

THE END OF DEVELOPMENT

by

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The notion of development as employed by most social scientists for the last twenty years has outlived its usefulness. The effort to elaborate a universal model of economic, social and political change that, if implemented, would guarantee access to the "good life" has failed, but the failure, partially acknowledged in the West, has not yet gained full recognition in the Third World, which limps along in pursuit of Western goals to which the West no longer subscribes.

The consequences may be benign. It may be that the Third World nations need in the short run to emphasize economic growth without undue regard for environmental and social costs that have become significant in the West. It may be that the Third World peoples will benefit if their nation-states seek to fulfill so-called basic needs, such as food, housing, and health care, even though it is by no means clear that peoples concur on what constitute "basic needs."

However, while genuine benefits may accrue from economic growth, especially if its products are redirected toward "basic needs,"¹ the costs of these policies cannot be ignored. In fact, the costs, though less obvious, may be more important than the benefits. Insofar as governments take these objectives seriously and seek to impose them on the incomprehending, improvement in standards of living must be discounted by the degree of "pain" inflicted.² Moreover, the more a government insists on any strategy of development, the more it forces change in the economic, social and political habits of its constituency. And the sacrifice of these patterns of behavior, some dear to their practitioners, must be counted as a further cost.³

Most important, government adherence to the idea of development as an externally defined objective nurtures the feeling that development is itself something to be acquired or imposed, not generated from within. Pursuit of development as an ideal, whether than ideal is fashioned in the capital city or in American universities, may sap a people's belief in its own ability to fashion a better life. Emphasis on planned development may reduce a people's capacity for autonomous, purposeful adaptation of cultural patterns in ways perceived to be desirable. In short, development may stand in the way of progress.

I take this to be the fundamental problem confronting one who would think about the question of development. But perhaps it is only a problem at the level of universal generalization. Perhaps, if one could narrow the scope of inquiry to a single cultural area, such as the Middle East, one could resurrect the notion of development by defining it in a way that coincides with peoples' own perceptions of progress. Better yet, perhaps one could save development as an ideal by focusing on a single country, such as Egypt. I undertook this project in the hope of finding that regional specialists or Middle Easterners themselves had, through common sense and closer touch with realities, escaped the theoretical potholes in which so many of us Westerners seem to be mired.

This paper is but an interim report on the project itself. As an indication of what area specialists believe "development" to be, it draws upon the proceedings of two conferences of the Middle East Institute (MEI) on the subject of development, the first held in 1963 and the second in 1976. For a reading on how Egyptians seek development, it relies primarily on interviews conducted in Cairo in September, 1977.

Both MEI conferences reflected tensions between a desire to make development a universal concept and a realization that a given community or nation may not accept any universal definition. The Middle East Institute counts diplomats, foundation personnel, businessmen, military officers and academicians among its members. Its conference programs reflected that mix and seemed to promise, on both occasions, some narrowing of the chasm between internal and external, subjective and objective, policy-oriented and highly theoretical perspectives on development. But, in fact, both conferences revealed the depth and breadth of the gulf without constructing a usable bridge.

In 1963 and again in 1976 speakers emphasized that development worthy of the name must reflect what Middle Easterners deem to be progress. Chester Bowles said in 1963: "The only realistic program we can promise with any hope of success is the fundamental one of helping people to help themselves evolve something they are willing to defend themselves."⁴ He called for special attention to rural areas, where needs might be most difficult to understand. William H. Lewis, talking about northern Africa, argued for development planning that would begin at the village level. The key questions, more pressing for him than which projects should be undertaken, were: "1) Who should establish the priorities? 2) Who is to decide what is of value in a people's traditions? 3) What means--suasion, coercion, etc.--should be applied in pursuit of modernity?"⁵ Such considerations imply that development should mean different things in different countries or even different regions of the same country.

This democratic strain resurfaced at the 1976 conference. Its most rigorous exponent, Afif T. Tannous, consultant on Middle Eastern Development, U. S. Department of Agriculture, called for beginning development from knowledge of the "expressed needs" of the people. "We must begin with what they want to

be done," he said. The planning process must be turned upside down.⁶

Cathie Witty, noted that efforts to apply a national legal system in rural Lebanon had not been regarded as legitimate. The newly created institutions did not serve people's needs, because they did not stem from the community itself. Unlike Tannous, Witty did not call for "listening to people and doing what they say." But she did say "new kinds of programs" could only come from "planning with them." The distinction "listening to" and "planning with" local communities was not clear.

Such thinking, however much it employs the word "development", tends to reduce the term to a mere cover for time-related actions, which is what broadcasters mean when they refer to "developments in the Middle East." Professor Bitofi of the American University of Beirut, addressing the 1976 conference, subscribed to such a view in his analysis of the impact of changing values on so-called "traditional" cultures in the Middle East. He cited cases where

traditional values had crumbled, others where traditional values had survived even under duress, and still others where traditional and modern values seem to co-exist without conflict. How does one predict which outcome will prevail in a given situation?

He said only "life" would resolve the question. Peoples themselves will decide that question. Academic social scientists cannot go beyond that observation, he said.

Such modesty has not, of course, been characteristic of Western social science in the last three decades. Most students of development have sought to give the term universal meaning; they posit development as a set of ideals that can be achieved by a combination of careful academic research and vigorous government planning and execution. By focusing on "development" in the Middle

East, organizers of the MEI conference undoubtedly understood the subject as quite distinct from "developments" in the area.

Most conference participants in both 1963 and 1976 would doubtless have defended this distinction. William R. Polk, in an introduction to the edited version of the 1963 papers, identified development with changes in modes of communication, with urbanization, with increasing areas of government control, with expansion of the market economy and with the spread of education.⁷ Most contributors to the 1963 volume and participants in the 1976 conference included at least economic growth in their conception of development. Many emphasized the importance of planning as a means to achieving this goal, although there were warnings that planning is not an end in itself⁸ and that it must take account of "social milieu, cultural values and human orientations."⁹ Alan Horton, keynoting the 1976 conference, argued that the "ideal of development" means essentially the efforts of a nation to become stronger, efforts that depend on raising national income, among other things. But he also acknowledged disagreement among "practitioners" of development on what it is.

These definitions of development represent but a few of those discussed in the academic literature of the last twenty years. All reflect a persuasion that a sifting of the Western experience reveals values of universal validity against which Third World efforts can be measured. Strangely, all represent ideas that many Westerners can no longer swallow undiluted as representative of their own nation's objectives.

Increasing communications? Few would argue that television has lived up to its promise. Urbanization? Large cities constitute a challenge to the survival of civilized living in many parts of the Western world. Increasing

areas of government control? The twentieth century cannot forget Stalinism and Nazism, and tax revolts in the United States express disenchantment with the ever growing burden of government. Growth of education? More education of persons performing the same tasks as their less educated parents does not necessarily increase either productivity or happiness.¹⁰ Planning? Controversy continues to surround its usefulness in promoting general well-being. Stronger nation-states? Few would defend the modern nation-state as a guarantor of peace and progress; some would say the strength of national institutions militates against our chances of resolving global problems, such as those of over population and resource scarcity. Economic growth? It has become commonplace, even in the developing world, to say that growth does not automatically result in a higher quality of life.

Even in 1963 MEI conference participants demonstrated awareness of these problems. Chester Bowles warned against "our deep-seated tendency to equate development with economic growth."¹¹ Robert R. North suggested that developing countries could not afford to ignore "elements of equity and justice" in their efforts to promote growth, for to do so would be to "precipitate political and economic environments which are hardly conducive to development."¹²

However, there prevailed at the 1963 conference an aura of optimism that would not survive the intervening thirteen years. Jerome B. Wiesner said: "This is undoubtedly the first period in the long history of man in which there can be genuine hope that life need not be primarily a grim struggle for survival. . . ."¹³ He spoke of development as a "massive human engineering effort." To guide that effort, Manfred Halpern pleaded for "policy-relevant theories of social change." He foresaw "an insightful theory of the character and potentialities of the revolution of modernization proceeding under conditions of misery and in telescoped time."¹⁴

On a practical level, others expressed confidence that governments, equipped with theories of development, could achieve their objectives. Frank Keenan Sloan argued that military governments might facilitate progress,¹⁵ and Yusif A. Sayigh offered a general justification for strong-arm tactics in the pursuit of development aims. He expressed admiration for the Nasirist experiment in Egypt. One need not worry about authoritarianism in the long run, he said, for "it is only through development and the concomitant break of other old rigid systems that a solid foundation for political democracy can be laid."¹⁶ Education, growth, organization, democracy--all good things seemed attainable together, if only the right "policy-relevant theories" could be produced and applied.¹⁷ In fact, even temporary dictatorship might be brooked, if it followed advice, promoted economic development, and consequently, laid the foundations for democracy.

By 1976 the tone had become more pessimistic. In his summary of the conference, Philip H. Stoddard said he had detected a "deep current of pessimism" about Middle Eastern governments, about American ability to cope with the problems arising in the Third World, about the prospects for many developing countries, and about the distribution of whatever benefits were to be had in these countries.

The pessimism actually ran deeper than lack of faith in governments, American or Middle Eastern. Looking back at the MEI conference of 1976 in the light of the published papers for the conference of 1963, I find the most striking change to be diminished faith in social scientific ability to understand development and generate "policy-relevant theories" for its achievement. In fact, almost none of the "policy-relevant" suggestions of the intervening years received mention, much less endorsement. Not Samuel Huntington's plea

for political institutionalization, especially in the form of strong parties.¹⁸ Not the Rostowian prescription for the injection of capital¹⁹ nor the various suggestions of other economics for balanced or unbalanced growth,²⁰ for emphasis on the rural sector²¹ or for the fulfillment of basic needs.²² Not the ideas of dependence theorists, who insist that development means first and foremost independence, economic as well as political, from foreign powers.²³ Heavy State Department involvement and the Middle East orientation of the conference might explain silence about dependence theory, based as it is in Marxist thought and Latin American experience, but lack of reference to other "policy-relevant" ideas seems peculiar and perhaps significant.

Conference participants appeared willing to concede that the notion of development had not been and could not be adequately defined. A few years ago, one could defend an equation of growth, education, and urbanization with development, even when the consequences of these phenomena did not appear completely positive, by saying simply that Middle Easterners wanted these things. Westerners were thought to show no bias in defining development as that which they, the Westerners, had already achieved, for non-Westerners tended to agree with their perspective. Alan Horton echoed such thoughts when he said, "Belief in development is now built into Middle Eastern life and will spread." But even he noted that "dramatic change" does not necessarily mean "dramatic development," and others spoke in similar terms of the 1976 conference. Changes seen as desirable in the West or even among Middle Eastern elites do not necessarily reflect the wishes of the peasants, the villages, the people. And there seemed to be greater reluctance in 1976 than in 1963 to say that peasants do not know what is best for themselves.²⁴

The conflict between social scientific views of development and village-level perceptions loomed so forbiddingly in what was said at the 1976 conference that it began to undermine the subject at hand. Yet one would naturally look to such a conference, attuned to cultural traditions of the Middle East and to the practicalities of implementing development plans, for some rapprochement between universal definitions and local understandings of development. Instead, speakers readily acknowledged the inadequacy of all general definitions without specifying how these definitions could be amended or replaced by careful inclusion of notions anchored in Middle Eastern cultures. Conference participants seemed willing to permit the term "development" to wither and to encourage local conceptions of progress. The 1976 conference bore the title, "The Process of Development in the Middle East: Goals and Achievements." It ended without defining goals or describing achievements and without even specifying that development is a single process rather than an infinite variety of randomly generated experiments in social change.

Perhaps one should not have expected anything else from such a forum. No general theorist of development appeared on the program. Perhaps regional concentration obscures truths available at a higher level of analysis, although this seems improbable, since any such truth would come at the expense of cultural considerations. But it could also be that the regional focus is too broad; perhaps, as Alan Horton suggested, the nation-state must be the focus of development theory. National elites drawing upon their knowledge of cultural uniformities might be better qualified to merge local understandings with universal definitions. If this were true, it might be possible to formulate a single, coherent idea of development for a single country such as Egypt -- especially given the relative

cultural homogeneity of that nation, compared with others in the Middle East-- even if no single viable definition could be found for the Middle East as a whole, much less for the entire Third World.

I sought to explore this possibility during a brief visit to Egypt in the fall of 1977. Inspired by the format of some interviewing John Waterbury had done on the population problem,²⁵ I framed a set of propositions about development and asked a number of Egyptian officials and intellectuals to respond. The sample was neither random nor complete, although the interviews were rather lengthy, averaging an hour. My purpose lay as much in identifying and structuring a larger project as in obtaining immediately usable results. But the responses I obtained, however fragmentary, may be of interest in the light of the dilemmas in development theory outlined above.

During the interview I worked from a list of fourteen propositions.²⁶ With some subjects I sought reaction to most of the propositions; with others, for lack of time or lack of the subject's interest in certain topics, I used a subsample of the propositions. All interviews, though, touched on three issues basic to development theory: economic growth, dependence and independence, and the place of so-called traditional values in a developing society. In each instance I explained briefly the proposition and offered some reasons why it had come under attack in some quarters.

Not surprisingly, the proposition, "Economic growth is the key to progress," generated the greatest consensus. Four officials at the Ministry of Planning were unanimous on this point. "You may doubt," said one, "for you are at a different stage of development. We are moving on this basis." The others nodded in agreement.

None of the other respondents--two at the National Institute of Planning and three academicians, all involved in writing and thinking about Egypt's current political and social problems--disputed the importance of growth as a part of what constitutes development. One scholar called it a "prerequisite" for development but made it clear that "human growth" and "value growth" are equally urgent in his eyes. Another respondent noted that the Ministry of Planning, in deliberating on a new five-year plan, had tended to emphasize growth over distribution; for him, development means combining growth with redistribution. At the National Institute of Planning, Ismail Sabry Abdallah, then the director, agreed that development is a broader phenomenon than growth. While growth in the West has underpinned progress, it is neither possible nor desirable in his eyes to repeat the Western experience; for him this would be a negation of Egypt's cultural identity. It would also mean paying the high social costs already absorbed in the West.

A third academician, Dr. Bontros Boutros-Ghali, who has served as Egypt's foreign minister, put himself almost as far as Ismail Sabry Abdallah from the Ministry of Planning's position but still without denying the importance of economic growth. Development is "2000 calories a day for everyone," he said. Then comes education--"not 100% per cent literacy, but let's say 50 per cent" and hospitals to fight bilharzia, among other diseases. "Once these basic things have been done, we can think about other things, and we can take a look at the theories." Without saying so, Boutros-Ghali lined up with those who advocate a "basic needs" approach to development. In general, this school has insisted that growth must be subordinated to, but not sacrificed for, concerns about equity of distribution. Neither redistribution

without growth nor growth without redistribution would bring the improved standards of living the Third World has come to expect.²⁷

Thus my subjects demonstrated unanimity on the importance of growth. But only the Ministry of Planning espoused economic growth as the sole objective of development. If there were evidence that the Ministry represented government views at the highest level, or if the Ministry reflected popular views in Egypt, one might be tempted to ignore dissent. But in fact several sources suggested that the Ministry of Planning did not enjoy high confidence and influence within the cabinet. Those I interviewed in the Ministry admitted they sometimes encountered incomprehension when they sought to defend their views before the People's Assembly, where "not every member understands" such matters as balance of payments or import substitution. As an undersecretary put it, "We must assure them that this plan is the best plan for what they want." Clearly the Ministry of Planning makes different assumptions on this score than other articulate, thoughtful Egyptians. One must, as a result, be cautious about saying development means growth, because that's what Egyptians think it means.

The Ministry of Planning appears even more isolated in its views on the place of traditional Egyptian values in development. "You have assumed there is conflict between Islam and development," objected one of my respondents. "Why look at my colleague here, Mr. _____. He makes the pilgrimage every year." And, of course, he is a planner. My observation that traditional groups appeared to be regaining importance in Egyptian politics did not elicit any modification of their response; to them, growth constituted the objective; the "open-door" policy of President Sadat had

been designed to further that objective; recreating equilibrium in the balance of payments was vital if Egypt were to attract Western investors. Nowhere in these plans did the Islamic culture of Egypt require consideration. As a critic put it: "They're planning for another country!"

None of my other respondents assumed, as did those at the Ministry of Planning, that traditional values could be ignored in thinking about development. Their views fell into three categories:

1. The Islamic context is a fact; development must occur within that context, at least until the context itself is eroded by change. El Sayed Yasin, a sociologist by training, criticized both the advocates of Islam, "who have failed to adapt sufficiently," and secular thinkers, who "have tended to neglect the significance of the past." They have not understood the attitudes of the masses, he said, which are necessarily rooted in Islamic culture.

Yassin took a stance similar to that defended by Abdallah Laroui, of whom Yassin thinks highly. Laroui distinguishes between tradition as ideology and tradition as structure, a part of the social landscape. As ideology, traditionalism is an attempt to resurrect a culture that enjoyed its success a thousand years ago in radically different historical circumstances. Laroui insists that we must understand history in order to shape it; to advocate the restoration of a tenth century culture in the twentieth century is ahistorical. It is also ahistorical to ignore the current devotion to Middle Eastern peoples to elements of that tenth century culture. For Laroui, development means moving with forces of history into the twentieth century and toward the elimination of such vestigial attitudes.²⁹

2. Islam is flexible. While the Ministry of Planning is wrong in thinking there is no conflict--notions such as women's rights and the role of Copts in Egypt were mentioned as proof--this viewpoint insists that the religious establishment can be counted upon to follow the government on key matters under an authoritarian regime. Presidents Nasir and Sadat have maintained working agreements with the establishment, headed by the Sheikh ul-Azhar. The government refrains from interference in civil-religious matters and the ulama stay out of politics. The government can, by this line of thinking, act with few restraints from the religious community.

As for the individual, Islam interposes no one between the believer and his God. Said one respondent, "For me Islam is the Qur'an and the Hadith. I don't have to listen to Al-Azhar. There is no church in Islam." The question is how Islam can be revitalized, adapted, and retained as a cultural anchor in a changing world, without inhibiting unduly the changes that must occur.

3. "Inherited values" need not be rejected. But it is not enough to talk about preserving Islam and then to proceed in a fashion that ignores inherited values, as do the planners. Neither is it sufficient to know what al-Azhar thinks or how the intellectual may accommodate his religion to changing circumstances. Instead, one must set out through empirical research "to review our cultural heritage, to find out what is fundamental and what is superficial." Only after extensive empirical research among the peasants and in the poorest urban areas can one have accurate ideas about how to plan for "development"--development that will be understood as progress rather than deterioration.

This viewpoint resembles the Yassin-Laroui perspective in its emphasis on understanding traditional values as an aspect of social structure and in

its rejection of traditionalism as an ideology. But, unlike Laroui, it suggests the possibility of building upon inherited values. For example, despite extreme poverty, few people seem to starve in Egypt thanks to the all-embracing grasp of the extended family. Is this not an admirable welfare institution? Proponents of this view would recommend efforts to save the Egyptian family from the ravages of individualism characteristic of the West. They believe empirical research can reveal the strengths of tradition from which it is possible build a new yet familiar, comfortable and authentic society. They see development as "the capacity to renew oneself, to develop change from existing values and attitudes."³⁰

This notion resembles a predominant theme of the 1976 MEI conference: to understand how villagers understand and react to change one must consult villagers. Change must stem from wants rather than needs. Manfred Halpern had actually suggested the theme in 1963, when he called "for the kind of deliberate change in which modern Middle Eastern man established new roots and the capacity to generate and absorb growth on his own."³¹

The idea of change rooted in culture avoids the pitfalls of the other two modes of thinking about tradition, not to mention the Ministry of Planning's effort to deny the problem. To suggest, as Laroui does, that traditional patterns must be understood so that they may be more quickly eliminated presupposes a true "objective" reading of history. Recent history has favored the shift from collectivism to individualism, but nothing insures against a reversal. Perhaps even the West will regain an appreciation for the extended family. While I accept Laroui's criticism of those who have ignored tradition as practice, I do not see how one can with confidence foresee the future movement of history. And even if it were possible to

prognosticate with accuracy, I would be unwilling to concede that the Arabs should relinquish long-cherished values merely to put themselves in harmony with history. For Laroui, all values are relative to history except history itself, which represents Truth. The logic of accepting the truth of history and rejecting other truths, even those understood to respond to fundamental human needs, appears ideological, although Laroui rails against ideology.

To say that the flexibility of Islam permits Islamic culture to follow wherever a government leads is to argue that there is independent vitality in beliefs and traditions, which will survive despite the sweep of history. Individuals can continue to find comfort in purified religion, even as the ritualistic, popular features of Islam float away. But like Laroui's, this view fails to specify those values for which customs must be sacrificed. It assumes, like Laroui, that history moves forward. It assumes that development is Westernization at a moment when the West has become increasingly uncertain that recent directions of change constitute progress, even in the West. These two approaches, the historicist and elitist positions, founder on the problems of defining development satisfactorily in universal terms.

In contrast, the third, or "mass culture", approach runs aground on the other shore. Its appeal must not obscure its impact on the concept of development. If every nation, every village and every neighborhood must define its own concept of progress and implement that concept with appropriate reforms, the "science" of development becomes one of observation. The term "development" loses its meaning, and it becomes difficult to think of any community, Western or Eastern, Northern or Southern, that could not be characterized as "developing" in this sense.

Another proposition I set before my respondents in Egypt has sometimes been regarded as an escape from the conflict between ethnocentric ideas about development and evaporation of the concept itself: that development should be identified with national independence. Echoing dependence theorists, I noted that underdevelopment has been portrayed as a product of development in the capitalist West.³² Dependence of poor countries on richer ones insures the continuation of underdevelopment. Only when a country makes its own economic and political decisions can it be said to be moving toward development. I might have added, but did not, that the content of independent choice thus remains open; national elites might choose to listen to villages and build from traditional patterns of life. The mere striving for liberty from outside interference would put such an elite on the path of development.

None of the Egyptians I interviewed, whether committed to capitalist forms of economic growth or to socialist models, found such a viewpoint relevant to their country. The planners, whose commitment to the open door (infitah) made them likely critics, dismissed as impossible the idea of complete independence of other countries. Self-sufficiency is not a reasonable guide for Egypt, they said. "We tried that in the 1960s." They believe Egypt needs outside help and must accept the conditions that inevitably accompany such help. On the other hand, they noted that political autonomy could not be compromised. At what point economic ties assume political significance they did not specify.

One academic respondent indicated he thought development meant increasing self-sufficiency. A country should be freer to take decisions for itself. But he noted that rapid "economic development seems to have occurred in countries aligned with the Communist bloc--such as China, Vietnam and Cuba--rather than among non-aligned countries." Moreover Egypt is not capable of assuring its

own self-defense, he said. Therefore, while it still may be possible to prefer lesser rather than greater degrees of dependence, development should not necessarily be equated simply with an escape from dependence.

Another respondent distinguished the South American situation, where there has traditionally been little diversity in foreign relationships, with that of Egypt. South America has attempted to rely entirely on the modern sector of its economy and, as a result, on the United States. He criticized the Sadat regime for narrowing Egypt's foreign options and depending so heavily on the United States and Saudi Arabia. Still, he said, the problem is one of minimizing dependence, not eliminating it. "We can't go without foreign technology for some problems," he said.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali put it more emphatically. "We belong to the world," he said. Isolation is not possible. What is more, the only long-term solution to Egypt's economic difficulties lies in regional or subregional cooperation. "No solution exists within the boundaries of Egypt," he said. Already Egyptians emigrating to find work have become a key source of national income.

It would not be fair to say on the basis of such a small sampling of opinions that dependence theory has no following in, and no relevance to, Egypt. But from this group of highly articulate Egyptians, ranging from stalwart supporters of Sadat to critics of the current regime and its orientation toward the West, one does get a sense that dependence theory is not likely to provide a widely accepted definition of development in that context. Even if one accepts the necessity of independence to preserve maximum opportunity for self-development, dependence theory itself does not specify a program for that undertaking. To say that villages should do what they want and that nations should proceed as they deem best is a recommendation that fundamentally vitiates the idea of development as it has generally been understood.

In Latin America, the struggle for greater independence may remain a part of development programs; many advocates of dependence theory also appear to be proponents of economic growth using socialist tools. But evidence that dependence has impaired opportunities for self-sustaining growth do not demonstrate the wisdom of pursuing growth by either capitalist or socialist methods. Nor does the dependence position specify what should be done about so-called "traditional" patterns of behavior.

Dependence theory underscores a prerequisite for what many people would regard as progress. As an ideal, independent decision making commands respect everywhere, other things being equal. Similarly, most persons and nations probably desire higher incomes, if they do not have to sacrifice too much security to obtain them.³³ And they would for the most part probably prefer to retain time-honored cultural practices, if conservation does not compromise all change in economic and political domains. In short, all these propositions about development constitute elements of what Third World countries seem to desire. Moreover, students of economic growth provide valuable advice to peoples who seek growth; students of international relations may be able to suggest alternatives to dependence, etc. But none of these ideas satisfactorily summarizes what everyone means by development.

To mix these notions with others, such as expansion of political participation and strengthening of political institutions, and to call the result "development" does not help.³⁵ That is, the umbrella term may encompass all that any nation is doing under the rubric of development, but by that fact it cannot help a people choose what ought to be done if they wish to make progress.³⁶ Samuel Huntington showed with exquisite clarity that the expansion of political participation is not necessarily consistent with political stability, which may

be vital to the achievement of other objectives. Rapid growth may be inconsistent with the preservation of inherited values. Independence may not be maximally conducive to growth. A theory that merely says all these elements constitute development says nothing about the tough question of a proper mix.

The use of "development" or "modernization" as synonyms for progress seems harmless. But accumulating bits of evidence suggest that by promising what it cannot deliver--a universal recipe for progress--employment of the terms "development" or "modernization" may be detrimental to progress. Continued use of the terms perpetuates the myth of distinction between objective and subjective definitions, between things viewed from the outside rather than from inside, between the view of the man-in-the-street about what is good for him and the opinions of the "experts." It encourages villagers to conceive of development as external progress. As Duvignaud observes, it leads to the expectation that development will be delivered, packaged and wrapped, to those who sit patiently and wait.³⁷ Defined in universal terms, development seems far removed from village realities and causes villages to stand against, or at least not to identify with, changes inaugurated on their behalf. Villages look to national governments, who in turn look to international donors and specialists, who in turn profess their confusion about what needs doing. (Asked what development means, one AID official in Cairo said: "I have the impression there is confusion about that,") or fall back on the Chester Bowles maxim: "We can only help people to help themselves." Yet the pursuit of development as a universal ideal discourages self-help by implying that someone knows what development is and how it can be obtained. "Development" sounds as if it were more than just making life more palatable for Egyptians.

The idea of development discourages initiative at the local level and encourages action at higher levels. It permits elites to argue that they possess the secret recipe and counter-elites to stage coups on behalf of other recipes. Even academicians have sometimes lent respectability to the argument that military regimes, no matter how coercive, might be justified by their penchant for "development." (Recent studies suggest that such regimes have not been spectacularly successful in achieving higher rates of economic growth than civilian regimes, much less greater general improvement in well-being.³⁸)

As long as men imagine that there exists some perfect model of development, together with ready-made recipes for implementation, the temptation will be strong to put politics in the hands of technocrats, military or civilian, who claim to be the faithful executors of "real" development. In fact, of course, they will necessarily be the partisans of a version of progress, which may or may not reflect the needs of their country.

The idea of development suggests that long-range thinking should take precedence over the short-term. Societies must know where they are going and make plans to get there. Yet the West has not, in general, had a clear vision of where it is headed.³⁹ U. S. officials reproach Egyptians for failing to define priorities, to make hard choices about the future, but the same problems plague our own government. So much long-range thinking has proved erroneous that officials and public alike show reluctance to bet heavily on any one option. The short-range, incremental decision making typical of the American political system contains notable weaknesses, as its critics have often observed, but comprehensive planning under conditions of competing goals and partial information may harbor even greater drawbacks.⁴⁰ Planning may well enable a country to reach more specific objectives, such as producing the sort of educated manpower needed for specific tasks in the society, but planning for "development" means

tipping the scales toward hazy, long-range objectives as opposed to pressing, obvious, short-term needs.⁴¹ In this sense the theorists of development--much to their own horror, no doubt--have by their emphasis on global, long-range planning alienated many practitioners who work in the villages and see what needs to be done in a parochial context.

In the Third World, development and modernization have become synonymous with progress. To the extent that these concepts have become indistinguishable, continued use of the terms clearly does no harm. But neither does this practice enrich the English language or further the cause of social science. To distinguish among these terms, as did Samuel Huntington with the terms "political modernization" and "political development" make more sense, although he actually makes "political modernization" synonymous with expansion of political participation and political development synonymous with institutionalization. Even the distinctions fail to make unique the terms "modernization" and "development."⁴²

However, the extent of preference in the Social Sciences for this pair of terms over that of "progress" or "reform" or other more specific words suggests that some social scientists see a distinction. It is the belief in this distinction that is pernicious, for it discourages individuals from making effort on their own behalf, helps legitimize repression and deflects attention from short-term problems that represent pain and anguish for millions of people.

For all of that, the idea of development has provoked an enormous concentration of thought in sociology, economics, psychology and political choice about problems of change. The "modernization" movement has produced solid thinking about what produces growth, about the emergency of stable political institutions in the face of demands for greater participation, about the ways

in which human beings shift their frameworks of perception to include more and more of the world.⁴³ Nothing said here is meant to depreciate the wisdom acquired.

But times have changed. While there was twenty years ago good reason to think that "all good things go together", it now seems clear that this is not so. It is doubtful that there can be a universally acceptable definition of "development." And it is clear that research on economic, political and social change will continue, whether or not the terms "modernization" and "development" continue to be used. These terms have simply outlived their usefulness.

A return to the older notions of progress, social change and reform would now suggest some promising lines of inquiry neglected during the long romance with "development." Progress suggests perceptible improvement in the quality of life. Used and abused like other ideas, "progress" nonetheless focuses on what has been accomplished rather than on some mystical set of objectives. Progress yesterday meant bigger and faster automobiles; today it means safer, economical automobiles. The definition is generally understood to change with the times. Social science needs to know much more about how villagers and city folk of the Third World perceive improvement.

To speak of social change is not to imply that all social change is equivalent in value content. Some changes may be desirable, some undesirable. But there may nonetheless be a common denominator. Change is unsettling. How much change do societies want? How much can they absorb? Do societies have differing propensities for change?

Even more than the word "progress," "reform" suggests specific measures designed to improve a society by retouching some of its ways of doing things.⁴⁴ Reform is necessarily partial, incremental, achieved from within. Persistent

reform seems much more certain to produce development than development, as it has been understood by social scientists, is likely to produce reform.

Notes

¹For a contrary argument, that the "basic needs" idea undercuts the potential for economic growth and does not therefore further the interests of the LDC's, see Geoffrey Barraclough, "The Struggle for the Third World," New York Review of Books, XXV, 17 (Nov. 9, 1978), p. 57.

²Peter L. Berger, Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), Chap. 5.

³Ibid, Chap. 6.

⁴"Urban and Rural Tasks in National Development," in William R. Polk, ed., The Developmental Revolution: North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia (Washington: Middle East Institute, 1963), p. 41.

⁵"The Development Equation in Northwest Africa," in Polk, p. 84.

⁶This and all subsequent references to what was said at the 1976 conference are based on my own notes of the proceedings.

⁷In Polk, op. cit., p. 2,3.

⁸Douglas Ensminger, "Urbanism--A Growing World Problem," in Polk, p. 30.

⁹Lewis, op. cit., p. 84.

¹⁰Fred Hirsch, Social Limits to Growth (Cambridge: Harvard, 1976).

¹¹Bowles, op. cit., p. 37.

¹²"Taxation as a Tool for Development," in Polk, p. 221.

¹³"Science in Development," in Polk, p. 166.

¹⁴"The Character and Scope of the Social Revolution in the Middle East," in Polk, p. 22.

¹⁵"The Role of the Military in Development," in Polk, p. 113.

¹⁶"Development and Democracy," in Polk, p. 124.

¹⁷See Robert A. Packenham, Liberal America and the Third World: Political Development Ideas in Foreign Aid and Social Science (Princeton: Princeton University, 1973).

¹⁸Political Order in Changing Society (New Haven: Yale, 1968), Chap. 1.

¹⁹Walt W. Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1960).

²⁰For an argument on behalf of unbalanced growth, see Albert O. Hirschman, The Strategy of Economic Development (New Haven: Yale University, 1958), Chap. 4.

²¹For example, Hla Myint, The Economics of the Developing Countries (New York: Praeger, 1964), Chap. 3.

²²For example, Mahbub ul-Haq, The Poverty Curtain: Choices for the Third World (New York: Columbia University, 1976), Chap. 4; and ILO International Labour Office, Employment, Growth and Basic Needs (New York: Praeger, 1977), Chap. 2.

²³Samir Amin has written in this vein about the Middle East and Africa. See, for example, his also James D. Cockcroft, Andre Gunder Frank and Dale L. Johnson, Dependence and Underdevelopment (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972)

²⁴Peter Berger demonstrates why such reluctance is justified in Pyramids of Sacrifice, Chap. 4.

²⁵John Waterbury, "Perceptions of the Population Problem," American University Field Service Reports, Northwest Africa Series, XVIII, 3, 1973.

²⁶The propositions I used follow; it goes without saying that they reflect some of the literature on development referred to above:

- a. Human beings can, by use of reason and labor, fashion a better world.
- b. Economic growth is the key to progress.
- c. Economic development should not involve undue sacrifice of human life or of meaning in people's lives.
- d. Progress in the Arab world must be accomplished within the confines of Arabism and Islam. A new set of compromises will be needed.
- e. Development means national development, free from exploitative dependence on foreign governments.
- f. It is impossible to know what progress means without asking people. We must go to the village level and ask the people what they want.
- g. Development must come first to the rural areas, then to the urban sector.
- h. Progress depends on political stability.
- i. Progress means greater and greater choice in the shaping of one's life-- in economic, social and political terms.
- j. To make progress one must make short-term sacrifice for the long-term betterment of the nation.
- k. Effective economic growth will eventually alter prevailing mentalities and reduce population growth rates.
- l. Progress stems from careful planning.
- m. Alternatively, progress stems from being pragmatic and doing what must be done here and now.
- n. Progress means complexity in economics, government and society.

Time did not permit my getting reactions to all propositions from all respondents.

²⁷Mahbub ul Haq, op. cit., Chap. 2; Hollis B. Chenery et al, Redistribution with Growth (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), Chap. 1.

²⁸See note 22.

²⁹See Laroui, The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism, tr. Diarmid Cammell (Berkeley: University of California, 1976), p. 33.

³⁰Ibid, pp. 153 ff.

³¹This viewpoint reflects the thinking I encountered at the National Institute of Planning.

³²Halpern, op. cit. p. 22.

³³For a strong refutation of the thesis, see P. T. Bauer, Dissent on Development (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1976), Chap. 3.

³⁴Robert H. Bates, "People in Villages: Micro-level Studies in Political Economy," World Politics, 31 (October, 1978), p. 139.

³⁵For a recent example of such an effort, see Abdul Aziz Said and Brady Tyson, "Development: Goals and Measurements," Communications and Development Review, II, 1, Spring, 1978, pp. 24-29.

³⁶André Gundar Frank has made a somewhat similar criticism of theory based on the Parsonian paradigm. See Frank, "The Sociology of Development and the Underdevelopment of Sociology," in Cockcroft, Frank and Johnson, op. cit., pp. 325-342.

³⁷Jean Duvignaud, Change at Shebika, trans. Frances Frenaye, (Austin: University of Texas, 1977), p. 274.

³⁸See Robert W. Jackman, "Politicians in Uniform: Military Governments and Social Change in the Third World," American Political Science Review, 70 (December, 1976), pp. 1078-1109, and Eric A. Nordlinger, "Soldiers in Mufti: The Impact of Military Rule Upon Economic and Social Change in Non-Western States," American Political Science Review, 64 (December, 1970), pp. 1131-1148.

³⁹Studies of Congress have blamed inaction on the fact that the public itself cannot agree on what ought to be done. See for instance Gary Orfield, Congressional Power: Congress and Social Change (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975).

⁴⁰P. T. Bauer, op. cit., pp. 69-92.

⁴¹Robert L. Ayres makes a case for ministering to short-range needs in "Development Policy and the Possibility of a 'Livable' Future for Latin America," American Political Science Review, 69 (June, 1975), pp. 507-

⁴²Huntington, op. cit., Chap. 1.

⁴³Daniel Lerner, The Passing of Traditional Society (Glencoe, Illinois, The Free Press, 1964).

⁴⁴Francis Mading Deng, in his study of the Dinka says, "Development is here conceived as a refinement of what exists among the people themselves. If imported goals are to be given a solid foundation, their roots must be explored in the context of adoption. It is by this process that initiative can

