



# PUSTAKA UNIVERSITAS

MEMAJUKAN ILMU PENGETAHUAN EKONOMI, SOSIAL, PERTANIAN  
UNTUK PEMBANGUNAN NASIONAL

No. 36 - 1973 : Family Planning Programs and Activities in Rural Area,  
Rural Sociology and Community Development.

## TRADITIONAL VALUES AND THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

by

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Pembangunan yang hanya berorientasi pada pertimbangan ekonomi semata2, tidak saja membuat mereka2 yang bukan ahli-ekonomi sukar memahaminya, akan tetapi efek lain yang lebih besar juga sangat mungkin terjadi -- yaitu terhambatnya pelaksanaan pembangunan itu sendiri.

Usaha pembangunan tidak dapat dilepaskan dari uaha2 yang menimbulkan perubahan; termasuk perubahan dalam hubungan kemasyarakatan. Masyarakat itu sendiri selalu berubah (ada Social Change); oleh karena itu apabila "pembangun masyarakat" tidak begitu responsif terhadap kenyataan2 sosial yang masih berlaku maupun perubahan2 sosial yang sedang berlangsung, rencana pembangunan yang disusun tidak akan terlaksana sepenuhnya; tidak mustahil akan mengalami hambatan2 yang besar. Itulah sebabnya usaha pembangunan pertama seyogyanya memperhitungkan kenyataan2 masyarakat dengan lebih teliti menurut waktu dan tempatnya. Kedua, diterjemahkan kedalam bahasa masyarakat agar mereka dapat memahami, menerima, dan membantu pelaksanaannya.

Agama misalnya, merupakan segi yang menentukan dalam organisasi sosial pada kebanyakan masyarakat tradisionil di Asia. Sebagai penuntut terhadap kebenaran dan realitas "murni", semua agama biasanya sukar untuk menghadapi perubahan2 dalam masyarakat. Oleh karena itu yang menjadi masalah sekarang ialah bagaimana membuat agama tersebut dapat menyerap perubahan2 sosial yang diakibatkan oleh adanya pembangunan, tanpa harus kehilangan integritasnya.

Dr. Soedjatmoko mencoba membahas faktor2 religi ini dalam hubungannya dengan pembangunan. Pembahasan ini -- yang ditulis sewaktu beliau menjabat Duta Besar RI di Amerika Serikat -- dikemukakan sebagai pidato pada Asia Ecumenical Conference for Development di Tokio 15 Juli 1970, berjudul Religion and the Development Process in Asia. Artikel dalam nomor ini merupakan ringkasan daripada pidato beliau.

TRADITIONAL VALUES AND THE  
DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Soedjatmoko

(For Asian political leaders (such as the author) involved in the development process of their own countries, key problems for which social sciences cannot yet supply answers involve questions of how to motivate and manage volatile processes of social change. Religionas, incorporating traditional values but encompassing developmental needs, can play an important role in transitions toward modernization, and may also help shape its goals.)

The prevalent theories of economic development start off by identifying factors that affect the growth rate of the net domestic product, savings and investment rates and trade levels. While useful in increasing our understanding of economic development, these theories and models say nothing about to get development going. They deal with the externals of the development process, and its measurable symptoms. The compulsion towards increasing refinement of measurements, and the craving for theoretical elegance and symmetry further add to the irrelevance of these models for those of us who, while deeply involved in the development process itself, are not economists. A number of theories of political development have also been formulated. But most of these theoretical models seem to be based on a very limited number of variables and unilinear explanations operating within a single system. The factors that can be identified and measured in their impact on the growth rate under specified assumptions, for instance, may turn out to have only very limited relevance in a rapidly changing society. It is significant that there are few theories which try to relate economic growth with the process of political development.

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We still do not know how exactly the development process can be set into motion, and even less at what point growth can become a selfsustaining process. And while our understanding of the development process has greatly increased as a result of the empirical and theoretical work that has been done, those that have a stake in the development of their nation are very acutely aware of the lack of operational guidelines which might help them in their efforts to overcome the sluggishness or stagnation of their societies.

Reasons for the shortcomings of these theories may be, first, that they seem to remove the problems of development away from the reality of power and politics and in this way seem to reduce the decisions that have to be taken to simple technocratic and bureaucratic ones. But we know how intensely political the simple choice of the site for a dam or a factory in our own community can be, or the choice between a weapons system and a road and harbor system. Also, social change and development is bound to have political implications which will have a bearing on the distribution of power. Likewise, the degree of power a government is able to exert significantly influences the range of economic policy options open to it.

Secondly, they overlook the importance of the cognitive factors in development and growth. It is man's vision of the future, his hopes, fears and expectations that determine his actions in the present; his awareness of the past influences him as well. It is impossible to understand the dynamics of a social system responding to new problems and challenges--and this is what development is all about--unless one also has an understanding of these hopes and aspirations as well as to the self image of the people within that system. And until we take into account how man in a given society perceives his own problems, his interests and his goals, we really have no clue as to how and why he will react in a particular way and not in another.

Thirdly, economic development cannot be understood in isolation; it is part of a more general process of social transformation. We are not simply concerned with the attainment of economic goals; we are dealing with major changes in a society, with the building of a new nation, with painful processes of disintegration at various levels of society. Nation building has its own requirements: decolonization has left a number of Asian nations with a heritage of unresolved conflicts, resulting from or aggravated by the arbitrariness with which colonial boundaries had been drawn, the preferential

treatment accorded certain ethnic or communal groups, the existence of unintegrated minorities. National independence requires the welding of these often quite disparate elements into single polity capable of coping with the requirements of the 20th century. The goals and priorities, the phasing of economic development as well as the feasibility of specific economic policies inevitably are deeply affected by these overall nation building requirements.

Fourthly, a one-dimensionality is characteristic of these development models. It is important to realize that in nation building and development we are not dealing with unilinear processes of gradual and rational adjustment and redirection, but with discontinuities, with strains and stresses, conflict and disorder. It is important, too, to be sensitive to the possibility of failure or even collapse, to the risks and the dangers in any process of social transformation. We should also be aware of the depth of human emotions, of the hope and fervor, the fear and despair which are involved, of the terrible violence and cruelty of which man is capable in extreme situations. At the same time we cannot forget the immense magnitude and frightening urgency of the problems which threaten most Asian developing societies. The pressure of population increase on resources, the massive and rapidly growing unemployment problem, urbanization and increasingly inadequate educational systems--all of these problems make a rapid rate of development an essential pre-condition for the viability of many new Asian states irrespective of their politico-economic system.

#### Political Requirements

Unless a government has a strong commitment to economic development, no sustained development is possible. Such a commitment implies the will to avoid war and to avoid expenditures that only satisfy the craving for grandeur and splendor. It also means the political courage to bring about administrative reform and the forging of national discipline necessary for the effectiveness of any development policies. That courage--as well as a sufficient power base--will also be necessary to implement the unpopular measures that may be crucial to the success of the development process.

Above all such a commitment means the willingness and the capability to reorganize the whole nation for development, not only economically but also politically. In many cases this involves major structural changes. Tax reform, for example, may increase the government's capacity to mobilize

domestic resources; land reform may lead to higher levels of production. Both are a means to release new developmental impulses in the society at large, but they are also profoundly disturbing and politically hazardous. Economic growth can up to a point take place without radically disruptive changes in the social system, but it would be an illusion to think that the point of selfsustaining development could be reached without any structural economic and political change. We should also realize that strutural change is not only a condition for development, but will also arise as a result of economic development. Both such structural changes inevitably bring in their wake shifts in the distribution of power. The "green revolution" for instance is bound to lead to changes in the balance of power in every village, with likely repercussions on regional and national balances of forces. Likewise, rapid social change significantly aggravates the customary intergenerational conflict; the emergence of a new generation then becomes a serious challenge to the prevailing system.

The capacity of a government committed to economic development to stay the course and to maintain its momentum will also depend on the courage and wisdom it has to absorb the political consequences of development, and to accept some degree of damage to its own power base. It must show the skills to appeal to the new elements of power that will emerge in the successive phases of development. Development continually creates new constituencies which will require recruitment, and integration into a shifting power base, and the political risks to any existing government are obvious. The political system which made development possible may as a result itself change. Development, thus, does not immediately lead to political stability, but is inevitably accompanied by some measure of instability which the political system must develop the capacity to absorb.

While we have spoken of the need for strong initial power and support as a launching pad for development, at the same time, history has shown the limits of governmental power in most developing societies. Regardless of whether such power is structured at the center as a democracy or an autocracy, the low level of managerial effectiveness and the generally inefficient bureaucracy put very distinct limits on the implementation of development policies by government fiat. Unless government leadership succeeds in setting in motion widening areas of auto-activity geared to development within the social system as a whole, there is very little hope that development plans can take

on life and reality. Change from above is insufficient; but the importance of continuously broadening popular participation is too often overlooked. The capability of establishing and developing voluntary associations for new development-oriented purposes--such as small business groupings, trade unions, cooperatives, credit unions, and community service organizations--is just as the organizational and managerial capabilities of the government. These networks of voluntary associations constitute the new emancipating forces, the instrumentalities capable of harnessing impulses for change and progress, making possible the growth of an increasingly open society.

#### Requirements of Social Change

The forward movement of a whole social system obviously depends on a broad consensus regarding goals and means--some shared vision of the future capable of arousing new hope. Unless realities can be seen with new eyes, however, and hope translated into a sense of new profitable opportunities on the individual level, such vision as I am talking about will have little motivating value. At the same time the history of new independent nations has made it clear that unless the new goals are related to prevailing notions, attitudes and values, it is almost impossible to mobilize broad sectors of our transitional societies.

The social organization in most traditional Asian societies was shaped by religion. The most meaningful language of large parts of Asia's masses is still the language of religion. In order to comprehend their social dynamics, and develop ways of utilizing or circumventing them in the development process, we need to understand how religion meshes into social relations and into collective as well as individual human behavior. These religions can be a strong motivating and integrative force. They can also be an obstacle to necessary change. Most religions have at one point or another in history played one of these roles and usually both--at different times--and it would be folly to ignore the potential that religions have to facilitate or to hamper the process of development and nation building.

There are other motivating forces that can play a role in the development process. One of them is self-confidence and pride. Success in the attainment of particular intermediate goals in trade, in industry, in politics may have a spillover effect on other sectors of society, stimulating them to greater efforts and generating a climate of renewed hope and heightened activity.

Fear and the danger to national survival may spur a society to greater exertion and the fullest use of its capabilities. Class hatred, fuelled by deliberate class struggle and welded into an instrument of power, may be the trigger; but so also can the simple desire for freedom and justice and the yearning for a better life. It is the task of any developmental ideology--secular or religious--to relate the elements of hope, the capacity to look at the difficulties of one's situation in the light of new opportunities, and man's basic yearnings--for better material conditions, for education, for justice, equality, participatory responsibility as well as for spiritual development--into a consistent structure of thought and perspective.

Models, rational strategies for development, utopian blueprints are not enough. What is needed is a vision that is at the same time a road map towards its realization as well as a method for the struggle towards its attainment. But there is no general strategy for development. Each nation will have to develop its own vision of the future out of the materials of its own history, its own problems, its own national make-up. Western models of modernization have dominated much of the thinking on development, but the existence of such non-Western models as the Russian and the Japanese is convincing evidence of the historical freedom that--within limits--each nation has in shaping its own future. It may eventually turn out that adherence to the Western model is not the rule, but the exception.

#### Values, Religions, and the Hazards to Development

The development process has no built-in guarantee against failure or derailment, nor does it have a built-in mechanism for the maintenance of its momentum. While we speak in terms of new goals, new purposes and values we should not close our eyes to the pains of social transformation. Rapid social change is inevitably accompanied by growing uncertainties, disorientation, deep anxieties and fear, leading towards increasing resistance to change. The capacity of a culture to resist change is perhaps as important to the health of that culture as is its capacity to innovate and to absorb change, for without such resistance there would be neither structure nor continuity. However, the anxieties and fears in the wake of development tend to stiffen resistance to change, and especially when fears are played upon for political reasons, new and dangerous rigidities may develop within the system. Not only

institutions and vested interests but also cherished values are threatened. Thus in cultures where the family is the most important social unit in society, and where family loyalty and solidarity are virtues of the highest order, the growth of an effective feeling of a higher loyalty to the nation, essential to the solidification of the new nation, ay be difficult to bring to life. The persistence of "corruption" in some countries often reflects the incompleteness of this transition to the more impersonal requirements of the modern nation state.

Most serious are the problems which arise from the increasing irrelevance of traditional conceptions of social reality, and the consequent persistence of narrow political preoccupations and conflict patterns which bear no relation whatsoever to the new and urgent problems. In a sense the inability of many to perceive the new dimensions reflects the inner fragmentation and identity crises through which social transformation is taking them. The establishment of a new, creative relationship to social reality, as well as the reformulation of a new system of commitments, pivots around the development of a new sense of identity, on the collective and on the personal level. The kind of person I want to be, the kind of relations I want to have with my fellow man, the kind of society and the kind of world I want to live in are the central questions in the search for this identity and in the process of nation building.

It is, of course, possible to look for answers to these questions from the perspective which the humanities and the social sciences provide. But on the whole their positivism and operational pragmatism fail to meet the intensely felt human needs in these situations. Some secular ideologies, to be sure, have shown they can have such integrative and motivational power. However, it would be a serious mistake to overlook the transcendental and essentially religious dimensions to these questions. Few people and very few cultures in Asia are to live among the happenings of our day-to-day life without some sense of their larger meaning. Man's mortality, the cycle of birth and death, growth and decay, the seeming senselessness of much of human experience only becomes bearable within the context of some kind of awareness of eternal truth and reality. And especially in Asia, where religions have not only been roads to the salvation of the individual soul but also have helped shape systems of social organizations, this aspect should be taken into account in any analysis of social dynamics.

As claimants to ultimate truth and reality, all religions have always had difficulty in their relationship to history and social change. Rapid social change aggravates this already difficult relationship. It leads to a sharp increase in the mutations in morality and of human conduct that run counter to the standards of behavior which have, over time, grown up around religion. This in turn may strengthen the inclination to perceive the nature of the problems created by social change as simple moral problems, which makes it even more difficult for the religion concerned to relate creatively to change. Bewilderment, frustration and despair therefore often turn towards a more fundamentalist and rigidly traditionalist position, or on the other extreme, to religious and even secular utopianism or total secularization. Explosive social tensions can become almost unavoidable.

If, however, the prevailing religion in a changing society develops, through its leaders, an adequate comprehension of the process of social change, of the urgency of development, of the social factors impelling it and the requirements for civility and for the viability of any political system, it can play an important reintegrative role. Because religion, even more than a secular ideology, is a total system of integration, it contains within itself the authority and directive capacity for reordering men's values and goals.

The attainment of, or failure to attain, the goals of development could very much be determined by whether the religions of Asia will be able to absorb and digest the new elements and perspectives that come with social change, without loss of their own integrity. Insofar as this comes about, they will be able to play the essentially reintegrative and motivating role described here. Further, the manner in which the religions of Asia position themselves relative to the development process is bound to have a profound impact on the political process and systems that will emerge. In other words, unless the religions in Asia are capable of formulating their own development ideology, and learn to use their tremendous influence on the masses toward the attainment of development goals, they may in the end be shunted aside, and it may well be the secular counter-religions which will shape the political systems through which these goals will be achieved.

Pluralism. So far we have assumed a homogeneous society. The relationship between religion and the development process becomes even more

complicated where nations are composed of different cultures and different religions. In those societies modus vivendi have emerged which made peaceful coexistence possible, and in a static condition these unarticulated inter-religious balances could function relatively well. However, religions and their practitioners do have different capacities to absorb social change and to adjust to modernization. In some cases extraneous or incidental factors in the development process may seem to work to the advantage of one religion as against another. The development process, therefore, may at some point upset the delicate inter - religious balances that had been worked out and on which religious tolerance had been built. This is bound to resuscitate the fears and suspicions of the various religious groups about each other. In such a climate the problems of change may be perceived in terms of religious conflict. Violence attendant to the breakdown of systems of inter - religious accommodation has occurred in a number of our countries.

It is therefore of the greatest importance for the viability of the political system in a religiously pluralistic developing nation that no single religion become totally identified with one or other specific aspect, or with the whole of the development effort, to the exclusion of the others. There is, of course, room for healthy competition in modernization among the religions where such competition serves to accelerate change and increases the capacity of the social system for creative adjustment to the requirements of modern life. But we should be aware of the point where such competition becomes counterproductive.

An involvement of all religions in a country and their organizations will be an important step towards the building of a transcommunal consensus of development. All religions in a society thus have a common interest in developing among themselves the understanding, accommodations and self-restraints, as well as modes of cooperation, which will ensure the continued participation of all other religions in development efforts. They also have a common stake in strengthening the capacity of the nation to deal with conflicts peacefully, with full regard for basic human rights. While many of our nations are committed to these basic rights, the social pre-condition for their effective application are on the whole quite fragile. Strengthening the "rules of the game" for conflict resolution in our relatively new nation states is therefore a conditio sine qua non for maintaining the political consensus and social cohesiveness on which our national existence de-

pends. It is impossible to exaggerate the need for such an effort.

In the history of many parts of Asia millenarian movements have been familiar features. The persistent expectations in one form or another of the "Just King" suddenly appearing to lead the establishment of a just and prosperous society, and the innumerable violent outbreaks of peasant rebellions not leading to any appreciable change in the social structure, are symptomatic of this outlook. Instant utopianism, especially if coupled with violence, may revive archaic and regressive patterns of thought and behavior which will seriously set back the struggle for emancipation, modernization and development. As one whose life was shaped by revolution and the violence that goes with it, I would be the last person to deny the role violence can play, under certain conditions, in the shaping of new societies. But historical experience also shows how--after independence-- the application of violence in a pluralistic society can lead to the total breakdown of traditional mechanisms for intercommunal accommodation, leading to unimaginable waves of bloodshed. That the new utopianism in some of our countries is not peasant-based but urbancentered, operating among religiously or morally motivated sons of the middle class, should not prevent us from drawing the lessons from these phenomena.

#### Involvement of Religions in Development

My argument points to the desirability, even the necessity, of religions being involved in the process, and in many countries in the politics of development, at least in some specific ways. Political involvement of religious institutions in whatever form, however, raises some fundamental questions. How can a religion immerse itself in the political process without losing its soul?

The essence of religion escapes us if it is discussed merely in terms of something else rather than in its own terms. This leads us to a consideration of religion in its relationship to the goals of development. Because religion is essentially concerned with the ultimate questions regarding the meaning and the purpose of life, it cannot unquestioningly abide by the conventional wisdom of the economists, the sociologists or the political scientists and the goals they implicitly assume for the development process. In facing up to the need for economic development, all religions must raise

the question of goals as well as of means. Should development aim at duplicating--with minor modifications at best--the American, the Russian or the Japanese model of development and the goals implicit in them? Do not the cultural crises in which the industrial and technologically advanced nations find themselves--whatever their ideology--their spiritual malaise and their high ecological cost raise the question whether Asian development should not search for different directions, based on a different balance between man and nature, man and society, man and technology and man and the supernatural? Should not the religions in Asia raise the question of the desirability and possibility of alternative social systems capable of coping with the problems of the 20th and 21st centuries, that could be maintained at a lower human and ecological cost?

The religions of Asia cannot escape the responsibility, while playing out their constructive role in the development process, of raising these fundamental issues so that each choice in the course of development is made in full awareness of the options that are available once man refuses to follow unquestioningly the steps already taken by the industrially advanced nations. In order to play this creative role it will be necessary for religious leaders to speak in terms that make sense to their followers in their efforts towards material, intellectual and spiritual improvement. While it is not the task of religion to provide specific solutions to the problems it raises, by raising these questions each step of the way, and insisting on their being confronted, it may possibly improve the quality of what we -- as human beings -- are making of ourselves in the pursuit of these goals.

(Excerpted from "Religions and the Development Process in Asia," a speech presented to the Asian Ecumenical Conference for Development, Tokyo, Jalan, 15 July 1970.)

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