’ ‘project identities’); he concludes that:

(i) Civil society (we could add fourth generation development strategies), while opening a new world of opportunity for the churches, challenges them with someone else’s agenda. Civil society was not invented within the churches, but was born in the midst of people’s struggles and has been worked on by many and in different contexts. It has, therefore, become vital for the churches to work with others’ agendas and to avoid hegemonising processes and programmes. In all, the churches are challenged here to another kind of involvement, one that is not to be seen as less important than former modes of involvement: acting as facilitator, enabler and catalyst of others’ experiences, which, in turn, would have a far-reaching influence on the nature, function and contents of the churches’ programmes (1994:19).

(ii) Civil society (we could add fourth generation development strategies), challenges the churches to fully engage in local and global realities. Based on the realisation that small-scale schemes and micro-projects “cannot ignore the imposed character of global systems”, the churches are challenged to resolve “the tensions between local and global realities”, to engage in an

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48 See points (2) and (3) in footnote 1 of Chapter Four.
agenda of a global civil society working to transform the global systems of power:

The neo-liberal proposal of decentralizing state and civil society risks reducing global policies to the care of vulnerable groups with no political impact for transformation. Similarly, no new alternative or experience can dispense with the need for changes and transformation in the dominant global system. “The world needs a new vision of global cooperation for the next century,” the United Nations Development Programme has said.\textsuperscript{49} (\textit{Ibid.})

(iii) Civil society (\textit{we could add fourth generation development strategies}), challenges the churches to engage with the whole phenomenon of NGOs and social movements. Being central actors of contemporary civil society working for development and transformation, the churches (as co-actors of civil society) are challenged to facilitate critical consultation on their nature and activities (that is, of NGOs and social movements). Particularly with regard to the nature and work of NGOs, consultation (to which the churches could contribute) is necessary on the following matters: on questions such as labelling all organisations NGOs, including churches and ecumenical movements; on the attempts to replace people's movements by NGOs; on NGOs as subsidiaries of the state and implementers of readjustment policies; on the role of NGOs as facilitators of “ideological readjustment” (\textit{ibid.}).

(iv) Civil society (\textit{we could add fourth generation development strategies}) challenges the churches to exert themselves for a new international order. On the basis of what should be their profound dissatisfaction with the transnationalisation and gross concentration of power under contemporary capitalism, the churches are challenged to critically self-examine their own position in the international system (within an organisation such as the WCC, for instance). They should seriously reflect on what it means to be an international organisation, in relation to systematically structured ones (such as the World Bank and IMF) as well as international voluntary organisations (such as Red Cross and Amnesty International). They are to reflect on the ways through which they can contribute to the promotion of international civil society organisations (1994:19-20).

7.3.2 **The new communication solidarities**

Regardless of what a progressive group’s first issue of importance is, its second issue should be media and communication. This applies to all social movements. Robert McChesney (1996:16):

*(T)he power of the new movements, locally, nationally, and internationally, lies rather in their new ideas, values, and organizational principles - the latter revealing at least an implicit understanding of the potential of the latest communication technologies.* Peter Waterman (1996:50-51)

On the basis of the analysis in this study fourth generation development strategies **necessarily** challenge an actor such as the churches to become actively involved in the formal terrain of communication. As promoters of the new social movement politics, they are challenged in the following way:

They are challenged to engage in strategies that will **strengthen the new social movement and civil society activities and discourses specifically through the use of the media and new communication technologies**. This implies that they engage with other civil society actors in strategies that will **counter the consolidating and disempowering effects in world communication, will democratise world communication and thereby open up spaces and resources for the discourses and activities of the new social movements**. In a more general sense, it implies that they **act as facilitators, enablers and catalysts of a new civil society dynamics by generating resources and contributing to a communication infrastructure through which the new social movements and a larger civil society solidarity may flourish**.

However, let we immediately qualify such a challenge to the churches by stating that a meaningful contribution by the churches is here by no means self-evident. In one of only a few meaningful contributions to the theme of communication in the field of Christian theology, Neville Jayaweera suggested that such a statement was not only applicable to the mainline churches or the churches in the evangelical movement. Jayaweera also specifically discussed the role of the WCC and commented on the WCC’s (incomprehensible) lack of contribution to the concept of a New International Information Order (NIIO). He stated amongst other things that:

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The WCC, more than any other Church organisation, had the resources and the moral authority to speak out on this issue as it had indeed spoken on such issues as racism, disarmament, human rights, etc. It represents and speaks for more than ninety percent of the Churches outside the Roman Catholic and Fundamentalist Churches. Its voice is recognised and respected by the United Nations, and individual sovereign countries. Ideologically, at least
during the past decade, it has fearlessly witnessed to issues involving the rights and claims of poor and oppressed societies, often and not surprisingly, at great cost to itself. Why then has the WCC been muted on the issue of the NIIO? (1980:19)

In this article Jayaweera also gave two reasons “why the Churches should have been in the vanguard” of the struggle for an NIIO. The NIIO concept was, firstly, “fundamentally a concern for values” that one might assume the churches would fully embrace: truth, justice, fair play, respect for the human individual, the defence of the weak and the oppressed, human rights, including the right to communicate and to be informed and educated, cultural equality, etc. (1980:18; italics added).

Secondly, amongst the global institutions, the churches’ engagement in communication could be regarded as unprecedented. They had invested hundreds of million of dollars annually to communicate their message and for making the Christian position on various issues known. They were, in fact, communicating all the time, reaching out to all corners of the globe: through the operation of radio and TV stations, the publication of books, periodicals, magazines, newspapers, tracts and comics, the production of films, songs, drama and dance, grassroots parish networks, cellular groups and workshops, Bible study classes and house prayer groups (ibid.).

In his explanation of what he called the paralysis, the inability and unwillingness of the churches to involve themselves in the communication debate, we may note how Jayaweera’s criticism of the churches is very much in line with a basic assumption in our own study. For him, such a paralysis could be ascribed to the fact that “(t)he churches lack a social sciences approach and remain addicted to looking at empirical phenomena in theological terms” (1980:20, italics added). It can be said that they “have never felt a need for a valid ‘theory’ of communication”, as they basically remain interested “in one-way flow mass media” for evangelising purposes. Lacking any critical theoretical competence, they were also incapable of drawing the link between the interrelated question of an NIIO and a New International Economic Order (NIEO), or to recognise that the debate on communication is simultaneously a debate on economic justice, and that the call for an NIIO is merely an extension of the demand for a new economic order into the communication sector (ibid.).

The following quote well summarises Jayaweera’s argument, but also what could, from a fourth

50 Giving some direct statistics of the churches’ involvement in communication, Jayaweera (1980:18) pointed out that in the 1980s in the United States alone Christian groups and churches owned and operated 998 radio stations and 27 TV stations exclusively for communicating the Gospel. In addition, Christian groups in the USA were spending over $500 million a year on buying airtime on the national networks and private local stations. Scattered around the world, there were in all over 71 transcontinental and global broadcasting stations transmitting the Christian message on SW radio daily.
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generation development approach, be stipulated as the basic problem of theological and ecclesiastical debates on development in general:

It is nearly five hundred years since theology was dethroned from its self-appointed position as queen of the sciences. But most Churches and Church organisations generally behave as if Francis Bacon and John Stuart Mill had never lived. An empirical hypothesis, by definition, is more flexible and better able to respond to a changing reality than theological formulation. And communication, both as structure and as process, is primarily an empirical phenomenon. Unless communication is first analysed and understood in empirical terms, no amount of theological cerebration will give us the tools with which to manage it effectively. But Churches prefer to address themselves to the communication problematic in theological terms. They talk constantly of the ‘Theology of Communication’. In a sense one can even formulate a ‘theology of bridge building’ but no one would want to risk crossing a bridge constructed on theological principles. This is no less true of communication. (Ibid)51

We may conclude that a critical perspective, such as the one above by Jayaweera, cannot be neglected if we are to envisage a fourth generation development contribution by the churches, specifically in the area of communication. They are required to make the field of ‘communication for development’ an area of proper specialisation. This will mean that social theories of the new informational or ‘Network Society’, as set out in 6.4 of this study, will become the framework for all contextual understanding, analysis and action by the churches.

In line with our first working concept of ‘resistance identities’, for the churches this will mean specialising in that area in which the formal practical and theoretical field of communication correlates with the field of alternative development or ‘another’ development and which can be termed alternative communication (AC) (see Hamelink 1994a:137-138; Lewis 1993:12; Melkote 1991:Chapter 7; Stangelaar 1985:11-20; Waterman 1996b:25). Here, of course, one

51 In an earlier study on the participation of the churches in public communication, Cees Hamelink raised a similar critique. He concluded that the nature of the churches’ involvement in communication was inherently anti-dialectical by nature, that they operated without any proper theory of society by which they could critically analyse the socio-political and ideological context of their own communication praxis, which isolates public communication from the total social context (and thus from the problem of power and ideology). As a reversal of this, Hamelink proposed an approach/perspective for the churches according to which theological reflection and communication praxis are dialectically related, whereby theological reflection proceeds from a critical social theory that reveals the churches’ own position (ideological and political) and enables them to develop an alternative communication praxis. In ecumenical terms, it would imply a reversal from the “church and society” debate to a “society and church” debate (see 1975:48-50, 127-130).
is first of all thinking of local ‘resistance’ initiatives to the dominant information capitalist system (see Stangelaar 1985:11, 13-16; Waterman 1996b:25), which, on the practical level, may emanate in concrete initiatives such as “local stations, small community newspapers, minority media, counter-information magazines, theatre groups, pirate radio/TV stations, and alternative contents in mainstream media” (Hamelink 1994a:137-138). Guided by our determination in 7.3.1 in terms of which the concept of ‘resistance identities’ constantly anticipates and moves towards the actualisation of ‘project identities’, one is here thinking of the conceptualisation and actualisation of initiatives that confirm ordinary people as “the active participants in the communication process” and the active designers of “their own meaning systems instead of passively consuming the meaning system of the prevailing social order” (Hamelink 1994a:142). On a concrete, practical level, for the churches this would mean actively supporting a people’s media (see Hamelink 1994a:142-144), and moving still closer to the notion of project identities, supporting the construction of people’s networks that (most clearly in the movement from ‘resistance’ to ‘project identities’) exploit the potential of the new communication technologies and link local peoples to larger regional and global communication networks in ‘cyber space’ (see Hamelink 1994a:142-145).

In line with our second working concept of ‘project identities’, this will, for the churches, mean specialising in the field of world communication. It will mean that their ethical and value critiques become concrete in terms of addressing the disempowering effects (economically, politically, socially and culturally) of global information capitalism on ordinary people (see Hamelink 1994a:132-132); that their criticism is practically rooted in their active support for a global civil society initiative aiming “to shape world communication politics in accordance with people’s interests” (Hamelink 1994b:315; see also Hamelink 1994a:145-149). Pertaining to the ideal of “an active self-organizing global civil society” (Hamelink 1994a:147) that, in accordance with the analytic framework presented in 6.4 of this study, “is particularly active and effective on the terrain of

52 (1) Concrete examples of these kinds of ‘resistance identities’ would be those by Castells noted in 6.4, namely the Mexican Zapatistas and the Condepa movement in Bolivia (see footnote 31 of Chapter Six).
(2) Our concept of ‘alternative communication’ (AC) comes close here to the one identified by Peter Waterman. Having first of all listed a number of fundamental and interdependent characteristics of AC that comprise a strong element of the meaning of ‘resistance’, Waterman has otherwise been interested in an AC project that, while retaining its peculiar cultural/social identity, is outwardly orientated, overlaps with and relates to both the dominant system of communication and the new (transnational) social movements and civil society. As he explains: ‘I would like to suggest that alternative communication and culture are the project, or projects, of democratically-minded, theoretically-critical and socially-committed intellectuals (academics, professionals, artists, organisers), oriented towards the new social movements and civil society (both nationally and globally). ‘Alternative’ is thus placed, in both class and cultural terms, in tension with the ‘dominant’ and the ‘popular’. The three could be thought of as overlapping, interpenetrating and mutually-determining cultural spheres, physical spaces/geographical places, or even particular cultural products … It allows for, and even requires, ‘alternative’ media or cultural actors to operate in relation to, and within, both other spheres as well as their own. It recognises ‘alternative’ cultural projects, spaces and places as marginal in power terms but maximal in terms of cultural freedom and innovation.’ (1996a:25)
communication, media ... [and] culture” (Waterman 2000:142), for the churches this will mean joining the new social movements in what Hamelink identified as “a process of learning, of identifying issues as communication issues, of recognizing the micro/macro connection” (1994b:315; see also 1994a:147). According to Hamelink, this ought to lead to the following kind of dynamic, in which the churches should participate but a dynamic which they also need to help create by contributing to the necessary resources and infrastructure:

The defence of local self-determination needs global action. Local spaces have to link transnationally to discover how people’s right to communicate is curbed by current political practice. Linking can take place through telecommunication, and computer networks are more easily accessible than before. Computer conferences on the main concerns in world communication are a feasible project. Joint actions can be planned for intervention in the global arena in an autonomous manner. People across the globe can conclude private agreements and alternative treaties in the various issue areas of world communication. (Hamelink 1994b:315)

On a more general practical level, which goes beyond the specific aim to democratise world communication through the actual use of modern communication technology, a recent proposal by Robert Cassani to establish a global ‘Civil Society Development Fund’, may well guide the churches in their quest for concrete modes of action in the sphere of development and communication. Cassani argued that such a fund had become necessary to secure civil society’s independence from the dominant political and economic powers, and in meeting the infrastructure requirements of civil society so that it can seek its own solutions to global problems (see 1995:215-217). He furthermore emphasised that the information and communications ‘infrastructures’ of civil society in the broadest sense had to be the principle beneficiaries of the Fund (1995:220, italics added). These could be regarded as the needs that have become indispensable to a civil society to forge a global identity and engage in “(g)lobal lobbying, the coordination of campaigns and the exchange of information and real-time media relations” (1995:217). A number of communication-specific needs can be identified that such a fund ought to support and sustain:

- the need to subsidise access fees to electronic communications systems;
- the information and communication needs of those who facilitate or engage in fair trade;
- the need for an independent global non-commercial, non-governmental television network to carry news and information from a plurality of perspectives, without the pressure of purely advertising-driven programming;
We may propagate that the churches could play an important facilitating, enabling and catalysing role by making a sustained financial and organisational contribution to the above kind of enterprise. Also, this kind of enterprise could guide the churches in reapplying their existing communication resources on local and regional levels and in those areas in which they (as actors that are often skilled in the new communication technologies) might play a capacity-building and training role. As the Fund would operate on a fully decentralised basis and be comprised of “a web of regional and local affiliates” (1995:215) that seek to enhance the capacities of poor people to participate in informational society (1995:220), this is also the kind of enterprise that churches at local and regional levels might feel close to. At the very least, it denotes the kind of enterprise that ought to be imitated by churches at local and regional levels that are serious about strengthening civil society and about playing fourth generation development roles.

Communication, a fourth generation development perspective confirms, is basic to an authentic people-centred development process. Put in the negative, without sufficient access to the various mediums of communication, there can be no mobilisation of a civil society, no authentic participation by people, control of their immediate environment and active design of their own meaning systems (social and cultural), no proper conscientisation and education on people-centred development issues and values, no flourishing of the new social movements. As Hamelink pointed out, communication is basic to people's empowerment:

The term empowerment literally means that people are given power. It refers to a process in which people achieve the capacity to control decisions affecting their lives. Empowerment enables people to define themselves and to construct their own identities. Empowerment can be the outcome of an international strategy which is either initiated externally by empowering agents or solicited by disempowered people ... Much like communication is an important tool of disempowerment, it plays a significant role in empowerment. People's power requires knowledge about the decisions that affect their lives and information about what they can do about these decisions. People's power also needs expression, dialogue and the sharing of experiences. (1994a:132-133)
Yet, as Hamelink has emphasised, empowerment through communication in the context of contemporary world communication cannot be taken for granted. He concluded that in order for this to happen, “to create world communication politics ‘as if people matter’... new civil initiatives ... [were] needed”. He postulates this as a basic condition: “If people’s interests are to be accommodated, people will have to claim the right to communicate.” (1994b:314-315, italics added). This would require the new social movements to mobilise around the issue of communication as vigorously as they have around other issues:

So far, social movements have expressed their concern about the world in such fields as human rights, security, environment and development, but not in connection with world communication. Yet people’s daily lives are affected by world communication in essential ways. We need therefore, much like the green movement and the peace movement, a communication movement. (1994b:315)

In view of such a quest for new civil initiatives in the field of communication, Hamelink indicated that a first step in this regard “could be the worldwide adoption by individuals and movements of a People’s Communication Charter” (1994a:148, italics added). Launched as an ongoing initiative by a number of organisations, this Charter “could provide the common framework for all those who share the belief that people should be active and critical participants in their social reality and capable of governing themselves” (ibid.). It can be noted in brief that it is a document that aims to inspire political action around an integrated communication and human rights perspective. As stated in the introduction to the Charter, its aim is “to bring to cultural policy-making a set of standards that represent rights and responsibilities to be observed in all democratic countries and in international law”. Based on the recognition that “communication is basic to the life of all individuals”, it contains 18 standards that aim to protect people’s rights and dignity in the area of communication and to democratise world communication on behalf of ordinary people. They are the rights to: (i) respect (in accordance with the basic human rights and standards of dignity, integrity, identity and non-discrimination); (ii) freedom (of expression); (iii) access (to local and global resources for communication); (iv) independence (in the area of communication); (v) literacy; (vi) protection of journalists; (vii) the right of reply and redress; (viii) diversity of languages; (ix) (protection of) cultural

53 An updated version of the charter has been obtained from Cees Hamelink at the Centre of Communication and Human Rights by e-mail: hamelink@antenna.nl. Date: 18 July 1996.
54 Centre for Communication and Human Rights (The Netherlands), Third World Network (Malaysia), AMARC-World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (Peru/Canada), Cultural Environment Movement (USA).
55 As indicated at the end of the Charter, it has been informed by, and benefited from, various agreements and declarations in the field of international law and human rights.
identity; (x) participation in policy-making (in the areas of communication and culture); (xi) children’s rights; (xii) cyberspace access; (xiii) privacy; (xiv) (protection from) harm (that is, physical, psychological and social violation of individuals and groups by the media); (xv) (juridical) justice; (xvi) consumption (that is, physically and psychologically healthy consumption); (xvii) accountability (to the general public); (xviii) implementation (of the Charter).

In addition to the idea of a Global Civil Society Fund (which is especially directed to civil society’s needs in the field of communication), we may conclude that The People’s Communication Charter constitutes a most meaningful (already existing) initiative that can give concrete direction to the churches’ (both local and global) participation in fourth generation development strategies. The Charter is an initiative that integrates the issues of communication, human rights, culture and development into a single framework, and which seeks to continuously broaden its support base, so its adoption may present a very worthwhile challenge to the churches. Spelled out in question form: could the churches at local, national and global levels become the meaningful supporters of the Charter? Could they subscribe to it through their various bodies and make it part of their theological, development and educational framework? Could they become part of a larger solidarity movement that places the agenda of the Charter at the centre of their activities for transformation and justice?

Also overlapping with what we have recognised as the churches’ contribution to a global Civil Society Development Fund, could the churches become the real supporters of those groups already involved in the areas of communication and human rights stated in the Charter (cf. Hamelink 1975:129)? Could they make their own communication structures available to such groups by engaging in those diverse areas or issues themselves? Could they provide moral, political, ideological, financial and infrastructural support for the various groups and victimised involved? Could the churches, through its various national and international bodies, become an important voice to expose and criticise the present international economic order, by bringing a fundamental communication perspective into such critique on the basis of the Charter?

As Hamelink asked in an earlier study, could the churches make a significant contribution to the creation of the conditions under which people will become competent to deal with communication (1975:130)? At a very concrete grassroots level, similarly to what we identified under the idea of a global Civil Society Development Fund, could the churches engage in initiatives of education, training and conscientisation that will enable ordinary and poor people to acquire what The People’s Communication Charter stipulates in its 5th article as the “skills necessary to participate fully in public communication”: literacy in reading, writing, story-telling, critical media awareness, computer skills and education about the role of communication in society?
7.3.3 Alternative development policy

Given the complexity of contemporary social, political, and ethical issues, the church can no longer be content to focus its public ministry primarily on the issuance of social statements and public proclamations ... We have enough prophets who fire their moral broadsides against the evils of our society; we have enough policymakers who determine our future through efficiency studies and cost-effective analyses. What we lack are those who combine prophetic vision with careful analysis; and until we cultivate and nurture such persons, our public life will remain diffuse and spiritless. Ronald Thiemann (1991:41-42)

In this study the hypothesis has been sustained that the churches best fit the unlimited space of the fourth generation development realm in which the emphasis falls on a ‘politics of ideas’, on values, ideas, ethics, and on civil society networking. Yet, this emphasis does not mean that the fourth generation strategic mode constitutes a ‘soft option’ for the churches, whereby they may bypass the more formal and rigorous processes of social theoretical analysis and policy-making. Whereas it can be said that this is already clearly implied in our discussion of the first two beacons above, which challenge the churches to new levels of social theoretical specialisation and public (political) action in various areas (economics, communication, etc.), the challenge to become meaningful actors on the level of formal/official development policy-making in general should be stated as a third beacon for the churches in fourth generation development. Consequently, the churches are – no less than other actors in civil society – challenged to move towards greater specificity and engage in the policy-making processes that ultimately determine the direction that development takes. Their marginalisation in the public sphere (as we observed in the introduction of this study) does not exempt them from countering this position and seeking a higher public profile. This constitutes a challenge that the churches cannot shy away from, one that will ultimately determine their credibility and the quality of their involvement in development. They are challenged to make a constructive contribution to the conceptualisation and implementation of policies that ought to change institutions, structures and organisation in general on the decentralised and global levels of society. They are challenged to infiltrate the corridors of power and speak and operate on the same concrete public level as the rulers and decision-makers of society.

From a different angle, our emphasis on the complementary relation between third and fourth generation development strategies cannot but lead the churches to develop skills and seek opportunities in the formal policy-making arena. While the mode of fourth generation development action ultimately goes beyond this formal arena, as we concluded in 5.4, the other side of our
perspective nevertheless remains. As we concluded (in 5.4 but especially also at the beginning of this chapter), fourth generation development strategies cannot do without the managerial, organisational and policy-making skills developed in the third generation mould of action. This mode of involvement needs those skills in order for its actors to become concrete, constructive and effective in terms of the global transformation that they want to achieve. Moreover, third and fourth generation strategic orientations can be seen as belonging to the same people-centred development vision. This recognition asks from actors of the fourth generation strategic development orientation to become operative also on the level and modes of involvement set out in the third generation development orientation. It asks from those actors to become involved in formal policy-making activity on all levels of society, in a way that their involvement will manifest the reinforcing and complementary nature of third and fourth generation development strategies. It asks from them to influence the formal operational arenas of both third and fourth generation development strategic action in the direction of the new social movement values that are emphasised in the fourth generation orientation.

Thus, the framework and contents that have been set out in Chapter Four of this study become just as important for the churches (in addition to the framework and contents that have been set out in Chapters Five and Six). Chapter Four points particularly to the innovative element in the third generation strategic development orientation, which lays the foundation for a serious involvement by the churches in development. There the churches will find the core of a proper social scientific theorising about development that ought to appeal to their own normative orientation.⁵⁶ On the basis of such theorising, there the churches are also orientated towards a new kind of political involvement,⁵⁷ which, as we have further seen, is closely linked to the notion of a new professionalism in which actors of a people-centred development should, inevitably, develop new capacities in the areas of policy-making, management, organisational development, and so on.⁵⁸ There the churches and other people-centred development actors can find the perspectives on theory, skills and strategy that, if adapted to, would give them the solid basis from where they can truly excel in the sphere of fourth generation development activity (in so far as this sphere also requires concrete policy, managerial and organisational alternatives).

Yet the discussion in Chapter Four and our reliance on an interrelated NGO and people-centred development debate in this study in general for a deepening perspective on the strategic involvement of the churches in development (that is, from the starting-point of David Korten’s analysis) take on a further important meaning on the phenomenological level. Particularly with regard to our

⁵⁶ See 4.3.1.
⁵⁷ See 4.3.2.
⁵⁸ See 4.3.3.
comparative view of the ecumenical and NGO development debates at the start of Chapter Four, it should be stated that that view cannot be read as a complete identification of the churches with the NGO sector (as if the social identity of the churches can be summarised by the sum total of the contemporary NGO phenomenon). At the same time, the comparative view in Chapter Four suggests the substantial overlapping between the two sectors in the field of development, historically, strategically and organisationally.

As allowed and demanded by the new worldly determination in the ecumenical development debate and the new civil society solidarity perspectives that ultimately determine fourth as well as third generation development strategies, it can be stated here as a basic premise that the phenomenological overlapping between the church and NGO sectors ought to receive far greater consideration in the theological-ecclesiastical debates on development. Based on their historical and sectoral overlapping, the churches’ path towards meaningful participation in the formal public arena (as required in both the third and fourth generation development perspectives) should go through the contemporary NGO sector. Being the less skilled, less informed and less experienced affiliate today, the churches are to seek renewed cooperation, affiliation and integration in the field of development with their NGO counterparts. Through, and only through, seeking alliances with and becoming part of an ever more sophisticated NGO network, which is increasingly challenging but also cooperating with the world’s major policy-makers (such as the World Bank, United Nations, governments) (see Coate, Alger and Lipschutz 1996:94; Uvin 1995a:509; Poverty and Social Policy Department, World Bank 1997:28-36), could the churches make a meaningful (people-centred) contribution in the arena of development policy.

As the discussion in Chapter Four may suggest, the contemporary NGO sector, from the beginning of its initial historical overlapping with the churches, has embarked on a secular development path, which means that today it is acknowledged – to a far greater extent than is the case with the churches – as a meaningful role player by the main secular development actors. As such, the contemporary NGO sector, largely in its secular guise separated from the churches, has progressed towards levels of formal public development involvement far beyond the churches. Over against the domains of religious life in which the peculiar (unique) identity of the churches rightly ought to be sustained (such as cultic and personal worship, pastoral care), the churches are summoned to emulate to a greater extent this secular inclination of the NGO sector in the area of development. It can be claimed that this will be the only way for the churches to gain entry to and acceptance, on a systematic and specialised
basis, in the arena of formal development policy-making. Motivated by – and on the basis of – their faith and moral commitment, the churches are required, as one extension of their involvement in human life, to present themselves as development-oriented organisations that can in a capable way speak a predominantly secular social scientific discourse of development and that are fully integrated into the coalition activities of the NGO sector as a whole. This requires that they will, in a formal way, promote an NGO identity and activity that will simultaneously display the new professional, voluntary, participatory and democratic proficiencies that we outlined in Chapters Four and Five.

Whereas it is true that the notion of “public church means different things to different writers”, as two participants in what has come to be known in recent decades as the debates on ‘public theology’ and the ‘public church’ have observed (Hessel and Hudnut-Beumler 1993:297), our own perspective may find meaningful support in these debates. Beyond the theological-ecclesiastical and NGO development debates, we may note an emphasis in these debates on the need for the churches to progress to a policy involvement similar to that stressed above (though we focused more specifically on the issue of development, while the debates on public theology and the public church focus on the issue of public and policy involvement in general).

As is evident from the quote with which we started this subsection, we encounter among the current debates on public theology and the public church the perspective, similar to our own, which states that the churches need to convert their moral discourses and statements into more specific policy discourses (see Lategan 1995:226; Hessel and Hudnut-Beumler 1993:299). In these debates the churches and Christian theology are summoned to make such a policy contribution not only for the sake of a new kind of normative policy determination, in which a value or ethical commitment would creatively combine with careful analysis (Thiemann 1991:41-42), but also for the sake of maintaining their own future and meaningful place in a rapidly changing society (Lategan 1995:220). Furthermore, they will be able to make such a contribution only on the basis of an engagement in “new forms of education” through which “genuine debate and dialogue about crucial public issues can take place” (Thiemann 1991:42). They are called upon to make such a contribution on the basis of a worldly, solidarity and interactive determination very much in accordance to our own determination in this study:

The spirituality (or spirited mission) of a public church ... combines faith commitment with civil dialogue, prophetic passion with public sense ... it seeks the transformation of the social order that

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The Churches’ Participation in Fourth Generation Development

Affects, and should be affected by people of faith. A church oriented to public ministry is open to the world, speaking and acting beyond its walls for the common good, so that others notice, interact, and respond. It is people embodying their faith in social concert and coalition. (Hessel and Hudnut-Beumler 1993:299-300; italics added)

Against the background of the above generally stated intention of a public theology or church, we can at this point turn to the proposal for an interactive, constructive mode of theological discourse in the public arena that has been made by the South African scholar, Bernard Lategan. Making a contribution that can be regarded as representing a higher point of hermeneutical and conceptual sophistication in the general public theological debate, Lategan pointed out in his proposal the need for a different type of theological discourse in the post-apartheid South African context, which can also be applied to our line of thinking in this subsection.

Following the refined distinction made by David Tracy (a foremost exponent of the contemporary public theological debate) between three different publics of theology (the academy, the church and society at large), Lategan focused in particular on the meaning and implications of the third public for theological discourse (1995:219). In accordance with our recognition earlier in this subsection of the validity of a more distinctive church identity in certain instances or contexts, Lategan likewise emphasised his intention not to undermine the importance of more traditional theological and faith discourses that are conducted in the contexts of the first two publics, but only to add another kind of discourse:

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, it must be clearly stated that the intention of this proposal is neither the replacement of existing modes of discourse by a ‘superior’ form, nor the devaluation of alternative modes. The argument is, rather, one of ‘horses for courses’. The suitability and effectiveness of a particular discourse are in direct relation to the purpose for which it is employed. But more than that, the different modes of discourse play a supporting role in relation to each other. Intra-textual analysis, rediscovering of the tradition, reformulation and re-affirmation of dogma, describing the world of the text in its own terms, narrating the story of Biblical texts for their own sake, explaining and defending the truth claims of theology, prophetic resistance and confrontation, uncompromising witnessing, and apologetics of a more subtle or a more aggressive kind, all have their validity and function. The issue is to take into account which public one is dealing with, and to decide on which mode or modes would be suitable for that purpose. Furthermore, the more clarity that can be obtained in the
context of the second public regarding the nature and content of faith propositions, the more effectively the discourse with the third public can be conducted. The different modes are complementary to each other and should be valued for their supportive contribution. (1995:225)

Beyond the preservation of theological and faith discourses in the first two publics, within this framework there ought to be, and could be, a legitimate and necessary place for a different type of theological discourse suiting the context of the third public (that is, larger society) - a type or style of discourse that would complement (and not oppose!) the modes of discourse conducted in the contexts of the first two publics. Lategan postulated that in the third public, theology and Christianity ought to respond to “the need to contribute to the establishment of a new public ethos in civil society” (1995:225). This could be seen as a crucial extension of their task (as a primary value or ethical actor), yet, one in which they must forsake their privileged position. In order to participate in, and contribute effectively to, this public, theology would be required “to move beyond its preoccupation with itself, beyond being concerned primarily with the validity of its own truth claims, beyond its defensive attitude, beyond its experience of marginalisation and its resignation of not being able to influence civil society” (1995:225-226). Theology would be required to adopt a new style of discourse (a new form of language) for the sake of a wider cause:

The plea is, therefore, to move beyond what is conventionally understood as theological discourse and to explore the possibilities of a form of language that is not primarily interested in preserving the integrity of theology, but to serve a wider cause. The leading question for this purpose is not, How do we defend Christian truth claims? but, What contribution can theology make to the process of developing and establishing a new public ethos?

What is proposed here, comes close to what Gustafson (1988:45) calls ‘policy discourse’ - a discourse ‘which seeks to recommend or prescribe quite particular courses of action about quite specific issues’. As we have already seen, it is a discourse conducted in the public arena with the focus on concrete issues, within the constraints of the possible. It has the added dimension of taking responsibility for what is proposed in this discourse, and therefore demands accountability. Gustafson points out that it is a discourse not conducted ‘by external observers, but by the persons who have the responsibility to make choices and to carry out the actions that are required by the choices’. (1995:226-227)

We may end here by pointing out the seven characteristics that Lategan finally emphasised as indispensable for theology to succeed in such a policy-specific discourse. Reiterating, in fact, much of what we have attempted to say in this subsection, these characteristics can be presented as a structured set of proposals that should also determine the way forward for the churches, as development-oriented NGOs, to become authentic actors on the formal terrain of development policy-making.

Firstly, theology/the churches as development-oriented NGOs would be required to adopt a non-prescriptive mode of discourse in which their attitude “should rather be one of joint discovery, allowing parties in the public debate to participate on their own terms and articulate from their own experience and perspective - letting issues and formulations emerge before directing and confining the discourse” (1995:227).

Secondly, theology/the churches as development-oriented NGOs would be required to adopt an inclusive style of discourse, by which they are open to the flow of ideas, to the fundamentally new and unexpected and to all possible contributions (ibid.).

Thirdly, theology/the churches as development-oriented NGOs would be required to adopt an interactive, participatory style of discourse, which is no longer developed and conducted in the protected environment of the ‘own group’. “It implies the willingness, not to claim a privileged position for theology, but to become vulnerable, and to be challenged.” (ibid.)

Fourthly, theology/the churches as development-oriented NGOs would be required to adopt a discourse that gives evidence of hermeneutical competence, “that is, familiarity with different discourses, but also the ability to move between these discourses and to mediate and interpret issues as they are expressed and experienced in different contexts” (ibid.).

Fifthly, theology/the churches as development-oriented NGOs would be required to adopt a serving mode of discourse, by which they lose and transcend themselves “to become liberated in service to the other” (ibid.).

Sixthly, theology/the churches as development-oriented NGOs would be required to adopt a new kind of constructive discourse, which goes beyond resistance and protest and display “a willingness to reach out, to build, to take responsibility, and to jointly map out a possible course of action” (ibid.).

Seventhly, theology/the churches as development-oriented NGOs would be required to adopt a new mode of anonymous, secular or camouflaged discourse, which is no longer formulated in recognisable theological language and
effectively translates theological concepts in a public discourse accessible to participants from other discourses, in a form that is genuinely public. 

7.3.4 ‘Soft culture’

Another way to state the need for a transformation in consciousness might be in terms of a shift from the dominance of traditional masculine consciousness to the dominance, or preferably a melding into the dominant culture, of critical elements of traditional feminine consciousness. Growth-centred development institutionalizes the masculine ideals of competition, empire and conquest. It is intrusive and individualistic. It seeks symbols of dominance and power over others and nature. People-centred development depends on a realization of traditionally more feminine ideals of a nurturing family, and community, place, continuity, conserving, reconciliation, caring and reverence for nature and the continuous regeneration of life. David Korten (1990:168-169)

As an extension of the element of spiritual development that Korten has identified as a central dimension of fourth generation development, the notion of ‘soft culture’ can be proposed as a fourth most important beacon for the churches. It appears that this notion summarises in an appropriate manner what Korten has defined as ‘spiritual development’, but also much of the appreciation of the authors from the WOMP/Alternatives of what religion and its institutions (including the churches) have to offer to their agenda of transformation. As such, this notion best highlights what the churches can offer as religious and idea institutions (contrary to the churches as development-oriented NGOs, with reference to the previous subsection) that draw,

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64 See here our statement in footnote 17 in the introduction, where we pointed to such a mode of anonymous or secular discourse as basically the mode of discourse to which this study adheres, but with the exception that we allow more explicit theological/religious discourse to contribute to the interdisciplinary perspective at particular moments or stages. This exception indicates the marginal difference between our own position and that of Lategan. Whereas our study also fully locates itself in the third public and aspires to the rules/conditions of participating in this public, it, in contrast to Lategan, also allows for a selective contribution that is formulated in the realm of theology/reigion itself. In the case of Lategan such a contribution is restricted/referred back to the first two publics (the academy, the church), whereas in our case this demarcation rather becomes blurred. Adhering by and large to the rules/conditions of the third public, the relation between the three publics in our case becomes more than a complementary one, but one in which the three publics at times also overlap.

65 This can be argued on the basis of the quote at the start of this subsection (7.3.4), which is extracted from Korten’s discussion on the element of spiritual development. See in this regard also the discussion in 5.3.2.

66 See 6.2.2.
legitimately and meaningfully, on their own metaphors and spiritual language, in addition to the normative language/discourses from the social sciences.

It can be said that the notion of ‘soft culture’ presents us with another way of looking at a social movement approach to development. It explicitly pertains to the characteristic of a ‘politics of unlimited space’ that we have emphasised in this study and fully draws on the ethico-political language of the new social movements, that is, predominantly in the sense of Manuel Castells’s notion of ‘project identities’. Yet, as indicated by the concept of ‘soft culture’, the focus here is, beyond anything else, on the aspect of culture. This focus pertains to a description of society and human behaviour in which the cultural element merges with the aspect of spirituality, values and ethics. In this sense, ‘soft culture’ constitutes the counterpoint to a contemporary society characterised by hard, macho (male) culture, aggression and egoism – values which have been internalised in society’s structures and institutions and in human behaviour in general. In all, we can say that the idea of ‘soft culture’ is to serve as the ultimate expression of a totally different society (that is, different to the existing one), as a concept giving contents to new meaningful expressions of thinking, living, doing and relating in society as a whole.

It must be stressed (in accordance with our adherence to the notion of ‘project identities’ here) that the expression of ‘soft culture’ does not merely relate to what many theorists of an ‘alternative development’ or ‘post-development’ notion understand as the recovering of traditional cultures (as the embodiment of ‘Gemeinschaft’ versus ‘Gesellschaft’) (see Goulet 1995:137-152; Esteva 1993:20-23; 1987; 125-152; Rahnema 1993a:127; 1993b:169-172; Verhelst 1992:Parts I-IV). Denoting a common project of transformation that relates to the whole of humanity, it indeed challenges a hegemonic and homogenising superstructure and cultural transformation that are suppressing local cultural traditions. At the same time, however, it also focuses on the suppressive elements inherent to

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67 With reference to footnote 64 of this chapter, here we have the clearest case in point of the selective discursive contribution by the churches (and other religious institutions) to the third public that is formulated (partly!) within their own realm.

68 It will become clear in the course of the discussion in this subsection that the social scientific perspective is not neglected and how we, in fact, to a greater extent draw on its contribution to formulate our perspective on the churches’ participation in ‘soft culture’.

69 See the exposition of this characteristic in the introduction and 5.4.

70 In his essay on ‘Critical Political Economy’ Robert Cox has given a definition of ‘hegemonic culture’ that he linked in a direct way to the contemporary American way of life. He meaningfully stated: ‘The question of consumption models is closely linked to the question of hegemony. In the terms I have used, an indicator of hegemony would be a preponderant ontology that tends to absorb or subordinate all others. One intersubjective understanding of the world excludes all others and appears to be universal. It is often said that although United States economic power in the world has experienced a relative decline, the American way of life has never been a more powerful model. An American derived ‘business civilization’, to use Susan Strange’s term, characterizes the globalizing elites; and American pop culture has projected an image of the good life that is a universal object of emulation - a universalized model of consumption. This constitutes a serious obstacle to the rethinking of social practices so as to be more compatible with the biosphere.’ (1995:43)
traditional cultures, such as hierarchy, patriarchy, autarchy, sexism and fundamentalism. As it is a project geared towards greater humanisation, a mere romanticisation of traditional cultures as representing the (re)generation of true humanity is resisted.

In the above sense, of pertaining to the whole of humanity, of going beyond human diversity, the aspect of ‘soft culture’ can also be related to the aspect of a global ethic that was discussed earlier. It can be defined as the internalisation of a global ethic, of a spirit of compassion, of tolerance, of moderation, of solidarity in the overall behaviour, attitude and interaction of people in society. Closely related to a proposal by Johan Galtung for a social development project of ‘restructuration’ and ‘reculturation’, we may here speak of what Galtung refers to as the need for “binding normative culture” and “binding ethical rules” or “norms” to become rooted in human beings - over against prevailing norms that are not binding, which is the meaning of “culturelessness” (“anomie”) (1996:394, 397-398).

To continue with Galtung’s perspective, he determined that the aspect of ‘soft culture’ also needs to find concrete expression in society’s structural and institutional formations. For him, the realisation of ‘soft culture’, in a project of social development, is inseparable from the rehumanisation of society’s structures and institutions. “What is needed is humanity.” (1996:410) This would, according to Galtung, first of all lie in the recreation, or strengthening, of what he calls “Beta structures”, those structural and institutional formations of a micro kind expressing intimate, horizontal relationships. They are structures that not only include close family and friends, but also colleagues and neighbours, workplaces and voluntary organisations (1996:386).

While the emphasis is on Beta structures (because ‘small is beautiful’), it has to be recognised that some macro structural and institutional formations remain important, what Galtung calls “Alpha structures” (because ‘some big is necessary’). However, the goal would be to rehumanise Alpha, to “create Beta inside Alpha of any kind - bureaucratic, corporate, academic” (1996:408-409). It is a kind of Beta innovation well illustrated in number of contemporary examples: the colloquium at university, the Grameen Bank (introduced in Bangladesh) in banking; the so-called ‘Zehnergruppen’, groups of ten people working together in economic organisations in the former East Germany; the ‘Wohngemeinschaft’ (WG), which signifies ‘communes’ of like-minded people living and consuming together, and sharing all the work of the household - an extended family except for the kinship factor (1996:410).

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71 See 7.3.1.
72 One may draw a close parallel here between Galtung’s notion and examples of Beta formations and Ulrich Duchrow’s notion and examples of small-scale alternatives discussed in 7.3.1.
Importantly, in the context of this study, it can be pointed out how Galtung finally appreciates the potential contribution of *religion* to the realisation of ‘soft culture’. For him, religion’s special contribution is its *unifying* potential, that is, “(t)he notion of religion as linking, connecting, unifying” (1996:411). If we may interpret this further, it pertains to religion’s potential to create community and solidarity through a new spirit of *compassion* for others. Yet, it is a new spirit of compassion that should, first and foremost, start *with religion itself, with an inner struggle to promote the softer (unifying) aspects of the various religions* and to demote their harder aspects (that is, aspects that make religion as much one of the most destructive and divisive forces in society). In Galtung’s own words:

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Thus the most important struggle in the religio-scape ... is not the traditional struggle among religions as to which one is the most suited to carry humanity forward, but the inner struggle between the unifying and the divisive forces ... The important point is that the struggle is within rather than between and that each religion has this struggle on its agenda. Moreover, the harder aspects (Inquisition, witch-burning) have no doubt contributed to giving religion a bad name. Quakers and Sufis, Buddhists and Baha’is offer much softer approaches, but none of them would be entirely free from the harder aspects. For humanists this would imply a softening of the line they sometimes draw between themselves and the religionists, following the tradition of eighteenth century Europe. In short, there is a message to everybody in the world that is No. 1 in the vocabulary of the present Dalai Lama: compassion. (1996:411-412)

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In accordance with the above framework we can speak more specifically about the Christian churches’ contribution to ‘soft culture’. Such a contribution requires from the churches, amidst the wave of fundamentalism currently overwhelming their ranks, to install a new spirit of *tolerance* and *open-mindedness* amongst their membership towards others outside their direct circle, which should be extended to seeking new relations of partnership and solidarity with the latter in the field of fourth generation development. Furthermore, it asks of the churches to make the contents of a global ethic (in so far this has already been conceptualised) the basis of their message. At the heart of this should be a *new message of compassion*, as the highest marker of authentic religion to be rendered to all people, notwithstanding their descent – indeed, as

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73 Such a starting-point for religion is also recognised in *Declaration toward a Global Ethic* of the Parliament of the World’s Religions that was discussed in 7.3.1. This document acknowledges that religion’s contribution to a global ethic can only occur after eliminating “those conflicts which spring from the religions themselves, dismantling mutual arrogance, mistrust, prejudice, and even hostile images, and thus demonstrate respect for the traditions, holy places, feasts, and rituals of people who believe differently” (Parliament 1993:22).
the highest marker giving sense and purpose to human life. Such a contribution should not, however, be conceptualised on the level of ideas alone, on bringing a particular message. In accordance with an integrated cultural/structural perspective, such a contribution anticipates that the churches themselves will become creative contributors of new Beta formations as envisioned by Galtung and as set out in 7.3.1.74

In addition to the above, however, there would still be a consistent need to further fill in and enrich the notion of ‘soft culture’, over and above the already stated perspectives. It can be proposed that this is to be realised in particular through an engagement in feminist discourse, as a most important reactive and proactive discourse against male-infused hard culture. As Peta Bowden explains, in this discourse we are, for instance, presented with discourses of caring, with an “ethics of care” that is given further contents by a number of concepts denoting a variety of specific caring relationships and practices, namely mothering, friendship, nursing and citizenship (1997:2). Confronting the existing, dominant “morality of gender inequality itself” and expressing the multiple practices of a new “gender-sensitive ethics”, a particularly challenging aspect of such an “ethics of care”, in Bowden’s conceptualisation, is to overcome “the traditional split between public and private values” and to extend the concept of caring “beyond the familiar ground of close, personal relationships into a realm of more attenuated and formalized practices” – that is, into the public realm (1997:8-9, 17). For Bowden, this would require “social restructuring that enables both wider responsibility for nurture and participatory parity for women in public affairs” (1997:154). An “ethics of care” needs to go beyond and challenge existing ‘progressive’ social restructuring processes in the public sector, by demanding “a reconceived citizen ethics that reaches beyond the confines of distributive justice” (1997:155). This is because of the fact that the latter has not really challenged the “relations of dominance and dependency, as well as the distributive norms” that social and political institutions conventionally sustain (ibid).

Bowden maintained that women who had taken responsibility for caring practices have only been permitted “marginal status in public and citizenship practices”; and, within the activities of the public sphere itself, social relations have instead followed the same pattern, whereby female occupations are frequently subordinated to, and based on, servicing males’ work. Bowden elaborates on this point:

Where responsibility for caring practices is acknowledged in the public sphere, the great majority of service workers are women whose ‘natural’ caring activities are frequently defined as unskilled labour and paid accordingly. Thus public policies that uphold and

74 See footnote 72 of this chapter.
The Churches’ Participation in Fourth Generation Development

exploit the ideology of family-based practices of care simultaneously play into social structures that sustain multi-layered relations of dominance and subordination, and support women’s dependency in citizenship. (1997:157)

To end off our brief exploration of Bowden’s work, her perspective on the possibilities of reversing the ongoing relations of dominance and subordination suffered by women (and thus of reversing hard culture!) could be meaningfully explained by indicating how it well reflects Anthony Giddens’s notion of a ‘life politics’ that he propagated in one of his recent articles. For Giddens, in short, a new “politics of life decisions” and new life-style practices have emerged in a contemporary, detraditionalised society of manufactured risks and uncertainty, according to which people (in the industrialised and developing worlds) are beginning to reorientate their lives towards different values (1996:372-373). Giddens also refers to this as “life-style bargaining” in which various “life-political actions between different groups of people” have taken shape (1996:374).

In this regard, specifically under the banner of what he has identified as “emotional life-style bargaining”, Giddens has ventured into Bowden’s terrain. For Giddens, too, a particularly important phenomenon of emotional life-style bargaining has come to be the changing relations between the sexes, whereby women across the world are today staking a claim to forms of autonomy previously denied or unavailable to them. While it very much points to a claim by women to achieve equal economic and political rights with men (thus to what Giddens identified elsewhere in his essay as traditional “emancipatory politics”), this claim, according to Giddens, also extends to the social and cultural level, into the realm of ‘life politics’ as “it raises issues to do with the very definition of what it is to be a woman, and therefore a man, in detraditionalizing societies and cultures” (1996:376).

To return more specifically to Bowden, the above notion in Giddens, of a new ‘life politics’ by individuals and groups/coalitions, overlaps with Bowden's further perspective on the possibilities to overcome what she sees as the prevailing relations of domination and subordination of women in society (that is, the not yet realised “new social contract between men and women” envisioned by Giddens (ibid.)). Accordingly, Bowden also emphasised the role of (conscientised) public participants⁷⁵ to carry forward “their personal experiences and aspirations of alternative practices” into the domain of citizenship. Through this kind of ‘life politics’ (Giddens), she anticipates a double process of conflict and change that would take place increasingly in the public realm, changing institutional and social structures, linking the private with the public domain, and influencing and changing the collective value system and public debate.

⁷⁵ One assumes from the larger context of Bowden’s discussion that the reference is here to female and male participants.
Taking the example of Scandinavian countries as a particularly good case to illustrate her point, she explained:

These possibilities for the transformation of allegedly personal interests into the broader concerns conventionally associated with citizenship are matched by opportunities to reconfigure the conventions of citizenship itself. While they are caught up within the dominant constructions of care-giving and citizenship, public participants also bring with them their personal experiences and aspirations of alternative practices. And it is with these understandings of the possibilities and choices, that different practices of care and different relations of citizenship allow, that they are able to ‘work within-against’ - to contest, reconceive, and change conventional relations of citizen care from within their conventional positions of involvement.

These movements for change may not be swift: frequently, they entail humiliating compromise, tokenism and appropriation. But the sites of structural contradiction and conflict within the ‘system’ - the overlapping realms of both ‘social services’, and personal and informal caring - retain the potential for producing new norms, symbols and meanings for citizen care. Commentaries, on the Scandinavian experience at least, indicate that ‘conscious institutionalization’ of connections between public and private, community and personal aspects of life, has enabled women to become important partners in citizenship ... [T]he treatment of responsibility for nurture as a public issue is facilitating the rethinking of public values that connect the marginalization of women and their practices of care, the injustices of gendered labour arrangements and the irresponsibility of most men with regard to our intrinsic vulnerabilities and interdependencies. In this respect, Jane Lewis and Gertrude Astrom report that ‘attitude surveys show that all Swedish men between the ages of twenty-one and sixty at least feel that they should participate in unpaid [care] work.’ (1997:163-164)

Thus, we can propose that the above notion of ‘life politics’, particularly as informed by feminist perspectives of caring, poses a further challenge to the churches’ understanding and contribution to ‘soft culture’. For the churches, it firstly implies that the discourse and practice of ‘soft culture’ is not something to be perceived as distinct from this world, as something ‘soft’ and exotic that is peculiar only to certain domains or spheres and to certain people. It can be said that the imperative to bear witness to their faith through word and deed has always been central, in one way or another, to the message and self-
understanding of the churches. But this, generally speaking, has rather been understood as something a-political and separate from the question of structures and institutionalisation, political, economic and social.

As opposed to this self-understanding, the notion of ‘life politics’ challenges the churches to a new understanding of their faith, a politicisation thereof according to different social movement values not conceptualised and practised merely from within their own circle, but outside their direct domain - amongst and with other actors, social movements, etc. It thus challenges the churches and their members to adopt new forms of struggle and solidarity, in this world and with others not necessarily belonging to their own circle. In close connection to the discussion in the previous subsection, it challenges the churches to go public, to speak a language and engage in practices that, in terms of their own language and practices, converge with the ‘worldly’ language and practices of a new ‘life politics’ and ‘soft culture’. Consequently, it is a language and practice in which both the churches and other actors of a life politics should find many common denominators: compassion, care, tolerance, respect (for others), modesty, solidarity, etc.

Secondly, it is especially Bowden’s feminist perspective that further challenges the churches’ understanding of a ‘life politics’ and ‘soft culture’. Adopting a public identity, this perspective implies, is not enough as one of the most crucial inner transformations that still ought to take place in a largely male-biased and male-dominating church sector, has to do with the place of women in the churches and their contribution to transforming theology. Yet, having said this, perhaps one of the silent but most meaningful revolutions within the churches over recent decades has been a new confirmation of women and feminist theology in the churches.76 This confirmation constitutes an emerging revolution in the churches that can certainly be considered to have made, and continues to make, an important contribution to the feminist movement. And in this new theological and ecclesiastical voice (collectively speaking) the language of ‘soft culture’ may also be heard.

In a book entitled, With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology, by women from Africa, Asia and Latin America, we may, for instance, note how Ana Maria Tepedino has written about “Feminist Theology as the Fruit of Passion and Compassion”. In this essay Tepedino writes about women’s struggle “against male-chauvinist ideology, which dehumanizes both men and women” (1989:166). Thus, she claims that the struggle ought to be a collective endeavour by women and men, and that women theologians should invite their male theological colleagues to join them in the struggle to give birth together to a new theology. Moreover, the starting-point for feminist theology ought to go beyond the experience of oppression, the experience of God, and the struggle

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76 Cf. here Richard Falk’s appreciation of feminist religion in section 7.3.1.
for justice” to the “practice of tenderness” ([ibid.], italics added). According to Tepedino, such dynamics needs to be all-embracing in terms of humanity as a whole, by seeking to create brotherly and sisterly relationships not simply between men and women, but also among the elderly, adolescents, and children.

In a further, concrete sense, Tepedino stipulates that women in the ecclesial base communities have shown the way to the practice of such tenderness through the many life-giving initiatives in which they are involved and have taken the lead: the various movements for health, day-care centres, and schools; the community movements for land reform; the volunteer crews to construct housing; ecology projects; the movement to create an alternative to contemporary wasteful, consumerist, individualistic and hedonistic society ([ibid.]).

In addition, the word passion emphasised in Tepedino’s above-mentioned essay title should attract our attention to this as a term that further informs the meaning of ‘soft culture’. Used as a twin concept with ‘compassion’, ‘passion’ here appears to denote the emotive aspect of women’s practice of tenderness mentioned above. For Tepedino, women do theology with passion, by passionately and wholeheartedly engaging with the subject themselves, by striving to fill their ideas with lived experience. As expressed in the following definition, they allow themselves to become totally possessed and unswerving in their struggle for new meaningful life.

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Passion, allowing oneself to be possessed, is the essence of the mystical experience and of the erotic experience as well, involving every fiber of one’s being at one peak moment, which explodes with energy and vitality for carrying on the struggle. (1989:168)

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While we could find in Tepedino’s perspective an important indicator for the churches’ contribution to ‘soft culture’, for transforming the churches and theology through a feminist input, there would still be scope for a further movement along the line of ‘resistance identities’ to ‘project identities’ that we are aspiring towards in this study. This is, for instance, illustrated by the above definition by Tepedino in which the notions of “passion” and “erotic experience” are related to the notion of “struggle”. Certainly, this cannot be the full story about human purpose and fulfilment. For the churches in particular, it means that neither a mere ‘struggle’ paradigm (even if this is filled with a more proactive contents), nor a world-denouncing Puritanism will do. It holds that a great challenge for the churches remains the development of a new ‘theology of joy’, as creative supplement to their worldly ‘theologies of struggle’.

It must be concluded that ‘soft culture’ does not per se stand juxtaposed to the notions of pleasure, joy and passion (the latter term used here not in the above

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77 This adherence to the notion of ‘project identities’ has been stated repeatedly in 7.3.1. See also the end of Chapter Six.
sense of ‘struggle’ but in the sense of denoting sensuality), but affirms them rather. Here we may refer to Jürgen Moltmann, the distinguished German theologian, who once asked in an earlier work on ‘theology and joy’ whether it can be regarded as right to laugh, to play and to dance in a world of so much suffering; whether the cultural revival of play, festivities and enjoyment in the affluent West is not forced and downright unnatural as long as there are so many hells on earth. “How can we laugh and rejoice when there are still so many tears to be wiped away and when new tears are being added every day?”

Moltmann gave a positive answer to these questions: *creative play and enjoyment anticipates and constitutes the true liberation and freedom of humanity*. But this does not mean a neglect of suffering and injustice in the present world, as Moltmann addressed himself to “those who are mourning and suffering with others, who are protesting and feeling oppressed by the excess of evil in their society”. What really matters is for humanity to learn “to distinguish between the alienated forms of merely apparent good fortune and the liberating forms of enjoyment” (1973:27-28).

Thus, for Moltmann the art of creative play and enjoyment prepares for, and anticipates, the liberated, future society (see 1973:36-37). In his final chapter he proposes as a special challenge for Christians and Christian congregations to “experiment with the possibilities of creative freedom”, to become “testing grounds of the realm of freedom right in the realm of necessity” (1973:85). In the context of what Moltmann wrote earlier, a kind of freedom is implied that stands opposed to much of the Christian tradition’s unconditional denouncement of pleasure and the abolition of the “games of freedom”: the Puritans, the Neo-Puritans, the Reformation, the larger Protestant tradition (1973:34-35).

But as Moltmann further commented, not only Christians have disregarded the culture of pleasure. This was just as much a characteristic of their secular counterparts, the socialist revolutions. As Moltmann observed ironically, “(i)n Prague the 1948 revolution closed down 2,000 coffeehouses, restaurants and beer gardens, the very ones in which the revolution itself had once been debated and plotted” (1973:35).

Of course, it must be said some 25 years after Moltmann wrote these comments that the question today is rather about an alternative to the hard culture of contemporary global capitalism, which has almost completely denounced and replaced socialism and religious asceticism. It should be concluded, however, that on ethical, existential and religious grounds, the answer does not lie in a return to either of the latter. For Moltmann, in this regard, the answer would rather be to wrest control of the alienated games of society from the ruling interests and to change them into games of freedom (*ibid.*). In the same vein Peter Waterman, in his reflection on alternatives to global capitalism in view of an anticipated project of “Global Solidarity Culture”, has suggested that there
may be a thin line separating an alternative society and culture from capitalist society and culture. According to him, the answer would lie rather in processes of *selective rejections* and *rearticulations* by means of the many different voices participating in a common project of solidarity and transformation:

The identification here of global problems rather than universal enemies requires us to formulate and develop viable, convincing, attractive, and “enjoyable” global solutions. The word *enjoyable* is crucial here. Insofar as we recognize how state-nationalism and globalized capital capitalize (literally and figuratively) on enjoyment, those seeking to surpass capitalism must shrug off their fear of hatred of pleasure, sensuality, lust and individual consumption ... The notion of a worldwide Maoist Cultural Revolution will attract few - especially among people who have been already subjected to such puritanical authoritarianism and its accompanying hypocrisies ... If we reject revolutionary historical schemas, then we can extend globally the notion Calderon (1987) has applied to Latin America, of living in “mixed times.” Such a notion undermines the binary oppositions of Traditional-Modern and Modern-Postmodern, reminding us that we live in a historical world, not just a sociological or linguistic universe. Realistic global utopias will then represent nor negations of either “premodernity” or “modernity”, but selective rejections and rearticulations - implying the necessary contribution also of those living under, rediscovering, or valuing precapitalistic civilizations and cultures. (1996a:49-50)

7.4 Conclusion

Development, education, communication and humanization are all part of the same process. Process means progression, creation, moving upwards and towards what is both desirable and ‘better’ (more human) ... The word ‘development’ should then be reserved for what it was coined for in the first place: to indicate growth, yes, but also and above all to invoke creation, culture, education, ownership and control, the satisfaction of fundamental human needs and everything involving autonomous human agency. Raff Carmen (1996:209)

The above quotation from Raff Carmen’s book, *Autonomous Development. Humanizing the Landscape: An Excursion into Radical Thinking and Practice*, fittingly concludes our perspective on the churches and the contemporary development debate in this study. Indeed, we may note that the four beacons of
complementary third and fourth generation strategic development action identified in this chapter reflect Carmen’s conclusion of a broader and richer concept of development, one that also incorporates social scientific and ethical concepts and discourses that traditionally do not belong to the explicit and overt language of development.

For the churches (and other religious institutions), perhaps more than any other actor of development, such a broader, richer and at times less traditional concept of development would seem to be far more appropriate to their nature as ‘idea’ and ‘value’ institutions and (presumed) orientation towards holistic human well-being. In accordance with the perspective on complementary third and fourth generation strategic development action that has been explored in this study, the churches are challenged to invest to a far lesser degree in ‘development’ activities of a first and second generation nature - activities that are the less sophisticated expressions of development in the traditional sense of the word. As actors that (presumably) want to make a durable contribution, they are challenged to adapt and reorientate themselves to the third and fourth generation strategic development practices, which may first of all relate to innovative interventions in the traditional economic and political (or public) areas of development.

Yet the concept of fourth generation development strategies - an understanding of strategic development action that we adhered to predominantly in this study - challenges the churches to focus especially on their (anticipated) contribution to the now emerging broader, richer and less traditional understandings/discourses of development in normative development and social sciences debates. These are new understandings/discourses of development that do not neglect the more traditional areas of development. However, they broaden the scope of development and move on to aspects that can be regarded as vital to greater social well-being, to transforming the lives of the poor and addressing oppression in its fullest sense, and to the creation of a society (globally speaking) that truly progresses on the path towards greater humanisation (following Carmen). In this sense, they are understandings/discourses that seek to transform the traditional areas of development as well as to go beyond those areas to emphasise other dimensions or aspects of human and social life.

On the part of the churches, the new emerging fourth generation strategic development orientation - which is infinitely broader and richer on a conceptual, relational and ethical level in comparison with traditional development thinking and praxis - challenges them to a fundamental introspection. It challenges them to new levels of normative social-scientific discourse and specialisation. Above all, it challenges them to reconsider what their real strengths and purpose are in achieving development, or more preferably, in achieving a new just and human society. In that sense, it challenges them to excel as ‘idea’ and ‘value’ institutions in a renewed, more informed and concrete way - ‘idea’ and ‘value’ institutions that are not merely concerned with preserving or protecting their own peculiar
identity in the process, but engage in new relationships of solidarity and coalition with the contemporary movements of the poor and civil society with which they have (or ought to have) much in common.

In conclusion, we have in this chapter (re)confirmed the prevailing relevance of the ecumenical development debate. This, certainly, is a debate or discourse representing an intellectual road that has not been travelled by the majority in the churches. It is a debate or discourse that must be sharply distinguished from the so-called evangelical development thinking, which is dominant in the churches today and which, on the basis of underlying ideological and structural constraints, cannot take the churches beyond the first and second generation orientations. At the same time, the ecumenical development debate or discourse and the churches’ adherence to that debate or discourse need to find new impetus in the modes of complementary third and fourth generation discourse and action that we have identified in this chapter. The ecumenical development debate and the churches’ adaptation to such modes will enable them to overcome the state of erosion and impasse in which they currently find themselves. Through their engagement in such modes they may become a significant actor contributing to true human development.

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78 See 7.2.
79 This can be argued on the basis of the exposition in Chapter One, which remains very much applicable to contemporary evangelical thinking on development. See also footnote 17 of this chapter.
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This book newly addresses the question about the Christian churches’ participation in development. The innovative element of this reflection is the way in which the author finds meaning and significance particularly in the concept of a fourth generation approach to strategic development engagement. The book’s essential argument is that a fourth generation strategy—an approach that makes the contemporary social or people’s movements the primary subjects of its development action and theory—holds the greatest prospect for authentic participation by the Christian churches in development. Development, now more than anything else, is viewed in terms of a ‘politics of ideas’, as a condition of change to be brought about by the power of ideas, values, transformed relationships and communication. And it is to this sphere of expertise, the ‘unlimited space’ of social life that it can be argued the churches (and religion in general) also belong. While the notions of ‘idea’ and ‘value institutions’ cannot define them completely (as they are from a sociological and theological point of view also many other things), the churches can (at their best) be defined as institutions that are educated in their own distinctive way in a ‘politics of ideas’, and which may rightly perceive their primary task to be the changing of minds, conscience and behaviour of human beings and (other) institutions (e.g. the state and government).

Finding initial orientation and perspective in the debate on development in the Christian ecumenical movement, the book proceeds to find a further deepening and innovative perspective in the contemporary NGO and related people-centred debate on development but also a wider selection of debates from the social sciences literature. On the basis of this exploration a synthesis of perspectives is offered whereby four areas or beacons of meaningful development action by the churches—the new social movements, the new communication solidarities, alternative development policy and ‘soft culture’—are highlighted and discussed in particular.

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