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## TRANSFORMING THE ARENA OF ACTION: TWO PATHS TO CULTURAL MODERNIZATION COMPARED

THE IMPORTANT QUESTION the world faces is how substantially to transform a people's situation in ways that call forth desirable new behaviours. Experience indicates that education in the narrow, traditional sense of schools and communication media, such as books, motion picture films, and radio, does not suffice to launch thoroughgoing cultural modernization. This paper will present facts to demonstrate this assertion, and to show that the educational factor which has proved to be capable of implementing comprehensive modernization within a single generation consists of more than schools, printed or broadcast words, and instruction by qualified teachers or so-called "change agents". Effective education for cultural modernization demands constructing new social conditions in which people will be motivated to try new ways of doing, growing, and making things and will be induced to alter their traditional patterns of thought and feeling.

This conclusion has been reached mainly by comparing two contrasting ways in which governments have tried to instigate cultural modernization. The first is community development. In this, the author's direct experience has been in Pakistan where several years ago he closely observed Village-AID in one Punjab village while also studying from books, reports, and personal interviews the wider aspects of community development in that country and in India. The second approach to modernization may be labelled "radical situational transformation". Direct experience with this has been in the eastern Arctic town of Frobisher Bay on Baffin Island, where the Canadian Government has created a radically new situation for about a thousand Eskimo.

Such phrases as "economic and social revolution", "silent revolution", and "symbol of the resurgence of the spirit of India" express the enthusiasm with which governments in South Asia, encouraged by backing from the United States of America, launched community development programmes that were counted on to "unleash creative energies of the people". The phrases also echo the degree to which in some circles community development has

assumed the status of a social movement arousing almost religious conviction. Such expressions, however, ought not to obscure the fact that in reality those "great" efforts are in operation relatively limited ventures. In Pakistan, for example, the First Five Year Plan allocated only 3.2 per cent of Pakistan's development expenses to Village-AID work, not counting the product and labour donated by villagers participating in local projects. On the other hand, the explicitly stated objectives are indeed ambitious, the main one being to raise rapidly the productive output and real income of the villager. To do this, the programmes in Pakistan and India insist on enlisting participation by the people themselves, who will work together to improve their own standards of living, stimulate self-reliance, kindle a need for achievement, and so continue development in self-generating fashion. Operations on the local level are perhaps familiar to most readers. In step one, a trained agent of culture change (a village worker or Gram Sevak) discovers or helps to catalyze felt needs of the village people. To help them to resolve those needs, he provides villagers with new knowledge, or else communicates with higher echelon personnel to bring better qualified experts to the scene. The villagers, by following their tutors' lessons, are expected to become culturally transformed. The social span that these change agents cover is significant for the evaluation that is to be made here. One survey in India showed that a single Gram Sevak had under his command 12 to 15 villages, that is from 4,000 to 8,000 persons, the smaller numbers being in mountainous and tribal territories. His circle of operations covered from 27 to 43 square miles, the latter area being characteristic of mountainous and tribal country. Not surprisingly, outside of his headquarters village the village-level worker remained for only short periods. Although community development in Pakistan and India holds agricultural development to be the primary target, the programmes seek to accomplish more than this, an important object being to foster village leadership capable of engaging in planning and co-operation. Health and literacy are other goals. Villagers, it has been found, appraise the programmes heavily in terms of such services and material benefits brought into the village as better seeds, manures, roads, and vaccination for cattle, and their perception is congruent with the programmes' dominant ambition.

The character of this effort in Pakistan and India may fairly be described as petty and its success trifling. Ronald Segal, describing the "economic precipice" on which rural India is balanced, cites Government sources that point out how community development in that country has failed to co-ordinate its efforts, fallen short of its own objectives, evoked too little popular initiative,

and benefited richer cultivators more than poorer ones or artisans. Pakistan impressed the writer with the enthusiasm that some officials and Western-oriented villagers invested in Village-AID. Yet the demonstration plots that were inspected, the queues observed waiting to have the village worker administer inoculations, the few men counted attending literacy classes, hardly suggested the kind of rural revolution that he had been assured in Karachi he would witness when he made his second visit to West Pakistan's villages in five years. Even in a village chosen for inspection by the Village-AID organization, there were no signs of what could be called a threshold of cultural modernization.

Not only the size of Pakistan's and India's effort to secure fundamental change is inadequate; so also is the closely related procedure they are employing. The belief so firmly implanted in community development, that people will manifest needs which can then be successfully harnessed to induce them to work for better standards of living, is doubtful when applied to an entire village or nation. A much longer and far more intricate path leads from a need for better agricultural output to the use of green manuring than the theory of "felt needs" suggests. So small a change as this—the adoption of green manuring—though highly significant to a particular individual, is negligible compared to the task of modernization facing those countries. Most people remain unaffected when with diligence and skill the Gram Sevak induces one client to move some distance toward agricultural or any other kind of modernization. Consequently, however successful the agent of change may be in particular cases, in the larger context people continue to do business as usual, manifest their customary attitudes, enter traditional social relationships, follow habitual goals. In other words, they continue a cultural momentum hardly deflected by the small change that has been accomplished.

The model of education utilized in community development comes from the schoolroom. It depends on a change agent (equivalent to the over-extended classroom teacher) who introduces and demonstrates innovations (new knowledge). Emphasis is put on instilling something into relatively passive pupils who are supposedly motivated—even eager—to learn and who will subsequently, it is hoped, put into practice (somehow, someday) what they have learned. Only the final examination, that fruitless ritual by which the teacher assures himself that in the time elapsed his pupils have not forgotten too much (say not more than 40 or 50 per cent of what he hoped to retrieve, which would make the passing grade 60 or 50 out of 100), is missing in community development. As many people have pointed out, the trouble with this model of educa-

tion lies in the big gap separating input from output. As a result, the method is inefficient and inadequate, especially for large-scale cultural modernization, a conclusion that the reports of the respective community-development organizations of Pakistan and India support despite their undercurrent of optimism. Such a model of education fails to anticipate the problems that pupils face in trying to translate into action what they learn passively (even when they understand it). It does not expect that, even having learned, pupils may still remain anchored to customary habits by their largely unchanged milieu of action. For, as Margaret Mead says, "survival of some parts of an old pattern tends to reinstate the rest, and so continually acts as a drag on the establishment of new habits . . . ."

Community development based on the extension agent serving as a teacher can certainly achieve some advances in living standards. The emphasis on self-help may even catalyze social responsibility and boost morale, particularly where a co-operative project has been successfully executed. Such small-scale attempts at change, however, do not promote cultural modernization fast enough, or secure it against dragging and retrogression, because they leave the larger situation relatively unaltered. Kusum Nair in *Blossoms in the Dust* asks "In the conditions that prevail in rural India . . . would it be reasonable to expect that the 'side effects' of physical institutional and economic development will bring about the necessary adjustment in the human factor more or less automatically with the help simply of the demonstrations and exhortations of the extension services provided under the Community Development programme? . . . Can we really expect that such a revolutionary transformation will come by itself, when it has not been possible to enforce even simple acts of social legislation, such as removal of untouchability or raising the marriage age of girls and boys?"

Frobisher Bay, today containing about 2,000 people—over 900 of them Eskimo—originated in 1942-43 when construction began of an air strip that enabled the place to serve as a staging route in the transfer of war material between the United States and her European allies. South Baffin Island Eskimo had begun to absorb European elements into their culture long before 1942, intensive contact dating to the middle of the nineteenth century when many whalers visited the bays and even employed Eskimo. Missionaries arrived not long thereafter. During the ensuing decades the Eskimo adopted the same assortment of new clothing, guns, traps, flour, tea, and a few other foodstuffs; elements of Christian belief and worship; cardplaying, and other

recreation that penetrated the cultures of other northern Canadian aboriginal people. As a result, their lives were changed; but they were not as radically transformed as they became in the 1950s after a heavy influx of families moved into the town in pursuit of jobs that became increasingly available with the construction of a radar site and the eastern Arctic DEW Line. To accommodate the rapidly expanded native population—from 258 in 1956, to 494 in 1957, and 624 in 1958—the Government through its newly established Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources found itself assuming increasing responsibilities and providing more and more services for the Eskimo, including houses and a townsite for its native employees, houses for welfare cases as well as for rental, and finally houses for a housing co-operative that its agents had helped to organize. In addition to a hospital, the Government instituted a rehabilitation centre to retrain Eskimo who through serious surgery or incapacitating illness were prevented from returning to their traditional land-based careers; and, of course, it provided schools. Simultaneously many other facilities appeared in Frobisher Bay, not to serve the Eskimo but to provide weather and airport services to military and civilian air traffic and to administer the region. Stores opened as well as a laundry, power-plant, hotel, and radio station. These facilities provide year-round jobs for many Eskimo and non-Eskimo. The Government also provides for the distribution of water to and the collection of sewage from Eskimo and non-Eskimo homes. Government-operated busses transport children, workers, and as space permits, other adults. Volunteers man a fire-fighting station. The provision of these and other urban-type amenities to Eskimo and non-Eskimo does not come cheap in the Arctic. It requires a many-stranded lifeline between Frobisher Bay, Canada, and the rest of the world. In this wider society originate most of the satisfiers that make the town a comfortable place in which to live, including much of the food that Eskimo consume; hardware; oil for heat and light; building materials; clothing and clothing materials; engines and other appliances; medicines; gramophone records, tape recorders, and musical instruments; movie films; and even the stone which Eskimo carve, as well as the doctors, nurses, teachers, and other specialists who are partly responsible for maintaining Frobisher Bay as it is.

Maintaining the town and its functions provides about one-third of the adult male population (79 in number) with full-time jobs and furnishes many more men with occasional wage-labour. In addition men seek whatever seasonal opportunities their schedules provide to hunt caribou and seal or to fish. A few men—about 16—make a more or less full-time career out of living on

the land in relatively traditional fashion. But they by no means wholly insulate themselves from the town's resources, particularly not in winter, when they reside in the community for several months. Few if any Eskimo reveal dire poverty. Even the rudest self-made cabins made of scrap lumber—especially when their radio-equipped, comparatively well-furnished interiors are examined—do not compare to the dilapidated shacks on the outskirts of a South Asian city. We heard nobody complain of chronic hunger; nobody **wears rags of necessity**. Basic needs are met quite adequately; whether through jobs, a combination of jobs and social assistance, or in some cases completely by social assistance. As a result, people's higher needs can be activated, and **this happens when they plan summer holidays on the land, furnish their homes comfortably (even luxuriously by local standards), and participate generously in recreation.**

This, then, is the situation confronting the Eskimo who live in Frobisher Bay and that they help to maintain in association with other Canadians. I have heard Government officials refer to their role in the North as "community development", particularly when they describe efforts to help the Eskimo organize fishing and other producer and consumer cooperatives. It should be apparent that in Frobisher Bay measures affecting the Eskimo do not, like community development programmes in South Asia, constitute part of a formal and explicit program. Broad and very vague goals for Canada's northern people are periodically enunciated by political figures in Canada. Generally they visualize the North as manifesting a partnership between the indigenous population, brought to a high standard of education, and representatives from southern Canada. This goal, however, is not being self-consciously pursued in the altered configuration in which former seal hunters and fox trappers and their wives, who used to prepare the skins in tents or snowhouses and cook over seal-oil lamps, now live. It has little immediate relevance to the situation in which Eskimo are employed as clerks, repair trucks, perform work as janitors, cook in restaurants, keep house in electrified homes equipped with refrigerators and telephones, play bingo, see twice-weekly movies, appear in court, and attend elementary school. Developing a new life for town-dwelling Eskimo has an *ad hoc* character when viewed in historical perspective, but it has nevertheless rapidly transformed Eskimo culture at practically every observable point.

During his six-months presence in Frobisher Bay in 1963, the author observed the people's experience with modernization to be continuing, for example, when the Community Council debated the ineffectual role the Gov-

ernment itself was playing in the town's spring cleanup, when members of the Community Association listened to an annual report and then elected a new board of directors (the overwhelming majority Eskimo), when the housing co-operative sought to extend its efforts into a "consumer co-op", and the Community Association acquired used busses with the intention of branching out into the transportation business. No doubt the Eskimo acted in frameworks that had been arranged by Euro-Canadians (meetings of the Community Association and Community Council, for example) or after a few men had received careful counsel from interested administrators who, among other things, wanted to promote Eskimo initiative and self-reliance. But that in no way reduces the significance of such actions as further steps toward modernization. The knowledge that officials are officially and unofficially interested in what Eskimo do explicates the character of the learning-situation of Frobisher Bay. We have parted company with the model of education followed in the traditional classroom, in which a teacher instructs and exhorts relatively passive pupils. Education for adult Eskimo is a matter of practice and action, action that occurs even if Eskimo act in situations which Euro-Canadians have structured, advised, or helped to plan.

Compared to community development, the truly remarkable feature in Frobisher Bay is the way Eskimo at almost every turn are able to gear their behaviour to a modern culture into which, well within a single generation, they have transformed their lives. New jobs, new housing and house furnishings, new patterns of organization, new forms of recreation, new problems and temptations, new agents of social control, new models—all appeared simultaneously and invited a wholesale cultural upheaval which, as has been indicated, still goes on. Change has not, however, affected everything. Many people, though they understand English, are comfortable only when they speak Eskimo, and even children do not speak English too readily. The Eskimo in the town have not wholly shed their past; sentimentally it retains a strong hold over them, and they are intent on teaching hunting and other land-based skills to their children, even if to do so they must take the youngsters out of school to enable them to accompany their parents. Nor can the people be said to have changed wholly at their own pace. Survival in the town depended on meeting promptly the white man's demands and on correcting behaviour alertly and quickly when in important ways it failed to meet the white man's expectations. From the opposite point of view, a too cautious administration has also held the Eskimo back and slowed down changes,



slowing the pace at which Eskimo entrepreneurs can emerge in businesses of their own.

The town contains its quota of agents of change who seek to develop the Eskimo by talking to and instructing him. That familiar educational pattern is firmly entrenched in the classroom. But this is not the style of education followed by the industrial development officer, for example, who if he explains the advantages of co-operative organization is also ready to back the desire of the people to own their own houses by putting the resources of the Government to work, at cost, in securing and shipping prefabricated parts for those houses. In the case of the fishing co-operative, the Government provides the engine and building necessary to freeze fish, enlists the labour of fisherman and packers, furnishes nets and fuel for the undertaking, and seeks southern markets for the product.

Like a "total institution", Frobisher Bay provides an all-encompassing learning situation in which nearly all of the Eskimo's needs are met under circumstances vastly different from those under which he lived a short time before. His transformation is geared to many simultaneously operative incentives and negative sanctions. However, he is under no obligation to change. His response to town life is not dictated. He may remain largely uninvolved or can quit the town to return to his former settlements and resume his former career on the land and frozen sea. On the other hand, the town constitutes more than a mere limiting condition on behaviour. Its positive quality lies in its invitation to act and in the ready way it makes possible a new way of life and enables the Eskimo to become a substantially different kind of person.

Further differences and similarities between community development in South Asia and the situation confronting Eskimo in Frobisher Bay can be pointed out. As Wilfred Malenbaum has shown, it is quite in keeping with the large number of people to be influenced through community development in poor countries such as Pakistan or India that input costs in such programmes are relatively low, meaning that goals are achieved at relatively slight cost. Villagers provide labour voluntarily, obviating wage compensation. Their reward is intended to come from their successful accomplishments; that is, from higher yields, better roads, cleaner water, and so on. In Frobisher Bay, on the other hand, rewards for labour are monetary or, rather, are derived from the satisfiers that money can immediately buy. Maintaining the town of Frobisher Bay requires considerable expenditures by the Federal Government for which Canada in return receives little of economic value. Govern-



ment, financed housing, a power plant, schools, an airport, administrative offices, and other facilities not only provide the Eskimo with remunerative work, but also with indispensable opportunities to try new behaviours and to form new ideas and values, thereby to modernize. The cost of such opportunities comes high and can only be borne by a relatively rich country that needs to provide such services for only a comparatively small number of people.

In both the Far North and South Asia, cultural outsiders constitute the agents heavily involved in managing the educational process. That is, both the Eskimo and the South Asian villagers are being led towards modernization by officials or teachers committed to the Western world and to modern standards at variance with those traditionally followed by the people in their charge. In Pakistan and India, however, the élite leaders belong in some measure to the same basic cultural and historical tradition as the people they are guiding. Despite this basic link between tutors and learners, the pace of change there is slow. In Frobisher Bay the persons serving as leaders and models belong to a different historic and cultural tradition in consequence of which they rarely speak the language of the people they are guiding and have limited empathy into the people's perceptions and values. Yet change here has been rapid and thorough. It is proper to conclude that, contrary to what has been asserted, cross cultural education to be successful need not be founded on a "good understanding" of the culture to be altered.

Community development in Pakistan and India tries deliberately to inculcate values and motivations favourable to cultural modernization, a requirement that the psychologist, David C. McClelland, holds essential for successful development in under-developed areas. McClelland lists three ways in which motives favourable to development can be brought about: (1) through adult persuasion and education; (2) through structural changes in social relations that subtly promote new values (for example, the expropriation of landlords in revolutionary China and the subsequent division of large landholdings); and (3) through early childrearing, a time which he regards as the most likely to result in high achievement motive. An early bent toward achievement derives not only from parental coaching but also from appropriate encouragement provided by nurseries, schools, and well-trained teachers. In fact, in a newly developing country those agencies are more important for starting a self-sustaining modernizing programme than the family, which is more likely to implant traditional attitudes. South Asian community development, as has been said, recognizes the need for motivational change as it seeks to create and maintain a need for modernization by persuading adult

villagers to help themselves and by giving them successful experience in carrying out developmental tasks. The argument here, however, has been that community development is extremely limited in the degree of modernization it accomplishes. Village schools in Pakistan and India no doubt help to stimulate children's interest in cultural modernization, but the situation in the village allows few means by which the individual spurred to modernization by what he learned in school can readily perpetuate and exercise his new-found motives. Migration is, of course, a possibility, but one that hardly helps to modernize the village itself. In Frobisher Bay there is relatively little adult education or persuasion that has motivational change as its deliberate aim. However, structural changes that involve the individual in producer and consumer co-operatives or that spur home ownership, jobs, and decision-making in non-family organizations constitute the very essence of the Eskimo's new situation in the town.

One must recognize the difficulty of measuring success and failure in experiments of this kind or, in fact, of educational effectiveness in general. Furthermore, such evaluation may be premature. Results are far from all in, and the long-term changes resulting from community development or from radical situational transformation may be quite different from the consequences that can presently be observed. The contrasting circumstances surrounding each programme, and the unequal numbers of people involved, make them far from ideal comparisons. In addition, the people possess diverse psychological characteristics about which little is known but which may be crucially significant for the observed differences on which this argument is based.

The radically new situation confronting the Eskimo in Frobisher Bay presents those people with many more possibilities for a more modern style of life than are available to Pakistan and Indian villagers, and they are therefore modernizing much more rapidly.

No situation can automatically induce change. That comes only through the response that people choose to make in their customary behaviour. The point is that some situations are better designed than others to induce such a response, although the difficult-to-recognize psychological potentialities of people to offer such responses are also extremely significant. It is quite unlikely that any situation will extend its possibilities of action equally to young and old, to men and women, to more intelligent and less intelligent. In Frobisher Bay, for example, officials with power are able to control access to the arena of action when they deliberately choose some individuals with determinable

social and personal characteristics for jobs or special attention. In some degree, however, the town environment affects all the Eskimo who remain in it and who are capable of perceiving significant cues in their situation to which they suit their behaviour. Such cues include wares in the store, instruction and teaching aids in school, types of social dancing, technical skills found on the job, conflict set up between nearly equally desirable alternatives that call for new ways of scheduling mutually exclusive behaviours, and particular Euro-Canadians who become patrons or models of particular Eskimo.

Case studies from the Arctic and South Asia support an increasingly compelling theory of socio-cultural change, namely, that wholesale and rapid change is more easily assimilated than slow, partial change. Anthropologists used to visualize change as terribly difficult; therefore they endorsed only small changes unlikely to upset a social system and promote distress in its members. Experience, however, taught them to recognize that the least conflictful kind of change may lie in people simultaneously transforming their culture on many fronts. Margaret Mead, in her report of a transformed Manus, points out that "rapid change is not only possible, but may actually be very desirable, that instead of advocating slow partial changes, we should advocate that a people who choose to practice a new technology or enter into drastically new kinds of economic relationships will do this more easily if they live in different houses, wear different clothes, and eat different, or differently cooked, food."

The small number of people who live in the Eastern Arctic favours the Canadian Government's plans for cultural modernization, for the Government's relatively huge economic resources are not unduly strained when it finances the relatively unproductive North to the extent that it does. Hence, as a whole, this particular model of cultural change is inapplicable in the crowded, non-affluent countries of the world. On the other hand, not for a moment need we believe that they are obliged to remain as they are. Human intelligence is undoubtedly fecund enough to devise analogous methods of large-scale cultural transformation, but whether we are willing to pay for them financially and socially is another question, one that becomes sharper as we try to alleviate the complex problem of poverty in our own affluent surroundings.