



PALLAVA BAGLACORREIS

and Japan have each spent far more, the breakthroughs necessary to enable molecular manufacturing could come from nearly anywhere in the world. Nanotechnology could enable the ultimate leapfrog.

Challenges ahead

Leapfrogging is not a panacea. The ability to match or exceed developed world technologies in one sector does not necessarily translate to other arenas; a leapfrog nation may produce innovative biotechnologies but still be unable to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals for clean water. The widest array of leapfrog technologies and ideas can't counter endemic corruption or political instability.

There are numerous ways in which leapfrogging can fall short: NGO or lender mandates may require the adoption of certain infrastructure technologies that made sense a decade or two ago, but are less useful now; government policies may inhibit the growth of new technologies with stiff fees or shortsighted restrictions; there may be resistance for reasons of tradition, foreign pressure, or even marketing; and chosen leapfrog technologies may just not work very well.

Even so, leapfrogging remains an important

prism through which to examine global development and the future of emerging countries such as India, Brazil, and China. It's a useful reminder that the current economic and political order is not permanent, and that nations and regions once considered backward can emerge to take on important global roles. It underscores the observation that developmental histories do not all follow the same path; expecting a developing nation today to face yesterday's challenges and opportunities can be a serious mistake.

Most importantly, leapfrogging demonstrates that the power of technology is contextual. Industries and ideas thought to be revolutionary when they emerged in the developed nations can become stale and obsolete. At the same time, technologies that have unrealized promise when implemented in the West may be utterly transformative in locations not laden down with legacies of past development. The future belongs to those best able to change along with it. Sometimes, starting from nothing can be a catalyst for just that sort of change.

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A software engineer talks by mobile phone with a large dish antenna in the background in Hyderabad, India.

PEOPLE-POWERED CHANGE

Proven methods for aiding communities facing such threats as deforestation or loss of markets for traditional products could be applied to assist the Iraqi people in establishing a balanced and effectively functioning society.

As the Iraqi people move toward establishing their own country, their decisions about how to divide power between Baghdad and outlying regions, and their subsequent progress in substantiating that balance, will be both important and difficult to achieve. Facing this challenge, they would be well advised to look closely at a family of powerful and proven methods for engaging all parties in a community in dialogue. After setting development goals and devising plans for achieving them, the residents work cooperatively to implement the plans.

The power of these methods, known collectively as “participatory development” (PD), lies in their ability to create win-win opportunities in which all stakeholders can claim ownership of the goals, plans, and results. Rural Moroccan communities in the High Atlas Mountains provide a good case in point.

Mountain community development

In the winter and spring of 2003, communities in the Tifnoute Valley of the High Atlas Mountains, south of Marrakech, jointly engaged in PD activities with direct relevance to their long-term survival. With their long list of stresses and challenges, those communities offer a worthy context for evaluating the approach.

The Berber villages in the region are among Morocco’s poorest, with high rates of illiteracy and joblessness. Furthermore, contaminated drinking water is a major cause of infant mortality. The villagers’ dependence on fuelwood for cooking and on grazing animals (goat, sheep, and cattle) as their main source of income has contributed to massive deforestation and erosion.

The Tifnoute people also grow wheat and corn on terraces along the mountainsides using traditional methods. Over recent decades, however, population growth coupled with degradation of the land has forced most households to supplement their harvest with purchases of these staples. The transition to cash crops, such as cherries and apples, which began about ten years ago, was advanced significantly through the villagers’ work with participatory development.

Another factor affecting the fate of the Tifnoute communities is their neighbor, giant Toubkal National Park, Morocco’s oldest (1942) and largest (over 40,000 hectares) protected area. The area inside the park, which includes the tallest peak in North Africa (Mount Toubkal at 4,163 meters) and a reliable water source, Lake Ifni, is also the villagers’ summer pastureland. Therefore, local people are concerned about the effect protec-

by Jason Ben-Meir



LIZ FANNING / HIGH ATLAS FOUNDATION



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Above left: Women carrying heavy loads of brush collected from high on the rugged slopes of Morocco's Tifnoute Valley. The collection of fuel for cooking is a major cause of deforestation in the region.

Left: People who remain in their home villages as the world changes also have to change. Here, men plant a fruit tree, developing a new cash crop.

tion regulations will have on their livelihoods.

Fortunately for the Tifnoute, the High Atlas Regional Management of Waters and Forests employs three facilitators trained through a grant from the World Bank in the techniques of participatory resource appraisal, one of the methods in the PD family. Toubkal's facilitators have engaged people of the Tifnoute and neighboring communities in constructive dialogue about the use and development of the shared resource base.

The goal of such efforts is to reach agreements between communities and park management that support local people in choosing and engaging in new forms of income-generating activities (such as fruit farming) in exchange for their accommodation of nature-protection measures (such as closing an area to grazing). The new income reduces community dependence on the neighboring park area, which in turn helps to conserve the natural resources.

A NATIONAL-LEVEL ‘MARSHALL PLAN’

In May, His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco announced the National Initiative for Human Development to address some of his country’s most pressing needs: creating jobs, improving public infrastructure, and assisting the most vulnerable people. The initiative, as described by the king, is a “large-scale mobilization ... in the effort to achieve sustainable development [and] self-reliance.” Supported through 2010 with funds totaling more than \$1 billion, it will first target 360 rural communities and 250 urban districts (roughly three million people) that are in the most need. One motivating factor is the recognition of a strong connection between severe poverty and terrorism. More specifically, the initiative is a response to the fact that eleven of the sixteen suicide bombers implicated in last year’s bombings in Madrid were from the same impoverished Moroccan shantytown.

In his initial announcement, King Mohammed called for the establishment of local and urban centers that would be used to build the self-reliance of the nation’s most impoverished people. From the extensive experience of PD programs, it is possible to make a clear proposal in response to the king’s request. Participatory planning and training centers can play a key role in the initiative by bringing communities together to create new projects that diversify their income base and build self-reliance.

Centers situated in communities and managed by community members can assist local people in determining their priority goals and then in designing and implementing projects. They can also provide training in facilitation,

modern agriculture, health, and other skills. In sum, they can provide one-stop shopping for community development needs in ways that transfer needed skills to the local population.

Facilitators in each community would be needed to catalyze the PD process. Centers can provide training in facilitation to schoolteachers and other community members, as well as to outside technicians and appropriate government and nonprofit liaisons. Rural schoolteachers in

Morocco, for example, who are typically young and eager to improve the social conditions in the villages they serve, can be excellent facilitators of community development once they receive training.

The Near East Foundation, an American NGO committed to the grassroots development of the Middle East and beyond, has a center in southern Morocco that offers a fine model for transferring important skills to local people. An excellent example of a government agency that

operates in a way consistent with the methods of participatory development is Morocco’s Ministry of Environment. The ministry’s primary objective is to involve communities and other organizations in projects addressing their shared goals related to the environment. The creation of PD centers already has the strong support of some of the king’s closest advisers, so Morocco may well lead the way in realizing the full benefits available when methods of participatory development are applied on a large scale.

—Jason Ben-Meir



Amsouzerte, the central village of the Tifnoute Valley, is nestled on the side of the mountain among irrigated terraces.

JASON BEN-MEIR

Benefits of participatory development

The people of the Tifnoute have received significant benefits from their investment in participatory development. These include enhanced socioeconomic development, greater trust, more-productive partnerships, and strengthened civil society.

Enhanced socioeconomic development.

Participatory development projects are both for profit (for example, a co-op based on the production of such tangibles as crafts or agricultural improvements) and for public purposes, such as establishing a potable water supply and building a school. The transfer of skills to communities to enable their effective management of projects is an important part of participatory development.

In the Tifnoute, as in most rural communities across Morocco, potable water, irrigation, and tree planting are regularly identified as top priorities, with school construction and women's cooperatives often rounding out the top five. More than any other project, potable water decreases infant mortality and illness among the population. Modern irrigation maximizes the utility of water supplies and creates the opportunity for building schools, clinics, women's co-ops, and other service centers on the additional land made usable by the increased access to water. Fruit trees diversify household incomes and can help prevent rural dislocation caused by free trade with the United States.

In 2003 and 2005, the U.S. Agency for International Development, with the strong support of Ambassadors Margaret Tutwiler and Thomas Riley successively, provided funding that enabled the purchase of over 10,000 cherry and apple trees for the Tifnoute communities. In addition, the villages benefited from important national and international partnerships formed by the park management for the purpose of directing support to local communities. Typically, government agencies and NGOs lend technical expertise to enhance project design and provide resources that help establish local projects.

Greater trust and more-productive partnerships. In the Tifnoute, the implementation of projects that responded to the needs of local people, as expressed and identified through constructive dialogue during a series of meetings, helped to build trust between the park management and the villagers.

Participatory development approaches use both direct dialogue among the parties involved and third-party facilitation (at least in initial stages) to help ensure an inclusive and productive process. For example, during one such session in the Tifnoute, a community-based conflict management procedure that involved listening to each other's concerns and having them acknowledged was particularly useful. The procedure was used for working through a water rights dispute whose settlement required that the park management and the community achieve mutual understanding on important issues.

Strengthened civil society. In the process of working together to realize their development goals of managing existing projects and creating new ones, communities also establish local associations, which are core civil-society institutions. New tiers of cooperation can form as neighboring communities join together in implementing projects beneficial to the entire region. Morocco already has a straightforward procedure for filing and registering associations and has experienced a significant increase in recent years in the number of local NGOs. In the Tifnoute as well, participatory development has helped catalyze the creation of several associations.

Larger benefits

Rural development and diversification of income are very high national priorities for Morocco in a free-trade era with the United States. For the United States, the free-trade agreement with Morocco, signed and ratified last summer, is a model for future trade agreements. It is the first with an African nation

Fruit trees diversify household incomes and can help prevent rural dislocation caused by free trade with the United States.

THE VALUE OF PARTICIPATION

According to Morocco's High Commission for Water, Forest, and Anti-Desertification, the country's forests face serious threats affecting four million people. Grazing is both a major contributor to the problem and an obstacle to reforestation. Given grazing's importance to rural livelihoods, especially in mountainous regions, community participation is essential to successful reforestation projects.

Projects in Africa and elsewhere show that it is possible to promote development while also conserving nature. This balance is achieved by processes of participatory development that assist communities in deciding priority projects and bringing all parties together to communicate and negotiate win-win scenarios.

In cases ranging from children living in the slums of Dhaka, Bangladesh, to at-risk women and youth in Albuquerque, New Mexico, development projects designed through a participatory process have proved successful in attaining socioeconomic and environmental benefits. Case studies point out that as community participation increases, so does the probability that the resulting projects will be sustained by local people.

—Jason Ben-Meir



People gather from throughout the Tifnoute Valley for this weekly market. Mules and donkeys tethered on the nearby hill will be used to carry loads of grain and other heavy purchases back home.

and the second with a Middle Eastern country (after Jordan).

Community-designed development can be extremely effective in combating the brutal effects of free trade on subsistence farmers, which include a sharp decline in employment, falling prices for farm products, lower land prices, urban migration, rising income inequality, and an increasing agricultural trade deficit. Studies from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace explain that under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Mexico experienced these effects, challenging conventional wisdom that agricultural liberalization is good for a developing country in a trade relationship with a developed economy. Mexican cereals, grown using traditional methods, cannot compete with U.S. subsidized agricultural production (especially corn); with their traditional employment undercut, farmers have been forced to look for work in urban areas.

We now understand, however, that diversification of rural income sources can prevent the displacement of farmers caused by free trade. In communities designing and implementing their own projects, income diversification has been a result. As one community member explained in an open-forum meeting in Tafraoute, Morocco, "We wouldn't want to move to the cities if we had the means to achieve the goals of our village."

Lessons for Iraq

The Iraqi people must decide what kind of federalism they want and how power will be dispersed between the central national authority and regional power centers. Secular Shiites in southern Iraq are now seriously considering following the model of the Kurds in the north, who have established an independent parliament, ministries, and a regional military force. The bitter history of ethnic relations in Iraq makes it understandable why more and more Shiites are opting for this kind of relationship. Most religious Shiites, on the other hand, prefer a strong centralized authority because it is consistent with the universal Islamic rule that will be instituted by the

Mahdi, the legendary, end-time imam.

In principle, federalist democracy involves dispersion of power toward localities and involving all social groups in decision making. Participatory development is often viewed as promoting federalist democracy because it is based on inclusion and has been shown to strengthen the capacities of local communities to manage their own development. Also, PD projects reflect the self-defined interests of those involved in the process, which affirms local identities and strengthens federalism.

At the same time, however, PD experiences from around the world also suggest that central governments can play a positive and important role in supporting community development. In fact, communities engaged in PD processes may form relationships with central authorities that can be characterized as “having their cake and eating it too”; that is, development based on the will of communities and supported by regional and national governments. Federalism standing on this kind of relationship is a model that could help guide the Iraqi people through the challenging constitutional issues they face.

From another angle, experience has shown that successful partnerships based on PD processes encourage transparency among the partners and a readiness to engage in the ongoing design and implementation of projects. In Iraq, the many town hall meetings organized last year at the provincial and neighborhood levels to discuss the transition to self-rule were a positive step. More interactions are needed to support these steps. Regular meetings and ongoing relationships will be required as the communities determine and manage their own development.

Cases in Morocco and around the globe show that when political actors base their projects on their constituencies’ self-described priorities, it increases their own prospects for success, due to heightened public support. Community members and leaders who have acquired the skills and training to achieve collaborative development and experienced its benefits make excellent candidates for local and national leadership. They understand that an effective social movement can begin

with a series of community meetings where local people are given the opportunity to express their concerns and interests.

Finally, U.S. policymakers should remember that American support of locally designed projects generates enormous public goodwill and constitutes an excellent form of public diplomacy. PD projects are far less expensive than typical aid programs because of their reliance on local capacities and know-how and the contributions (often in the form of labor) that local communities and partners provide. Also, community-designed development engenders feelings of trust and respect for the organizations, agencies, and providers of financial assistance that have made such an experience possible.

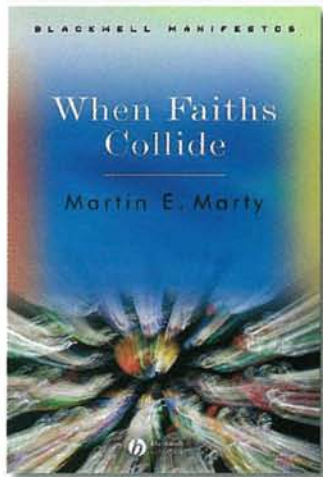
The United States faces huge challenges in the Muslim world—from aiding in the reconstruction of Iraq to supporting a peace process that builds Palestinian self-reliance and minimizing rural dislocation in Muslim nations with which it engages in free trade. Given these challenges, the United States would be wise to consider carefully the way that participatory development can promote socioeconomic and political development that would profoundly benefit the region and advance its own fundamental interests. In Iraq, the needs are urgent and the stakes are particularly high. The United States should now decide to support the application of participatory development throughout the country as an important step toward achieving a federalist democratic state in the Middle East.

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Justin Watson

The Welcome Stranger



WHEN FAITHS COLLIDE

Martin E. Marty

Malden, Mass. Blackwell Publishing, 2005
193 pp., \$16.95

Martin E. Marty begins *When Faiths Collide* with an observation: “The collisions of faiths, or the collisions of peoples of faith, are among the most threatening conflicts around the world in the new millennium. They grow more ominous and lethal every season.” This sort of observation, while true, has been repeated so often, especially since 9/11, that it has become a commonplace, a cliché. And in our public discourse, the clichéd expressions of this problem are usually followed by equally clichéd solutions.

One such solution is a doctrinaire secularism, which sees religion as irrational and dangerous, inevitably breeding holy warriors and theocratic tyrants. If it cannot be eliminated, religion must be kept from political power, just as one keeps an open flame from gasoline. Yet the secular-

ist solution in its most militant form—a crusade against crusades, a jihad against jihads—is one of those cures that would be as bad as, or worse than, the disease.

A far more popular solution, and thus even more clichéd, is the “plea for tolerance.” This plea has been made so habitually and broadly that it amounts to little more than “Let’s be nice. Please.” It is more popular because it demands so little of us. It is easy enough to say the right words, strike the fashionable pose, and deplore the “intolerant.” We can adopt the attitude of tolerance with little danger of dealing with actual persons or real differences.

Marty, a distinguished historian of religion, asks us to go beyond these clichés. “My thesis,” he writes, “is that the first address to these situations [of conflict] should not be the conventional plea for tolerance among them, but is rather a call that at least one party begin to effect change by risking hospitality toward the other.”

The basic meaning of hospitality is “to receive a stranger.” In contrast to tolerance, which can become a mere attitude toward a generalized other, hospitality involves concrete acts toward specific persons. Hospitality also can be costly, even dangerous. “Conversation and interplay follow the acts of reception,” Marty reminds us. “Both are full of risk.”

Marty’s model of hospitality is rooted in the Bible. As he observes, “One of the main bearings of God toward humans is to show hospitality. In these scriptures God, surprisingly, is depicted both as the believer and the stranger, the host and the guest.” Throughout *When Faiths Collide*, Marty relies upon the distinction between “strangers” and “believers” developed by the German sociologist Georg Simmel (1858–1918). The

stranger is not someone passing through, but someone who comes from outside the group and *stays*. Simmel observes that the stranger’s “position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself.” The believer is someone who thinks of his ancestors, and thus himself, as having been there “from the beginning.” His place in the group is one of secure ownership and empowerment. The believers might, or might not, exercise forbearance, toleration, toward useful strangers. But letting strangers remain is risky because they can undermine, by conversion or subversion, the imagined unity and purity of the group. Ironically, the supposed menace of strangers can also unify a group by providing a common enemy.

The stranger-believer distinction can be clear enough when there is some identifiable cultural minority within a homogeneous majority culture, such as the Jews in medieval Christian Europe. Yet the sheer diversity we find in contemporary cultures in the West makes the distinction hard to apply objectively. The United States, for instance, makes a complete hash of any neat line between strangers and believers. Native Americans have been here “from the beginning,” yet are often treated as strangers by the descendants of immigrants. Even many white fundamentalist Protestants, who claim to be the true believers in “a Christian nation,” often see themselves as strangers in contemporary America. In reality, we are all believers and we are all strangers now. Yet the lines between believer and stranger continue to be drawn subjectively.