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ABSTRACT

A. Inkeles' cross-cultural work is reviewed. Inkeles studied young factory workers in six developing countries (Argentina, Chile, India, Israel, Nigeria, and East Pakistan) to determine their "modernity" characteristics versus their "traditional" or rural orientations. The use of the "modern man" thesis in this study, that is, that the factory can be an educational tool for modernization, is criticized because the term is used loosely and factory work is used as a norm. This "norm" imposes class and psychological status on rural migrants. In addition, factories tend to manipulate rather than educate workers, that is, the individual becomes an instrument for production rather than a functioning unit in society as a whole. Inkeles' view that "psychic unity" is developing as a result of urbanization processes is considered highly "middle-class" in its mentality and ambitions. There is no concept of man as "change agent" in the modern syndrome. Some of Inkeles' points about modernization trends and nonformal training and education by factories are significant. However, his thesis is stretched too far in trying to envision these trends as normative, good, and unifying. (A. Inkeles, "Making Man Modern," American Journal of Sociology; v75 n2 p208-225 Sep 1969.) (Author/JS)

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D I S C U S S I O N D R A F T

"ON MAKING MAN MODERN"--A REVIEW

by

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Summary of a Discussion Draft
"ON MAKING MAN MODERN"--A REVIEW

by

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September 1971

This paper reviews the cross-cultural work undertaken by sociologist A. Inkeles and his colleagues in the study of young factory workers in six developing countries to determine their "modernity" characteristics, as opposed to "traditional" or rural orientations.

In this review the "modern man" thesis, which holds that "the factory can be a school" for modernization, is seen as a significant observation of the process of factory training in the total urbanization process. However, the thesis is criticized for its loose use of the term, and meaning of, education. Furthermore, the thesis is criticized for setting up factory work as a "norm" since in reality this imposes a class, as well as a psychological status on rural migrants. Finally, the fact is underlined that factories tend to manipulate rather than educate workers. The individual becomes an instrument for production in society rather than a fully functioning unit in the total make-up of society.

The "psychic unity" which Inkeles sees developing as a result of urbanization processes is seen as highly "middle-class" in its mentality and ambitions. There is no concept of man as "change agent" in the modern syndrome. In fact, it appears that so-called modern man is really a sort of happy, unsuspecting, manipulated unit that functions in society but does not contribute to the structure and goals of society.

Inkeles has many significant points about modernization trends and non-formal training and education by factories, but it is felt that he stretches his thesis too far in trying to envision these trends as normative, good and unifying.

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"ON MAKING MAN MODERN"--A REVIEW

I

INTRODUCTION

As a part of research for the Social and Cultural Aspects of Economic Development at Harvard's Center for International Affairs, Alex Inkeles and several colleagues--American and foreign--undertook a cross-cultural study of young factory workers in six developing countries with a view to determining their "modernity" characteristics, as opposed to "traditional" or rural orientations.¹ The countries chosen for the study were: Argentina, Chile, India, Israel, Nigeria and East Pakistan. The methodology of the study was two-fold: a complex and comprehensive questionnaire and in-depth interviews. To identify "modern man" a set of personal characteristics and qualities were established for purposes of comparison. It was decided that the following made up the "modern man" syndrome:

- i) openness to new experience, both with people and new ways of doing things;
- ii) increasing independence from traditional authority figures (e.g., parents and priests) and a shift of allegiance to leaders of government, public affairs, trade unions, cooperatives, etc.;
- iii) belief in the efficacy of science and medicine, with a concomitant abandonment of passivity and fatalism;
- iv) ambition for oneself and one's children to achieve high occupational goals;
- v) respect for punctuality and interest in planning of affairs in advance;
- vi) strong interest and active participation in civic and community affairs and local politics;
- vii) striving to keep up with the news and preference for news of national and international import over sports, religion or purely local matters.

¹Inkeles, Alex, "Making Men Modern" in The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 75, No. 2, September 1969, pp. 208-225, tables.

The main finding of the study was that: "The factory can be a school-- a school for modernization." By this is meant that the factory environment can cause "late socialization" and thus alter traditional qualities and characteristics of people from a traditional to a modern mode. According to the study, however, "The classroom still leads the workshop as a school of modernization in the ratio of 3:2. Using a stricter test which utilizes factory workers only, grouped by length of industrial experience, it turns out that every additional year in school produces three times as much increment in one's modernization score as does a year in the factory, that is, the factory goes to 3:1. The school seems clearly to be the more efficient training ground for individual modernization. Nevertheless, we should keep in mind that the school has the pupil full time, and it produces no incidental by-products other than pupils. By contrast the main business of the factory is to manufacture goods, and the changes it brings about in men--not insubstantial as we have seen--are produced at virtually zero marginal cost. These personality changes in men are therefore a kind of windfall profit to a society undergoing the modernization process."

The main claim by Inkeles is that "qualities which serve empirically to define a modern man do not differ substantially from occupation to occupation, or more critically from culture to culture." One way of making men modern across the board, or across the world, is via the factory. This thesis is concurred with--in part though not in substance--by William H. Form who also concludes: "the same processes of modernization are occurring about at the same rates in countries at different levels of industrialization." Form differs, however, in his claim: "The factory and the city seem to exert the same type of influence on rural migrants at about the same rates everywhere. Such evidence tends to support an industrial man or convergence hypothesis."²

²Form, William H., et al. The Accomodation of Rural and Urban Workers to Industrial Discipline and Urban Living: A Four-nation Study. 7th World Congress of Sociology, Varna, Bulgaria, September 17, 1970, mimeo., tables.

The difference in language and meaning of the two sociologists may be profitably re-stated. Inkeles suggests a "modern man" thesis based on occupational influences cross-culturally. Form refers to an "industrial man" developed cross-culturally by occupational as well as urbanization influences. Both of these theses are based on the notion of "convergence"--that man tends to grow alike, to develop similarities in form, habits, etc. The difference between the views and language of these two sociologists is crucial because it tells us something about: rhetoric versus rigorous common sense.

But first, there are several important elucidations and substantial contributions made by Inkeles' study. On the basis of his survey of 6,000 young workers in six different countries, he arrives at four points which his "modern man" thesis tends to establish. Although the first of these may remain debatable, the last three points (if we insert "industrial" for "modern") are highly revealing and significant--not only for sociologists but for social engineers, such as: statesman, administrators, educators, social workers, labor leaders, radicals, etc. The four points are:

- a) There is an empirically identifiable modern man.
- b) Significant changes can be brought about in men who are already past the formative early years and have already reached adulthood as relatively traditional men.
- c) There are behavioral consequences arising from the attitudinal modernization of the individual, i.e., modern men act different from traditional men.
- d) Men can go through the process of rapid socio-cultural change without deleterious (psychic strain) consequences.

Point (b) has particular significance for administrators and practitioners in the field of "out-of-school education," or what in the United States is termed "continuing" or adult education. What Inkeles is saying is that there is a false identification between education as a training cum socialization instrument and formal schooling. This realization is crucial to persons concerned with the purposes, planning and practice of education.

Finally, there is another, and disputable, claim by Inkeles that his "modern man" thesis argues for the "actual psychic unity of mankind in a structural sense and the potential psychic unity of mankind in the factual sense." Either this is an apocalyptical statement or a mind-twisting verbal fantasy.

II

MODERN MAN VERSUS MANIPULATED MAN

Before we can talk about the "modern man" thesis with any sort of clarity, the question of modernization needs to be reviewed. We cannot discover whether certain men are modern or not just by the way they act or react in given circumstances; we need to look at the forces manipulating them. What is modernization? And what is it causing to happen?

It is impossible to conceive of a modern political system without some political and administrative centralization and a tendency towards the continuous spread of potential political power. Even in the United States, while we argue over the degree of plurality permissible and required, the forces of centralization and conformity are eating away at the belief in the essential integrity of the individual which--even according to the Armed Forces--is "the basis for the American way of life."³ Likewise, it is impossible to conceive of a modern economy without the development of markets, of suitable labor capital, and of demand for the products of industry.

There is an ever-growing specialization (or specification of different societal functions) and the extension of notions of achievement and universalism in any process of modernization. These basic characteristics are

³Houle, Cyril O., et al. The Armed Forces and Adult Education. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1947. 257 p.

integral to the modern-man syndrome; they are usually preceded by economic growth in the form of industrialization. Factories are most commonly the fertilizer for this growth.

Along with economic development there usually goes a "rise in educational standards and achievements, the spread of political consciousness, secularization, the rapid growth of science, the decline of the family, and the increase in social mobility; all are associated with industrialization."⁴

If we were to choose from the above trends and tendencies of modernization as a process, we might conclude that there are really three sine qua non factors in the making:

- i) centralization, with concomitant structural specialization;
- ii) social mobilization;
- iii) institutional ability for sustained growth.

The order is not important. What matters is that to achieve social mobilization and institutional ability for sustained growth, the concept of modernization must be designed as a continuing and not a terminal process. In other words, a modern social structure must be capable of continually absorbing the forces and results of change within its drive toward sustained growth. Otherwise, modernization would be a goal to be attained and stopped at. Nobody concerned with the notion of a "continuing society," or as John Gardner says, an "ever re-newing society" can conceive of the modernization process as a terminal affair anymore than anybody seriously interested in his own self-development can consider education as a terminating process.

Tradition, modernity and change are interrelated and to some extent combined. Modernization's most general and common problem is: the ability to develop and maintain an institutional structure which is capable of

⁴ Etzioni, Amitai Modern Organizations. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc. (Foundations of Modern Sociology series; Alex Inkeles, editor), 1964. 120 p. (ref. p. 105).

absorbing changes beyond its own initial premises and of dealing with continuously new and different problems. Which is another way of saying that the modernization process is not only made up of certain developments, such as, urban development, industrialization, specialization, etc., but dependent upon the ability to build upon change and, in a sense, to change change to fit different economic, political and social needs.

The factory is at once a catalyst--or fertilizer--and, by its very nature and purpose a limited and limiting ingredient in the process of making society modern, since catalysts usually spark change but are not easily changed themselves. The city on the other hand is both catalyst and change-integrator. As Form suggests, the urban milieu is as influential and determinative a factor bearing on man's growth of outlook, behavioral changes, values-shifts, etc.

A fundamental aspect of modern culture and "modern man" is future-orientation. As Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck point out in Variations in Value Orientation, whereas traditional cultures tend to produce in man a "being" orientation, industrially advanced nations develop a "future-oriented" mentality.⁵ When a man's sense of the future is limited or nil, we think of him as traditional, static or senile--depending on his geographical, social or gerontological place in the world. Inkeles refers to this future orientation when he mentions "respect for punctuality and interest in planning affairs in advance."

The modernization process in Argentina, Chile, India, Israel, Nigeria and East Pakistan has met with varying degrees of success and frustration. What makes the process "modern," however, is its conceptualization as a continuing and not a terminal series of activities, that is to say that the

⁵ It is interesting to note that a preliminary study by the New York State Council for Education reports on the basis of a sample survey that Americans are not as future-oriented now as ten years ago. Although it is too early to be sure what this finding portends, it is clear that the dynamism and demands of modern American society are having their negative affects (on his being?).

process itself is seen as continually "future oriented." Furthermore, there is a growing sense of "responsibilization" for the way in which the process takes place. New as well as old developing nations are more and more concerned with the control of technology and, in contrast to Inkeles, not merely with the culture-creating side of development but with its culture-destroying aspects as well.

Structural specialization, social mobilization and institutional ability for sustained growth are factors in a flow which are easier to isolate than to implement. The factory (basic industrialization) may be a first step toward modernization; it is, nevertheless, not the only step. Some thinkers and practitioners, in fact, believe that agricultural development must precede industrialization.⁶ In short, there seems to be range of variables all having something to do with the extent and rapidity of modernization. The factory is one of these variables. Moreover, as Inkeles suggests, it facilitates a man's integration--and the reduction of his psychic strain--as he makes the move from rural to urban life--at least for those men whose lives (economically, socially and psychologically) have been directed toward this particular kind of occupation.

In the final analysis, Inkeles seems to be concerned more with social psychology than social organization or social change--and, more particularly, with social behavioral psychology. The thrust of his study is toward "convergent" (or uniform) learning, not toward divergent (or individual) learning.⁷ His interest is with the affects of modernization through "factorization" on one group within the urban milieu: the guys who get the factory jobs. But aren't those who get the jobs more prepared and ready and "modern" oriented in the first place? What effect would factory employment

⁶See Rene Dumont. L'Afrique est mal partie (1968?).

⁷The British psychologist, Liam Hudson, reviews and develops this notion of "convergent" and "divergent" learning.

have on workers in a rural area? To what extent would the modern-man syndrome fit or differ for the migrant who receives another (non-factory) kind of job? What becomes of "traditional man" who comes to the city and sets up, alone or in partnership, his own business enterprise? To what extent can the influence of the factory be distinguished from the affect of the urban milieu?

Although Inkeles compares the factory to another institution--the school--he does not compare the factory to other comparable institutions demanding allegiance and discipline--for example, the army, a political party, job institutions other than factories. What happens to "the unemployed who came to the city with high hopes but failed to find work"--meaning, work in the factories? Were there no other alternatives? In which case, can we call that society "modern?" And if not, isn't our "modern man" more of a puppet than a person?

As with most cross-cultural studies, the standard (normative) values of the society under study are established as a departure point. The society is thought of as being in "equilibrium" and expressed most perfectly by the "powers that be." This is also true of the bases of judgment and decision-making and social engineering at the international level. It is perhaps an inevitable result of dealing with problems and observations in the large. It is a way of looking which must of necessity ignore other, less standard, minority movements toward change. We cannot fault Inkeles for taking the normal route towards a cross-cultural study, but we cannot help but see his "modern man" as more of a manipulated than a self-manipulating man.

III

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There is a false identification between education and formal schooling. Twice as disturbing is the false identification between education and

development. That education may take place in schools or that education may influence development are not in question. What is in doubt is the high emphasis being placed on formal education as a factor in development. Inkeles is certainly right in reminding us that the school is not the only institution that carries out educational functions.

Contemporary--modernizing--societies expect too much of the schools. They expect equal educational opportunity to mean equal vocational opportunity. At the same time, societies do not demand from the schools their highest purpose: to help learners to learn to produce knowledge. In fact, the "comprehensive notion of education as anticipatory socialization--the mode for the transmission of fundamental beliefs and attitudes, with concomitant knowledge and skills from one generation to the next--is generally accepted as the functional view of the educational enterprise."⁸ Only in books such as: Education as a Subversive Activity, do educators talk of teaching as a process aimed at teaching learners to produce knowledge. And, in the final analysis, isn't it the "knowledge producing countries" that are considered truly "modern?"

The school, nevertheless, is certainly not the only kind of educational institution. Apprenticeship is as meaningful an educative experience as it ever was; that it takes place in a factory rather than under the tutelage of a "master" and that its aim is a higher eschelon job and more pay rather than an individual style and "mastery" only suggests that we need to look at the history and development of apprenticeship more closely.

Functional education may not seem the highest form of learning but its importance for developing countries cannot be underestimated. Moreover, the growing awareness of the inability of the formal school system to meet the demands for "democratization of education" or ensure its graduates vocational

⁸Ziegler, Warren, "A Framework for Studying the Future for Continuing Education--Worldwide." Working paper for the International Seminar on Adult Education, Syracuse U., Dec. 1-4, 1969. 21 p.

achievement commensurate with their skills and interests only indicates that meaningful (not peripheral) alternatives to formal school education are needed. It also indicates that we need to recognize the value of other "educative" institutions in society, such as the factory, and the effective way in which they provide "skillful, social and intelligent"⁹ traditional men with the trappings needed to integrate more smoothly into a modernizing society. It is to Inkeles' credit that he has done just this.

The factory certainly needs to be recognized as an experience with educative by-products that tend to alter men's thinking and behavior. On the other hand, this kind of education must not be confused with the higher purpose of education--that which will contribute to the divergent possibilities of development rather than promote only the convergent direction of economic advancement. Education is not merely, as one African President claims: ". . . to prepare young people to live in and serve society, and to transmit the knowledge, skills, and values and attitudes of the society."¹⁰ Thomas F. Green of Syracuse University has pointed out that education ". . . is always concerned with (a) socialization, (b) cultural transmission, and (c) the development of self-identity in the individual."¹¹ But when we look closely at the meaning and "development" value of education, then we cannot help but recognize that this meaning and value are not only inherent in training and attitudinal changes but more nearly linked to the discovery and invention of new ways of seeing, thinking and doing. Education, we repeat, is not merely a process whereby cultural values, knowledge and skills, attitudes and habits are transmitted, but a relationship in which the learner is encouraged to produce (to invent, to create) knowledge.

To teach to produce knowledge must be the goal of any truly educational enterprise, in our opinion. Otherwise, our talk is about something else:

⁹ A phrase from Alex Comfort.

¹⁰ Nyerere, Julius K. "Education for Self-reliance." Essay, March 1967.

¹¹ Green, Thomas F. Work, Leisure and the American Schools. New York: Random House, 1968. 174 p. (ref. p. 148).

the politics of education, the social role or "sociology of education,"¹² developmental education in the sense of training, consumer education, or some other aspect or by-product of the educational process.

What Inkeles seems to be telling us about the school is that: The school must become a factory for modernization.

In a society whose cultural or economic base does not encourage inventiveness (divergent learning), then there is really little need for the kind of "higher" education we have in mind. "High productivity," just as the hard-headed economists keep insisting, "may be more a basic cause for formal education than a result."¹³ Inkeles' thesis, then, takes on special connotative meaning. If the factory is seen not only as an economic means to growth but as a "school for modernization" and if, further, the formal school system is failing, then why not start pouring money into factories and forget about that overburdened, much too subtle and difficult, problem of education.

"Freedom of choice is basically an inescapable component of other valued states, such as fulfillment of one's capacities, creativity, 'well being' and control over the environment. By itself, it is operationally meaningless since freedom of choice where there is no choice is a nonsensical concept, devoid of meaning. Valuing freedom of choice thus becomes a vital protection against tyranny. In economic planning, where deliberate manipulation of motivation and behavior is paramount, freedom of choice must be given special attention, to avoid exaggerating the basic infringement of human dignity that deliberate manipulation implies and often involves."¹⁴ This quote--also by our hard-headed economist--indicates again our concern with Inkeles'

¹²Shipman, M.D. Sociology of the School London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1968. 196 p.

¹³Swerdlow, I. "Economic Planning and Public Administration" (unpublished manuscript).

¹⁴Swerdlow, I., op. cit.

"modern man." It is disturbing to think that we can talk about the modernization process as one in which conformity and discipline are given priority over individual choice and self-determination. But Inkeles is righter than we might like to believe; this is exactly the direction in which many developing countries are moving.

IV

STRUCTURAL AND FACTUAL PSYCHIC UNITY

Erik Erikson has written: ". . . in all parts of the world, the struggle now is for the anticipatory development of more inclusive identities." This is happening at the political, social and psychological levels. The struggle in Nigeria over Biafra can be understood as a civil war or ^{as} an effort to solidify a nation of "Nigerians" rather than continue a confederation of Haussas, Yorubas, Ibos, etc. The polarization of youth and adults today: the so-called hippies and hard-hats, is another example. The old dichotomy between egg-heads and yokels is still pretty much accepted. The struggle of the United Nations, the aim of the "global village" notion, the thrust of international corporations, all seek to develop large, inclusive identities--at the political, the social and the professional levels.

Inclusive identities may be deceiving. In his new work, Man's Power, Kalman H. Silvert writes: "The reward of the complexity of modern life is that the modern individual is permitted, even required, to be many individuals." He adds, "A reversion to wholeness in the sense of a seamless singularity of personal characteristics, behavior, and values is a retrogressive cultural and personal impoverishment."¹⁵

Silvert's view does not by any means disprove Inkeles' "modern man" thesis. In fact, it only helps to point up the schizophrenia, or multi-phrenia,

¹⁵ Silvert, Kalman H. Man's Power; A Biased Guide to Political Thought and Action. New York: The Viking Press, 1970. 163 p. (ref. p. 86).

in post-industrial countries. On the other hand, it helps to put Inkeles' thesis in perspective. It suggests that the singularity of personal qualities and characteristics Inkeles associates with "modern man" may, in fact, be a limiting notion--an attempt to develop an inclusive identity where in reality there is only a fragment of the modern individual's total personality. The "modern individual" might, for example, find the following traits as modern as those devised by Inkeles:

- i) willingness to point out, and act on, contradictions as he sees them in himself, in others, in institutions and in society in general;
- ii) commitment to help his neighbor in time of need--thus recognizing that, within any society (even a modern one) we all need each other;
- iii) recognition that science and medicine (for example) are tools of men and thus not only fallible but capable of inaccurate as well as heinous use;
- iv) comprehension that high occupational and educational goals are meaningless unless fulfilling to the psyche;
- v) awareness that sports, religion and purely local matters may be as interesting and important as national or international matters (unless the latter require his action at the local level);
- vi) understands "foreign states of mind" as merely different ways of perceiving;
- vii) always recognizes when there are, or should be, alternatives to traditional ways of doing things.

How much more, or less, modern is a man who speaks from his own experience, recognizes alternatives, sees contradictions and acts on them, and understands foreign states of mind?

In a sense, we are saying that Inkeles' "modern man" seems more of a modern object, a robot, than a real person. This is perhaps inevitable with any attempt at "inclusive identities" or "psychic unities." Ultimately, the question is whether the "modern man" is a prototype that forms a unit within a psychic aggregate, or merely a socio-political unit with psychic overtones?

Inkeles considers of utmost significance that "qualities which serve empirically to define a modern man do not differ substantially from occupation to occupation, or more critically from culture to culture." Essentially, he wants to make of "industrial man" a new and bigger label-carrier. Shazam! I'm a modern man. In his statement, Inkeles might have been fairer if he had said: "qualities which serve empirically to define my concept of a modern man." For example, we would have liked to have asked the 6000 workers whether they revered punctuality out of choice or out of fear of losing their (probably highly desired) jobs. Or if their ambition for their children were rationally, or irrationally, based. Or, finally, whether their active participation in civic and community affairs was an interest carry-over from village life or a strictly new development.

The feudal system is one of the neatest examples of structural and factual psychic unity. A peasant in Germany or England in the Middle Ages probably shared many things in common, including a comparable outlook on life. Industrial man today is not much different except in that, with rapid urbanization and initial social mobility, he must literally "change his ways," but then this would have been true with almost any peasant's son who ran off to undertake an apprenticeship in a European city at that time.

What Inkeles seems to imply with his reference to structural and factual psychic unity is the unfolding of a kind of "new ethic"--a "modern man" ethic to compare with "the Protestant ethic" or to contrast with the counter-culture, or "hang-loose" ethic.¹⁶ There is a movement today to discover and define a new ethic, but the "modern man" thesis as proposed by Inkeles seems to fall short of the mark. His thesis suggests a set of behavioral patterns rather than anything which could be labelled as a "new ethic;" at best it is a structural psychic unity imposed by necessity.

¹⁶ Simmonds, J.L. and Barry Winograd. It's Happening, A Portrait of the Youth Scene Today. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Marc-Laird Publishers, 1969.

But there is one thing about the psyche that Inkeles does tell us loud and clear and that is: a man without a job in an urban area is probably under considerable psychic strain. If the "modern man" is not under stress, then it is probably that he has given up those activities and experiences that demand his continuing socialization and education. At best, he has become "set" in a pattern. Who is to say if he is more modern than the man who did not find a job and has become alienated (and perhaps "revolutionary") because the factory represents a syndrome which is too controlled and limiting and blah.

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