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On the Possibility and Desirability  
of a Theory of Modernisation  
by  
Ronald P. Dore,  
Communications Series No. 38 (M)

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of a Theory of Modernisation

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NOTE.

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## ON THE POSSIBILITY AND DESIRABILITY OF A THEORY OF MODERNIZATION

### Introduction.

"Modernization" used to be a word I had some liking for. When I first started thinking and writing about the processes of change in Japan in the last century I had need of it. It was still fashionable to describe these changes as "westernization", a word which unacceptably reinforced British stereotypes of the Japanese as "mere imitators", and was clearly inappropriate as a description of the development of Japanese agriculture, of the transformation of traditional Confucian morality into a national Japanese ideology, or of a hundred and one other changes which had taken place since 1870. "Industrialization" was clearly not an adequate alternative. It would have to be stretched too unnaturally to cover such things as the creation of a new judicial system and the rationalization of government administration which were well under way before there were more than a hundred factories in Japan. "Modernization" seemed the best choice, a useful and sensible way of summarily referring to the whole complex of what had happened or what had been done. And I saw no need then to make the distinction - which now does seem to me important - between what had happened and what had been done.

My disenchantment with the virtues of this useful word began to set in in 1960 when I attended a conference at which scholars from Japan and the United States met to discuss the pattern of Japanese modernization.<sup>(1)</sup> As an old fashioned positivist who takes a strictly nominalist view of the nature of scientific concepts, much of the discussion which concentrated on the nature of the modernization process made me very uneasy. At the extreme were the reifiers who talked as if "modernization" was somehow an active "force", somehow real and "out there", working itself out in similar though varying ways in different societies. Only slightly less objectionable were the essentialists who started from the assumption that modernization for a society was as "real" a process as, say, increasing senility for human beings, and involved the conference in what seemed to me pointless discussions concerning what was the "essence" of this process - whether it could be properly characterised as "increasing rationality", or as "structural differentiation", or as "individuation" or whatever.

Clearly a nominalist approach was not ruled out. At the simple descriptive level one might conceive of the possibility of studying the history of a number of different countries and arriving at a common-denominator definition of modernization through observation of similarities (in the way, say, that biologists and botanists, from observation of hens and human beings, crocodiles and fruit trees, arrive at a concept of "fertilization"). One might go further and take apart the causal relations within the process of analysing the correlation between changes in different spheres within societies (e.g. "the spread of cost accounting is always roughly simultaneous with the spread of formal training requirements for the ordination of priests") and thus arrive at some explanation of the process of change in terms of a common factor like increasing rationality, which might be legitimately described as a cause of these changes - much as psychologists infer from the correlations between individual's scores on a series of tests of memory, verbal skill, arithmetical skill, etc., that certain neural processes must be involved in all these activities, the quality of which can be called "intelligence". But, I was too impressed by the rich concrete variety of historical experiences of different nations in the last few centuries, and too impressed by the obvious fact that it makes an extraordinary difference at what point in world history you begin to introduce cost accounting (whether

1. This conference is described in J.W. Nall's first chapter in M.B. Jansen, ed., Changing Japanese attitudes towards modernization, Princeton U.P., 1965.

it is several centuries before anyone has ever heard of democracy, trade unions, spacecraft, or United Nations experts, or whether it is well after these things have become familiar) to think that such exercises would be worthwhile. It is not that I am against comparative sociology. On the contrary I believe that all science involves comparisons and there are many useful and interesting problems that can only be tackled by comparing national units. But it did seem to me (a) strategically unwise to focus comparisons on the attempt to elucidate such a global trend as "modernization", and (b) quite illegitimate to try to do so ignoring the absolute time-scale of world history. (Even the physiological processes of senility are doubtless different in the nutritional and pharmaceutical context of 20th century England from what they were in 16th century England: how much more marked may be the changes in the likely modes of "modernization" of societies with changes from century to century in the political and economic context with which the world provides them.)

In short, the essentialist line of attack which seemed to attract most of the participants at the conference, appeared to be illegitimate: the second, less popular, nominalist approach appeared interesting but both too ambitious for one generation's lifetime and fraught with methodological difficulties.

These doubts were reinforced by attending subsequent seminars organised by the Conference on Modern Japan(2) and one or two of the series of conferences organised by the Committee on Comparative Politics of the American S.S.R.C.(3) The need to reconcile these doubts with the patent usefulness of the term "modernization" to describe the history of Japan in the last century led me eventually to the distinction which forms the core of the article which follows - the distinction between what I have called an intransitive concept of modernization which concerns "what happens" in societies, and a transitive concept of modernization which is concerned with the more or less deliberate attempts of men to change societies. In the four years since I wrote the article I have had no reason to doubt the usefulness of the distinction. I might add that its validity does not depend on acceptance or rejection of my concluding "statement of faith" concerning what ought to be the proper concern of students of "modernization" or "development".

It has sometimes occurred to me to wonder how it came about that I should have been selected for this particular blinding flash of enlightenment, why the truth should have been vouchsafed to me and denied to most of my academic colleagues! If I may be forgiven indulgence in that higher form of egotism which is modest self-analysis I think I at least partially know why, and it may interest students of the sociology of knowledge to learn something of the more obvious "structural determinants".

At the first conference I mentioned above, in 1960, there appeared a fairly

2. Publications resulting from these conferences, published by Princeton U.P. are, in addition to that edited by Jansen mentioned in the previous note: W.W. Lockwood, ed., The State and economic enterprise in modern Japan, 1965; R.P. Dore, ed., Aspects of social change in Modern Japan, 1967; R.E. Ward, ed., Political Development in Modern Japan, 1968.
3. See the series of publications from Princeton U.P.: Studies in Political Development: L.W. Pye, Communication and Political Development, 1963; J. La Palombara, Bureaucracy and Political Development, 1963; R.E. Ward and D.A. Rustow, The Political Modernization of Turkey and Japan, 1964; J.S. Coleman, Education and Political Development, 1965; J. La Palombara and M. Weiner, Political Parties and Political Development, 1966; etc. The emergence of an established orthodox doctrine of "modernization" through these volumes makes interesting reading.

clear division between the Americans who had no doubts about the usefulness of an attempt to study Japan's last century as an example of the process of modernization, and the Japanese who resisted this approach. The Japanese objections sprang primarily, it seemed, from two sources. There were, first, those who operated within a pretty firm framework of Marxist analysis and saw the translation of "the development of capitalism" into "modernization", of "the process of primary accumulation" into "the take-off stage", or of the "bourgeois revolution" into "the crisis of participation" as just a means of taking the nastiness out of capitalism, part of the Rostovian attempt to substitute a non-Communist for a Communist manifesto and reinterpret the history of men's exploitation of men in terms of the triumphant march of Man on the path of inevitable progress.

Their second objection, a related one, lay in their suspicion of what they saw as the prescriptive implications of this approach. Japan, the implication seemed to be, had made it. Japan was a successful case of modernization. Japan was to be looked at as a model which might provide lessons for the development of the poor countries of Asia and the rest of the world. This was at a time when the mood of revulsion against the war and the social system of pre-war Japan which had led up to it was still extremely strong, not only among intellectuals but also among the public at large. It was a time when even the secondary school history lessons interpreted the Russo-Japanese war at the beginning of this century as simply a stage in the development of Japanese imperialism and dwelt on the repressive policies of pre-war governments which had hindered the development of the progressive forces within the country. The nationalist revision which has gathered strength in the 60s and was much accelerated in 1968 by the celebration of the centennial of the Meiji Restoration was at that time still confined to small groups of conservative politicians with a few intellectual supporters who were barely represented at the conference. In this context the view of Japan's development as providing a prescriptive model for contemporary developing countries had little appeal to Japanese scholars.

The debate was intensified in subsequent years - at many levels, he it said, with increasing understanding and useful clarification of issues - but at the extremes with increasing acerbity. Soon after the first conference one of its participants, Edwin Reischauer, a student of Japan and an historian of distinction with many friends in the Japanese intellectual world, was appointed as Kennedy's ambassador to Tokyo. In speeches and in articles in Japanese intellectual journals he wrote qua historian of the special characteristics of Japan's pattern of modernization in the terms of approval that one would expect of a good neighbour's ambassador. Modernization theory thus quickly became a part of the "Reischauer offensive", the attempt to subvert the intellectual and ideological integrity of Japanese scholars, an open incitement to Japanese national pride and thus an encouragement to those right wing nationalists who were most prone to support the strategic and commercial-imperialist aims of American foreign policy.

It was in this ideological context that the subsequent conferences were held. Although the Americans present at these conferences included some who were critical of America's Far Eastern policy, and although Japanese who took an extreme conspiratorial view of the "Reischauer offensive" rarely received or accepted invitations, the political overtones of "modernization theory" provided a consistently important factor in our discussions, and there emerged a fair correlation between passport colour and theoretical position adopted.

At many of these conferences I was the only one present who was neither a Japanese nor an American citizen. Marginal man may not always see things steady and see them whole, but at least there are no strong ties of group sentiment to draw him irresistably to one view or the other. And at least

marginal man does have to think out his own position with greater urgency than others. The conclusions that I reached were determined in part by the fact that I sympathised with the element of truth in the Japanese "Reischauer offensive" theory. (And whole-hog structuralists might explain this in turn by the fact that Britain enjoys much the same underdog status in the Atlantic alliance as Japan does in the Pacific alliance.) At the same time I was irritated by the "I'm all right Jack" insularity of Japanese scholars who were disinclined to see the problems of the poor half of the world as their problems, refused to admit that a study of land tenure developments in Japan in the 1890s might illuminate the problems of land tenure in the contemporary Philippines, and refused (because Mao Tse Tung in 1960 was a quasi-hero figure and Prince Ito in 1880 was a repressive oligarch) to consider whether one could learn anything by putting both in the category "patriotic leaders of national regeneration" and comparing their mobilisation policies.

The position outlined in the following article represents the resultant compromise. Happy is the man who can achieve a coincidence between his theoretical position and his sentiments - happy though not necessarily right.

R.P. Dore,  
L.S.E., July, 1969.

#### On the Possibility and Desirability of a Theory of Modernization.

The verb "modernize" has a valuable use for which it is not easy to find a substitute. The political leaders and intellectuals of most developing countries desire to transform their country. They wish to see transformations in their economy, usually in their political system and educational system, often, also, in family life and in religious and cultural matters. Usually, the model for their reforming efforts is some other country more economically developed than their own; not necessarily a single country, but possibly a number of countries, each of which offers certain features to be imitated. British leaders, for instance, have recently become aware of a need to modernize many aspects of British life. Most commonly the model is America, but sometimes Scandinavian or other European countries.

It is useful to speak of reforming efforts of this sort as attempts to "modernize". Clearly, wholesale and rapid "modernization" in this sense is a neat epitomisation of the policy aims of the Meiji leaders of Japan in the 1870s, or Kemal Ataturk in Turkey in the twenties, or of countless other political leaders since. This sense of "modernization" may be paraphrased as follows: "The transformation of the economic, political, legal, social or cultural life of a nation in accordance with models derived from other contemporary societies thought to be more 'advanced'". It is a use of the word which implies nothing specific about the content of this transformation, its goals or its methods. There are as many forms of modernization as there are modernizing leaders.

There is a second, different sense of the word which is particularly common in recent academic discussions. In this usage the deliberate transformations implied in the first sense are assimilated to the "unengineered" transformations of societies like England and the USA during their periods of industrialisation, all being seen as different examples of a single unitary historical process. This second sense may be paraphrased as: "A process of social change, including and contemporaneous with industrialisation, which has already been taking place for decades or centuries in the industrial societies and which is now starting to a greater or lesser degree in the developing societies". As a convenient label one might call the latter sense



sense of the word the "intransitive" and the former the "transitive" usage. That is to say: one can talk in the first sense of societies "being modernized", not of societies "modernizing", and in the second sense, vice versa.

In its first usage the word "modernization" seems to me useful since there is no other comprehensive shorthand way of describing what modernizing leaders are about. In its second sense the word seems to me useful only for designating - in a very rough and ready way - a field of comparative study, in much the same way as the words "feudalism" or "low temperature physics" are useful. The danger implicit in this second usage, however, is that one is tempted to slip into such phrases as "Modernization is a process which ..." - phrases which only make sense on the assumption that the concept is capable of precise definition. Thence arise attempts to arrive at such a precise definition by enumeration of the component elements of "modernization". Sometimes such a definition itself is graced with the title "a theory of modernization"; sometimes the matter is pushed further and a real theory is built up which postulates the casual interrelations which link the various component elements of the process.

All of which exercises seem to me a waste of academic resources. My reasons for thinking so are as follows.

A typical list of the components of the process of modernization in this second intransitive sense might include all or any such features as: an increase in the total or the per capita output of goods and services, a rising level of mass education, urbanisation, a trend towards a nuclear family structure, an increasing functional specificity in organisational structures, an increasing tendency to allocate social roles on the basis of achievement rather than ascription, greater social mobility, bureaucratization, in something like the Weberian sense, of both economic and political structures, greater equality of incomes, wider participation in political decision-making, greater rationalisation of law in terms of universalistic principles, and so on. Whatever the list, such attempts to define modernization (intransitive) run into a serious problem.

That problem can be stated most clearly in its crudest form. For an American - and it is chiefly in America that the word "modernization" has recently been in vogue - it may be posed most sharply in the form: "What to do about Russia?" There are a number of possible ways of dealing with the fact that in terms of economic structure and performance, educational levels, degree of bureaucratization, use of achievement criteria, legal rationalisation and so on, Russia and America exhibit great similarities, while in other respects - in the nature of their social and political systems as well as in the mechanisms of economic decision-making - they exhibit great differences. At least three distinct positions may be taken.

1. "Modernization" means fundamentally a process which is an inevitable concomitant of industrialisation. Or more accurately "modern economic growth", the latter being defined as a continuous growth of the per capita output of goods and services achieved by investment of which a substantial part involves technological innovation rather than mere replacement or duplication of capital facilities. It is possible for a country to sustain this process for a long time and remain predominantly agricultural (e.g. New Zealand) but the case is rare enough for "industrialisation" to stand as a convenient shorthand for what is meant. As such it has to be defined in terms only of those characteristics which history has empirically shown to be inevitably concomitant features. Since both Russia and America are to a high degree industrialised, the definition must be framed in sufficiently broad terms to enable one to say that both Russia and America have undergone a process

of modernization. To give an example from the political field, one can, therefore, talk of an increasing degree of popular participation in politics or an increasing specificity of function in political structures as part of the process of modernization, but one cannot be more concrete about the forms of participation or specificity - to the extent, for instance, of including Western-style democracy as a part of the definition.

2. It is possible to include such features of Western democratic politics as a competing party system and freedom of speech and assembly within a definition of "modernization" and at the same time retain the theoretical assumption that it is "a process", a unitary phenomenon whose elements are linked by chains of causal inevitability. This can be done by considering Russia and America to represent different degrees of modernization or different types of partial modernization. Thus it might be asserted that Russia is less modernized than America and that inevitably, as time goes on, there will be an increase in political freedom, a greater scope for free market systems and hence a greater resemblance to the United States. Alternatively it may be argued that the convergence will come from both sides, and that as Russia gives greater scope for individual choice, the United States will see a gradually increasing bureaucratization of, and state control over, economic life. In either case, modernization is a single process which, in the long run (allowing for the adjustment of lags in specific sectors), makes industrial societies alike in quite specific terms.

3. A third resolution of the problem is to abandon any assumption of inevitability and to import explicit value judgments into the definition of modernization. Thus there can be a variety of forms of social change accompanying industrialization. Some are good and desirable; others are bad and undesirable. On this basis one can choose either to call the American model "modernization" and the Russian "partial modernization", "failed modernization", a "perversion of modernization", etc. Or, of course, vice versa.

All three of these solutions have difficulties. Let us deal with the second first. Its defect lies in the fact that it contains postulates - that democracy or a free market or a high degree of bureaucratization are inevitable end-products of the industrialization process - which are certainly not empirically justified by the history of the world up to the present, nor theoretically justifiable in terms of discernible trends in modern societies.

The third solution escapes this difficulty. It poses others, however. If the end-product (or interim goal) of modernization is defined concretely in terms of the American model as the desirable one of a number of possible alternatives, the theory of modernization which results is of interest only to those who accept the value assumptions which it implies. And it is a fact of modern history that not all leaders of developing countries share these values. Some are more attracted by the Russian model than by the American. Others wish to adopt certain features of American society such as its high industrial productivity, while evolving political and social forms from their own traditions.

It is possible to accept with equanimity the fact that one's theory of modernization is of interest to only a limited number of the world's modernizers, and this is a perfectly viable position. It has other limitations, however. America may well provide an "end-state model" - a concrete embodiment of the desirable society. It cannot provide a "process model" - an example of how to reach this desirable state. It is obvious enough that conditions do not permit the history of the United States over the last century or two to be repeated elsewhere. The difficulty of finding "process models" is a topic I return to later.

The third position is, in any case, one which most American scholars are understandably reluctant to adopt. To start with, there is an unhealthy smack of ethnocentrism about any theory which postulates either that the rest of the world does, or that it ought to, wish to model itself on America. And it is one mark of the liberalism of the American academic world, which distinguishes it from that of Russia or of China, that most (though unfortunately not all) American students of social development consider such ethnocentrism to be at least in bad taste.

The resort to the first position - the one which allows such a wide flexibility in the definition of modernization that both Russia and America may be called modernized - is, therefore, a sign of grace in an American scholar, a mark of liberal tolerance. And it is a position which has considerable attractions. The attempt to define the common features of all the industrial countries, including Russia and Czechoslovakia, leads to academic discussions of great interest. Unfortunately, these interesting discussions of "modernization" (intransitive) are unlikely to be helpful to the leaders of developing countries trying to "modernize" (the transitive sense) their countries. The reason is that the discussion has to be carried on at such an abstract level that all the important details are left out.

This is nowhere a more fatal limitation than in the political field. As long as political modernization is conceived in such liberally flexible terms it serves more to obscure the fundamental political choices which politicians must make than to clarify them. It drains politics of its life and vitality. It removes from the purview of political science all the issues that political science ought to be about.

For example, a list of the changes which constitute a part of the process of political modernization might include the following:

An expanding degree of popular participation in politics; the development of the concept of citizenship; an increasing allocation of roles by achievement rather than by ascription; universalism in the law. All of which may be roughly summarised as increasing equality.

A greater magnitude and scope of government business; the rationalization and secularisation of the political process; a greater degree of effectiveness in the implementing of governmental decisions - roughly summarised as an increased capacity of government.

An increase in the number and variety of political structures, in their functional specificity, in their complexity, and in the degree of their integration - for short, greater differentiation.

It is hard, in the framework of such concepts, even to pose the fundamental value questions, let alone the practical policy questions, which are the very stuff of politics in the developed as well as in the developing world. Granted that there is likely to be an increase in equality as industrialisation proceeds, how much individual freedom has to be sacrificed to achieve it? Does the replacement of ascriptive by achievement norms, for instance, require that individuals should lose the freedom to will their property to family heirs? Is the sense of citizenship, resting on the institutionalization of political equality, compatible with the existence of great economic inequalities? And if not, what degree of inequality is tolerable? And if the sense of citizenship, and hence the legitimacy and hence the capacity of government, requires that economic inequalities should be kept within certain limits, how much should individuals' freedom to make profits, or to spend the profits they earn, be limited to that end?

And if one can ask how much freedom has to be sacrificed in the interests of equality, one can ask equally how much individual freedom has to be sacrificed in the interests of order. In the United States, for instance, unlike almost every other country in the world, it is not thought necessary in the interests of public order to deprive people of the freedom to buy lethal weapons without license at any corner store, though it is thought necessary to deprive people of the freedom to belong to a communist party. In Russia, on the other hand, it is thought necessary to deprive people of the freedom to join any other party except the communist. And so on; it would be an endless catalogue which listed the ways in which the freedom of action of individuals has been limited in order to maintain the stability of a system of power.

Similarly, one may ask, how much freedom has to be, or ought to be, sacrificed for economic development? How much does state planning require the restriction of freedom of economic activity; the use of political power to mobilise labour in ways which restrict individuals' free use of their leisure; the restriction of the freedom to choose one's type of education in the interests of a planned direction of human resources? And so on.

This is the kind of problem that politics is really about. It is the kind of problem that tends to slip through the too-broad mesh of a theory of modernization which adopts the first highest-common-factor approach.

The final conclusion which emerges from this process of elimination is, therefore, that for the leaders of countries in Asia or elsewhere who are trying to modernize, a theory of "modernization" (intransitive) is unlikely to be very helpful, whichever of the three possible approaches is taken. I think it would be better for the social sciences in general, and for political science in particular, if the concept of "modernization" in this intransitive sense as a process in nature susceptible to analytical theorizing were dropped from their vocabularies except as a broad label (like, say, "low temperature physics") which defines a field of study - "the social etc. changes accompanying industrialisation". Henceforth in this paper I shall use the word only in the transitive sense with which I began.

If a theory of modernization is unhelpful, what then should be the approach of those scholars who are interested in the problems of the developing countries and are subject to the nagging feeling that scholarship ought to be useful? My own answer would be a piecemeal empiricism which (a) takes the goals of a process of modernization from the goals actually held by modernizing leaders, (b) defines the problems in terms of adapting actual existing situations to those goals, and (c) seeks to elucidate these problems by building up a body of specific theoretical generalisations by means of ad hoc comparison of similar situations in history. These generalisations would be of the form: "If such and such happens in circumstances defined as such and such, so and so is the likely result".

Certain ground has to be cleared. "Take the goals actually held by modernizing leaders". In practice one must make a choice. In some developing countries the goals of political leaders do not extend beyond maintaining their own power. Those who thus treat political power as a private possession may easily be alienated from sympathy. Even those who exercise power with a sense of responsibility, however, may set a variety of objectives for the modernisation/ transformation of their country. Some aim only to acquire certain prestige-carrying symbols; a glittering airport, a steel mill, a seat on the Security Council. Some think in military terms of enhancing national power by acquiring a powerful army - and so on. Some scholars would select for sympathetic consideration only those sets of goals

which gave a prominent place to the prevention of communism. My own predilection would be to take as a serious topic of study only the problems of those governments whose modernization plans revolve around the achievement of a level of economic growth which permits a continuous and general rise in levels of living. Economic growth is, after all, a precondition for many of the other changes commonly desired - the enrichment of cultural life, the development of education, even the expansion of government services which permits the specialisation of governmental functions - and at the same time some of these changes, such as the development of education, are also preconditions for economic growth.

To narrow the problems of modernization to this particular focus does not mean that they thereby become technically economic. I am suggesting, in fact, that this is a focus eminently suitable for the enquiries of sociologists, psychologists, political scientists and all other workers in the social sciences. Take, for example, the question: "In a world where technology does not have to be newly invented but can be systematically imported, is economic growth best achieved by giving free play to the individual profit-seeking enterprise of individuals in a market economy, or by the state taking command of the available investment resources and using them in accordance with a centrally directed plan; or in what sectors is the one appropriate and in what sectors the other?" This is a question which involves sociological considerations of such matters as the conditions determining the actual structure of motivations in individual entrepreneurs or bureaucrats, and political considerations of the forces influencing decisions in the planning process and of the structural forms best adapted to various social and cultural conditions for carrying out planning decisions. The list of study topics of this kind can be extended indefinitely. In so far as the state is likely anyway to play an important role in economic development, at the very least in creating the infrastructure of communications and educational services, how can it acquire the authority necessary to mobilise investment resources and enforce its plans? How far ought, or can, opposition be simply repressed? As a factual question, at what point does repression destroy the possibility of achieving government by consent, by willing or grudging cooperation? As a value question, how much individual economic or political freedom is worth sacrificing in order to hasten the speed of economic growth? What is the role of ideology in maintaining the legitimacy of consent? How far can traditional local authority structures be utilised to mobilise consent for policies of economic modernization, and how far must they be destroyed and replaced by new organisations - political parties or bureaucratic structures? What is the relation between levels of literacy on the one hand, and the minimum degree of mass political participation required to maintain consensus on the other?

The scholar's job is to help get closer to answers to these questions by comparative study. It is here that "process models" as opposed to "end-state models" are important. In the nature of things, the countries seeking to modernize are more likely to learn something about the mechanisms of modernization from countries that have "been modernized" (been transformed largely through the efforts of modernizing leaders) than from those whose economic and social development owed little to central political direction. Japan and Russia are obvious candidates as such process models are already in a very advanced stage. No one country, however, is likely to offer a very satisfactory process model, and certainly not countries whose reforming efforts began many decades ago. The Japanese recipe for development, for instance, is not likely to be repeatable. Modern developing countries are not as ideologically isolated, they face a faster rate of population growth, they have available a much more advanced industrial technology than nineteenth century Japan. They cannot maintain the legitimacy of the government and its modernization policies by a nationalism which is fed by a series of

successful expansionist wars. They do not have the elements in the pre-modern social structure and cultural tradition which facilitated Japan's later development - and so on. That is why countries like India and China are more likely to be taken as process models for actual imitation. Although time has not shown conclusively the relative efficacy of their different recipes in terms of results, at least they are recipes worked out with reference to contemporary conditions.

More fruitful, however, than the study or imitation of single "process models" as a whole is the comparative study of particular problems in a variety of societies. For example, many countries are seeking to raise productivity in their traditional agricultural sector. In Asia, especially, the villages are often dominated by landlords. Would a land reform, redistributing ownership to the tenants, facilitate the process of economic development?

One might well begin by looking at the example of Japan. In the nineteenth century it seems that landlords often played a positive role in the diffusion of agricultural improvements. A land reform in, say, 1880, which destroyed these landlords' authority, might have slowed this process. Before generalising this into a general prescription to keep landlords in the early stages of agricultural development, one naturally looks at other societies. Something similar might be said of landlords in central Italy in the nineteenth century, but not in southern Italy. It could hardly be said of, for example, Indian landlords in the 1950s, of most Philippine landlords of the 1960s, and so on. As one compares a number of examples, one begins to isolate the relevant factors which determine the role of landlords in such situations: their cultural orientations; the size of their holdings and relations to their tenants; the level of literacy of tenants; the type of agricultural improvements which are ecologically feasible; the difference between living in a world where (as in 1880) "land reform" was unknown as a political slogan, and in a world (as in 1965) where it is a universal one, and the difference that this makes to the viability of traditional village hierarchies and the moral authority of landlords - and so on. When these factors are enumerated and some idea is gained of their relative importance it becomes easier to give a plausible assessment of what, in any particular situation, the effects of a land reform might be.

To be fair, a good many of the social scientists concerned with problems of modernization do in practice tackle concrete problems such as these in a manner similar to this. The two major points which I wish to make in this paper are: firstly, that the attempt to create, or to force discussion into the framework of a general theory of (intransitive) modernization only muddies the matters of discussion; secondly, that explicitly to select for consideration the goal of economic development from among those actually held by modernizing leaders, and for sociologists and political scientists as well as economists to frame their questions with reference to it, serves both to clarify the issues at stake and, in the economy of academic resources, to make scholarship of use (if it can be of use) primarily to those people who - by my values at least - must deserve consideration.

#### COMMENT

In addition to his many valuable contributions to our knowledge about Japan, American scholars and social scientists have long appreciated Professor Dore for his periodic attempts to point out our missteps, warn us of our cul-de-sacs ahead, and share with us some of the impressions of our

work which are widespread abroad. One reason why these attempts have been appreciated is certainly that Professor Dore in turn seems to possess an understanding of, and some appreciation for, the aims and methods of American scholarly research. The understanding and appreciation is clearly evident even when Professor Dore questions "the possibility and desirability of a theory of modernization" - a topic which has occupied more American academic pages in the 1950's than almost any other - and it seems to me quite likely that many or even most American social scientists will find themselves in agreement with Professor Dore's critique of our work. And not only with the critique; surely Dore's positive argument will evoke a favorable response from most American social scientists.

The purpose of these brief comments is to show nevertheless, that Professor Dore's exposition of the ways modernization has been, can be, and should be thought about and studied is flawed. Having attempted to show this, I will say briefly what is my preferred way of thinking about historical change.

Professor Dore begins by observing that the verb "modernize" has two quite distinct usages: "Ataturk modernized Turkey", and "England modernized during the eighteenth century"; he calls these the transitive and intransitive usages of the verb. He then argues that the intransitive usage (inevitably?) leads one into one of three uncomfortable situations: his knowledge about "modernization" is so general as to be useless for practical men-of-affairs and political leaders, or his notion of modernization includes implicit value-judgments which in turn force him to use more and more "epicycles" in order to distinguish things he likes from those he dislikes when they are otherwise alike, or he makes explicit value judgments. (This last style of thinking is then branded as ethnocentric, for some reason; at any rate, it is important to note that making one's own value judgments when conceptualizing modernization is clearly a Bad Thing.) Ignoring the second of these possible applications of using "modernization" intransitively, it appears that Dore is describing three types of theory which one may have about the world. These are:

1. Theory which is useful to political leaders, in that it gives specific, concrete answers when they ask "What should be done in order to achieve our goals?" In order to obtain such knowledge, research should aim at understanding the leaders' goals, understanding the actual, existing situations in which these goals will have to be worked for, and then building up an applied science containing generalizations of the form: if you do X in situation Y, then the result will likely be Z.

2. Theory which is universally true, i.e., true of all historical instances. While such a theory might appear, at first blush, to be the sort of knowledge to which all science and philosophy have always aspired, Professor Dore points out that with regard to modernization, such a theory necessarily does not include information about the idiosyncratic features of each modernizing society.

3. Theory containing concepts which incorporate one's own values.

Professor Dore concludes that it is only theory of the first sort which is worth obtaining, as far as he is concerned, about modernization.

The oddity of this conclusion for me consists in the fact that these three types of theory are not distinct, or at least insofar as I explicitly mention the use to which knowledge should be (or to be) put. It is tautological to observe that any true theory is universally true (i.e. true of all historical instances), and it is well-known that there is no difference in the truth-value of concepts whether or not they "import explicit value judgments" into their definitions. Hence it seems fair to



assert (and I think Professor Dore would agree) that the only criterion upon which Dore bases his argument is: for whom is knowledge useful? Professor Dore's examples make this point doubly clear. 2-type theory is "unlikely to be helpful to the leaders of developing countries...." And 3-type theory is problematic insofar as it posits some "end-state" as desirable or inevitable, since "not all leaders of developing countries share" the values of any single model, and since an "end-state" does not show "how to reach" itself. (It will be evident that there are unwarranted jumps from the definition in 3 to the assertion that this involves positing some "end-state" to the assertion that the "end-state" is desired by the theorist to the assertion that nothing about how to reach the "end-state" can be included in such a theory.

With apologies for the laboriousness of the demonstration, it seems to me that the above considerations are sufficient to show that (1) Professor Dore has said nothing about "the possibility of a theory of modernization", and (2) Professor Dore has argued that a certain sort of theory of modernization is desirable because and only because it is helpful, useful, to those political leaders who desire to modernize their countries. Actually, Professor Dore is even more explicit than this; he allows that he would "take as a serious topic of study only the problems of those governments whose modernization plans revolve around .....a continuous and general rise in levels of living". Simply, he would have us help such governments, and forget the rest.

The mind boggles. Not only is there no justification for this tunnel vision (presumably, Professor Dore believes that since one man's values are as good as another's there is no need to argue further?) But there is no consideration of this sort of question: how can one apply a "fact" about modernization-in-general to an instance of modernization-for-Dore's-purpose when we are not allowed to engage in research or theorizing which would tell us about the various types of modernization, and the crucial similarities and differences between the sort of modernization Dore wants to help and others? Surely one is not to take this argument seriously. Out of respect for Professor Dore, I conclude that he has over-stated his position; essentially, he only wants to tell us what to do, not why we should do it and should not do other things.

I began by pointing out that Professor Dore often seems to share American scholars' concerns and habits of thought even when he is being critical, and by predicting that this particular critique would be appealing to American ears. The reason why I expect Professor Dore's plea for useful knowledge about economic growth to be met receptively is that in making it he puts himself in company with some venerable sacred cows in the American social scientist's ideology. Ceteris paribus (of course) useful knowledge is better than useless knowledge; that is (to adapt an archaic but equivalent version of Dore's razor), will the King want to listen to you? You must separate facts from values in your study; scientific knowledge can be used by anyone for any purpose (and it should be?). Questions about "why" are non-scientific; science focuses on the "how". Economic goals are more important than other goals (and so on).

Very briefly, here is a different position. "Modernization" should be understood as (in Dore's words) "a process which is an inevitable concomitant of industrialization", even though this would make theory about modernization fall into 2 above. Further, "development" should be understood as an explicitly evaluative concept (and hence close to 3 above); for example, it was thought for a long time that political



development means the process of achieving more political good, such as more meaningful participation in a more loving public. (This same distinction is accepted by people with very different values from mine, such as S. Huntington, who conceives of political development as the building of stronger institutions). Research should be aimed at discovering whether and how such development is possible.

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