

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS ON POLITICAL MODERNIZATION IN ASIA*

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I

Modernization is social revolution. For our working purpose, it can best be defined as a *general social change*.⁽¹⁾ In order to have some indications of the depth of the problem, it is useful to examine some of the characteristics of the change we observe across the Asian scene today⁽²⁾.

- 1) Today, social change is constant and normal. Change has become the normal way of our life, although many of us don't like it and don't see it that way.
- 2) Change is rapid, very rapid indeed. A decade today sees more changes than a generation or even a century in the earlier history of our societies. man can live several scores of lives today.
- 3) In our societies, change is sequential in time. Any change has some chain-reactions over time. Once change occurs, the situation never goes back where it started. Change produces further changes.
- 4) Change has its consequence not only in time, but also in space. It has reverberating echo. A change that occurs in the eastern end of Asia has an immediate impact on the western corner of the continent. We have seen many instances of this nature in recent

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(1) For similar view of modernization, see Myron Weiner, "Political Modernization and Evolutionary Theory", in R. Barringer, G.L. Blanksten and R.W. Mack (eds), *Social Change in Developing Areas* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 102-111.

(2) Wilbert E. Moore, *Social Change* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963)

years.

- 5) In all our societies, the effect of change is *cumulative*. As social change surges, all the small waves at the earlier stages go into the bigger waves in the later stages. No period can escape the cumulative impact of the changes that had occurred in the previous periods, no matter how hard it may try to dissociate itself from the latter.
- 6) Change is being increasingly planned in our societies. Partly due to increasing knowledge of what other societies elsewhere have attained in material and social life, partly because of prevalent desire to catch up with others, most of our countries have adopted some sort of plans for systematic long-range development of our education, industry and agriculture.
- 7) As planned changes are introduced and implemented, there often arise unforeseen consequences which call for remedies with ever-increasing urgency. No time has been as full of tensions and sense of urgency as today in Asian societies.
- 8) Finally and the most important point is that the kind of social change sweeping across Asia today gives birth to *new social and political forces*. In many of our countries, individuals and groups who have in the past been only marginal and therefore have not participated in the central stream of social and political life are coming out to the fore of the society. Unexpectedly and suddenly they exert strong political influences and play new roles as emerging elite groups.

These are only a partial list of general characteristics of social change in our societies. Now let us consider the politically significant aspects of modernization.

II

Too often modernization has been approached from an external view-point, with emphasis on the external impetus which initially set in the change. From the point of view of political modernization, however, the internal process of germination of change is more important. It is important to note that social change, however it may have been brought about at the beginning, engenders new social forces over a certain span of time, be it a decade, a generation, or a century. *Time dimension* comes in as a factor in the modernization process⁽³⁾.

(3) John G. Gunnell, *Time and the Concept of Development* and Hahn-Been Lee, *Developmentalist Time and Leadership in Developing Countries*. Both CAG/ASPA Occasional Papers, Bloomington, Indiana, 1965.

New forces do not emerge overnight, for in any society there exist traditional forces that are usually inimical to such development. *But even traditional power elites do something in the face of change, without always knowing what they do, far less what the consequences of what they are doing will be. Under the pressure of some new ideologies or in the aftermath of some general social event or catastrophe, or at the behest of some foreign influences, the authorities adopt, often with half-hearted enthusiasm, some social and economic programs. These may include universal education, agrarian reform, industrial development program, trade liberalization, defense build-up, etc.*

These programs are usually perceived by the implementing authorities as merely isolated measures. Few realize, however, the political implication *over time* of the particular program which they introduce.

Every public policy or program is by nature political. But few recognize this. This is because few politicians and administrators see this point, or because, even if they saw it, it is neither socially acceptable nor politically feasible to present the case that way.

At any rate, *new public programs do create, wittingly or unwittingly, new social and political forces, and, over time, these new forces begin to exert their unforeseen but neutral influences. When they emerge, they represent new political thrusts*⁽⁴⁾.

In this regard, I do not espouse the theory of some contemporary Western thinkers⁽⁵⁾ who maintain that the kind of modernization that is taking place in many developing countries at present is "exogenous", that is, caused by foreign influences, as against that brand of modernization which took place in Europe a few centuries ago which was, in their term endogenous, that is, born internally. My own thinking is that the really important stage of modernization is *always endogenous* and that such endogenous change occurs in any developing society, including the Asian societies, in the process of, and as the consequence of some public or private programs which might have originally been influenced from the outside. The seed may have been brought in, but the germination occurs only in the domestic soil. In modernization, there is no basic difference between the East and the West.

A critical problem arises in this process of unwitting creation of new social and political

(4) For an illustration of such development see my book, *Korea: Time, Change, and Administration* (Houolulu: East-West Center Press, 1967)

(5) Fred W. Riggs, *Administration in Developing Countries* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964), pp. 38—42.

forces. It is the problem of *conflict of orientation*. This arises principally because of the gap between two strata, i.e., between the existing power elites who are "coerced" to introduce new programs, on the one hand, and the new elements who emerge in the process of the unfolding of the programs thus introduced, on the other.

Such conflict may be more acute in Asia societies, than elsewhere, because of the deeply-rooted traditional values and institutions.

Social upheavals and political convulsions occur when the new forces formed in the process of underlying social change are not adequately absorbed into the on-going system and such inadequate absorptions recur and are accumulated. We often call this overt aspect of upheaval "revolution" but it is only the surface: the real revolution is more deeply rooted, and flows in a wider stream than we realize⁽⁶⁾.

III

We shall now consider why this gap in the absorption of new social forces into the political process occurs. First of all, this gap represents the existence in most developing polities of Asia of *two layers of political institutions*. One is the layer of *formal* political institutions, and the other is that of *real* political institutions. The former represents such institutional structures as the chief executive, bureaucracy, legislatures and political parties which have in most cases been transplanted from Western societies and which form the formal political apparatus in the respective countries. The latter includes, in addition to traditional social institutions, such emerging institutions as universities, press, army, labor, business and religious organizations. In some cases, formal institutions are also real, that is, they possess real power. Bureaucracies in many Asian societies are the case in point. They are at once formal and powerful. Legislatures and political parties, however, are more formal than real in many countries. In contrast the so-called non-political forces are becoming increasingly real forces to be reckoned with in the political scene, as many and profound changes occur.

Thus, in many countries, although there exists formal separation of power between the executive and legislative branches of the government, the real ruling power is concentrated

(6) For systematic treatments on the concept and classification of revolution, see James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (February, 1962), pp. 5—19; and Chalmers Johnson, *Revolution and the Social System* (Stanford: The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, Stanford University, 1964)

in the hands of the chief executive and or the bureaucracy⁽⁷⁾. Similarly, in the realm of political party, a government party is usually accompanied by one or more opposition parties. But in actuality, often more amorphous groups, such as intellectuals, the military and businessmen tend to become the real sponsors or opponents of particular regimes.

There are reasons why some of the formal political institutions in our societies are merely formal. Politics implies power. Power draws people, people with relatively high degree of power motivation. But these who are relatively more power-motivated in most Asian societies are relatively more traditionally-oriented people. In general, they have vested interests in the status quo of the society. They are not in favor of change. At the initial stage of political development, however, these people go into politics and assume leading positions in the formal political structure.

To the contrary, those who are in the non-political groups are relatively more *marginal* people. They are the individuals who are not regarded as deserving access to power and therefore not supposed to be powerful. Thus denied ready access to more socially accepted channels of power, they go at first into the "non-political" institutions. They are more sensitive to change, more in favor of change. Many of them have vested interest in change. For this reason, although they are not regarded as "political" groups, yet from the broad perspective of political modernization, they often possess great potentials as modernizing political elites.

Once this reality of politics of modernization is realized, then the critical problem of political modernization is less the problem of designing a legal structure of government than that of identifying and integrating formal and real political institutions for the purpose of modernization.

IV

Integration of political institutions involves integrating values, both new and old, Here we have an obvious conflict. On the one hand, progress requires acquiring new values, whereas stability and order requires preserving old values. As the goal of modernization is a sustained orderly progress, both of these requirements must be met.

The first requirement of political modernization is to absorb progressive elements in the

(7) Fred W. Riggs, *The Political Structures of Administrative Development: Some Tentative Formulations*. (CAG Occasional Paper, 1967)

society⁽⁸⁾. This involves above all releasing the energy of the new generation particularly, in whatever social spheres they may be found. Adequate and timely provision of channels of mobility, vertically and laterally, helps the process of absorption of the young generation.

Creation of new values requires creating and developing new institutions, which instill and cultivate new values *over a sustained period of time*. It takes time for viable institutions to develop in education, industry, legal system, political organization. This is particularly true in the case of a comprehensive institution like democracy. Institution building must be approached with an *adequate time span*. Too often people introduce new political institutions modeling after some "ideal types" in developed countries, and get irritated the first sign of their maladaptation to the indigenous conditions. The forethought and preparation of these ill-advised imitators are matched by their impatience and lack of conviction.

When a network of new institutions such as constitutional government, universal suffrage, public education, family planning, industrial development and the like are introduced, the new values requisite in operating this cotery of institutions cannot be immediately shared by the active elites of the day who would be already imbued with traditional values. They may pay lip-service to the new goals, but they would act differently. But as the factor of *time* comes into play, the new generation that grows up relatively imbued with new values inherent in the newly-introduced institutions, manifests relatively greater concern for the new values and comes to gradually espouse them. When they perceive that the older generation pays too little attention to the new values and pays only lip-service to the latter, manifestation of their concern can take explosive forms. The task of integration is to minimize the upheavals that may arise under such circumstances and facilitate a process of orderly absorption of such new energies into the on-going system.

A corollary of this is mobilization of legitimate traditional forces for the cause of modernization. We often call this quality charisma⁽⁹⁾. Charisma is the product of recognition of some proven quality and performance in the past. When judiciously mobilized and applied, charisma mitigates pains of modernization, sanctions innovation, and facilitates adoption and diffusion of new ideas. In the interest of modernization and institutional integration, proper use of valuable resources of the past is essential and highly desirable for creation of a climate

(8) For absorption theory, see S.N. Eisenstadt, *Moderinzation: Protest and Change*(Englewood Cliffs, W.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966).

(9) For a treatment of various definitions of charisma, see Reinhard Bendix, "Reflections on Charismatic Leadership," in *Asian Survey*, Vol. VII, No. 6, (June, 1967), pp. 341-352.

of legitimacy, stability and solidarity which are so much required for an orderly modernization⁽¹⁰⁾.

To summarize, the essence of political integration is nothing but integration of both new and traditional social energies. It involves, first of all, recognition and identification of the relevant energies as valuable resources for building a new future. It future entails bringing together or mobilizing from among both these broad groups those elements which are interested in devoting their energies to meet constant change. In order that these often conflicting social forces may come into a constructive union, a larger horizon has to be created, a larger framework which they become willing to enter together. Question remains, who creates such new horizons and frameworks? It boils down to the problem of leadership, no less than the problem of creative political leadership.

V

This leads us to some concluding remarks on the role of political leadership in modernization and the qualities of *creative leadership*. As an increasing number of thinkers⁽¹¹⁾ on political development point out these days, no new state can modernize itself and become and remain democratic in the present century without an elite of force of character, intelligence, and high moral qualities. The role of political leadership lies in channeling the nation's talents, energies and resources to the task of modernization with a view to making the process secure and shortening the time required for transition from traditional to modern status.

The qualities that leadership must possess in order to channel and mobilize nation's resources are many, but I shall try to identify some salient ones⁽¹²⁾.

First, political leadership must have *vision*, vision of the future. Vision opens up new horizons and new futures. Future has possibility and freedom. If opportunities can be clearly shown to the people, future can embrace all forces, both new and old. Toward a larger future, existing conflicts can be resolved.

Second, creative leadership searches for *innovational elements* from among potential sources.

(10) Warren F. Ilchman and R.C. Bhargava, "Balanced Thought and Economic Growth," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, XIV, No. 4 (July, 1966), 385—399.

See also Marion J. Levy, Jr., "Rapid Social Change and Some Special Implications for Modernization, in the Report of the International Conference on the Problems of Modernization in Asia, at Asiatic Research Center, Korea University, June 28— July 7, 1965, pp. 655—664.

(11) Edward Shils, *Political Development in the New States* (The Hague: Mouton Co., 1962), p. 86.

(12) Philip Selznik, *Leadership in Administration* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957).

It sees men in a different light, sees them in their potentialities. Such a new outlook on men enables the leader to locate, recruit and promote innovators and reformers for modernizing roles.

Third, a creative leader is an *educator* in the broadest sense of the word⁽¹³⁾. He releases energy and elicits sacrifices for the common goal. He builds and imbues purpose. He transforms men and women from neutral bodies into participants who have a peculiar sense of commitment and mission. To build up national purpose, the political leader must not only dream a great dream but also infuse day-to-day behaviour with long-run meaning by setting examples and find modes of communication that will inculcate such national purpose.

Finally, creative political leadership must pave and plant *trust*. Leadership must create conditions under which innovation and enterprise can thrive. It must create a flexible and secure climate so that free resources can be displayed and accumulated. To elicit spontaneous trust leadership must possess legitimacy which means a state of mind of the people that the leadership deserves their natural support. And in order to inspire such spontaneous support, the leadership must have its foundation upon morality. This is the foundation for creating conditions that will make possible in the future what is excluded in the present. As CONFUCIUS observed long ago, among the three essentials of good government, which, according to this oriental sage, are *food*, *weapons*, and *people's trust*, people's trust is the most important. Needless to say this moral foundation is as necessary for political modernization in the present day Asia as in the time of Confucius.

(13) John M Gaus, "A Theory of Organization in Public Administration", in John M. Gaus, M.E. Dimock, and L.D. White, *The Frontiers of Public Administration* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1936), pp. 90—91.