

## Development, Economic Action, and the Production of Poverty: A Portrait Narrative from the Life of a Godfather to the Life of a Charity Worker<sup>1</sup>

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Article Info	Extended Abstract
<p><b>Article type:</b> Research Article</p> <p><b>Article history:</b> Received: 18 May 2026 Received in revised form: 29 May 2026 Accepted: 03 June 2026 Published online: 15 June 2026</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Development interventions, local communities, economic action, poverty, destitution.</i></p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Development interventions with the slogan of improvement and welfare were able to obtain permission to intervene and change the objective and subjective aspects of the characteristics of local communities' lives; because development as a network of discourses and a regime of truth, after being operationalized, caused multifaceted changes in local communities. The development discourse can be introduced more as the discourse of "promised status" than the discourse of "realized status"; because to date, we have witnessed a large gap between the ideals of development and the reality of development. Today, this gap has caused critical reflection by thinkers and public dissatisfaction in local communities. Because, at the same time as the scope of development interventions has expanded, we have witnessed an increase in poverty and unemployment in the study area, namely the Middle Zagros - Lorestan and Ilam provinces. Beyond the increase in poverty, the issue of concern is the fall of self-reliant individuals and hard-working activists in local communities into the abyss of poverty, misery, as well as their dependence on support institutions and charitable donations, and on the other hand, their marginalization in social relations. The intertwining of development interventions, economic action, and poverty in local communities is considered one of the neglected areas in economic sociology. In this article, with the aim of understanding how this intertwining occurs, we have sought to explain and interpret the consequences of development interventions for economic action and the duality of poverty and welfare. In addition to having lived experience in the field under study, the author has tried to go beyond the statistics and figures announced by development organizations and institutions, to make the silent logic of communities speak, and to portray their unheard narratives of interventions and their effects on economic action and poverty. This article focuses on the contradiction of the intertwining of development interventions, economic action, and poverty. To explain how this proximity has become possible, contrary</p>

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to the logic of developmentists, and under the influence of which mechanisms, self-reliant, reliable economic actors, who were the people's go-to people - the poor - have become passive, helpless, isolated actors, and dependent on donations from support institutions? How is it that after all these interventions and slogans, "misery" has now emerged as a new form of poverty as a result of development and economic action?.

**Method:** For this purpose, we have studied 6 people in local communities of Ilam and Lorestan provinces using the qualitative portraiture method. In-depth interviews and field notes were used to collect information. The study sample was selected using a theoretical sampling strategy in urban and rural areas from Ilam provinces - Dareh Shahr and Badreh counties - and Lorestan province - Pol Dokhtar and Romeshkan counties - after in-depth interviews with the selected samples and portraits of each participant were drawn. Then, the data and then the interviews were used to place them in the police station framework, find common ground in the portraits, and extract the main themes using thematic analysis method. We have tried to present the final narrative of development interventions from the perspective of logic and the unheard voice of the local community.

**Findings:** Based on the findings, development interventions transformed the indigenous community by destroying the joyful sufferings with strategies of humiliating changes, exclusionary interventions, and paralyzing changes. They transformed the world life, which was described as joyful suffering, into a calculating wasteland, and then, by creating discord and destroying social networks, they provided the platform for wandering and plundering economic activities. The resulting imbalance has resulted in the majority of society becoming the losers of the changes, becoming recipients of subsidies, pensioners, daily wage workers, and displaced persons, with only a few benefiting from development interventions on the back of the changes. Although the activists have had similar life paths, they have used different strategies to cope with the changes, and ultimately, receiving subsidies has been the fate of the majority.

**Conclusion :** The analysis of the findings shows that development interventions have been successful in "de-agencying" the target community and turning them into objects of misery, aid recipients, and dependence on the government, and in other ways, despising their assets and destroying the areas of indigenous economic action. Ultimately, development has played a role in guiding citizens from blissful suffering to poverty and its emerging form, namely misery, which is symmetrical to the destroyed social context. By neglecting the



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actors and their historical, social, and climatic context, it has sought to impose its logic on the logic of the target communities without considering the consequences of this imposition. In such circumstances, we need to deconstruct development, that is, to restore development to its true place.

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