

# **CULTURE AND INDUSTRIALIZATION**

## **with an Examination of the Japanese work situation**

BY

**Dr. Farouk El-Adly**

Professor of Sociology and Anthropology.

The present treatise which is connected with man in an industrial culture, is intended to throw further light on some cultural bases of industrialization and its human implications and to chart the strategic concepts and changes in the cultural life of industrial man. Social structural and cultural factors play an important role as impediments to industrial development in many countries, especially the "oriental" type of society. "**The social structure and culture\*** impose modifications of and in some instances, barriers to the process of economic change.<sup>1</sup>" This paper is in addition, an attempt to study some social systems, institutions and phenomena, as cultural facts, and as a primary characteristic of contemporary civilization.

The essay will consider at the beginning the concept of culture and industrialization as a system of modern civilization from the socio-anthropological point of view. At the end there will be a case study of Japan with an emphasis on the Japanese work situation.

In making use of Professor Hagan's terms, underdeveloped countries especially those in the Middle East like Egypt and Syria<sup>2</sup> as societies in Flux<sup>3</sup> represent "a study of the transition from a traditional social state to continuing technological progress<sup>4</sup>." In this respect, there will be a consideration of "the pre-condition for take-off the transitional era when a society prepares itself or prepared by external forces for sustained growth"<sup>5</sup>. Clark Kerr and his associates have stated clearly that, "the sweep of industrialization throughout the world transforms the culture of traditional societies."

To start with, an attempt will be made to shed light on culture and industrialization in terms of sociology and anthropology.

### 1. Some main definitions of culture.

It seems both unfortunate and strange, "Cowell said," "that the meaning of what is clearly a key-word in the discussion of a great number of contemporary questions and problems should be left so vague".<sup>6</sup> Cowell also said that "Scarcely

two people can be found to have the same ideas on the subject or to be willing to say precisely what they mean by culture".<sup>7</sup> This indicates how it is very ridiculous to define culture in a way which will be accepted by the majority of scholars. However the anthropologists were the first pioneers who give more or less an exact definition to culture which at least is still reliable in many works.<sup>8</sup> The central definition in anthropological studies is that of the well known anthropologist E.B. Tylor who gave a scientific definition of what we mean by culture. Tylor published his two volumes on "Primitive Culture" in 1871. His work is generally regarded as the first important contribution to the field of cultural anthropology. Culture or civilization,<sup>9</sup> he said, "is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."<sup>10</sup>

Anthropologists after Tylor do not add too much to his definition of culture. The main work after Tylor is that of Professor Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn in 1952. To start with their work, they examined six hundred works on anthropology, sociology, social and clinical psychology from 1900 onwards with special concentration upon the twenty years 1930-1950. In their exhaustive study of the word they have listed 161 definitions and concluded that "in more than half of the books 'Culture' was not even mentioned".<sup>11</sup> Anthropology, then does not offer very much to those who want to find out what "culture" means.<sup>12</sup> Kroeber and Kluckhohn tried to excuse anthropology as in its infancy as a science "preoccupied with gathering, ordering, and classifying data",<sup>13</sup> and, consequently, anthropologists have "only very recently become conscious of problems of theory and of the logic of science".<sup>14</sup> Heine Golden in an 'International Social Science Bulletin' has also accepted Kroeber and Kluckhohn's views about excusing anthropology. He writes as follows:

"Like other human activities, Anthropology too, has been subject to fashions, probably more so than and other comparable field. This may be due to its relative youth. It is still groping to explore new ways of approach. This is particularly true of anthropology, in United States, where the various current fashions originated, and from where they spread to Western Europe."<sup>15</sup>

These important remarks below are again a quote from Kroeber and Kluckhohn:-

The master idea about culture they say, "is now formulated by most social scientists approximately as follows: culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action".<sup>16</sup>

## 2. The Universal patterning of Culture.

Classifications of the components of culture appeared in early books and bibliographies. Important, here for example, is the scheme of Wissler which was viewed as a pioneer classification in this respect. He classified culture elements into nine categories as follows:<sup>17</sup>

1. Speech: Language, writing system, and the like.
2. Material traits: (a) food habits; (b) shelter; (c) transport and travel; (d) dress; (e) utensils, tools etc. (f) weapons; (g) occupation and industries.
3. Art: carving, painting, dancing, music etc.
4. Mythology and scientific knowledge.
5. Religions practices: (a) ritualistic forms; (b) treatment of the sick; (c) treatment of the dead.
6. Family and social systems: (a) the forms of marriage; (b) methods of reckoning relationships; (c) inheritance; (d) social control; (e) sports and games.
7. Property: (a) real and personal; (b) standards of value exchange; (c) trade.
8. Government: (a) political forms; (b) Judicial and legal procedures.
9. War.

But how far do Wissler's categories indicate universal elements and integration of any way of life. He replied that these features of culture must be on the one hand present in any culture, and on the other hand common to general cultures.

Criticisms have been raised of Wissler's classification of universal aspects of culture. For instance, it lacks first a concentration on economic organization and cultural transmission and, also as Professor Kessing has pointed out, "Wissler's placement of war as a universal category became particularly a centre for controversy".<sup>18</sup> However Professor Nordskog has cited that:

"War has been institutionalised and is deeply rooted in our culture, while peace remains essentially an idealised hope."<sup>19</sup>

War, then, one might say in terms of Kessing is "not only a universal factor, but (also) a biologically determined factor arising out of human nature".<sup>20</sup>

This paper will not deal with all the categories of Wissler's classification of culture elements in its relation with industrialization.<sup>21</sup> But it will deal only with some of these categories, which might be named as "non materialistic" aspects of culture.

### 3. Culture as a factor in the diversity of industrial development.

The cultural setting is of primary significance when we introduce the concept of culture into the study of industrialization. It, plays, as the dissertation will clarify a strategic role in the study of conditions surrounding technological change and economic innovation. The main purpose here is to consider culture as a principal factor for diversity in industrialization.

Culture is one of the central factors which leads to diversity in industrial development, whereas modern technology is one of the main influences which act as uniformity in industrial societies. John Goldthorpe in 'The Sociological Review' has cited clearly that:

"The factors which make for uniformity in industrial societies, are seen as largely overriding other factors which may make for possible diversity".<sup>22</sup> This

is because, as he himself said "American interpretations of the development of industrial societies often reveal marked similarities".<sup>23</sup>

These similarities actually go back to "an affirmation of a faith, deeply entrenched in (American) cultural order that material gain leads directly to the better life."<sup>24</sup> What support this idea is, the fourth point in president Truman's Inaugural Address of January, 1949 was based upon the assumption of the inherent value of progress. In the President's words, **the people of backward**<sup>25</sup> areas could "realise their aspirations for a better life if we bring them the benefits of our store of technical knowledge."<sup>26</sup>

While following the same vein of argument, Eugene Staley offers general recommendations for the development of underdeveloped countries. In his book, "The future of Underdeveloped countries," he asserts that the progress of these countries, if it is to succeed, must follow a way analogous to that of the United States. The following quotations indicate his approach to the problem:

"If the present efforts to underdeveloped countries to develop themselves go forward with Western cooperation, then it is possible — though not certain — that a world civilization may gradually evolve in which the West's pioneering contributions to such human values as freedom, individual dignity, and material welfare are preserved and combined with the cultural heritages of non-Western peoples".<sup>27</sup>

"It is worth stressing that the social stirrings in underdeveloped countries are basically a reflection of the revolutionary technological and economic progress of the Western world, and in considerable part reflect Western ideals".<sup>28</sup>

"The new nationalisms of the underdeveloped countries and their passion for equality, respect, and status, like their new awareness of poverty, have some of their roots in the West's own cultural contributions".<sup>29</sup>

This has been understood by Professor Hoselitz to mean that, "if any successful development is to take place the countries of Asia, African and Latin America will have to adopt social institutions and even social values resembling those of the West. In somewhat more down-to-earth terms they will have to become little Americans".<sup>30</sup> Professor Hoselitz goes even further and claims that 'the development of underdeveloped countries depends not merely upon their adopting the economic and technological procedures of the more advanced countries, but also upon their coming to resemble them in social structure and, sometimes even, in for of political organisations'.<sup>31</sup>

Abegglen, for instance, in his study about "the Japanese Factory" give plausible evidence for the differences between the Japanese factories and American production units in terms of diverse cultures and peoples.

"Whatever the temptation to speak generally of Asia, this kind of generalisation cannot be made from one to another of such enormously diverse culture

and peoples. The experience of Japan does provide, however, one test of the limits of adaptation, a measure of the kinds of alternatives to the technology, human relations interaction seen in the west which can be useful in attempting to estimate the range of adaptations and adjustments possible or necessary in introducing a technology which is the product of one kind of culture into another culture".<sup>32</sup>

As a consequence, the exercise of industrial development is confined to the cultural context of a given society, and therefore, every industrial development has its distinctive features. In this sphere, Abegglen's work represents an outlook both original and objective in so far as he succeeds in keeping away from. "Ethnocentrism"<sup>33</sup>, which in his own terms, 'is particularly strong in the area of technological and business procedures'.<sup>34</sup> And this is, in fact, true, for instance, Clark Kerr and his colleagues in their book "Industrialism and Industrial Man," especially in chapter 10, think in an ethnocentric, hellenocentric and absolutistic way. Or rather they think "in terms of 'the road ahead' rather than in terms of a variety of roads".<sup>35</sup> "Hence, there is the ethnocentric bias, that failure of the imagination which leads the sociologist to accept his own form of society, or rather some idealised version of this as the goal towards which all humanity is moving".<sup>36</sup>

Herskovits has cleverly pointed out:

"If we keep firmly in mind the force of our own enculturation, we will be able to understand how the ways of others are similarly valued by those who live in terms of them".<sup>37</sup>

The means of economic analysis then are probably insufficient by itself to understand the different aspects of industrial development. Professor Hagen, of Economic concluded that:

"... to understand economic growth (one would have to master the literature of psychology, anthropology and sociology".<sup>38</sup>

As Hoselitz has cited:

"The factors determining the rate of innovations, the disposal of income, and the form and rate of savings lie in the cultural and social conditions of a given population and not in their economy".<sup>39</sup>

To illustrate this, the USSR uses a highly specialised technology in industrialization yet is as economically progressed as capitalist countries. But despite this fact, and despite all the factors which make for uniformity in industrial societies, "Social stratification (for example) in the advanced societies of the communist world — or at any rate in the USSR and its closer satellites — is not (ipso facto) of the same generic type as in the West".<sup>40</sup>

"Yet if a single conclusion were to be drawn from (Abegglen's) study it would be that the development of industrial Japan has taken place with much less change from the kind of social organisation and social relations of preindustrial or nonindustrial Japan than would be expected from the Western model of the growth of an industrial society."

In this approach, thus, Abegglen succeeds to prove that "Each culture and society has its own integrity, its own systems of values, and indeed its own areas of complexity".<sup>41</sup>

In fact as Professor Keesing has pointed out:

"Science to be science, had to rid itself of distorting perspectives of ethnocentrism. At least if evaluations of different ways of life were to be tried, they had to be based on more sophisticated criteria".<sup>42</sup>

And as Professor Hoselitz has stated clearly, "If we do not prejudge the issues by applying ready-made theoretical formulations, and if we admit that various paths of growth and various patterns of social reorganisation are possible, we will be able to provide more appropriate theoretical guides for the sociological dimension in economic development".<sup>43</sup>

Sociologists, then, according to these views must reject any absolute standards or scales of worth and think in a way that Keesing has usefully termed "Cultural Relativism".<sup>44</sup> And indeed as Dr. Myrdal, in the light of his experience in the active career of Professor, Cabinet Minister, Director of the U.N. Economic Commission for Europe and as independent research worker, concludes that "the final solution of the value problem in economic and the social sciences generally must therefore be to set up a method by which human valuations are rationally and openly introduced into theoretical and practical research to give it direction and purpose, to make it both unbiased and relevant to life".<sup>45</sup>

# REFERENCES

\* My italics.

- (1) Bert F. Hoselitz, *Sociological Aspects of Economic Growth*, 3rd. Printing, London, The Free of Glencoe, 1964, pp. 44-45.
- (2) Everette E. Hagen, *On the Theory of Social Change*, Tavistock Publications, London, 1964, p. 8.
- (3) Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society*, New York The Free Press, 1964. See in particular Chapter VII which deals with Egypt and Chapter VII which deals with Syria).
- (4) W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, Cambridge, The University Press, 1960, p. 17., CF. W.W. Rostow, *The Process of Economic Growth*, 2nd ed. Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1960, pp. 274-306.
- (5) Clark Kerr et al., *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, London, Heinemann Educational Book's Ltd., 1962, p. 77. The term "Traditional Society" is an expression used by W.W. Rostow to describe a society with little industrialization and a limited application of scientific technology to production process. Vide, Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, op.cit., pp. 4-6. CF. Max Weber distinguishes between traditional and rational action. Weber describes traditional or tradition oriented social action as action based upon "the psychic attitude set for the habitual workaday and... the belief in the everyday routine as an inviolable norm of conduct." Vide, Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the world religions", in H.H. Gerth and C.W. Mills (eds;), *From Max Weber. Essays in Sociology*, N.Y., 1946, p. 296.
- (6) F.R. Cowell, *Culture*, London, Thames and Hundson, 1959, Preface, p. ix.
- (7) *Ibid.*, p. ix.
- (8) See for example, Clark Kerr et al., *Industrialism and Industrial Man*, Op.Cit., p. 77.
- (9) It was from Klemm that Tylor borrowed the word and first gave it the meaning which it has for English-speaking anthropologists today. See, Phillip Bagby, *Culture and History*, London, Longmans, Gree and Co, 1958, p. 74. Tylor himself used "civilization" at first in the same meaning of culture. (Bagby, p. 75). In other words, he applied the term culture to our civilization; and this is wrong. "A civilization is a culture of people who live in cities." See, Bichard Kluckhohn (ed.), *Culture and Behaviour*, Collected Essays of Clyde Kluckhohn, N.Y., the free Press of Glencoe, 1952, p. 20.
- (10) Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. 1, p. 1.
- (11) A.L. Kroeber Clyde Kluckhohn, "Culture, A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions, 'Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, 1952, Vol. XLVII, No. 1, p. 36.
- (12) Cowell, op.Cit., p. 333.
- (13) & (14) A.L. Kroeber & Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture*, op.cit., p.36.
- (15) R. Heine Goldern, 'International Social Science Bulletin', Vol. IX, 1957, p. 287.
- (16) Kroeber and Kluckhohn, op.cit., p. 181.
- (17) C. Wissler, *Man and Culture*, New York, George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd., 1923, p. 74.
- (18) F.M. Kessing, *Cultural Anthropology*, N.Y., Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1962, p. 189.
- (19) J.E. Nordskog (ed.), *Social Change*, N.Y., McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960, p. 343.
- (20) Keesing, op.cit., p. 295
- (21) J.R. Goldthorpe, "Social Stratification in Industrial Society" in *The Sociological Review*, Monograph No. 8, University of Keele, 1964, p. 97.
- (22) J.H. Goldthorpe, "Social Stratification in Industrial Society" in *The Sociological Review*, Monograph No. 8, University of Keele, October, 1964, p. 97.
- (23) *Ibid.*, p. 97.

- (24) Water R. Goldschmidt, 'The Interrelation Between Cultural Factors and the Acquisition of New Technical Skills' in Bert F. Hoselitz (ed.), *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas*, Cambridge, 1952, p. 136. Cf. Gunnar Myrdal, *Value in Social Theory*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958, pp. 80, 134.
- (25) My italics, Nell Smelser suggested that "a dichotomy such as 'advanced vs. backward' yield too little information, because they claim simply one society is superior to another. (And) to use such words may generate conflicts of pride and conflicts of meaning both of which subvert intelligent discourse". See, N.J. Smelser, *Social Change in the Industrial Revolution*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959, p.1. The progress then should not bear any normative meaning.
- (26) W.R. Goldschmidt, *op.cit.*, p. 136.
- (27) Eugene Staley, *The Future of Underdeveloped Countries*, London, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1954, p. 4.
- (28) *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- (29) *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- (30) Bert F. Hoselitz, *Sociological Aspects of Economic Growth*, *op.cit.*, p. 56.
- (31) *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.
- (32) J.C. Abegglen, *The Japanese Factory*, London, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1958, p. 34.
- (33) Cf. Clark Kerr et al., *op.cit.*, ch. 10.
- (34) Goldthorpe, *op.cit.*, p. 117
- (35) *Ibid.*, p. 117
- (36) Melville, J. Herskovits, "The Problem of Adapting Societies to New Tasks", in Bert F. Hoselitz (ed.), *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas*, *op.cit.*, p. 111.
- (37) Everett E. Hagen, *On the Theory of Social Change*, London, Tavistock publications, 1964, the Foreword by Max. F. Millikan.
- (38) Bert F. Hoselitz (ed.), *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas*, *op.cit.*, Prefaces, p. vi.
- (39) See, Goldthorpe, *op.cit.*, p. 100, Cf. Alex Inkeles, "Social stratification and Mobility in the Soviet Union: 1940-1950, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 15, 1950; Raymond Aron, "Social Structure and the Ruling Class" *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 1, 1950; R. Aron (ed.), *World Technology and Human Destiny*, 1963.
- (40) Bert F. Hoselitz, "Traditions and Economic Growth". In Ralph Braibanti and Joseph J. Spengler (eds.), *Tradition, Values and Socio-Economic Development*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1951, p. 93.
- (41) Kessing, *op.cit.*, p. 47.
- (42) *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- (43) B.F. Hoselitz, *Sociological Aspects of Economic Growth*, *op.cit.*, p. 82.
- (44) Kessing, *op.cit.*, p. 47; p. 178ff. Cf. Goldthorpe, *op. cit.*, 117 and Morris E. Opler, 'The Problem of Selective Culture, in Bert F. Hoselitz (ed.), *The Progress of Underdeveloped Areas*, *op.cit.*, p. 126 ff.
- (45) Gunnar Myrdal, *Value in Social Theory*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958, p. 260.