

Society and Economic Growth

*A Behavioral Perspective
of Social Change*

JOHN H. KUNKEL

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Preface

The study of social change and economic development attracts many who dream of a future when the human spirit will no longer be shackled by deprivation and suffering. Mere dreams, however, especially if they are combined with no more than a vague desire to help, will lead to failure, for the social, political, and economic problems of developing nations can be solved only by those who are willing to engage in objective analysis and hard work. If men's efforts to improve the qualities of life are to be successful, the inspiration provided by dreams must be fused with knowledge of human limitations and the operation of social and psychological principles.

Much of the literature on social and economic change is quite abstract and somewhat removed from the everyday concerns of men in developing nations; creative personalities, capital-output ratios, and a twelve per cent investment rate are among the topics that have received considerable attention. But what of the men who live, who build and hope, work and die? Many discussions of industrialization have a strangely ethereal quality about them, for the men who perform the tasks involved in economic growth appear merely as fleeting shadows in the kaleidoscope of critical minimum

efforts and problems of capital formation. Yet the activities of men, no less than social and economic factors, provide the substance for any understanding of the problems and promises of modernization. This book is designed to integrate men and behavior into the analysis of economic growth on the basis of recent work in sociology, psychology, and anthropology. A behavioral model of man and the social systems perspective are here combined to delineate the roles of individuals and their activities in the social changes that attend industrialization.

J. H. K.

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- Holmberg, Allan R., "Changing Community Attitudes and Values in

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- Reproduced from *The Achieving Society* by David C. McClelland, by permission of Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1961, New York.
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- Papanek, Gustav F., *Pakistan's Development: Social Goals and Private Incentives*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.
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Society and Economic Growth

i *Introduction*

Wherever he turns, man is confronted by inescapable evidence of social change. The ubiquity and high rate of change, dominant features of the present and recent past, have led to the rise of increasingly urgent questions and complex problems. Social scientists have presented a number of answers and solutions, but present knowledge is not sufficient for the tasks that lie ahead. Not only the fact of social change but also the results of its analysis have increased man's uncertainty concerning the future and his ability to cope with it.

While social change is evident all over the world, it is especially one type of change—economic development—that has recently captured the center of interest. The term refers not only to the rise of secondary industry but also to the associated political, social, cultural, and psychological changes in the conditions of human existence. Its hallmark is the improvement of living conditions. This is usually expressed in terms of per capita income and productivity, death and morbidity rates, the supply of food and other goods, average educational attainment, and a host of additional characteristics which, together, are thought to constitute the “good life.”

Economic development—whether it is only a dream, a painful transition from hope to reality, or an almost accomplished fact—is the domi-

nant motif of the present and future for much of mankind. More and more millions of men are exerting increasing pressure for the elimination of the disease, poverty, and ignorance which heretofore have been their lot. As a result, the analysis of industrialization and its problems has become an ever more urgent task, and information in this area is rapidly accumulating. Unfortunately, present efforts are not equally distributed among all aspects of economic growth; generally speaking, major emphasis so far has been placed on various economic characteristics, while social, cultural, and psychological aspects have often been neglected. The first aim of this book is to assess present knowledge of those characteristics of industrialization which usually are labelled "noneconomic," and to outline the contributions which sociology can make toward the comprehensive analysis of the process.

He who surveys the manifold phenomena of social change and economic development in the world today, who contemplates upon the undulations of recent history or ventures to predict the seething future, cannot help but search for explanations, for principles to account for today's events, for a glimpse of what is to be. The uneasiness which arises from the often cataclysmic events of the past, the fear inspired by present upheavals, and the dread borne from knowledge that the only certainty of the future is the alteration and disappearance of much that we cherish today, drive men to search for an understanding of the turbulent social world. A simple description, however, is not enough. A consistent explanatory system of thought—some kind of theory—would not only bring order into observations but also provide a "meaning" for events and enable man to predict, however hesitatingly, that which is to come.

Much of our knowledge of economic development is in the form of abstract economic formulas and descriptions of specific situations. Although both are useful, the early stages of theory construction require, in addition, the development of meaningful, valid concepts and the formulation of propositions which can be tested. The second aim of this book, then, is to provide such components for a theory of social change, and especially of economic growth.

There is much pressure to plan for economic development and to deliberately accelerate the often sluggish pace of modernization, for the material benefits so evident in the western world have increased the feel-

5 Introduction

ings of relative deprivation in the as yet nonindustrialized nations. Unfortunately, these efforts often are not so much a reflection of adequate information and the utilization of sociological and economic principles as they are the result of the simple—and often desperate—human desire for improvements in the quality of life. But the combination of ignorance and desire provides no assurance of success, and many programs have failed. The third aim of this book, therefore, is to outline the social factors and principles which, as far as is known today, are likely to be involved in programs of economic growth.

The titles of recent works are good indicators of the gamut of phenomena involved in the analysis of the social, cultural, and psychological aspects of economic development. "The Great Ascent"¹ which people in the industrializing nations envisage in the near future, "The Passing of Traditional Society"² which is deplored by the few and ardently hoped for by the many, and knowledge that "Man Takes Control"³ of his destiny to an ever increasing degree, are topics which reflect the depth of both the problems and emotions engendered by the rapid pace of alterations in the lives of millions. And when Myrdal entitles his ten-year study of industrialization in a large part of the world "Asian Drama,"⁴ the allusion to tragedy, to men caught up in the whirlwinds of others' making, is real and powerful.

Two of these books begin with charming stories of individuals buffeted by the forces unleashed in the development of modern industrialized nations. The present work does not begin with a story, and individuals such as the grocer of Balgat or Juan of Las Bocas do not appear. This is because emphasis is placed less on the experiences of particular persons or nations and more on the statement and investigation of hypotheses which may be abstracted from the experiences of men and the descriptions of social events. In order to accomplish this task, a variety of studies performed by men in several disciplines will be analyzed, ideas derived from the work of many investigators will be evaluated, and various approaches to the study of social change will be weighed against available data. The result is a somewhat abstract discussion, but frequent descents

1. Heilbroner (1963). The titles are located in the Reference section at the end of the book, under author's name and publication date.

2. Lerner (1958).

3. Erasmus (1961).

4. Myrdal (1968).

to the world of living men will render the whole project meaningful to bystanders and relevant for the participants.

Most studies of the noneconomic aspects of industrialization categorize their subject matter in terms of academic disciplines, describe a host of psychological and sociological characteristics, and investigate the complex roles of bureaucracies, governmental elites, vital rates, religious ideals, educational institutions, and so forth.⁵ Recent discussions of the “Three Worlds of Development,”⁶ “Rich Lands and Poor,”⁷ and the “Springtime of Freedom,”⁸ for example, concentrate on several large-scale characteristics and trends of nations and subcultures. These and other studies⁹ provide not only an overview of economic development but also place the process within the context of today’s political realities, yesterday’s historical heritage, and the present state of sociological knowledge. In short, they present pictures of industrialization which are equivalent to paintings viewed at a distance of several yards. The major units of the composition are easily discerned, their relationships are clearly evident, the (historical) perspective is flawless, and the scope of the conceptualization is astounding. Without a doubt much of reality is captured in all its breath-taking complexity. Often, however, the basic elements and specific relationships involved in the production are not amenable to detailed analysis. Characteristics of the canvas, paints, and brush strokes are lost—or at least overwhelmed by the grandeur of the overall impression.

The present work differs from most other studies in that it focuses on the basic elements and relationships that make up the multivariate social components of economic development. It attempts to recognize the fact that many complex phenomena—such as the extended family—have features which are both detrimental and conducive to industrialization,¹⁰ and that an adequate understanding of any social process requires the analysis of its constituent parts. In effect, this book with its emphasis on men and behavior presents an investigation of the same pictures of industrialization, but the paintings are now viewed from a distance of a very

5. For example Jacobs (1966), Morris (1967).

6. Horowitz (1966).

7. Myrdal (1957).

8. McCord (1965).

9. Etzioni (1968), Levy (1966), Moore (1967), Rostow (1960), Smelser (1963), Worsley (1964), Zimmerman (1965).

10. Litwak (1960a, 1960b).