# American social science and the psychology of development in India, 1940s-1960s

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

## Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any work that has already been submitted before for any degree or other qualification except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the History Degree Committee.

# American social science and the psychology of development in India, 1940s-1960s

## Joseph Paul Francombe

## Abstract

With the arrival of independence in 1947, India's first generation of post-colonial leaders embraced the concept of 'development' as a central objective of nation-building and a raison d'être of the post-colonial state. The opportunity of freedom, it was argued, would pave the way for a dramatic process of economic, social and political transformation that would turn India from an impoverished, colonial society into a 'modern', prosperous and democratic one. Set against this backdrop, this thesis explores intersections and entanglements between the post-independence pursuit of development and the forms of knowledge produced by post-war American social science.

Foregrounding the concept of 'psychologized development', the thesis focuses in particular on the ways in which Indian elites – including government officials, intellectuals, industrialists and more – drew on American psychological expertise in the hope of realizing development dreams. With its claims to understand the complex processes that shaped human action (and interaction), I argue, American psychological knowledge promised solutions to the most pressing contemporary problems, from the treatment of 'communal' tension to the engagement of rural communities in uplift programmes. Psychology revealed the foundations of effective economic entrepreneurship and the basis of sound industrial leadership. It even explained how new ideas and practices could be 'diffused' throughout society. For Indians, psychologized theories of human nature offered knowledge of great utility in the context of plans for rapid societal change. For Americans, they offered tools that would turn India into a model of democratic development in the context of a global Cold War.

Using a case study approach, this thesis explores the diverse settings in which Indians and Americans came together to psychologize development. In doing so, it examines both the common themes and the recurring challenges that came with attempts to realize development through social science expertise. The resulting history offers new perspectives not just on the character and complexion of developmentalism in post-colonial India, but also on the forms of cross-border connection that shaped India's post-1947 transition. The thesis makes novel contributions to a number of historiographical fields, including the history of American social science, the history of Indo-US relations, the history of development and global history.

# Acknowledgements

There have been many points at which I thought this thesis would never reach completion. Many moments when it felt like the sensible thing to do would be to accept defeat and move on. At each and every point that this sentiment veered towards action, something would happen to pull me back from the brink and convince me to persevere. In some cases, this came from the research itself – stumbling on a new archival source, for instance, that reminded me I did have something to say. Far more often, though, it came from the many wonderful people who have supported me through this challenging but also deeply rewarding process. Here, I can only begin to express my thanks to those involved.

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understanding, especially when things were tough. The greatest thanks of all must go to my wife, Danielle. Danielle has been on every single step of this journey with me. In doing so, she has had to put up with my almost permanent state of PhD distraction and stress. She has done so with such love, understanding and patience. She has also provided a great deal of helpful advice. There is no way I could have got to this stage without her.

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## Abbreviations

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|---|---|
| AEC | Atomic Energy Commission |
| AMA | Ahmedabad Millowners' Association |
| ASI | Anthropological Survey of India |
| ATIRA | Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association |
| BAE | Bureau of Agricultural Economics |
| BASR | Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University |
| CD | Community Development |
| CENIS | Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology |
| CFPI | Central Family Planning Institute |
| CPA | Community Projects Administration |
| EDP | Entrepreneurial Development Programme |
| FPCAR | Family Planning Communications Action Research |
| HBS | Harvard Business School |
| IADP | Intensive Agricultural Districts Programme |
| IIM | Indian Institute of Management |
| IIMA | Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad |
| IIMC | Indian Institute of Management Calcutta |
| IIT | Indian Institute of Technology |
| INCOSAR | Indian National Committee for Space Research |
| IRMA | Institute of Rural Management Anand |
| ISABS | Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science |
| ISRO | Indian Space Research Organisation |
| IUD | Intra-Urine Contraceptive Device |
| MIT | Massachusetts Institute of Technology |
| NPC | National Planning Committee |
| NTL | National Training Laboratories |

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|---|---|
| OB | Organisational Behaviour |
| OM | Overall Modernity |
| PEO | Programme Evaluation Organisation |
| PRL | Physical Research Laboratory |
| SIET | Small Industries Extension Training Institute |
| SPSSI | Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues |
| SSRC | Social Science Research Council |
| TAS | The Achieving Society |
| TAT | Thematic Apperception Test |
| TCF | Indo-American Technical Cooperation Fund |
| UCLA | University of California Los Angeles |
| Unesco | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USDA | United States Department of Agriculture |
| VLW | Village Level Worker |
| YMCA | Young Men's Christian Association |

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# Introduction

In 1965, in classrooms at Ranchi University, in the Indian state of Bihar, a team of psychologists presided over an experiment. Organizing 120 undergraduate students into forty groups of three, the psychologists began by explaining that all groups would be undertaking a simple 'cube construction task' using small wooden blocks. Meanwhile, unbeknown to the participants, the psychologists varied the conditions of the task along two different axes. To some, they provided the minimum number of blocks necessary to complete the task, thereby reflecting a state of 'limited resources'. To others, they gave three times the number of blocks required. At the same time, groups under each of these two 'resource conditions' were divided further, into two types of 'verbally induced need'. Some were motivated to feel a 'competing orientation'. Here, psychologists framed the task as a test of 'individual intelligence', one in which every participant should attempt to place the maximum number of correct blocks in the shortest possible time. In other groups, the psychologists sought to cultivate a 'cooperative orientation'. The aim of the exercise, these participants were told, was to maximize the task performance of the group as a whole.[1]

As students carefully placed block on top of block, the psychologists took notes about the impact of different conditions on the groups' ability to complete the task. To what extent did groups under 'unlimited' resource conditions perform better than those with 'limited' resources? How did task performance vary with different 'need conditions'? What sort of needs worked best under 'limited' resources? According to the researchers, the results would have significance far beyond the confines of the classroom. By highlighting the forms of motivation conducive to productive behaviour under different resource environments, the experiment would provide the basis for a new 'strategy for planned change'.[2]

Against a backdrop of grand contemporary visions for social, economic and political 'development', the Ranchi experiment represented an attempt to deploy psychological knowledge as an applied form of expertise. Psychologized frames of thinking, it suggested, provided a serviceable set of tools that could be used to catalyse the process of rapid societal transformation that India's post-independence leaders desired. The experiment would form part of a broader wave of efforts to apply psychological thinking to developmental problems in India. In this thesis, I explore the efforts of a network of actors – comprising government

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[1] Jai B.P. Sinha, 'The n-ach/n-cooperation under limited/unlimited resource conditions', *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* 4:2, 1968, pp. 233-246.
[2] Ibid., pp. 238-239.

officials, social scientists, industrialists and foundation officers – to 'psychologize' development in this way.

A history of what I call 'psychologized development', it will be seen, takes us on a journey through a diverse range of development fields, from post-partition communal tension, through rural and industrial development, to state-backed programmes of population control. What underwrote attempts to apply psychologized thinking in each of these areas, this thesis will suggest, was a conviction that development hinged ultimately on changes to attitudes, norms and behaviours. By highlighting the forces that gave rise to certain types of behaviour, proponents argued, psychological frames of thinking would help to usher in those adjustments, thereby fast-tracking development from the 'bottom-up'. A psychological approach made sense, then, because development, like all processes of social change, hinged ultimately on questions concerning both the individual and the collective mind.

In most existing accounts, the efforts of post-independence leaders to 'develop' India have been characterized in certain ways. Driven by desires for rapid economic and social progress, we are told, the Nehruvian state threw its weight behind grand feats of technical engineering, from hydroelectric dams to steel cities, together with prescriptive models of scientific economic 'planning', as the mechanisms through which India would make its transition into the modern world.[3] The Nehruvian investiture in grand material paradigms of progress can hardly be denied. The chapters of this thesis, however, speak of a complementary yet different set of ideas. For proponents of psychologized development, I argue, the real key to progress lay in a distinct kind of societal reordering. Psychological science, they argued, with its claims to comprehend complex processes that shaped human nature, promised to deliver development not in the form of steel and concrete but rather through the cultivation of new patterns of thought and behaviour. Recounting the efforts of those who sought to psychologize development thus foregrounds a powerful yet largely neglected strain of thinking within India's post-colonial development discourse, one that framed progress as a process centring on the rearrangement of society itself.

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[3] This is the narrative presented in synoptic histories of India's post-independence decades. See for example Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (London: Penguin, 2003), ch. 2; Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (London: Macmillan, 2011), ch. 10. On material paradigms of development see also Daniel Haines, 'Concrete 'progress': irrigation, development and modernity in mid-twentieth century Sindh', *Modern Asian Studies*, 45:1, 2011, pp. 179-200; Sugata Bose, 'Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development: India's Historical Experience in Comparative Perspective' in Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard (eds.) *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge* (London, 1997), pp. 45-63.

Psychologized development, this thesis argues, was an enterprise shaped profoundly by American social science. Driven by tumultuous shifts within American society during the first half of the twentieth century, not least the mobilization of social scientists by two successive world wars, American social scientists would enter the post-Second World War decades as leading advocates for the application of 'psychological' knowledge to pressing social problems, a process encapsulated in the birth of the new interdisciplinary concept of 'behavioral science'. With expanding American interest in the state of 'underdeveloped' countries during that same period, underpinned by a new Cold War logic, American social scientists would quickly seize opportunities to promote these psychologized forms of thinking beyond US borders. In what follows, I explore how American experts found in India a key site in which to demonstrate the power of these approaches to development. In doing so, I also trace the motivations and influences that led Indians, in various locales, to embrace these forms of expertise.

For Americans, the drive to apply social scientific expertise in India reflected a belief in the key symbolic significance of Indian development in the context of an escalating global Cold War. For Indians, American social science offered knowledge of great utility in the context of plans for rapid societal change. Psychologized thinking promised seemingly simple solutions to the most complex of questions: from the treatment of communal tension, to the engagement of rural communities in uplift programmes, to the foundations of effective entrepreneurship and industrial management. It even explained how new ideas and practices were 'diffused' within a population, and how to make them so. To some Indians at least, American social science offered forms of expertise capable of marshalling a process of rapid societal change. Significantly, it also appeared as a body of knowledge free from attachment to colonial rule.

American social science would come to play a significant role in shaping thinking on development in India. At the same time, India would also come to shape American social science. The experience of psychologizing Indian development would mould individual scientific careers. It would also turn India into a site in which entire fields of social science research would be either made or unmade. In India, moreover, American experts would find no blank canvas on which to project their own ideas. Instead, they would encounter a dynamic intellectual environment, one in which incoming concepts would be moulded and re-worked in accordance with local agendas and ideas. The story of psychologized development is, then, ultimately a story of transnational – albeit asymmetrical – intellectual

exchange. Indians and Americans would take different things from this process. Both, however, would be shaped by it in important ways.

Retelling the story of psychologized development thus does more than just highlight novel forms of development thinking. It also sheds new light on the forms of cross-border connection that have shaped India's recent past. Nuancing well-worn narratives of 'estrangement' between Indian and American actors during the post-1947 decades, the processes traced in this thesis demonstrate how the exigencies of the Cold War produced not just alienation and frustration between Indians and Americans, but also deep processes of borrowing, interaction and exchange.[4] These exchanges were by no means without tensions and misunderstandings of their own. By highlighting extended processes of Indo-US interaction across the period, however, they also give reason to re-think India's experience of, and position within, the global Cold War.

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In tracing the efforts of a broad, transnational collective of actors to psychologize Indian development, this thesis proposes five key themes that permeated all attempts to realize progress through the science of the mind. The first – what I call 'psychologism' – concerns the intellectual assumptions underpinning psychologized development. For those seeking to apply psychological knowledge to contemporary problems, I argue, behavioural factors represented more than just a factor in the development process – they formed the crux of it. Here, psychologizers differed from those who stressed the role of large-scale material, economic or social changes in development. Instead, they framed development as a process that *began* with psychological change. As will be seen, this take on development did more than just reduce the weight attributed to structural (non-psychological) determinants. In some cases, it also turned 'underdevelopment' into a problem centring on personality itself.

The psychologizing approach to development brought with it a second underlying assumption; namely, that human nature worked to a particular set of rules. For psychologizing social scientists, it was precisely the universality of human nature that made their contribution possible. A psychologized approach to tension, for instance, made sense because the psychological roots of inter-group conflict were the same everywhere. It was this

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[4] The trope of 'estrangement' has been a key feature of histories of Indo-US foreign relations during the early Cold War. See for example Dennis Kux *Estranged Democracies: India and the United States, 1941-1991* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993).

emphasis on universality that would underpin the confidence of American social scientists in espousing their own expertise in India. Under its influence, privileged American concepts could be promoted with little concern for the specificities in which they had first emerged. Collapsing distinctions between culture and behaviour, the universalizing view stressed the possibility of changing all behaviour through the manipulation of narrow social psychological variables. It turned behaviorist forms of thought into expertise deeply attuned to India's most pressing needs.

The twin impulses of psychologism and universalism ran through all attempts to psychologize Indian development. It is the third key theme of this thesis, however, that the ends to which social scientists mobilized these ideas were not always the same. On the one hand, social scientists differed both in the area in which they sought to apply psychological knowledge and in their understanding of how psychology really could assist development. In some cases, however, psychologizing social scientists also differed in their basic understanding of what the aims of development actually were. Here, it is worth highlighting one major question over which contemporaries parted ways. For some, it will be seen, the role of psychological expertise centred on its capacity to catalyse a linear process of urban-industrial 'modernization' based on the Western example. For others, meanwhile, social scientific knowledge served as a tool in the pursuit of a small-scale, 'communitarian' vision of development that deliberately eschewed this approach. The tension between these two variants of post-war development thought has drawn increasing attention from historians in recent years, encapsulated, most effectively, in Daniel Immerwahr's work on the communitarian strain.[5] In the chapters that follow, I explore how these competing developmentalisms permeated attempts to psychologize development in the field.

The fourth thematic strand of this thesis concerns the way in which psychologized development became a reality in India. That American behavioural models became entwined with Indian development, I suggest, was rarely, if ever, a product of raw American power. On the contrary, in each of the cases explored below, American psychological expertise found footing in India owing in large part to the actions of Indians themselves. American social scientists, then, served not just as straightforward agents of American largesse but also as respondents to Indian leaders' own desires to make use of their expertise. On one level, of

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[5] Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015). For a review essay on these competing development visions see Peter Mandler, 'Modernization's Doppelgänger', *Modern Intellectual History,* 13:3, 2016, pp. 819-829.

course, both the allure and the availability of American knowledge (backed as it was by US government agencies, foundations and universities) did speak of certain forms of American power. At the same time, the active role of Indians in soliciting American support serves to preclude a simple history of one-way imposition. The collaborative underpinnings of American expertise in this context sit in broad alignment with David Engerman's recent observations concerning the nature of Cold War economic assistance to India. Such assistance, Engerman argues, was made possible only by the desire of Indians to use it in order to 'advance their own interests' and 'fight internal battles'.[6]

The idea that psychological frames of thinking might help to expedite development gave cause for much optimism among contemporaries, both Indian and American. Psychologized social science, after all, drew its authority not from abstract theoretical models but from the careful observation – whether in the laboratory or the field – of actual human behaviour. It is a final theme of this thesis, however, that for those who put their faith in psychologized development, outcomes rarely met expectations. The challenges faced by psychologizing projects were by no means always the same. At times, for instance, such projects failed due to extraneous factors, such as shifts in political agendas. At others, psychologizing approaches found themselves outmuscled by other development expertise. In some cases, attempts to psychologize development would fail for altogether more troubling reasons.

One important subtheme here, unpacked at various points in this thesis, concerns the limits of group-based approaches to social change. Putting faith in local 'leaders' was a common feature of attempts to psychologize development, underpinned by a belief that existing group-leader relations could be used to engineer and accelerate processes of behavioural adjustment. The adoption of this groupist lens stressed the ties that bound people together in serviceable social units, rather than those that drove them apart. As social scientists and others invested their hopes in the transformative capacities of local group leaders, however, many soon found that they did so at a significant cost. The yawning gap between the lofty goals of psychologized development and its ultimate reality contains clear parallels with studies of applied psychological knowledge in other contexts, most notably Erik Linstrum's account of

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[6] David C. Engerman, *The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018). See also David C. Engerman, 'Development Politics and the Cold War', *Diplomatic History,* 41:1, 2017, pp. 1-19.

psychology in the late British empire.[7] It also speaks to a broader body of literature on the tendency of expert-led development regimes to 'fail'.[8]

Five intersecting themes then – psychologism; universalism; competing developmentalisms; collaboration; and failure – form the central leitmotifs of this study. Together, these themes explore not just the intellectual and institutional alignments that made psychologized development possible, but also the eventual fate of psychological expertise. In the chapters that follow, I trace how these five linked themes pervaded attempts to apply psychological knowledge within five key arenas of post-colonial development thought and practice.

In chapter one, I explore the advent of psychologized development in the context of an immediate post-colonial crisis. Centred around the problem of post-partition 'communal' tension, the chapter explores how the resulting pursuit of national 'social integration' led Indian elites to embrace novel forms of psychological expertise geared towards the achievement of peace. Responding to the global peacebuilding imperative of the post-war moment, I argue, leaders within the field of American 'social psychology' had forwarded an understanding of peace (and war) rooted in prevailing psychological theories. Human conflict, these theories suggested, was an eventuality linked inherently to the problem of 'aggression' and its displacement onto others. Situating this approach in its initial US context, the chapter traces its appropriation first by Unesco internationalists and subsequently by Indian intellectuals and government officials. In India, the claim that all conflict had psychological roots would give rise to the enterprise of 'tensions research' – a new, Ministry of Education-sponsored programme of social scientific enquiry concerned with uncovering the psychosocial basis of tensions between agonistic groups. As leaders at the Ministry of Education pushed this approach as a salve for India's internal problems, however, tensions research would soon encounter opposition on numerous fronts.

The second chapter turns to consider the mobilization of psychological knowledge in a new setting: that of rural development. Focusing on 'Community Development' (CD), a flagship rural development programme launched by the Government of India in 1952, the chapter

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[7] Erik Linstrum, *Ruling Minds: Psychology in the British Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).
[8] This broader literature has highlighted the ways in which the failure of development regimes serves to mask a more significant effect; namely, the expansion of state power. See for example, James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Timothy Mitchell, 'Society, Economy and the State Effect', in Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta (eds.), *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 169-186.

explores how CD's emphasis on cultivating patterns of village 'self-help' provided a new opening for social psychological ideas. Launched during a period of major tumult in global geopolitics, the inauguration of CD coincided with new levels of US interest in Indian agricultural development. In the subsequent entanglement between the CD programme and US actors and institutions, American social scientists would find opportunities to forward their own understandings of how CD's goal of rural self-help might be achieved. At the centre of this enterprise, I argue, sat social psychological ideas about the merits of group-based approaches to rural social change. As American experts and Indian officials embraced ideas about group mobilization as the key to rural development, they also settled on a Gandhian-inspired notion of the village as a 'natural' group unit through which such mobilization could occur. As the 1950s wore on, the viability of this groupist understanding of the village would soon be called into question.

The third chapter explores the rise of forms of psychologized development in the field of industrial entrepreneurship, this time linked to social scientific ideas about 'psychological modernization'. Rooted in an ascendant 'modernization theory' within post-war American social science, proponents of psychological modernization framed development as a process involving linear transformations in individual outlook and mentality – on the replacement of 'traditional' by 'modern' psychological norms. Focusing on the ideas of one particular theorist of psychological modernization, the Harvard University psychologist David C. McClelland, the chapter explores how McClelland found in India a site to test his unique argument that psychological adjustment formed a necessary precondition – rather than merely an effect – of economic development. In India, I argue, McClelland's ideas found fertile ground among officials, social scientists and business communities. During the 1960s, these groups would come together to explore the potential of induced psychological change to spark heightened entrepreneurship and economic growth. At the same time, India was also becoming the site in which McClelland's psychological take on modernization would face its most significant opposition.

In chapter four, I turn to trace how the emerging sphere of 'management' (and 'management education') became similarly entwined with psychological forms of knowledge. During the 1950s and 60s, I suggest, in response to the Nehruvian enterprise of planned industrialization, claims about the need for new forms of professionalized 'management' emerged as a matter of broad consensual agreement among Indian industrialists and policymakers. Tracing the emergence of ideas on 'management for development', the chapter focuses on the thought of

one exponent of this argument, the scientist and industrialist Vikram Sarabhai. For Sarabhai, I argue, development called not just for a general 'professionalization' of management tasks, but also for a precise vision of the forms of leadership necessary for effective organizations, at the centre of which sat the concept of 'horizontal control'. Sarabhai's thinking on horizontal control would find parallels in the forms of knowledge espoused by American management science. Focusing on the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, I explore how the horizontalist agenda soon became entwined with American social psychological techniques for 'democratizing' and 'sensitizing' corporate leadership. While Sarabhai and others promoted techniques for cultivating horizontal leadership, however, Nehruvian industrial planning embraced management of a different kind.

My final chapter traces connections between psychological knowledge and Indian population control. Here, I explore how population control, an increasingly central feature of national development planning during the 1960s, embraced social psychological thinking in the form of American communications science. A new interdisciplinary subfield within post-war American social science, 'communication studies' galvanized psychologists, sociologists, political scientists and others in the study of how communication processes shaped human behaviour. During the 1950s, leaders within this field were engaged in the development of a new, 'scientific' understanding of the way in which this process worked, one that gave prime importance to the role of 'interpersonal' factors in effective 'mass communication'. In India, communications knowledge would come to exert a profound influence over the government's approach to population control. Beginning with the establishment of new institutes of 'family planning communications action research', Indian planners would soon come to develop population programmes based squarely on the insights of communications science. As communications theory infiltrated population control, it framed reproduction as a behavioural phenomenon open to alteration through social psychological dynamics of communicative persuasion. By the late 1960s, the pursuit of fertility reduction through strategic communication had also become deeply entwined with more coercive approaches to population control.

This thesis adopts a broad, inclusive definition of what constitutes 'psychological' knowledge. 'Psychology', Nikolas Rose has argued 'is a "generous" discipline', one that routinely 'enters into alliances' with other 'agents of social authority…colonizing their ways of calculating and arguing with psychological vocabularies, reformulating their ways of explaining normality and pathology in psychological terms'. The key to this 'social

penetration of psychology', according to Rose, 'lies in its capacity to lend itself freely to others, who will "borrow" it because of what it offers them in the way of a justification and guide to action'. For Rose, the assimilable character of psychological thinking calls for conceptual, rather than disciplinary, definition of 'psychological expertise'.[9] In a similar vein, this thesis approaches psychological knowledge as more than simply the work that psychologists do. In some cases, the protagonists of this story do fit the description of professional psychologists within university departments. In others, however, the focus is on experts from a different disciplinary domain. At times, I explore how psychologized assumptions seeped into the thinking of other 'agents of social authority', from government officials to corporate leaders.

What follows, then, is emphatically not a disciplinary history of psychology in India, nor a straightforward study of American influence in India. Several of the figures and institutions one would expect to find in such histories appear only fleetingly in the pages to come. Meanwhile, considerable space has been devoted to projects, sites and actors that would appear trivial from a disciplinary or broader international relations perspective. What has determined the inclusion of projects and programmes in this thesis has been a concern with the ideas, interactions and exchanges surrounding the specific process of expert-led intervention that I call psychologized development. It is with this question in mind that the chapters should subsequently be approached.

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The history of psychologized development presented here engages and intersects with the work of historians in number of fields, the first of which might be referred to broadly as the history of development. The era of 'development', historians have shown, began long before the advent of Indian independence, and long before the escalation of the global Cold War. As an idea with its roots in the ideals of progress and 'social evolutionism' produced by the European Enlightenment, 'development' – conceived broadly as state-centred efforts to effect processes of social and economic transformation – gained new meaning during the first half of the twentieth century, driven in part by new understandings of 'the economy' as an abstract domain capable of expert intervention.[10] Colonial territories, as targets of an imperial

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[9] Nikolas Rose, 'Engineering the Human Soul: The Rise of Psychological Expertise', *Science in Context,* 5:2, 1992, pp. 356.
[10] Timothy Mitchell, *Rule by Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

'civilizing mission', were among those most subjected to development discourses.[11] In the Indian case, a rich body of literature has traced the emergence of developmentalist logic and rhetoric within British policies, showing, in the process, how such ideas served to justify and extend colonial rule.[12] Development ideas did more than merely serve as an instrument of colonial power, however; they also became a platform for challenges to colonial rule. With the growth of the nationalist movement from the 1920s, arguments about the 'underdevelopment' of India would become a powerful weapon in the armoury of the nationalist leaders. Promises to 'develop' India, meanwhile, became part of the raison d'être for nationalism itself.[13] Post-colonial concerns with progress were thus at their core a continuation of a longer tradition. Over the colonial to post-colonial watershed, David Ludden has argued, the 'cognitive terrain' of development remained 'remarkably stable'.[14]

The strong continuities between colonial and post-colonial development discourse can hardly be denied. This thesis, however, draws upon literature that has stressed the distinct features of developmentalism in the post-colonial era.[15] In India, independence brought with it new

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[11] On colonial developmentalism see Frederick Cooper, 'Modernizing Bureaucrats, Backward Africans, and the Development Concept', in Fredrick Cooper and Randall Packard (eds.), *International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History of Politics and Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 49-62; Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Joseph Morgan Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and the Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007); Helen Tilly, *Africa as a Living Laboratory: Empire, Development, and the Problem of Scientific Knowledge, 1870-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: from Western Origins to Global Faith* (London: Zed Books, 1997); Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology and the Ideology of Western Dominance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

[12] On colonial developmentalism in India see Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004); Daniel Haines, *Building the Empire, Building the Nation: Development, Legitimacy, and Hydro-Politics in Sind, 1919-1969* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013); David Ludden, 'India's Development Regime', in Nicholas B. Dirks (ed.), *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 247-287; C. A. Bayly, 'Indigenous and Colonial Origins of Comparative Economic Development: The Case of Colonial India and Africa', in C. A. Bayly et al. (eds.), *History, Historians and Development Policy: A Necessary Dialogue* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 39–64; Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert*.

[13] Benjamin Zachariah, *Developing India: An Intellectual and Social History, c. 1930-50* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[14] Ludden 'India's Development Regime', pp. 251-252. For other studies emphasizing continuities between colonial and post-colonial developmentalism see Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books, 1986), ch. 5; Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Haines, *Building the Empire, Building the Nation*. The emphasis on continuities between colonial and post-colonial regimes has been extended to other aspects of statehood. For one example see David C. Potter, *India's Political Administrators, 1919-1983* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986).

[15] Akhil Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India* (London: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 43. For other accounts that stresses elements of change, as well as continuity in post-colonial development discourse, see Bose, 'Instruments and Idioms of Colonial and National Development', pp. 45-63; Sunil S. Amrith, *Decolonizing International Health: India and Southeast Asia, 1930-1965* (Cambridge International and Post-Colonial Studies Series) (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

popular expectations surrounding development, combined, of course, with universal suffrage. Independence also tied the state to the domestic economy (and thereby to its development) in ways that had not been the case under the colonial rule. Just as importantly, the post-colonial pursuit of development also brought a new cast of actors to the fore. As nationalist leaders replaced colonial administrators, new Cold War geopolitical imperatives turned development into the site of new transnational interactions and exchanges. None of this changed the fundamental assumptions underpinning development itself. What it did do was open up new contestations over its meaning and form.[16]

In particular, this thesis draws on what is now a rich body of literature concerning the entanglements between Indian post-colonial developmentalism and American actors, institutions and ideas. Encounters between Americans and Indians on questions of social and economic progress were not unique to the post-1947 period, as the recent work of Harald Fischer-Tiné and others has shown.[17] At the same time, a number of historical accounts have also traced the way in which the immediate post-independence decades, converging as they did with the onset of the 'global Cold War', gave rise to an array of new cross-border connections within this space.[18] As decolonization and Cold War geopolitics conspired to

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[16] On the role of the Cold War in shaping development ideas and practices see Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See also Amy L.S. Staples, *The Birth of Development: How the World Bank, Food and Agriculture Organization and World Health Organization Changed the World* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2006).

[17] For earlier entanglements between Indian development pursuits and American actors see Harald Fischer-Tiné, 'The YMCA and Low-Modernist Rural Development in South Asia, c. 1922-1957', *Past and Present,* 240, 2018, pp. 193-234; Harald Fischer-Tiné, 'Fitness for Modernity? The YMCA and physical-education schemes in late-colonial South Asia (circa 1900–40)', *Modern Asian Studies,* 53:2, 2019, pp. 512-599; Subir Sinha, 'Lineages of the Developmentalist State: Transnationality and Village India, 1900–1965', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, l: 1, 2008, pp. 57-90; Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas,* ch. 3.

[18] David Engerman, *The Price of Aid*; Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*; Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Srinath Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas: A History of the United States in South Asia* (New York: Basic Books, 2019); Akhil Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments*; 'Nicole Sackley, 'The Village as Cold War Site: Experts, Development, and the History of Rural Reconstruction', *Journal of Global History*, 6:3, 2011, pp. 481-504; Nicole Sackley, 'Village Models: Etawah, India, and the Making and Remaking of Development in the Early Cold War', *Diplomatic History*, 37:4, 2013, pp. 749-778; Nicole Sackley, 'Foundation in the Field: The Ford Foundation New Delhi Office and the Construction of Development Knowledge, 1951-1970', in Johm Krige and Helke Rausch (eds.), *American Foundations and the Coproduction of World Order in the Twentieth Century* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), pp. 232-260; Jack Loveridge, 'Between Hunger and Growth: Pursuing Rural Development in Partition's Aftermath, 1947–1957', *Contemporary South Asia*, 25:1, 2017, pp. 56-69; David C. Engerman, 'West Meets East: The Center for International Studies and Indian Economic Development' in David C. Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark H. Haefele and Michael E. Latham (eds.) *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), pp. 199-233; Dennis Merrill, *The Bread and the Ballot: The United States and India's Economic Development, 1947-1963* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008). For an earlier account see George Rosen, *Western Economists and Eastern Societies: Agents of Change in South Asia 1950-1970* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

produce new levels of American interest in the affairs of so-called 'underdeveloped' regions, this has demonstrated, India – a newly-independent nation committed to both democracy and development – soon became a key symbolic site for American developmental ambitions.[19] In retracing the connections produced by this Cold War project, historians have also looked to uncover the reasons why Indians themselves chose to embrace (or to reject) American forms of support.[20] In much of this work, the focus has been on either material, technological or economic forms of assistance. Nicole Sackley has studied approaches to Indian development forwarded by select groups of American social scientists.[21] Thus far, however, there has been no attempt to understand the ways in which psychological expertise became a key theatre of interaction between American and Indian actors during this period.

In exploring the ways in which Indians and Americans successfully promoted psychological knowledge for development, this thesis builds upon the work of those who have studied the twentieth century rise of psychologized expertise. The work of Nikolas Rose, Ellen Herman, Rebecca Lemov and James L. Nolan Jr. is notable in this regard.[22] Such scholarship has offered a convincing portrait of the ways in which psychological frames of thinking have come to exert influence within Western societies, especially the United States. At the same time, there has been no attempt to explore the ways this embrace of psychologized thinking found parallels in other contexts. As this thesis demonstrates, in the midst of contemporary dreams of rapid social and economic progress, Indian post-colonial elites would also turn a

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[19] For a series of essays exploring the relationship between decolonization and the Cold War see Leslie James and Elisabeth Leake (eds.), *Decolonization and the Cold War: Negotiating Independence* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

[20] For an especially good example of this see Engerman, *The Price of Aid*.

[21] Nicole Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity: American Social Scientists, India, and the Pursuit of Development, 1945-1961', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Princeton, 2004.

[22] Nikolas Rose, *The Psychological Complex: Psychology, Politics and Society in England 1869-1939* (London: Routledge, 1985); Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (London: Free Association Books, 1999); and Rose 'Engineering the Human Soul' pp. 351-369; Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Rebecca M. Lemov, *World as Laboratory: Experiments with Mice, Mazes, and Men* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005); James L. Nolan Jr., *The Therapeutic State: Justifying Government at Century's End* (New York: New York University Press, 1998). Many studies have traced the rise of psychological expertise within particular domains of society. See for example: Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); James H. Capshew, *Psychologists on the March: Science, Practice and Professional Identity in America, 1929-1969* (Cambridge, 1999). For examples of psychology in corporate culture see Richard Gillespie, *Manufacturing Knowledge: A History of the Hawthorne Experiments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Jenna Feltey Alden, 'Bottom-Up Management: Participative Philosophy and Humanistic Psychology in American Corporate Culture, 1930-1970', unpublished PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2012; 'Personality, Incorporated: Psychological Capital in American Management, 1960-1995', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2019.

psychological lens on society. By charting the ways in which they did so, my thesis extends the literature on the rise of the 'therapeutic' to new and unexpected locales.

My study of how psychology became wedded to post-colonial development agendas also builds upon existing accounts of the ways in which, both within India and beyond, psychology and other forms of social science have been shaped by prevailing political, cultural and ideological milieus. During the colonial period, historians have shown, 'psychology' served at times as a powerful handmaid to colonial rule. By reifying perceived psychic differences between colonized and colonizing populations, psychological experts – from psychiatrists, to psychoanalysts, to mental testers – both legitimized prevailing ideas about racial hierarchy and helped to undermine subjects' own claims to self-determination.[23] Recent studies have sought to nuance the idea of psychological knowledge as an instrument of colonial power. While some produced knowledge that explicitly vindicated imperial ideologies, Erik Linstrum has argued, others wielded psychology in ways that did more to refute than they did to uphold the basic assumptions underpinning colonial rule.[24] Studies of psychology under colonialism have thus produced a lively debate concerning the relationship between psychological knowledge and colonial power. Meanwhile, the morphing of psychology into a tool of post-colonial development has received far less attention.[25]

This thesis has also benefited from the scholarship of historians in a number of other fields. Histories of Indo-US diplomatic relations, including the work of Robert J. McMahon,

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[23] Sloane Mahone and Meghan Vaughan (eds.), *Psychiatry and Empire* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Megan Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1991); Warwick Anderson, Deborah Jenson and Richard C. Keller (eds.), *Unconscious Dominions: Psychoanalysis, Colonial Trauma, and Global Sovereignties* (London: Duke University Press, 2011); Shruti Kapila, 'Masculinity and Madness: Princely Personhood and the Colonial Sciences of the Mind in Western India, 1870-1940, *Past and Present,* 187, 1, 2005, pp. 121-156; Christine Hartnack, 'British psychoanalysts in colonial India', in M. Ash and W. Woodward (eds.), *Psychology in twentieth century thought and society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 233-252; Christine Hartnack, *Psychoanalysis in Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Ashis Nandy, 'The Savage Freud: The First Non-Western Psychoanalyst in Colonial India' in Nandy, *The Savage Freud and Other Essays on Possible and Retrievable Selves* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 81-144; Sunil Bhatia, 'Orientalism in Euro-American and Indian Psychology: Historical Representations of "Natives" in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts', *History of Psychology,* 5:4, 2002, pp. 376-398; Jock McCulloch, *Colonial Psychiatry and 'The African Mind'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Saul Dubow, *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Graham Richards, *'Race', Racism and Psychology: Towards a Reflexive History* (London: Routledge, 1997).
[24] Linstrum, *Ruling Minds.* Perhaps the most blatant way in which psychology was used to challenge colonialism was through accounts of the destructive psychological consequences of colonialism, the most notable being Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986). For a secondary account of Fanon see McCulloch, *Colonial Psychiatry and 'The African Mind',* ch. 9.
[25] For an exemplary account of how psychological knowledge, and in particular psychiatry, was re-shaped by the colonial to post-colonial transition see Matthew M. Heaton, *Black Skin, White Coats: Nigerian Psychiatrists, Decolonization and the Globalization of Psychiatry* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013).

Andrew J. Rotter, Anita Inder Singh, Paul M. McGarr and Srinath Raghavan have provided invaluable background material on the rise of American Cold War interest in South Asia (as well as the obstacles faced by American actors in the region).[26] Owing to the fact that many of the experts studied in this thesis arrived in India through non-official channels, the expanding literature on the history of American corporate philanthropy (in India and beyond) has also proved instructive.[27] Broader transnational histories of the United States have encouraged me to think about the two-way processes involved in the circulation of American ideas.[28] Intellectual and cultural histories of American psychology and social science have provided essential background on the various forms of knowledge propagated by American social science.[29] Moreover, the thesis has also benefitted from the lively historical debate on the impacts of Cold War politics on American social science.[30] Finally, synoptic accounts of

[26] Robert J. McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Andrew J. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947-1964* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Anita Inder Singh, *The Limits of British Influence: South Asia and the Anglo-American Relationship, 1947-1956* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1993); Paul M. McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, the United States and the Indian Subcontinent, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Dennis Merrill, *The Bread and the Ballot: The United States and India's Economic Development, 1947-1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Kux *Estranged Democracies*; Srinivas Madumbai, *United States Foreign Policy Towards India, 1947-1954* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1980); Shivaji Ganguly, *U.S. Policy Toward South Asia* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1990); William J. Barnds, *India, Pakistan and the Great Powers* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972).
[27] Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); John Krige and Helke Rausch (eds.), *American Foundations and the Coproduction of World Order in the Twentieth Century* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2012); Soma Hewa and Darwin H. Stapleton, *Globalization, Philanthropy, and Civil Society: Toward a New Political Culture in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Springer, 2005); Robert Arnove and Nadine Pinede, 'Revisiting the ''Big Three'' Foundations', *Critical Sociology*, 33:3, 2007, pp. 389-425; Corinna Unger, 'Towards a global equilibrium: American foundations and Indian modernization, 1950s to 1970s', *Journal of Global History*, 6:1, 2011, pp. 121-142; Sackley, 'Foundation in the Field', pp. pp. 232-260.
[28] In particular the various contributions to Andrew Preston and Doug Rossinow (eds.), *Outside In: The Transnational Circuitry of US History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).
[29] For key texts on psychology see Kurt Danziger, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); John M. O'Donnell, *The Origins of Behaviorism: American Psychology, 1870–1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1985); Rebecca Lemov, *World as Laboratory;* Katherine Pandora, *Rebels within the Ranks: Psychologists' Critique of Scientific Authority and Democratic Realities in New Deal America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Herman, *Romance of American Psychology*; Mitchell G. Ash, 'Psychology' in Dorothy Ross and Theodore Porter (eds.), *The Modern Social Science (The Cambridge History of Science, Vol. 7)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 251-274. For social science more broadly see Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Mark C. Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible: The American Debate Over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918-1941* (London: Duke University Press, 1994).
[30] Mark Salovey and Hamilton Cravens (eds.), *Cold War Social Science: Knowledge Production, Liberal Democracy and Human Nature* (London: Palgrave, 2012); Joel Isaac, 'The Human Sciences in Cold War America', *The Historical Journal*, 50:3, 2007, pp. 725-746; Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Peter Mandler, *Return from the Natives: How Margaret Mead Won the Second World War and Lost the Cold War* (London: Yale University Press 2013); Noam Chomsky et al (eds.)., *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Post-war Years* (New York: The New Press, 1997).

India's post-independence history have helped to frame the political, cultural and intellectual milieu of the 1950s and 60s. In doing so, they have provided valuable information on the context within which the enterprise of psychologized development unfolded.[31]

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This thesis is the first to systematically examine the place of psychological expertise within post-war development thought and practice, not just in India but in any context. What follows, however, is more than simply an act of historical gap-filling. Woven into the fabric of this history are questions and debates worth studying for other reasons. To what extent have expert forms of development knowledge actually delivered on their promise? What have been the challenges faced by such forms of intervention? What has caused some forms of expert knowledge to rise, and others to wane? The chapters that follow offer few concrete answers to these questions. What they do provide, however, is a number of illuminating and cautionary tales. In this sense, the story of post-war actors' attempts to psychologize development is a story with stakes above and beyond the enterprise of academic history writing. It is also a story of relevance to our own expert-driven times.

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[31] The most notable examples being Khilnani, *The Idea of India*; Guha, *India After Gandhi*; Bipin Chandra, Mirdula Mukhejee, Aditya Mukherjee, *India Since Independence* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2008).

**Psychologizing tension: the social psychological approach to peace in wartime America and post-partition India**

On 15 August 1947, as Jawaharlal Nehru proclaimed the commencement of India's long-awaited 'tryst with destiny', Mahatma Gandhi, the 'father' of the Indian nation, observed prayer and fasting in a deserted Muslim house in the city of Calcutta, over 900 miles away. In the days leading up to the independence celebrations, Gandhi had taken up residence in the abandoned dwelling, located within the Belliaghat district of the city, in an attempt to end the viscous upsurge of 'communal' violence and bloodshed that had engulfed the city throughout the previous year. Using the house to hold prayer meetings, debates and confessionals with leaders of both the Hindu and Muslim communities, the Mahatma pleaded desperately to members on both sides to prevent a further outbreak of internecine slaughter in the period during the formal transfer of power.[1]

Famously, Gandhi's efforts would pay dividends. For almost three weeks after Independence Day, the city of Calcutta would bear witness not only to a complete suspension of large-scale violence, but also to 'unprecedented' scenes of 'communal fraternisation'.[2] Nevertheless, the juxtaposed positions of Nehru and Gandhi at the moment of independence highlighted a crucial point about the circumstances in which Indian freedom had arrived. Intertwined with high-level debates about the division of the subcontinent into two nations – a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan – independence had arrived amidst a bitter cycle of retributive violence between Hindu and Muslim communities, especially in major centres like Calcutta. The formal partition of the subcontinent on 15 August, which forced millions to move between the new territories, would further escalate this violence, leading to mass communal killings of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs across the four corners of the new nation. As Gandhi's fast at Belliaghat encapsulated, the restoration of harmonious relations between constituent communities represented a matter of urgent importance for India's new leaders at the moment of independence. Indian freedom, it made clear, arrived in the context of an urgent search for peace.

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[1] For first-hand accounts of Gandhi's time in Belliaghat see Manubehn Gandhi, *The Miracle of Calcutta,* trans. Gopalrao Kulkarni (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1959); Horace Alexander, 'A Miracle in Calcutta', *Prospect Magazine*, 137 (2007).

[2] Sumitra Gupta and Mahendra Pratap, 'Mahatma Gandhi: and the Calcutta Satyagraha 1947', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress,* 62 (2001), p. 513.

As a defining feature of post-colonial nationalist discourse, the concern for peace found a natural adjunct in the international arena. With the shockwaves of the Second World War still reverberating, a concern for the establishment of peace represented a defining feature of the broader international political and intellectual milieu with which Indian independence coincided. Reflected in the emergence of a new, reinvigorated internationalism at the United Nations, the urgent pursuit of post-war peace drew upon a prevailing belief that renewed international conflict, in an atomic age, would bring with it an end to the human race. 'If we do not want to die together in war', remarked US President Harry S. Truman in 1945, 'we must learn to live together in peace'.[3]

In this chapter, I explore how the mid-century pursuit of peace, as an animating feature of both Indian post-colonial and broader post-war international discourse, created spaces for the production and exchange of knowledge geared towards its achievement. Though the mid-century moment would give rise to wide-ranging intellectual engagement with the problem of war and human conflict, it was the dynamic field of 'social psychology', I suggest, that emerged at the forefront of attempts to apply knowledge to peace. Blurring the boundary between the academy and public life, social psychology would present itself as the architect of a new scientific understanding of the causes of war, one that turned peacebuilding – in all its variations – from a lofty ideal into a matter fit for expert intervention.

At the heart of this intellectual manoeuvre sat the elusive, yet alluring, concept of 'tension'. According to psychologists, all instances of human conflict – and ultimately of war – could be understood as a product of tension between the groups involved. Far from inevitable, or even rational, such tension represented a contingent social psychological state, produced by the interaction between individuals and the 'pressure' applied by external forces. More specifically, tensions were the result of a complex psychosocial chain in which individual 'aggression', caused by frustration, was displaced onto others in ways that made for 'warlike' behaviours. According to psychologists, the collective group tensions that underpinned war thus had their roots in tensions within the individual mind. By understanding the links between these processes, they suggested, the seeds of a truly lasting peace could finally be sown.

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[3] Harry S. Truman, 'Address to the United Nations in San Francisco, April 25, 1945', *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Harry S. Truman, Volume I: 1945* (Washington, D.C: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 23.

The social psychological approach to peace was forged in the context of mid-century American social science. But it soon found itself transported beyond these intellectual moorings. From its position at the forefront of post-war internationalism, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) quickly embraced the psychological approach as the basis for its first flagship programme – the project on 'Tensions Affecting International Understanding'.[4] As a central feature of Unesco's bid to build 'world community', the 'Tensions Project' would set out to both diagnose and treat the social psychological underpinnings of tensions pervading the international arena. But the lure of a social psychological approach was also a more global story. As Indian leaders sought to broker peace and integration within the new nation, they too would embrace expert psychological knowledge in pursuit of the task. In 1948, the Indian Ministry of Education would embark on its own Unesco-backed programme to study the psychological roots of tension between social groups.

Tracing this intellectual lineage, the chapter pays particular attention to the role of Gardner Murphy. As a leading figure within mid-century American social psychology, Murphy sat at the forefront of the movement to apply psychological principles to the problem of post-war peace. With the uptake of these ideas at Unesco and in India, the New York psychologist soon found himself transported to the new Republic as a Unesco consultant, recruited by Ministry leaders to coordinate the unfolding national programme of tensions research. Linking these diverse sites and spaces, Murphy's experience would encapsulate not only the utopian hopes of post-war social psychology, but also the challenges involved in propagating American social science across borders at this juncture.

In India, I argue, the enterprise of the tensions research represented an attempt to leverage methods and means designed to build peace in the international arena for the post-colonial national cause. Demonstrating a firm conviction in the potential of expert knowledge to steer national progress, leaders at the Ministry, including Humayun Kabir, embraced the application of 'objective' social scientific methods in the hope of probing the underlying causes of divisions that plagued India's internal body politic. As an attempt to harness the study of international tension for the nation, however, India's tensions project soon ran into criticism that reversed this logic. Critics accused the Unesco/Ministry project of hypocrisy, of broadcasting India's internal problems at the expense of more urgent tensions pervading the

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[4] Throughout this chapter, I have used the acronym Unesco (and not UNESCO), following the practice of the organization at that time.

international arena. What right did Unesco, whose European and American founders had dragged the world into two unprecedented world wars, have to study the problem of tension in India? What right did an American, whose own society remained plagued by internal racial tensions, have to coordinate such studies? During the early 1950s, such critiques would significantly curtail the ambitions of the tensions research, turning what had been a bold agenda of action-oriented study into a more modest programme of academic research. As Unesco's own Tensions Project also began to falter, the psychological approach to tension, rooted as it had been in the post-war, post-partition search for peace, soon found that its moment had come and passed.

## American psychologists and the social psychological basis of war and peace

As atomic bombs descended upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki, signalling an imminent end to the Second World War, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI), the organizational mouthpiece of American social psychology, published its third annual Yearbook. Edited and introduced by Gardner Murphy, a professor at the City College of New York, the Yearbook, entitled *Human Nature and Enduring Peace*, set out to mobilize the insights of contemporary social psychological research for the impending task of post-war peacebuilding. 'Governments, practical administrators, men of affairs', its introduction explained:

…have a right to be told in clear and direct language useful things which psychologists can formulate for their guidance, exactly as a chemist explains to a farmer the effects of crop rotation, or as a geologist explains to a civil engineer the difficulties which will arise in building a highway through the Tennessee Valley. The engineer of national and international affairs should have at his disposal the most definite facts available about the changing pattern of human nature from which war has stemmed, but from which, with proper engineering, peace may be made to spring.[5]

Published at the end of a war in which psychological expertise had found unprecedented real-world applications – from the clinical treatment of soldier mental health to the study of enemy 'national character' – *Human Nature* reflected a profound sense of confidence in the capacity of psychological knowledge to act as a guiding hand to official policy. 'Proud declarations that psychology had been the key to winning the war were commonplace', notes the historian Ellen Herman. And running alongside them came a keen sense of anticipation

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[5] Gardner Murphy, ed., *Human Nature and Enduring Peace: Third Yearbook of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1945), p. 10.

that 'psychology would be at the heart of future efforts to prevent war'.[6] Together with other statements issued by American psychologists at the time, including a 'Psychologists' Peace Manifesto' signed by two thousand psychological professionals, the SPSSI Yearbook formed part of a clear strategy to turn the making of peace, just as the making of war had been, into a question fit for psychological expertise.[7]

Set within this broad context, the SPSSI formed the nucleus for a particular branch of American psychological thought. 'Social psychology', as contemporaries referred to it, was a 'cannibalistic discipline best understood broadly'.[8] Drawing insights from survey research, community studies, culture and personality theory, opinion polling, and political science, social psychology was nevertheless characterized by certain defining traits that distinguished it from other strands of contemporary psychological research.[9] Most notable, in this regard, was its emphasis on the study of human behaviour in its social and cultural context. Rebelling against a dominant 'behaviourist' paradigm of the interwar years, with its desire to reduce psychology to a nomothetic, laboratory-bound, experimental science, *social* psychologists drew inspiration from German Gestalt theory and Boasian cultural anthropology in stressing the need to understand psychological phenomena in the full complexity of their individual instances.[10] While retaining an interest in the normative processes that underwrote all human behaviour, social psychologists thus rejected the use of rigorous experimentation to 'reduce the natural and social worlds to the lowest possible terms'.[11] Instead, they preferred to explore human behaviour as the outcome of the interaction *between* individual psychological

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[6] Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 77.

[7] Originally issued as an SPSSI press release in April 1945, the psychologists' manifesto was reprinted in the pages of the Third Yearbook. See Murphy, ed., *Human Nature,* pp. 454-460. For a quantitative appraisal of psychologists' views on the role psychological expertise in peace planning, see Ross Stagner, 'Opinions of Psychologists on Peace Planning', *Journal of Psychology,* 19:1, 1945, pp. 3-16.

[8] See Perrin Selcer, 'Patterns of Science: Developing Knowledge for a World Community at Unesco', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2011, p. 30.

[9] For historical introductions to social psychology in this period, written by practitioners in the field, see Gordon Allport, 'The Historical Background of Modern Social Psychology', in Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, eds., *The Handbook of Social Psychology* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1968), pp. 1-80 and William H. Sewell, 'Some Reflections on the Golden Age of Social Psychology', *Annual Review of Sociology* 15:1 (1989): 1-16.

[10] For historical accounts of the behaviorist paradigm see Rebecca Lemov, *World as Laboratory: Experiments with Mice, Mazes and Men* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2005); John M. O'Donnell, *The Origins of Behaviorism: American Psychology, 1870–1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1985).

[11] Katherine Pandora, *Rebels within the Ranks: Psychologists' Critique of Scientific Authority and Democratic Realities in New Deal America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 3

processes and lived social environments – to 'reconstruct the relations between phenomena, rather than to isolate single variables'.[12]

Social psychologists' concern for the dynamic relationship between the individual and the social environment – what contemporaries called 'the field' – led them to focus on the role of 'social stimulus situations' in shaping behaviour.[13] Here, the role of interpersonal relationships, group interactions, as well as prevailing social norms, values and institutions took centre-stage. At the same time, refusing to see the individual as a 'passive mechanism merely registering the imprints of the outside stimulus field', social psychologists also probed the role of the individual – as an 'organism with certain needs to be satisfied' – in determining 'receptivity' in relation to a given external stimulus.[14] As a 'founder' of social psychology during the interwar period, Gardner Murphy embodied the ideas and convictions of those working within this field.[15] During the 1920s and 30s, at Columbia University, Murphy published several works that helped to define the parameters of the new subdiscipline, including a major theoretical treatise on *Personality: A Biosocial Approach* and two extensive compendium-style introductions to *Experimental Social Psychology*.[16] At Columbia, Murphy would also nurture a number of doctoral candidates in social psychology, including Theodore Newcomb, Rensis Likert, Muzafer Sherif, and Kenneth B. Clark, all of whom would later become leaders in the field.[17]

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[12] Ibid., p. 106. For the connections between this vision and the psychocultural turn in American social science see Edward J. Gitre, 'The Great Escape: World War II, Neo-Freudianism, and the Origins of U.S. Psychocultural Analysis', *Journal of the History of Behavioural Science*, 47: 1, 2011, pp. 26-36.

[13] On the Lewinian concept of the 'field' within mid-century social psychology see Kurt Lewin, *Field theory in Social Science: Selected Theoretical Papers (edited by Dorothy Cartwright)*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951); James A. Schellenberg, *Masters of Social Psychology: Freud, Mead, Lewin and Skinner* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 68-86.

[14] Muzafer Sherif, *An Outline of Social Psychology* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 1.

[15] For a first-hand account of Murphy's role as a 'founder' of social psychology during the 1920s, recounted by a close colleague, see 'Reminisces of Otto Klineberg: Oral History, 1984', Columbia Center for Oral History, Columbia University, New York, p. 18. For more on Murphy's own understanding of '*social* psychology' and its divergences from the behaviourist paradigm see *There is More Beyond: Selected Papers of Gardner Murphy, edited by Lois Barclay Murphy* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 1989), pp. 7-10.

[16] Gardner Murphy, *Personality: A Biosocial Approach to Origins and Structure* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1947); Gardner Murphy and Lois Barclay Murphy, *Experimental Social Psychology* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931); Gardner Murphy, Lois Barclay Murphy and Theodore W. Newcomb, *Experimental Social Psychology: Revised Edition* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1937).

[17] According to Katherine Pandora, Murphy, together with his wife Lois Barclay Murphy and the Harvard University psychologist, Gordon Allport, was a key figure in the emergence of social psychology during the interwar years, and, as such, a leading 'rebel' against the dominant behaviourist paradigm of the period. Pandora, *Rebels within the Ranks,* p. 96-110.

Established in 1936, in response to the social and economic crises of the Depression era, the SPSSI articulated social psychologists' desire to apply their science to real-world problems.[18] Here, in a further divergence from the behaviorist emphasis on psychology as a removed, 'objectivist' science, Murphy and other founder members stressed the need for psychologists to act purposively to 'get scientific knowledge into the bloodstream of applied social action…building as many bridges as possible between theory and practice in group, community, national, and international living'.[19] The crux of this activist enterprise, as Katherine Pandora has argued, was the study of 'social attitudes'. According to social psychologists, attitudes (like human behaviour more broadly) formed at the intersection between individual organisms and social environments. As such, they were not fixed, interminable features of human nature, but malleable formations, contingent, in part, on the 'stimulus situations' that gave them their character.[20] Uncovering how certain attitudes were shaped by certain conditions offered an opportunity to change them. By highlighting the conditions that gave rise to racism and inter-group antagonism, for example, social psychology sought to highlight ways in which changes to a given social environment might enable the replacement of these attitudes with more cooperative forms of social existence. Between 1936 and 1945, SPSSI publications would apply these general principles to a wide range of contemporary issues, from industrial labour disputes to wartime civilian morale.[21]

In *Human Nature and Enduring Peace,* SPSSI psychologists set out to extend this line of thinking to the problem of war itself.[22] Contesting the 'widely-held belief' that 'war cannot really be eliminated because of the hate and aggression in the heart of man', psychologists offered an interpretation of war as only ever the product of a contingent set of social psychological conditions that made people 'war-ready'. 'Society', explained Murphy:

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[18] On the early history of the SPSSI see Lorenz J. Finison, 'The Psychological Insurgency: 1936-1945', *Journal of Social Issues,* 42:1, 1986, pp. 21-33; Finison, 'The Early History of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues: Psychologists and Labor, *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 1979, pp. 29-37; and B. Harris and I.A.M. Nicholson, 'Experts in the Service of Social Reform: SPSSI, Psychology, and Society, 1936-1996 [Special Issue]', *Journal of Social Issues,* 54:1, 1998, pp. 53–77.

[19] 'The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues: Statement of Purpose', *Journal of Social Issues,* 2, 1, 1946. On the distinction between 'objectivist' and 'purposive' visions of social science in this period see Mark C. Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible: The American Debate over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918-1941* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1994).

[20] Pandora, *Rebels within the Ranks,* pp. 113-118.

[21] For an overview of the Society's early work on these subjects see Finison, 'The Psychological Insurgency', pp. 21-33.

[22] In actual fact, the SPSSI's attempts to apply this sort of thinking to post-war peacebuilding had begun earlier in the 1940s. See Lorenz J. Finison, 'The Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Peace Action, and Theories of Conflict: 1936-1950', *American Psychologist,* 38:11, 1983, pp. 1250-1252.

…is *made* warlike or passive…excitable or placid, in accordance with the tempo of life as geography, the soil, and commerce with other peoples affect it…it is the cultural categories rather than the biological which make men ready or unready to fight, eager or reluctant to respond to the appeal of conquest or aggrandizement.[23]

According to the psychologists, understanding the social psychological basis for war began with the recognition that 'aggression' was not an intrinsic human trait. Distinguishing between 'inborn' tendencies – such as the desire to fulfil hunger, or to breathe – and those shaped by externalities, *Human Nature* placed aggression firmly within the latter category. The individual, explained Murphy, had 'no intrinsic tendency to aggression'. On the contrary, feelings of aggression represented a state produced 'only when *specific outside* pressures' were 'brought to bear'.[24]

Specifically, the Yearbook framed aggression as a product of 'frustration'. 'Frustration', it explained, occurred when an individual or group's capacity to pursue their own wants was 'thwarted' or 'blocked' by external arrangements, resulting in a 'failure to achieve goals'. All instances of aggression, the psychologists argued, were the result of some kind of frustration. War, broadly speaking, was thus causally linked to the experience of frustration within the populations that perpetrated it. 'Satisfied people or satisfied nations are not likely to seek war', explained Murphy. 'Dissatisfied ones constitute a perennial danger.'[25]

Here, in connecting aggression with the experience of frustration, SPSSI psychologists drew on the findings of one particular set of psychological experiments. Undertaken by the Yale University psychologist John Dollard and his associates during the 1930s, the experiment had employed empirical, laboratory-based methods to investigate the hypothesis that aggression was 'always a consequence of frustration'.[26] The aims of the experiment were largely theoretical in persuasion; by demonstrating the production of aggression in a stimulus-response mode, Dollard hoped to reconcile elements of psychoanalytic theory with the then dominant practices of behavorist experimental psychology. At the same time, however, the experiment's finding that aggression and frustration were causally linked appeared as knowledge with wide-ranging practical implications. Frustration, it suggested, was the key to understanding all manner of social problems, from the roots of criminality to the causes of

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[23] Murphy ed., *Human Nature and Enduring Peace,* p. 13.
[24] Ibid., p. 19.
[25] Ibid., p. 21.
[26] John Dollard, Leonard W. Doob, Neal E. Miller and O.H, Mowrer and Robert R. Sears, *Frustration and Aggression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), p. 1.

conflict.[27] The Yale psychologists would also link this hypothesis to a peculiar set of claims regarding the roots of frustration. Failure to conform to prevailing social norms, they argued, was a key cause of frustration. Conformity and adherence, by contrast, were the most effective ways to eradicate aggression within society.[28]

To the general claim that war had its roots in frustration, the SPSSI psychologists added a further set of claims about the conditions that actually led to war. At the heart of this sat the concept of what Murphy would call the 'loaded world-view'. 'Without any contradiction', he argued, 'war may properly be thought of as arising also from *points of view*'.[29] The tendencies to identify with one's own group, to see other groups as different to one's own (ethnocentrism) and to 'stereotype', for example, played an important role in fostering the conditions for war. 'The hope of peace', explained Murphy, was threatened:

… by the fact that instead of thinking of the individual wellsprings of goodwill and understanding which develop when human beings have a chance to know one another face-to-face, we think of abstract, generalized stereotypes.[30]

According to psychologists, the loaded world-view enabled the irrational displacement of frustration and aggression onto others. The individual facing frustration had no inherent need to vent their aggression towards other groups. Prevailing social norms, however, such as ethnocentrism and stereotyping, made the process of animistic scapegoating infinitely more likely to occur.[31] There was also a symbiotic dimension at work in all of this. On the one hand, the inability to understand others allowed for the displacement of frustrations on them. At the same time, the existence of frustration also worked to reinforce loaded world-views. Prejudice allowed for the channelling of frustration; but frustration perpetuated prejudice too.

Here again, the understanding forwarded by *Human Nature* drew on prevailing ideas within American social science. Driven by rising concerns about the effects of 'inter-group conflict' for wartime national morale, the study of 'prejudice' had become a staple feature of American social psychological research by the 1940s. In the process, notes Ellen Herman, a 'broad and explicit consensus' had emerged that prejudice represented a major cause of racial

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[27] See for example Dollard et al., *Frustration and Aggression,* pp. 26, 39-40, 151-153, 160.
[28] Dollard et al., *Frustration And Aggression,* pp. 110-138. See also Lemov, *World as Laboratory,* p. 140. For an interesting take on the connections between the Yale psychologists' conformist argument and their own personal experiences see Corbin Page, 'Preserving Guilt in the "Age of Psychology": The Curious Career of O. Hobart Mowrer', *History of Psychology,* 20:1, 2017, pp. 1-27.
[29] Murphy ed., *Human Nature and Enduring Peace*, p. 39.
[30] Ibid., pp. 43-44.
[31] Ibid., pp. 39-44.

and other antagonisms.[32] This new interest in prejudice was such that it even sparked the development of instruments geared towards measurement. In 1926, for example, the University of Southern California sociologist, Emory S. Bogardus, developed a new empirical tool for measuring prejudice, the 'Social Distance Scale'.[33] Inspired by Robert E. Park's definition of prejudice as 'the more or less instinctive disposition to maintain social distance from other groups', the scale worked by asking participants about their willingness to accept and interact with members of other communities.[34] In highlighting prejudice as a cause of inter-group hostility, American social scientists forwarded numerous hypotheses about the factors that underpinned it. Some stressed 'intrapsychic' factors, including frustration and aggression. Others, meanwhile, stressed sociological factors, most notably, a lack of social contact and communication between groups.[35] This new concern for prejudice was ironic, Franz Samuelson has argued, because it conveniently forgot the earlier role of psychological science in certifying the inferiority of minority groups.[36]

By placing the interaction between frustration and prejudice at the crux of their understanding of war, the SPSSI psychologists rejected the notion that human conflict represented a result of 'real' competition for resources, wealth and power between groups. War, they argued, had far less to do with actual material factors than it did with deeply 'irrational' processes of displacement.[37] The tendency to read conflict through the lens of irrationality would, it will be seen, remain an important feature of the psychologizing approach as it moved across borders. The corollary to this would be a consistent disavowal of the idea that hostile attitudes might constitute a rational stance.

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[32] Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology,* p. 57.
[33] Emory S. Bogardus, 'Social Distance and its Origins', *Journal of Applied Sociology*, 9, 1925, pp. 216-226. See also Bogardus, 'A Social Distance Scale', *Sociology and Social Research*, 17, 1933, pp. 265-271.
[34] For Park's statement see Robert E. Park. 'The Concept of Social Distance As Applied to the Study of Racial Attitudes and Racial Relations', *Journal of Applied Sociology*, 8, 1924, pp. 339-344. For the various biographical and historical contexts underpinning the development of the distance scale see Colin Wark and John F. Galliher, 'Emory Bogardus and the Origins of the Social Distance Scale', *The American Sociologist,* 38:4, 2007, pp. 383-395; Claudia Roesch, 'The Social Distance Scale, Emory S. Bogardus and Californian Interwar Migration Offside the Chicago School', *Journal of Migration History,* 1:2, 2015, pp. 200-214.
[35] This was not a clear distinction. In fact, most psychologists studying prejudice stressed both intrapsychic and sociological factors. The intrapsychic leaning, however, was best articulated by studies of the 'authoritarian personality' and its relationship to anti-Semitism, most closely associated with German psychologist, Theodor Adorno. For useful introductions to this approach see Franz Samuelson, 'Authoritarianism from Berlin to Berkeley: On Social Psychology and History', *Journal of Social Issues,* 42:1, 1986, pp. 191-208. For the most important integrative study on the causes of prejudice in the post-war period see Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1954).
[36] Franz Samuelson, 'From "Race Psychology" to "Studies of Prejudice": Some Observations on the Thematic Reversal in Social Psychology', *Journal of the History of Behavioural Sciences*, 14:3, 1978, pp. 265-278.
[37] Murphy ed., *Human Nature and Enduring Peace,* pp. 28, 71, 152, 205, 219, 315.

By itself, of course, the scapegoating of frustrations onto others was not enough to precipitate war. Such an eventuality hinged, rather, on the complex interplay between 'popular' processes of scapegoating and the actions of national leaders. On the one hand, it required 'loaded' populations ready and willing to view other national groups as the cause of their frustrations. At the same time, it also required a feeling among 'dominant personalities or classes':

> …*that their aspirations were being blocked*, that diplomacy and economic pressure were insufficient to achieve their goals, and that there was a good chance that military methods would succeed better.[38]

Determined leadership could perpetuate the idea that the blame for economic distress lay with 'outside powers' (as well as internal ones) and 'fan the feeling of frustration to a white heat'. More importantly, it was also national leaders who possessed the ultimate means to make war. Leaders could not act in isolation from society. 'Unless the psychological structure of a national group is right for the purpose', explained Murphy, 'the frustration of leaders will not in itself produce war'.[39] By the same token, however, it was only with the emergence of a frustrated national leadership that war would materialize. The crux of war, then, was a process in which both leaders and populations at large accepted the idea that conflict against others held the potential of relief for their own frustrations.

In his introduction to the Yearbook, Murphy applied this psychologized understanding to the processes that had led Nazi Germany to wage war in 1939. Sketching out the widespread frustrations of Germany's industrial, labour and agricultural classes during interwar years, he charted the emergence of the National Socialist Party as an attempt by 'frustrated and restless' leaders, driven by 'nationalistic revenge fantasies' to blame these woes on 'internal minorities' and 'outside powers'. As the party grew in strength through economic support, 'shrewd political manoeuvring' and propaganda techniques, gradually acquiring the means with which to make war, it drew on the support of a German population itself willing to blame others for its manifold frustrations. 'Frustrated German masses', explained Murphy, 'were easily led to blame, or to attack, helpless minorities'. 'It was only because this nexus of economic, political and psychological conditions obtained in Germany that a National Socialist Party was possible'.[40] Murphy's reading of Nazism (and thereby of war) as the product of a 'system of psychological relationships' formed part of a broader post-war trend

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[38] Ibid., p. 22. Emphasis in original.
[39] Ibid., p. 27.
[40] Ibid., p. 29.

in which liberal Western intellectuals sought explanations of fascism through psychological frames of reference and the analysis of the 'Nazi mind'.[41]



*Psychology for peace*

**Figure 1. Gardner Murphy**

(Source: WNYC Archive Collections)

The social psychological understanding of war brought with it two major insights concerning the basis for peace. The first was that war could ultimately be prevented by a greater commitment to the removal of the sources of frustration within society. 'If man can live in a society which does not block or thwart him', explained Murphy:

...he does not tend to be aggressive…If a society of men can live in a world order in which the members of the society are not blocked or thwarted by the world arrangement as a whole, they have no intrinsic tendency to be aggressive.[42]

An effective strategy for peace, by extension, required:

…the release of the individual from the frustrations of his daily life in such a fashion as to reduce the types of tension and aggression which are likely to lead, through one channel or another, to organized group conflict.[43]

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[41] For an historical study of these efforts see Daniel Pick, *The Pursuit of the Nazi Mind: Hitler, Hess and the Analysts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[42] Murphy ed., *Human Nature and Enduring Peace,* p. 20.

[43] Ibid., p. 28.

The second observation concerned the 'moulding of human attitudes'. While the reduction of frustration promised to tackle the root cause of war, post-war peace also called for a 'vast re-educational project' aimed at combatting prejudice and the loaded world-view. Such a project, noted Murphy, would comprise 'not only a bettering of our understanding of our fellows, but a redirection of our attitudes toward them'. For world peace to be achieved, he argued, 'world-wide educational steps toward intercultural understanding' were 'imperative'.[44]

### Unesco and the psychological study of international 'tension'

Psychologists' claims regarding the avoidable nature of war ran consonant with efforts to build peace in the post-war international arena. But the new internationalist architectures of the late 1940s would also create new spaces in which the social psychological approach to peace would find concrete expression. At Unesco, an organization at the forefront of these efforts, ideas about the psychological underpinnings of war would soon become the basis of new initiatives geared towards fostering international peace. Under the auspices of its flagship project on 'Tensions Affecting International Understanding', Unesco would embrace social scientific research designed specifically to diagnose (and treat) the social psychological conditions that led to war.

Founded in November 1945, before the framework of the United Nations had itself been clearly defined, Unesco occupied a central place in post-war hopes for international peace and reconstruction.[45] Assigned the elusive task of using education, science and culture to build 'the defences of peace' in the 'minds of men', Unesco's leaders, including its first Director-General, the British biologist and philosopher Julian Huxley, would approach this task as one that centred on the creation of 'world community' – a new post-national, post-racial sense of global consciousness that would provide the foundations for international peace.[46] World community, contemporaries argued, required more than just heightened

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[44] Ibid., p. 50.

[45] For an historical account of the founding of Unesco and its place within the broader United Nations system, and international relations more generally, see William Sewell, *Unesco and World Politics: Engaging in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). For the connections between Unesco and the League of Nations International Commission on Intellectual Cooperation see Jo-Anne Pemberton, 'The Changing Shape of Intellectual Cooperation: From the League of Nations to UNESCO', *Australian Journal of Politics and History,* 58:1, 2012, pp. 34-50. For an official institutional history Michel Conil-Lacoste, *The Story of a Grand Design: Unesco 1956-1993: People, events and achievements* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1993).

[46] The oft-cited phrase 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed' is contained in the preamble to the Unesco constitution. For Huxley's vision for Unesco and 'world community' see Julian Huxley, *UNESCO: Its Purpose and Its Philosophy* (Paris: Preparatory Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1946), p. 44.

political and economic integration; it required a radical reorientation of popular attitudes towards this new cosmopolitan end. As Glenda Sluga has argued, this was an ambition that wedded new hopes with old, reflecting not only the bold ambitions of the post-war moment but also the legacy of late nineteenth-century conceptions of evolution and empire.[47] Like the United Nations system more generally, world community was a vessel into which a diverse range of hopes, including those of a revived liberal imperialism, were generously poured.[48]

Forged under the rubric of world community, the 'Tensions Project' had its origins in a resolution presented to the 1947 Unesco General Conference by Louise Wright, a member of the American delegation and Director of the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. Drawing inspiration from a symposium on 'World Community' held at the University of Chicago earlier that year, attended by leading figures from across the American social sciences, the resolution implored Unesco to conduct enquiries into matters including:

1) the distinctive character of the various national cultures, ideals and legal systems; 2) the ideas which people of one nation entertain of their own and of other nations; 3) modern methods developed in education, political science, philosophy and psychology for changing mental attitudes and for the social and political circumstances that favour the employment of particular techniques; 4) the influences which make for international understanding or for aggressive nationalism.[49]

The proposed research agenda contained clear parallels to SPSSI psychologists' ideas about the basis of war in aggression and prejudiced worldviews. Its adoption by Unesco, thereby marking the birth of the Tensions Project, would turn these ideas into a central feature of the organization's own thinking on post-war peace. Encapsulating this process, two psychologists

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For an interesting account of Huxley's appointment as Unesco Director-General, and its relationship to British elite debates on the relationship between 'art' and 'science', see John Toye and Richard Toye, 'One World, Two Culture? Alfred Zimmern, Julian Huxley and the Ideological Origins of UNESCO', *History,* 95:319, 2010, pp. 308-331.

[47] Glenda Sluga, 'UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley', *Journal of World History,* 21:3, 2010, pp. 398-399.

[48] On the importance of liberal imperialist ideas in the foundation of the United Nations see in particular Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Foundations of the United Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012). For a review of this and other historiographical perspectives on the history of the UN see Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga, 'New Histories of the United Nations', *Journal of World History,* 19:3, 2008, pp. 251-274.

[49] The role of Wright's resolution in instigating the Tensions Project is recounted in Selcer, 'Patterns of Science', pp. 87-88. For more on the role of American social scientists in shaping the contours of the Tensions Project, see Theresa Thomas Rangil, 'The Politics of Neutrality: Unesco's Social Science Department, 1946-1956', *CHOPE Working Paper No. 2011-08*, 2011, pp. 15-21;

with deep connections to the SPSSI, Hadley Cantril and Otto Klineberg, would serve as the first two directors of the Unesco Project.[50]

As its title suggested, the Unesco Project introduced a new concept into the vocabulary surrounding the social psychological understanding of war – that of 'tension'. Alongside 'frustration', 'aggression', 'prejudice' and other such terms, it was references to the '*tensions* that cause wars' that littered Unesco press releases and memoranda during the late 1940s. Here, it is important to recognize, the term 'tension' served as a polyvalent signifier, capturing the idea that war had its roots both in the strained relations between nations and in the internal states of 'tension' caused by frustration. To speak of 'world tension' meant to speak of both of these things.[51] 'Tension', then, served to underline the perceived connection between the tenor of international relations and individual 'psycho-physical' states.[52] Its adoption as the guiding principle of the Unesco Project reflected its capacity to express cutting-edge social scientific thinking in language that all could understand. At the same time, it also reflected prevailing hopes that peace could be achieved through technical fixes, centred upon an understanding of the human mind.

In practice, the Tensions Project sought to probe these interlinked forms of individual and international 'tension' through novel forms of field research. Launched in 1948, the Project's 'Community Studies' programme was exemplary in this regard. Here, through the holistic study of communities *in situ*, social scientists sought to analyse both 'the problem of aggression and its relation to various social and psychological factors' and the 'social patterns [that] lead to tensions between groups'.[53] The aim, as one report put it, was to study the 'actual appearance' of tension 'in the life of peoples'.[54]

Community Studies proceeded as a set of coordinated field researches in four different countries – Australia, France, India and Sweden – with social scientists studying one rural and one urban community in each setting. A methodology for the studies, developed through

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[50] Cantril, a Princeton University psychology professor, served as President of the SPSSI from 1947 to 1948 Klineberg, a Columbia University social psychologist, had also served as SPSSI President from 1942 to 1943.
[51] 'We are interested', stated Otto Klineberg capaciously, 'in tensions as states of strain, leading to action, frequently of an aggressive or hostile character'. Otto Klineberg, 'The Unesco Project on International Tensions: A Challenge to the Sciences of Man', 30 May 1949, UNESCO/SS/TAUI/15, Unesco Archives (hereafter UA), p. 2.
[52] For more on this dual understanding of 'tension' see Robert C. Angell, 'Unesco and Social Science Research', *American Sociological Review*, 15:2, 1950, pp. 282-287; and Robert C. Angell, 'Sociology and the World Crisis', *American Sociological Review,* 16:6, 1951, pp. 749-757.
[53] Otto Klineberg, 'The Unesco Project on International Tensions', p. 3
[54] 'Statement Concerning the Unesco Tensions Project (1949-1953)', WS/083.71, UA, p. 3.

a series of Paris-based conferences comprising experts from psychology, psychiatry, sociology and other social sciences, recommended an eclectic mix of sociological and psychological instruments – including interviews, life histories, survey questionnaires, social distance scales, and projective tests – for use by the study teams.[55] The aim was to use these techniques to construct two pictures – one a sociology of the life of the community as a whole; the other of a series of psychological portraits of individuals within it. By illuminating the 'goodness of fit' between the former and the latter, the studies would highlight those areas in which an absence of fit gave rise to frustration and aggression.[56] From this point, the aim was to pinpoint the conditions that allowed this aggression to be steered 'towards foreigners'.[57]

While Community Studies undertook to build a holistic understanding of how international tensions were made, other aspects of the Tensions Project focused more explicitly on the prejudices that allowed aggression to be steered towards other national groups. Here, it was the study of mutual stereotyping that loomed largest. 'Stereotypes', explained Otto Klineberg:

…usually take the form of generalizations concerning the members of a particular national group. They are regarded as applying rather widely; they take the form of opinions or judgments concerning the character of *the* Germans, *the* French, *the* Russians, *the* Americans, etc. Unlike certain other generalizations, however, stereotypes are based not on an inductive collection of data, but on hearsay, rumour, anecdotes—in short, on evidence which is insufficient to justify the generalization. They are not grounded on objective facts, and as a consequence they represent a sort of "autistic thinking" which is relatively unresponsive to external reality.…It is not only possible, but even highly probably that unfavourable stereotypes concerning a particular nation constitute a fertile soil in which hostility may be more easily developed, although the specific outbreaks may be precipitated by other factors. Hostility can obviously be generated more easily between two nations which hold unfavourable stereotypes regarding each other.[58]

Between 1947 and 1951, Unesco commissioned studies of national stereotyping covering twelve countries. Conducted using the latest opinion polling and survey research methods, the studies sought to provide 'snapshots' of the assumptions held by members of each nationality towards other national groups. In all cases, the results highlighted not only a general tendency

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[55] Otto Klineberg, 'The Unesco Project on International Tensions', p. 3.
[56] It might highlight, for example, highlight how a high value attached to education by individuals failed to fit with that society's inability to make such education available to all, thereby leading to frustration. See 'Conference on the Methodology of Social Studies, Royamont, France, 1951', WS/051.62, UA, pp. 5-6.
[57] 'Statement Concerning the Unesco Tensions Project', p. 3.
[58] Otto Klineberg, 'The Scientific Study of National Stereotypes', *International Social Science Bulletin: National Stereotypes and International Understanding,* 3:3, 1951, p. 505.

to ascribe certain characteristics to certain sets of people but also an apparent correlation between negative stereotyping and a lack of first-hand 'contact' with members of other groups.[59]

According to Unesco social scientists, the study and exposition of mutual stereotypes had remedial qualities in its own right. 'When one group is able to see what it thinks of others, and what others think of it', explained one official, 'the absurdities and errors will become apparent'.[60] A second strand of the work on stereotypes, however, focused more concertedly on the development of methods for their eradication. The Tensions Project's 'Way of Life' initiative, for example, focused on the production of a series of monographs providing a 'general description' of different national cultures in fifteen countries. Styled as a popular iteration of the 'national character' studies performed by social scientists during the war, the monographs explained the different traits of national groups while highlighting the 'underlying values and attitudes in which all people meet as human beings'.[61] Designed for use in adult education and teacher training, these 'international textbooks' sought to promote mutual understanding between national groups, thereby undercutting the oversimplified, erroneous stereotypes that allowed international tensions to flourish. Meanwhile, under the research heading, 'Enquiries into modern methods which have been developed in education, political science, philosophy and psychology for changing mental attitudes and into the social and political circumstances which favour the employment of particular techniques', Unesco officials also compiled research findings on the best available methods – from mass communication to inter-group therapy – for combatting stereotypes and promoting international understanding.[62]

**Tension in the nation: psychologizing tension in post-partition India**

In October 1948, a little over one year after independence from British rule, the Indian Ministry of Education issued a memorandum to Indian universities. Accompanied by a letter

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[59] The studies were published in a special edition of Unesco's *International Social Science Bulletin* in 1951. See Ibid. For an example of the argument on first hand contact see H.E.O. James and C. Tenen, 'Attitudes Towards Other Peoples', in Ibid., pp. 560-561.

[60] The quote was from Sripati Chandrashekar, an Indian economist, sociologist and demographer and head of Unesco's Demographic Research Section. Cited in 'Psychiatry to aid of mankind: UNESCO Plan for Peace', *Times of India,* 9 November 1948.

[61] Hadley Cantril. 'The Human Sciences and World Peace: A Report on the Unesco Project 'Tensions Affecting International Understanding', SS/TAIU/1, UA, p. 238,

[62] 'Methods of Attitude Change Conducive to International Understanding', SS/TAIU/4, UA, pp. 1-11.

signed by Humayun Kabir, a Bengali intellectual, educationalist and special adviser to the Minister, Maulana Azad, the memorandum read as follows:

The Government of India feels that an objective, comprehensive and critical enquiry into the conditions and consequences of the various tensions that poison the relations between the different communities and groups in the country would be of the greatest possible value at the present juncture. Such a study, while discovering the causes of tensions, may also suggest methods for overcoming them, so that it may be possible to establish a better social order.[63]

Calling upon all universities to establish 'bodies of experts' consisting of 'specialists in Economics, Political Science, History, Anthropology, Sociology, Philosophy and Psychology', the memorandum explained that enquiries into tension were vital 'in order to promote better understanding between different communities and groups and facilitate the peaceful and orderly evolution of a secular State'.[64]

Drafted following consultation with Unesco officials, the Ministry memorandum drew squarely on the template of the Tensions Project.[65] Among the areas it recommended for investigation were:

(ii) Psychological and sociological survey of the distinctive character, type, customs and manners, traditions and history of different communities and culture groups…(iv) Enquiry into the conception which any one community or cultural group holds of its own members and of other communities or groups…(vii) Use of modern techniques developed in education, political science, philosophy and psychology for the study of processes and forces involved in conflicts between individuals, communities or groups (viii) Enquiries into techniques that have been developed to change mental attitudes of individuals and groups in order to create an understanding of one another's special problems and stimulate sympathy and respect for each other's ideals.[66]

Its circulation by the Ministry – then the official liaison between the Government of India and Unesco – initiated an attempt to borrow methods then being used to treat international tensions to address tensions within India's own body politic.

In fact, Indians were among the most prominent supporters of Unesco's attempts to foster 'world community'. Citing a Gandhian commitment to non-violence, many Indian post-colonial elites entered enthusiastically into Unesco's efforts to foster peace and international

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[63] 'Memorandum', Folder 6: India, 1949-50, Box 1262, Gardner and Lois Murphy Papers (hereafter GLMP), Center for the History of Psychology, University of Akron, p. 1.
[64] Ibid., p. 3.
[65] The Memorandum followed discussions between Otto Klineberg and P.N. Kirpal, Deputy Secretary within the Ministry of Education. See 'Memorandum on Assistance to the Indian Government in Planning a Research Project on Tensions', 14 September 1949, Folder 6: India, 1949-50, Box 1262, GLMP.
[66] 'Memorandum', pp. 3-6.

cooperation during the post-war years.[67] Kabir, a former Oxford University graduate with a dense network of international connections, was exemplary in this regard. During the late 1940s, Kabir would become an active figure on the Unesco scene, participating in both a 1948 symposium on 'Democracy in a World of Tensions', chaired by the American philosopher Richard McKeon, and also as a member of the committee that drafted the first of Unesco's influential *Statements on Race*.[68] As part of this broader participation in post-war peacebuilding, leaders at the Ministry of Education had also engaged proactively with the Tensions Project. Following the announcement of the Project's Community Studies initiative, in 1948, Kabir had quickly approved arrangements for India to serve (alongside Australia, France and Sweden) as a field site for the experimental research. In collaboration with B.S. Guha, an anthropologist and head of the Government of India's new Department of Anthropology, the Ministry arranged for a group of the Department's social scientists to travel to Paris to receive training in the newly devised methods for Community Studies. Returning to India, Guha's group set about applying these methods to explore the making of international tension among rural and urban communities in West Bengal.[69]

Indians, then, sat at the forefront of Unesco's efforts to mobilize social science in the name of international peace. The Ministry's 1948 memorandum, however, pointed to the fact that Indians entered these pursuits as a two-way enterprise. While committed to alleviating the tensions between nations, it demonstrated, Indian leaders were not above turning methods devised to foster world community into tools of post-colonial nation-building as well. The key context for this manoeuvre, as the memorandum would itself make clear, was communal

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[67] For one good example of this see R.P. Masani, 'Growth of the Idea of Human Unity and World Community', S.N. 24, Series: Speeches by Him, R.P. Masani Papers, Nehru Museum and Memorial Library, New Delhi.
[68] For Kabir's contribution to the seminar on democracy, see Humayun Kabir, 'Chapter XI', in Richard McKeon (ed.) *Democracy in a World of Tensions: A Symposium Prepared by Unesco* (Paris: Unesco, 1951), pp. 120-131. On the Unesco *Statements on Race* see Unesco, T*he Race Question in Modern Science: Race and Science* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); Perrin Selcer, 'Beyond the Cephalic Index: Negotiating Politics to Produce UNESCO's Scientific Statements on Race', *Current Anthropology,* 53:5, 2012, pp. 173-184; Marcos Chor Maio and Ricardo Ventura Santos, 'Antiracism and the uses of science in the post-World War II: An analysis of UNESCO's first statements on race (1950 and 1951)', *Virtual Brazilian Anthropology,* 12:2, 105, pp. 1-2; Michelle Brattain, 'Race, Racism, and Antiracism: UNESCO and the Politics of Presenting Science to the Post-war Public', *American Historical Review,* 112:5, 2007, pp. 1386-1413.
[69] In fact, the initial connection between the Unesco Community Studies programme and India came through the initiative of Guha, rather than the Ministry of Education itself. During a visit to Europe, in 1948, Guha had met with the then Head of the Unesco Social Science Department, Otto Klineberg, to discuss the Unesco Tensions Project. During the meeting, Guha and Klineberg discussed the Community Studies initiative and agreed that India would 'provide a very suitable place for undertaking such studies'. Upon return to India, Guha then wrote to the Ministry of Education, which quickly approved the proposal. Otto Klineberg to B.S. Guha, 30 December 1948; B.S. Guha to the Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Education, 17 January 1949; Humayun Kabir to B.S. Guha, 20 January 1949 all in File No. 8/41/49-A2, Records of the Ministry of Education, National Archives of India (hereafter NAI). For a first-hand account of the Community Studies in India see, see Uma Chowdhry to Gardner Murphy, 3 October 1953, Folder: Uma Chowdhry, Box 1083, GLMP.

violence. Building on existing outbursts of fighting between Hindu and Muslim groups in the lead up to independence, the 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent, a process that forced millions to move between the new nations of India and Pakistan, had sparked an unprecedented escalation of violence between India's Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities, leading to the death of over a million people by the time the mass migration drew to a close.[70] Kabir, like many other Indian leaders, would recall the 'total anguish' he had suffered as result of this bloodshed, of feeling 'completely shaken and bewildered' by the realisation that Hindus and Muslims, 'many of them with almost identical backgrounds', could 'become mortal enemies overnight'.[71]

Concerns about the state of relations between India's internal social groups, Srirupa Roy has argued, held an implicit utility for post-colonial leaders. By normalizing ideas about the 'diversity' of the population, they helped to present the state itself as the only 'legitimate institutional authority under whose helpful guidance individuals could enjoy security, groups could enjoy freedoms and recognition, and the nation as a whole could enjoy unity and stability'.[72] In the case of post-partition communal tension, however, such concern also called for urgent action to address these problems. 'The displacement of large groups of men and women and tensions created by it', the Ministry memorandum declared, 'have created special problems which demand immediate study and treatment'. Alongside other internal tensions, including those between caste, linguistic and regional groups, communal tensions in particular called for urgent action in order to preserve 'internal security', 'stability' and conditions conducive to 'prosperity', 'democracy' and 'freedom'.[73]

Against this backdrop of internal communal strife, combined with concerns about other latent social tensions, the Ministry memorandum thus spoke of an attempt to turn the psychological study of tensions inward. But the decision to embark on domestic tensions research spoke of more than just a concern for national (as well as international) peace. In Kabir's words, the initiation of the tensions studies spoke also of a 'new awareness of the value of the study of

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[70] The literature on partition and communal violence is extensive. Some of the important examples include Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017); Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition, 1932-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
[71] Dipankar Datta, *Humayun Kabir: A Political Biography* (New Delhi: Asia Publishing House, 1969), p. 33.
[72] For Roy, the 'normalization of diversity' was a key discourse through which the necessity of the post-colonial state, and by extension the nation, was reinforced. Srirupa Roy, *Beyond Belief: India and the Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism* (London: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 7.
[73] 'Memorandum', p. 1-3.

the social sciences for…dealing with some of the most difficult and intricate social problems of the day'.[74] What led Ministry officials to turn the study of tension inwards, in other words, was not just a concern with alleviating forms of internal social conflict, but a positivist faith – shared with Unesco internationalists – in the power of 'scientific' intervention to deliver social change. In passing the question of tension to 'bodies of experts' armed with 'objective' tools of social enquiry, Kabir and his Ministry colleagues exemplified a broader tendency among Indian post-colonial elites – a tendency to frame 'science' as both the driver of national progress and the elixir for all manner of social ills.[75] This Comtean faith in the amenability of society to scientific intervention, one which we will see repeated throughout this thesis, was accompanied by a belief in the capacity of the state itself, acting on scientific principles, to rise above particularistic interests and act in the name of the social whole.[76] The Ministry memorandum, then, encapsulated a faith in scientism and technocracy that defined the Nehruvian moment. But what could experts really say about peace?

Following a period of inactivity, the Ministry's tensions programme began in earnest on 9 August 1950 with a three-day Planning Conference in New Delhi. Attended by social scientists from across the nation, as well as Ministry officials and members of other government departments, the Conference agreed to organize the enquiries into tension around six independent 'study teams', located within distinct research institutions, each of which would study social tensions within its own local environment. Though agreeing that Hindu-Muslim relations would be of 'central and fundamental' importance, the Conference followed the Ministry memorandum in specifying that the study teams should also conduct studies of other forms of tension, 'including caste, language, economic and regional hostilities'.[77]

Three days earlier, senior Ministry officials including Kabir, P.N Kirpal, and the Ministry Secretary Tara Chand had welcomed Gardner Murphy to India. Travelling with his wife, the eminent child psychologist Lois Barclay Murphy, Murphy arrived with the title of 'Unesco consultant', tasked with providing 'expert' advice to the enquiries into tension undertaken by

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[74] Humayun Kabir, 'Higher Education in India and the Study of the Social Sciences', in Humayun Kabir (ed.), *The Teaching of Social Sciences in India, 1947-67* (New Delhi, Universal Book & Stationery Co., 1968), p. 28.
[75] On Nehruvian elites and science see David Arnold, 'Nehruvian Science and Postcolonial India', *Isis*, 104:2, p. 362; Benjamin Zachariah*, Developing India: An Intellectual and Social History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 235-240.
[76] Sudipta Kaviraj has argued that this sense of viewing society as organism amenable from above would eventually bring with a disjuncture between the 'expert' discourse of the state and society at large. Supidta Kaviraj, 'On State, Society and Discourse in India', *IDS Bulletin,* 21:4, 1990, pp. 10-15.
[77] Gardner Murphy, *In the Minds of Men: The Study of Human Behaviour and Social Tension in India* (New York: Basic Books, 1953), pp. 22-26.

the Ministry.[78] The appointment followed a formal request for technical assistance from the Unesco Tensions Project, submitted by the Ministry in March 1949. Murphy, a leading figure in the movement to apply psychological principles to peace, had been recommended for the job by Otto Klineberg, his former colleague, close friend, and at that time acting Director of the Unesco Social Science Department.[79] As a Unesco consultant, Murphy would chair the proceedings of the New Delhi Planning Conference, supervise the research, and provide each study team with technical guidance on 'modern' methods of social scientific research.

The study teams drew upon existing and emerging sites of psychological and anthropological research. Three of the selected sites – the universities of Lucknow, Patna and Aligarh – had strong traditions in experimental psychological research running back to the 1920s.[80] Here, renowned analysts such as Kali Prasad, H.P. Maiti and Pars Ram would head teams focused on the new, more sociologically-inclined questions of tensions research. A fourth study team, headed by the anthropologist B.S. Guha, comprised social scientists from the Government of India's Department of Anthropology (known also as the Anthropological Survey of India (ASI)), established in 1946 to conduct 'physical, biological and cultural' investigations of tribal groups. ASI, we have seen, had already been participating in Unesco's own 'Community Studies' programme since 1948.[81] The project's final two study teams were located in Bombay and Ahmedabad respectively. At the University of Bombay, a group formed under the direction of the economist C.N. Vakil was tasked with studying the 'three-cornered hostility pattern' between 'Hindu residents, the Hindu refugees, and the Muslims' in the city. In Ahmedabad, a group of researchers at the newly established Ahmedabad Textile

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[78] 'Indian National Commission for Unesco: Project for Research on Social Tensions, 13 November 1951, UNESCO/SS/4, UA, p. 1. For her part, Lois Barclay Murphy had been invited to act as a consultant on a plan for a B.M. Institute of Child Development in Ahmedabad, thereby giving her an opportunity to pursue research on child rearing patterns, education and personality development. For her eventual writings on this subject, see Murphy, *In the Minds of Men,* ch. 4. For a recent historical appraisal of these efforts see Arathi Sriprakash, Peter Sutoris and Kevin Myers, 'The Science of Childhood and the Pedagogy of the State: Post-colonial Development in India', *Journal of Historical Sociology,* 32, 2019, pp. 345-359.

[79] Murphy, *In the Minds of Men,* p. 15. For an account of Klineberg and Murphy's close relationship at Columbia University during the 1930s see 'Reminisces of Otto Klineberg: Oral History, 1984', pp. 1-23.

[80] Durganand Sinha, *Psychology in a Third World Country: The Indian Experience* (New Delhi, 1986), pp. See also H.P. Maiti, 'Special Report on the Teaching of Social Psychology', in Kabir, The Teaching of the Social Sciences, pp. 178-180, pp. 24-28.

[81] The ASI's study of tribal groups was intended to 'ensure not only a fair play and justice in administering them but also for guidance in formulating measures for their adjustment to the changing conditions of the time'. B.S. Guha, 'Progress of Anthropological Research in India', *Anthropos,* 41/44: 4/6, 1946/1949, p. 611. See also 'Department of Anthropology, Government of India', *American Anthropologist*, 50:3, 1948, pp. 576–581. For a fascinating account of the early history of the ASI, approached through a biographical account of its first Deputy Director, Verrier Elwin, see Ramachandra Guha, *Savaging the Civilized: Verrier Elwin, His Tribals and India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. chs 8-10.

Industry's Research Association (ATIRA), led by the social psychologist Kamla Chowdhry would explore tensions pertaining to the industrial environment.[82]

Many of these appointments articulated the clearly shifting potentialities of social science in the post-colonial moment. Take B.S. Guha for example. A physical anthropologist by training, educated at the University of Calcutta and Harvard University, Guha had spent the 1920s and 30s building a reputation as a leading authority on the classification of Indian racial groups. As evidenced by the titles of his major works *The Racial Affinities of the People of India* (1935) and *Racial Elements in the Population* (1944), it had been the colonialist quest to categorize difference – not to the desire to overcome it – that had formed the backdrop for the science through which he made his name.[83] Guha's transmogrification from race scientist into a leader of tensions research spoke of the new integrationist imperatives attached to social science in the post-colonial milieu – a shift that mirrored the transition from interwar 'race psychology' to 'studies of prejudice' within wartime American social science.

### Psychologizing tension: communalism

As already noted, research projects initiated by the six study teams probed wide-ranging forms of 'social tension', from those between 'settled' and 'Adivasi' communities, to linguistic and caste tensions, to tensions between workers and their supervisors. Two categories of tension, however, formed the core of the researchers' enquiries. The first of these was the study of communal tensions, forming part of the investigations conducted by five of the six study teams. Here, Indian social scientists followed squarely the example set by their Unesco counterparts. Far from a consequence of inherent differences between the two groups, they argued, Hindu-Muslim tensions were deeply enmeshed in the pre-existing prejudices, biases and misunderstandings between different social groups, prejudices which allowed for the displacement of frustrations onto each other. Communal antagonisms, the

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[82] Murphy, *In the Minds of Men,* pp. 22-26.
[83] B.S. Guha, *The Racial Affinities of the Peoples of India* (Simla: Census of India, Government of India Press, 1935); B.S. Guha, *Racial Elements in the Population* (Oxford: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1944). Guha's racial classifications had been formulated in direct dialogue with the work of earlier colonial administrators-cum-race scientists, most notably Herbert Hope Risley. On Risley and colonial anthropologies of race in India see Christopher Pinney, 'Colonial Anthropology in the "Laboratory of Mankind"', in C.A. Bayly (ed.), *The Raj: India and the British 1600–1947*, (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1990), pp. 252-63.

Aligarh-based researcher Pars Ram explained, were 'due to one's inability to look at others as they look upon themselves'.[84]

This argument drew on comparisons between areas of 'high' and 'low' communal tension, as defined by recent outbreaks of communal violence. Performing interviews, social surveys and Bogardus-style social distance tests in both contexts, social scientists argued that the results pointed to significant differences. On the one hand, areas of low tension were marked by a considerable degree of social contact and interaction between Hindus and Muslims. In Lucknow, for example, where relations between the city's Hindu and Muslim communities were relatively peaceful, social distance surveys revealed tendencies for 'greater social contacts between Hindus and Muslims', 'common observances of religious festivals', 'common dress', 'common culture' and 'greater understanding and tolerance'.[85] High tension areas, by contrast, such as Bombay and Aligarh, showed the opposite trend. Here, surveys pointed at a pervasive 'provincialism' involving less communication and interaction, and greater feelings of social distance between groups.[86] In such areas, explained Murphy, 'despite much childhood association', the city's Hindus and Muslims eventually 'drew apart', entering 'different ideological and cultural worlds'.[87]

Comparisons of high and low tension areas thus revealed greater tendencies towards segregation and integration respectively. Communal tensions, by extension, appeared to be linked to the prejudices and feelings of social distance that already existed between particular social groups. In his studies of Muslim 'minority group psychology' in the city of Aligarh, the psychologist Pars Ram would adhere firmly to these assumptions. Chronic feelings of religious persecution and discrimination felt by Aligarh's Muslims, he argued, were not so much a reflection of actual experience than they were evidence of the scapegoating of 'common frustrations' made possible by the social gulf between Hindus and Muslims. 'Both Hindus and Muslims are exposed to frustration on the score of inadequate employment and non-availability of needed goods', he explained. In the context of their social isolation from

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[84] Pars Ram, *A UNESCO Study of Social Tensions in Aligarh, 1950-1951* (Aligarh: New Order Book Co., 1955), p. 5.
[85] Murphy, *In the Minds of Men,* pp. 129-165, p. 156.
[86] Ibid.*,* pp. 129-165. The concept of 'provincialism' was stressed by C.N. Vakil in his study of Bombay. See *Unesco Study in Group Tension (Hindu-Muslim) Bombay* (Bombay: School of Economics and Sociology, 1951), p. 15.

Hindus, however, Muslims had 'channelled' this frustration 'into a specific kind of stereotype; Hindus persecuting Muslims'.[88]

Ram would take these arguments further in an analysis of rumour. Drawing on the work of the Harvard University psychologist Gordon Allport, Ram seized upon rumours as 'clues to the problems and perplexities of the rumour-affected sections of the community'.[89] Studying a period from February to March 1951, during which the Muslim community of Aligarh had been engulfed by vicious rumours concerning an imminent attack by the city's Hindus, he made two observations. The first was that the perpetuation of the rumour served an important 'social function' within the Muslim population. Spread by vulnerable sections of the community, the rumour 'made active' those powerful members of the community capable of taking steps to address the threat. In turn, these power-brokers themselves believed the rumour because it reinforced their own value to the community at large. Rumour thus 'conserved the prestige and dependence relations operating in a community'.[90] The second observation, however, concerned the relationship between the spread of rumour and the social dislocation between Muslims and their Hindu counterparts. Rumours about the impending annihilation of the Muslims by Hindus gained credence, Ram argued, due to Muslims' lack of exposure to anything other than internal channels of communication. The Urdu press tended 'to delight in dilating upon grievances'. 'Informal groups' meanwhile, 'usually cut off from the rest of the population', perpetuated 'an atmosphere of defeatism…through exchange of notes about the treatment of the Muslims'.[91] The Hindus of the city, entrenched as they were in their own channels of communication, were 'blind' to the incidents of discrimination that concerned Muslims. 'One kind of communication', according to Ram, was 'completely shut off from one set of people' yet had a 'tremendous emotional significance for the other'.[92] The key point was that a lack of communication between Hindus and Muslim groups was a major factor in the perpetuation of tensions between them.

By framing Hindu-Muslim tension as a product of prejudices rooted in deficient communication, tensions researchers mirrored closely the understanding of war put forward in *Human Nature*. Here, communal conflict was characterized not so much as a function of

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[88] Ram, *A UNESCO Study of Social Tensions,* pp. 28-29.
[89] Cited in Murphy, *In the Minds of Men,* p. 130. For the study from which this took inspiration see Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman, 'An Analysis of Rumour', *The Public Opinion Quarterly,* 10:4, 1947, pp. 501-517.
[90] Cited in Murphy, *In the Minds of Men,* p. 153.
[91] Ibid., p. 139.
[92] Ibid., p. 169.

the 'actual hostilities', 'the competitive relationships', nor the mutual 'damage and threats' posed between groups, but rather as a result of the 'irrational' displacement of internal frustrations onto others aided, in turn, by the prejudices that lack of communication made possible. In stressing the 'irrationality' of communal tensions, Indian social scientists, like American psychologists, sought to downplay the idea that conflict was inevitable. For all its good intentions, there was also something in this reading that verged on disingenuous; namely, a tendency to divorce the problem of tension from actual lived experience. The scale of retributive communal violence witnessed during the 1940s had, after all, been so severe that many Hindus and Muslims had indeed suffered deep tragedy and loss at the hands of members of the other community. In such cases, the reason for antagonism towards the communal 'other' was based firmly in reality. The framing of tensed attitudes as a product of irrational displacement, however, glossed over the role of these personal and community traumas in the process of attitude formation. In doing so, it denied its subject matter the status of a rational response to experienced wrongs.

According to psychologists, the discernible links between communalism, prejudice and social distance suggested at least one major antidote to the problem of communal strife: increased opportunities for communication and understanding between Hindu and Muslim groups. In the context of their investigations, psychologists outlined a number of strategies through which this objective might be pursued. Proposed solutions included a 'broad educational programme based on the replacement of provincialism by a sense of a common destiny shared with all other citizens' and the development of shared communication channels – from newspapers to textbooks – that would provide 'factual material of a sort which will encourage genuine understanding'.[93] At the same time, there was also a need to promote improved interpersonal relations between Hindu and Muslim groups. The most important point in combating communal tension, Murphy explained, was 'personal contact on terms of equal status'.[94]

## Psychologizing tension: refugees

The study of 'refugee tensions' was a second key focus of the tensions research, ultimately becoming part of the work carried out by four of the study teams. This field of study reflected the emergence of a 'refugee problem' as a serious concern for India's provincial and national

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[93] Ibid., p. 246.
[94] Ibid., p. 246.

governments during the early post-independence years. Following the mass influx of Hindus and Sikhs into India between 1947 and 1948, and continued waves of migration in the years that followed, vast numbers of migrants found themselves without access to jobs, accommodation, and basic services. With violent demonstrations and forcible occupations of property an increasingly common occurrence, the plight of refugees had quickly become not only an urgent humanitarian concern but also a source of national insecurity and instability by the time the tensions research got underway.[95]

Against this backdrop, the study of 'refugee tensions' represented, first and foremost, an attempt to understand the psychological condition of refugees. Starting from the assumption that refugees had, almost by definition, experienced 'terrible frustration', the aim of social scientists was to explore the extent to which this experience had given rise to both internal (psychological) and external (social) patterns of tension. Unlike the study of communalism, then, which aimed to explore the social psychological underpinnings of *manifest* social tensions, enquiries into refugee tension sought to pre-emptively trace the direction of tension that would, it was argued, necessarily flow from the experience of frustration.

The most notable example, in this regard, were the studies of refugee tension conducted by the anthropologist B.S. Guha and his colleagues. Seeking a comparative element to his analysis of East Pakistani refugees, Guha had opted to study refugees in two distinct settings. The first was a government-administered refugee colony located 40 miles to the west of Calcutta, in the village of Jirat. The second was a 'self-help' community established in the suburbs of Calcutta. Named Azadgarh, the community was established on land seized by the refugees themselves. Selecting a random sample of 100 individuals within each location, split along caste, gender and age lines, Guha and his colleagues set about examining the social psychological status of the refugees using a battery of sociological and psychological

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[95] For just some examples of the rich and voluminous literature on the experience of refugees during and after partition, see Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1945-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Joya Chatterji, *Bengal Divided*; Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*; Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India*; Vazira Fazila-Yaccoobali Zamindar, *The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia: Refugees, Boundaries, Histories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Ian Talbot, 'The Partition of India: Introduction', *Cultural and Social History,* 6:4: 2009, pp. 403-410; Ian Talbot, 'Punjabi Refugees' Rehabilitation and the Indian State: Discourses, Denials and Dissonance', *Modern Asian Studies,* 45:1, 2011, pp. 109-130; Ramachanda Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (London: Macmillan, 2011), ch. 5.

techniques, from interviews, to attitude scales, to projective tests. The findings, they argued, pointed to different patterns of 'tension' among the refugees of the two settlements.

In the Jirat colony, Guha argued, the frustration experienced by the refugees had given rise to discernible patterns of outward 'social tension', of which 'Muslims', 'local people' and 'the Government' were the prime recipients. Such tensions, he suggested, while in part a response to actual experiences, such as the government's inadequate assistance, were also to be understood as tensions of 'a displaced or transferred type', caused by the 'blocking of the group's retaliatory attitude' towards the 'real offender'; that is, the communities of East Pakistan whose persecuting actions, Guha claimed, had been the principal cause of their frustration.[96] More interesting than Guha's pronouncements on social tension, however, were his observations on the internal psychological state of Jirat's refugees. Drawing on his extensive interview evidence, Guha postulated that the colony's inhabitants had responded to their extensive frustrations not simply with outward aggression, but in many cases with regression to an almost infantile state of dependency:

[A] kind of primitivation [sic] of the behaviour of the subject seemed to be operative. His actions become less mature, more childish; the sensitivity of his discriminations and judgements diminished, his feelings and emotions became more poorly differentiated and controlled like those of a child. In general, his psychological field tended spontaneously in the direction of a lower level of simplification, which is a reversal of the normal trend towards higher level complexity characteristic of the growth and maturation of the individual. Thus we find from the life histories that they were childishly dependent on the Government support. They found nothing to be done by themselves, seemed to have lost all initiative and organised efforts befitting adult persons and in its place expected that everything would be done for them by the Government. As a proof of the diminution of the sensitivity of their discrimination and judgement some subjects when asked to state their idea of rehabilitation or what Government should do for them, replied that they have lost all their power of judgement and thought, and could not answer the question and asked the interviewers to suggest these for them.[97]

By arguing that dislocation had reduced refugees to a state of listless apathy, Guha mirrored the arguments of social scientists studying refugees across the post-war world. In a contemporaneous report on the status of refugees worldwide, submitted to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the French anthropologist Jacques Vernant suggested that 'the refugee has no longer the elasticity which enables a man when fortune has dealt him a

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[96] B.S. Guha, *Studies in Social Tensions Among the Refugees from Eastern Pakistan* (Delhi: Manager of Publications, Department of Anthropology, Government of India, 1959), p. 9-10.
[97] B.S. Guha, *Memoir No. 1, 1954. Studies in Social Tensions Among the Refugees from Eastern Pakistan,* (Calcutta: Department of Anthropology, Government of India, 1959), p. 32.

hard blow to recover his poise and carry on'. Compared to the energetic labour migrant, Vernant argued, the refugee showed a 'typical lack of drive'.[98]

In the case of Jirat, Guha contended that this process of psychological deterioration had played a role in many of the issues then being experienced by the colony, including the failure of most refugees to secure gainful employment. As Joya Chatterji has argued, however, such an analysis wilfully neglected more obvious reasons for the colony's problems, including the lack of employment opportunities, the geographical isolation, the malarial conditions, and the poor quality of the agricultural land.[99] In due course, anthropologists' claims about the 'childlike dependency' of Jirat's refugees would be woven into an official explanation of the colony's failure, sweeping aside the planners' own culpability in the process. Here, Chatterji argues, notwithstanding clear failures like Jirat, the concept of refugee psychological degeneration provided justification for the Government of West Bengal to continue with its flawed policy of 'dispersal', based on the resettlement of refugees in often remote, poorly administered, government-controlled camps.[100]

The study of Azadgarh's refugees revealed a different psychological portrait. A key factor here, according to Guha, was the different circumstances under which the settlement's refugees had left Pakistan. Unlike the inhabitants of Jirat, most of whom had remained in their homeland until fear and insecurity made this untenable, the majority of Azadgarh refugees had left earlier, under more peaceful conditions. Some had left before partition, others shortly after. Virtually all, however, had departed East Bengal before the largescale outbreak of communal violence that took place there in February 1950. Coupled with this, the self-help nature of the Azadgarh settlement had also proved far more successful than Jirat when it came to the provision of livelihoods for its refugees. Established on land seized in the southern suburb of Tollygunje, Azadgarh sat in the vicinity of mills, offices and factories wherein the settlement's population of mostly literate, upper-caste refugees could find work. For Azadgarh's inhabitants, then, both the circumstances of departure and the process of 'settlement' appeared to have involved considerably less 'frustration' than they had for those residing in Jirat.

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[98] Jacques Vernant, *The Refugee in the Post-War World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 17. On 'apathy' as an assumed psychological characteristic of the post-war refugee see Gerard Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: Europe's Displaced Persons in the Post-war Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 155-156.

[99] Joya Chatterji, 'Dispersal' and the Failure of Rehabilitation: Refugee Camp-dwellers and Squatters in West Bengal', *Modern Asian Studies,* 41:5, 2007, p. 1015.

[100] Ibid., p. 1017.

According to the researchers, however, notwithstanding these rather more favourable conditions, Azadgarh refugees were experiencing no less 'tension' than their counterparts. The reason for this lay in the inhabitants' deep anxiety concerning the government's approach towards them. Following police supported efforts to reclaim the land from the settlers, as well as the passing of a 1951 provincial Bill outlining the government's intention to 'evict' squatters from 'unauthorised' property, the refugees had come to harbour the distinct impression, the researchers argued, that their settlement was under threat:

While…they obtained satisfaction of ego-participation and ego-enhancement through the activities connected with the establishment and maintenance of the colony, as against the refugees of Jirat, who have had no part of control in their own affairs and virtually subsisted as an 'outgroup' on charity from the Government, fear of insecurity was immeasurably greater among the Azadgarh settlers, as the very existence of the settlement in which they had sunk their capital and brought to a state of sufficiency, was at stake.[101]

The result, according to Guha, was a pronounced 'tensional attitude' towards 'the Government', combined with reduced (albeit not absent) hostility towards Muslims.[102]

It was a tension, Guha explained, that the researchers experienced first-hand. Early attempts to gain access to Azadgarh's refugees, he reported, were thwarted by the group's suspicion that the researchers were 'agents of the government…who under the guise of scientific workers went there to collect information which might be utilized against them when deemed necessary'.[103] Faced with such opposition, the researchers chose to distance themselves from the state. For example, during meetings with Azadgarh's camp leaders, facilitated by local notables including the Congress politician and renowned 'champion of refugee causes' Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Guha requested that the leaders:

… ponder over the matter that the investigators went there as scientists and men…not as Government officials, for in that case they would be able to establish their camp and to go on with their work with the help of the police but that was not the method of a systematic pursuit of a scientific investigation…and that their obstruction would mean the under estimation of [the] Indian in the eye of the world.[104]

Here, the act of distancing from the government agendas severed as a tool to generate the trust of refugees as study subjects. Notably, such a distancing stood in marked contrast to statements made in other settings, wherein Guha stressed the great utility of social science –

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[101] Guha, *Studies in Social Tensions among the Refugees of East Pakistan,* pp. 11.
[102] Ibid., p. 11.
[103] B.S. Guha, 'A Report on the Present Conditions of Refugees at Azadgarh', Folder: India. No. 2 Murphy UNESCO, Box 1804, GLMP, p. 3.
[104] Ibid., p. 4.

and of tensions research in particular – as a tool in the service of the state's nation-building efforts.[105]

According to the researchers, the Azadgarh refugees' 'persistent state of insecurity about their continued existence' was such that it had largely undermined their otherwise good 'group morale'.[106] While not then demonstrating the same forms of regression seen in Jirat, the 'tension' caused by this uncertainty threatened to bring about a similar process of psychological deterioration in the longer term. Here, the analysis ran consonant with other studies of refugee tensions, such as those in Bombay and Ahmedabad, wherein social scientists had also suggested the possibility of links between prolonged uncertainty, frustration and the eventual 'deterioration of personality'.[107] Notwithstanding this observation, however, Guha's study also offered a clear sense that the Azadgarh self-help settlement offered, on the whole, a superior model of refugee rehabilitation. By allowing refugees to 'participate in the organization and management of the camp', Guha explained, Azadgarh had created opportunities for 'ego-participation and ego-enhancement' not offered by approaches that treated refugees as an 'out-group to be pitied and succoured'. While the government's failure to provide Azadgarh's refugees with security had undermined this effect, an approach that combined these ego-enhancing elements with greater security guarantees would help to both prevent the relapse to 'infantilism' and to reduce the problem of tension against external targets.[108]

Guha's emphasis on the psychological and social merits of refugee 'self-help' found support from his fellow tensions researchers.[109] But it also chimed with a broader set of discourses surrounding refugee resettlement in post-partition India. As several historians have demonstrated, the concept of 'self-rehabilitation' – that is, the ability of refugees to turn themselves into effective national citizens *without* state intervention – had become the core principle of the Government of India's resettlement policy by the early 1950s. This emphasis on self-rehabilitation, Ravinder Kaur has argued, was a 'governmental technology'. On the

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[105] See for example B.S. Guha, 'The Role of Social Sciences in Nation Building', *Sociological Bulletin,* 7:2, 1958, pp. 148-151.
[106] Guha, *Memoir No. 1*, p. 63.
[107] Murphy, *In the Minds of Men,* p. 207.
[108] Guha, *Studies in Social Tensions,* p. xii.
[109] The creation of such opportunities for 'refugee rebuilding', explained Gardner Murphy, represented: 'an act of capital outlay comparable to the sinking of wells…If the economic contribution of the millions of refugees be taken as seriously as the economic contribution of unreclaimed land, India can enormously reduce her problem of social tensions. Murphy, *In the Minds of Men*, p. 217.

one hand, it allowed effective rehabilitation to be claimed as the 'success' of state policies. On the other, it framed rehabilitative failure as an outcome for which 'the state was not responsible'.[110] At the same time, the emphasis on self-rehabilitation also downplayed the factors that determined the ability of a refugee to successfully self-rehabilitate, from financial resources to the strength of one's social and cultural 'capital'. In doing so, it inadvertently rewarded those who could manage on their own while failing to support those 'who really needed state help'.[111]

### Projecting tensions

Alongside other instruments, such as interviews, surveys and social distance scales, projective testing formed a key technique used during the tensions research. A state-of-the-art concept within mid-century American psychology, projective instruments sought to discern features of a subject's psychological profile by assessing that subject's responses to a series of prompts. The key to this enterprise was the indeterminacy of the prompt itself, the effect of which, proponents argued, was to provoke test subjects to 'project' their innermost thoughts, feelings and motivational drives. Projective techniques drew upon psychoanalytic understandings of the mind, specifically their claim that the driving force of human action lay below the threshold of everyday human consciousness only to be revealed through 'free association'. By the 1950s, the projective techniques deployed by American social scientists had grown to include a wide range of instruments, from Rorschach inkblot tests, to 'Draw-a-Man' tests, to tests of visual, auditory and sensory 'apperception'. Projective techniques, the historian Rebecca Lemov has argued, operated on the basis of a curious contradiction. On the one hand, the overriding concern of these methods was to listen to and understand the needs and desires of the people they tested. At the same time, however, projective tests were also structured in a way that avoided 'freely giving voice' to the test subject. The projective instrument 'provided a kind of instamatic psychic X-ray that, by its very workings, allocated *to the expert* the task of discerning the true meaning of what was being said'. In doing so, it denied that right to individuals themselves.[112]

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[110] Ravinder Kaur, 'Distinctive Citizenship: Refugees, Subjects and Post-Colonial State in India's Partition', *Cultural and Social History¸* 6:4, 2009, p. 430.

[111] Ibid., p. 444. For more on the tendency of discourses of self-rehabilitation to ride roughshod over the needs of more vulnerable groups, for example untouchables and women, see Chatterji, *Spoils of Partition,* ch. 3; Uditi Sen, *Citizen Refugee: Forging the Nation after Partition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), ch. 5.

[112] Rebecca Lemov, 'X-Rays of Inner Worlds: The Mid-Twentieth Century American Projective Test Movement', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences,* 47:3, 2011, p. 274.

Two projective instruments featured prominently in India's tensions research, the first of which was the 'sentence completion test'. Here, instead of seeking responses to 'yes-no questions' or asking individuals to indicate their feelings on a five-point scale, psychologists presented interviewees with an opportunity to complete sentences about others in any fashion they liked. The test, explained Murphy, performed a function not served by other methods of research, enabling the scientist to venture:

> …momentarily beneath the surface, getting a spontaneous form of expression, and discovering the relative importance of factors contributing to an attitude, not merely an indication of the intensity of the attitude.[113]

In his study of refugee tensions in the city of Ahmedabad, the psychologist N.L. Dosajh employed sentence completion tests to examine the directionality of the tensions held by refugee communities. Used alongside other instruments like attitude scales, the tests asked refugees to complete a series of sentences designed to uncover the true nature of their feelings towards other groups or entities. Sentences used included: 'the kind of people I like is…'; 'Muslims as a whole are…'; 'The Gujaratis in general are…'; ' 'The other communities in this country are…' and 'The present government is…'.[114]

Another who made use of sentence completion tests was B.S. Guha. In examining the attitudes of Bengal's predominantly Hindu refugee communities, Guha employed sentence completion to probe deeper into the nature of refugee tensions towards Muslims in particular. Five linked sentences formed the basis of this investigation, each of which provided an opportunity to express potential causes for hostility towards Muslims.[115] According to Guha, the completion exercises highlighted three consistent themes underpinning refugee feelings of tension towards the Muslim community: '(1) manners and conduct; (2) cow slaughter (and beef eating); and (3) torture'. References to torture highlighted the role of 'specific horrors which live in the memory' as a potential cause of antagonism between Hindu refugees and Muslims. At the same time, however, the first two suggested the importance of more systemic processes, including social distance and stereotyping, in the making of inter-group tension.[116]

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[113] Murphy, *In the Minds of Men,* p. 186.
[114] Ibid., p. 176.
[115] The five sentences were: 'One thing that puts me against Muslims is…'; 'One thing that makes me distrust Muslims is'; 'Muslims are people who'; 'I dislike Muslims whenever they'; 'I like Muslims whenever they'. Ibid., p. 186.
[116] Ibid., p. 187.

A second projective instrument used by tensions researchers was the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). Developed by the Harvard psychologist Henry A. Murray and his partner Christiana Morgan during the 1930s, the TAT operated, first and foremost, through visual stimulation. Presenting subjects with a series of ambiguous images, testers then used open-ended questioning to encourage the subject to create a 'narrative' based upon the thoughts, feelings and emotions provoked by each image. In designing the TAT, Murray and Morgan's principal interest had been in its capacity to reveal hidden motivational drives.[117] In the context of the tensions research, however, the TAT would, like the sentence completion test, be employed as a technique for probing the real nature of a subject's feelings towards others.

As part of his investigations into communal tensions in the city of Lucknow, the psychologist Kali Prasad deployed a bespoke version of TAT geared towards probing both the existence and nature of feelings of tension between Hindus and Muslims. As with Murray's original TAT, Prasad showed subjects a series of images and asked that respondents 'make up a story about the scene shown in the picture'. Rather than Murray and Morgan's original frames, however, he prepared a new series of images designed specifically to represent 'communal conflict situations'. In 1950, Prasad informed Murphy of his plans to apply this method to '1,200 persons – Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and refugees'. A projective approach, he suggested, would act as 'a check' on the results of more subjective research methods such as questionnaires and interviews.[118]

In employing American projective tests to the study of tension, Indian social scientists tailored these techniques towards a new set of questions. At the same time, they also adapted projective instruments to fit a new cultural environment. The TAT in particular, with its images drawn from American magazines and popular culture, was deemed unsuited to easy cross-cultural application. In using the test on communities in Bengal, for instance, Uma Chowdhry, a psychologist working under B.S. Guha's Calcutta-based study team, observed that the original TAT had caused confusion among participants owing to the fact that 'in certain respects…Indian social situations do not have counterparts in Euro-American society

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[117] On the origins of the TAT see Lemov, 'X-Rays of Inner Worlds', pp. 260-263; Jason Miller, 'Dredging and Projecting the Depths of Personality: The Thematic Apperception Test and the Narratives of the Unconscious, *Science in Context,* 28:1, 2015, pp. 9-30; Wesley G. Morgan, 'Origin and History of the Thematic Apperception Test Images', *Journal of Personality Assessment,* 65:2, 1995, pp. 237-254.

[118] Kali Prasad to Gardner Murphy, 6 September 1950, Folder: India. No.4 Murphy, India – Correspondence, Box 1804, GLMP. N. L. Dosajh, a psychologist studying refugee tensions in the city of Ahmedabad, would develop a similar adaptation of the TAT. See N.L. Dosajh to Gardner Murphy, 11 October 1950, Folder: India. No.4 Murphy, India – Correspondence, Box 1804, GLMP.

as portrayed in the original Murray cards'.[119] The lack of resonance between the images and Indian social and cultural realities, Chowdhry argued, presented a barrier to 'empathy' and 'identification' with the figures featured, the result of which was an absence of subject projection in response to the cards. Noting especially the absence of reference to the 'joint family system' and 'religious phantasy' within Murray's original images, Chowdhry worked to produce a new set of prompts that incorporated these features of 'Indian' cultural life.[120]



*An 'Indian TAT'*

**Figure 2. Slides from Uma Chowdhry's 'Indian' modification of the Thematic Apperception Test**

(Source: Uma Chowdhury, 'An Indian Modification of the Thematic Apperception Test', *Journal of Social Psychology,* 51:2, 1960)

Tensions researchers' attempts to 'Indianize' the TAT ran alongside a broader wave of efforts to adapt Western projective instruments to new cultural environments. In India, Chowdhry's

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[119] Uma Chowdhry, 'An Indian Modification of the Thematic Apperception Test', Folder: Uma Chowdhry, Box 1803, GLMP, p. 4. Later published as Uma Chowdhry, 'An Indian Modification of the Thematic Apperception Test', *The Journal of Social Psychology,* 51:2, 1960, pp. 245-263.
[120] Ibid., pp. 6-8. Chowdhry's would share her 'Indian TAT' with other social scientists working on the tensions research.

work on an 'Indian TAT' intersected with the attempts of other social scientists, working under the auspices of a Columbia University research project, to produce their own culturally-appropriate versions of the test.[121] Such efforts, Lemov has argued, formed part of a concerted contemporary movement to use projective instruments in order to 'amass data-rich psychological portraits of a worldwide sample comprising all types of people known to humanity'.[122] From the 1940s onwards, this 'projective test movement' would spur the creation of extensive 'adaptations and target-specific' versions of projective instruments intended to ensure their widest possible application. Subsequent adaptations would target not just 'national cultures' but also specific cultural subcategories such as children and the elderly.[123] As Erik Linstrum has demonstrated, attempts to adapt projective instruments to different cultures had also formed part of a global wave of psychometric testing during the first half of the twentieth century, one in which projective techniques, including the TAT, had become one of the tools used to conduct 'mental measurement' of populations across the British empire.[124]

Projective techniques, it will be seen, would also feature prominently in other attempts to psychologize development. During the 1960s, for example, the Harvard University psychologist, David C. McClelland, would turn projection, and the TAT in particular, into a key instrument in the service of another set of contemporary problems; namely, those concerning economic development. Here, animated by ascendant discourses on the need to 'modernize' Indian society, psychologists would turn the TAT into a device for measuring (and ultimately producing) the psychological characteristics associated with modernization. Attempts to use the TAT in this way would diverge significantly from the use of projection to

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[121] Led by the anthropologist, Gitel Steed, the Columbia project would seek to study Indian personality formation through the lens of the dominant 'culture and personality' movement with American cultural anthropology. In doing so, it would scrutinize villages across northwestern and north central India using a broad range of 'psychodiagnostic tests'. For more on the Columbia Project see Alexander Lesser, 'Gitel Poznanski Steed', *American Anthropologist*, 81:1, 1979, pp. 88-90. For the group's own efforts to develop a culturally-attuned TAT see Panna Lal Shrimali and G.M. Carstairs, 'Observations on the use of T.A.T in Sujarupa Village', Folder 3, Box 73, Gitel Poznanski Steed Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Regenstein Library, University of Chicago. Steed and her fellow researchers would collaborate with the tensions researchers regarding their own modifications of the TAT. For evidence of this see Gitel Steed to Gardner Murphy, 26 May 1950, Folder 9: India, 1950, Box 1262, GLMP.

[122] Lemov, 'X-rays of Inner Worlds', p. 255. For a more detailed account of this pursuit see Rebecca Lemov, *Database of Dreams: The Lost Quest to Catalog Humanity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015). For a fascinating account of American social scientists' later application of the TAT in the context of the Vietnam war see Joy Rohde, 'The Last Stand of the Psychocultural Warriors: Military Contract Research in Vietnam', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 47:3, 2011, pp. 232-250.

[123] Ibid., p. 262.

[124] Erik Linstrum. *Ruling Minds: Psychology in the British Empire* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), pp. 121, 122, 129, 141, 169.

probe the causes of inter-group tensions. In both cases, however, scientists would suggest that a key route to development lay in the capacity of projective instruments to uncover the patterns of thought and feeling that lay buried within the subconscious mind.

## The fate of India's tensions research

As social scientists collated their findings regarding the social psychological basis of tensions, their arguments chimed neatly with the broader agenda of the Ministry of Education during the post-independence years. By the early 1950s, the notion that communal and other tensions had their roots in inter-group misunderstanding and stereotyping, exacerbated by social and cultural separation, had become a key element of thinking among Ministry leaders. Pronouncing the need for education to address the 'social and psychological conditions that give rise to fear and prejudices', the Ministry would consistently emphasize the need for 'courses and curricula' to be organized 'in such a manner that they focus the attention of the younger generation to subjects dealing with inter-group relations and lead to better understanding among people'.[125] Beyond the Ministry, however, the tensions research would prove more controversial.

Significantly, the principal controversy here proved to be not so much the technical merits of the research, but rather the various sensitivities surrounding national self-image, hypocrisy and the motives of international organizations that it provoked. When addressing the subject of tensions research during a speech to the Indian National Commission to Unesco, in 1951, for example, India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, remarked upon the project's tendency to conflate India's internal tensions with the more serious tensions pervading the international arena. 'UNESCO', he explained:

…has here in India been carrying on investigations into what is called, the problem of tensions. They study tensions, tensions between capital and labour, tensions between this community and that; between this religious group and that; and so many other tensions because our world is full of tensions and, what is worse, each one of us, even as individuals, is full of tensions…I wonder if it would not be a worthy exercise in a study of tensions for UNESCO to study them at Lake Success. Why go far afield in studying them? Why not study them at the headquarters?[126]

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[125] K.L. Shrimali, 'Cultural Contradictions: Inaugural Address to the 36th All India Educational Conference at Trivandrum on 28 December 1961', in K.L. Shrimali, *Education in Changing India* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p. 56. For this theme see also Humayun Kabir, *Education in New India* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956).
[126] Jawaharlal Nehru, 'UNESCO and the Future of Humanity', *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Vol. 16, Part 1 (1 March 1951 – 30 June 1951)* (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1994), p. 134

Similarly, when the tensions programme surfaced during discussions in the Rajya Sabha, parliamentarians asked not just for clarification on the findings of the studies, but also 'whether it is advisable that *a foreigner* should come and sit in judgement on such a question'. 'When America is causing tension all over the world', asked Shri Bhupesh Gupta, a Member of Parliament for the Communist Party of India, 'what is the big idea of our Government getting an American over here?'[127]

According to Gardner Murphy, the tensions research soon became the subject of a palpable sense of suspicion regarding the work of international actors in India. 'There is', he suggested:

> …a very natural feeling after the 200 years of British control that those of white skin may remain in India to dominate Indian institutions, and there is today a fairly widespread feeling that the United Nations, UNESCO, the World Health Organization, and other instrumentalities are to a considerable extent Western agencies which are in India to do something…When now one visualizes the present writer as a designate of UNESCO, sent as an American from the Paris office of that organization to study social tensions in India, nothing can be more natural than the Indians' assumption that they were on the spot, that there was something wrong with them, that their country's institutions were in some way in need of correction, that social tensions were a bad thing which the Western world would like to eradicate, and that there was no real escape from the surgery destined to be carried out.[128]

Other tensions researchers, including the Aligarh psychologist Pars Ram, would also note the pervasive sense of distrust that surrounded the Unesco-assisted project. 'The notion is unfortunately prevailing in many quarters and persists even after the best efforts of Dr. Murphy to dispel it', wrote Ram to Humayun Kabir, that 'the purpose of the research [is]…to get a survey conducted for the [UN] to find out how minorities are treated in India'.[129]

Critiques of the tensions research reflected more than just suspicion towards the motives of international organizations, however. As Murphy again noted, they also reflected a prevailing sense of contradiction in the idea of an American studying social tension beyond America's own borders. During 'public addresses', Murphy recalled, audiences frequently posed the question 'in pointblank form':

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[127] 'Doc 5', in *Selected Works of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad: Vol 9, edited by Ravinder Kumar* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 1992) pp. 10-11.
[128] Murphy, *In the Minds of Men*, pp. 276-277.
[129] Pars Ram to Humayun Kabir, 14th December 1951, File No. F-6-6/52 A-5, Records of the Ministry of Education, NAI.

Why with your social tensions in the United States, your maltreatment of minority groups, and so on, do you come to India to tell us what to do about the problem of our minorities here?[130]

Such responses bore the imprint of a deep sense of awareness regarding racial discrimination in the United States, one that, as several historians have demonstrated, formed a persistent dilemma for American actors operating in India, and Asia more broadly, during the post-war years.[131] In India, in fact, popular resentment towards American racial prejudice was such that dispelling such discourses became a key theme within American cultural diplomacy in the newly-independent nation. In 1951, for example, a meeting of American diplomats working in South Asia suggested that:

…anti-Westernism springing from color and race prejudice should be combatted by maintaining the present volume of counter-propaganda through an information and cultural approach which admits the existence of a color problem in the United States but points out that we are doing something about it.[132]

The meeting's recommendations included an increase in the number of 'negroes' working in American establishments, together with a 'carefully formulated public relations program' in the region.[133] During the 1950s, efforts to combat discourses of American racial chauvinism, both within India and beyond, would grow to incorporate a wide range of tactics, from speaking tours by black civil rights leaders to the promotion of jazz music – and African-American jazz musicians – as a means of highlighting the openness and tolerance of American society.[134] As Nico Slate has argued, however, such efforts typically did less to convince Indian audiences than they did to impress upon American policymakers the need to address racial oppression at home.[135]

Tensions research, then, provoked both sensitivity and suspicion regarding the motivations of international actors studying tension in India. At the same time, however, it also encountered claims that the research served to exaggerate the extent of India's internal tensions. In 1952, a Steering Committee convened to discuss the future of the research programme adopted

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[130] Murphy, *In the Minds of Men*, p. 277.
[131] On the complications posed to Indo-US relations by the American race relations see Nico Slate, *Coloured Cosmopolitanism: The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 160-201; Andrew J. Rotter, *Comrades at Odds: The United States and India, 1947-1964* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), pp. 150-187; Srinath Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas: A History of the United States in South Asia* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), pp. 187-188.
[132] Cited in Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas*, pp. 187-188.
[133] Ibid., p. 188.
[134] On jazz and jazz musicians as a tool of cultural diplomacy on race matters see Penny von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
[135] Slate, *Coloured Cosmopolitanism*, p. 187.

precisely this view. Citing the 'delicate political implications' of the research, in particular its tendency to accentuate the problem of communal tension, the committee called for increased 'care' to be taken to 'place the study of communal tensions in their proper perspective by viewing them in the wider context of attitudes of different classes, communities and political and other groups'. At the same time, it also called for a 'reorientation' in the emphasis of the programme. Moving forward, it suggested, the principal focus of the study teams should be less the state of relations between social groups than 'the impact of policies and measures of Government and other agencies on different groups and communities'.[136]

Together with a Cabinet Directive calling for similar adjustments, the Steering Committee's decision dealt a significant blow to the enterprise of tensions research. By 1952, however, the various concerns raised had also produced a shift in the Ministry of Education's own stance towards the tensions programme. Having initially expressed great hopes for the research, Ministry officials now manoeuvred carefully around it, eager to assuage potential sensitivities it might provoke. When Murphy and his Indian colleagues made plans to publish the research, for instance, the Ministry persistently dragged its heels on the question of an official government publication. Fearing that the material was 'growing cold', Murphy would ultimately be forced to arrange for private publication of the research, calling upon contacts at the New York-based outfit Basic Books. The study, entitled *In the Minds of Men: The Study of Human Behaviour and Social Tensions in India* would eventually be published in 1953. The Ministry's comments on the draft publication, written by Humayun Kabir, encapsulated its now altered position towards the research.

We would…like you to include somewhere in the foreword of the text a reference to the fact that 1950, when you came out to India, was a rather bad year. On account of the exodus from East Pakistan in February to April of the year communal feelings in the country had been greatly accentuated. Also from the very nature of your visit, you had to concentrate on areas like Aligarh and Kalyan, where such feelings were more in evidence than in the vast hinterland where the communities have established a relationship of accommodation with one another.[137]

As the Ministry turned increasingly cold towards the tensions research, it also took measures intended to redress some of the criticisms levelled against that project. At the heart of this was a shift in the nature of its engagement with Unesco. Wary of claims that the tensions research risked stigmatizing India in the eyes of the international community, Ministry

[136] 'Proceedings of the Meeting of the Steering Committee of the Indian National Commission for Co-ordination of the Study of Tensions Research' File No. F-6-6/52 A-5, Records of the Ministry of Education, NAI.
[137] Humayun Kabir to Gardner Murphy, 27 October, 1952, Folder 11: India, 1949-56, Box 1262, GLMP.

officials now began to focus on opportunities that reversed the direction of learning on peace and the alleviation of tensions. The key initiative here was a concerted Ministry campaign to promote the merits of Gandhian principles and philosophies for the prevention of war. In leading a movement of non-violent resistance against British rule, this campaign argued, Gandhi and his followers had provided the world with a set of ideas and practices of great significance when it came to the construction of a peaceful world order. In 1953, in New Delhi, the Ministry hosted a high-profile Unesco Seminar on the 'Contribution of Gandhian Outlook and Techniques to the Solution of Tensions Between and Within Nations'. Featuring an illustrious cast of Indian speakers, including Jawaharlal Nehru and the Minister of Education, Maulana Azad, the Seminar invited leading Unesco internationalists and peacebuilders from around the world to:

…pay special attention to the ideas of Gandhi, who devoted all his life to the perfection of techniques for improving understanding between and within nations and to find out a moral substitute for war.[138]

Held against the backdrop of the widely discredited tensions research, the Seminar encapsulated a significant volte-face in the Ministry's thinking on tension. Now, rather than focusing on what India might draw from internationalist approaches to peace, officials prioritized the question of what India itself might teach the world on this question.

In actual fact, the tensions research did not disappear altogether. Under the new terms of the Steering Committee and Cabinet directives, the Ministry of Education would continue to fund social scientific studies of tension throughout the 1950s, thereby supporting studies at the University of Bombay, the University of Lucknow, the University of Mysore, and the University of Poona, led by many of the same social scientists who had participated in the project's initial phase. As they continued, moreover, these research projects played a formative role in the gradual evolution of 'social psychology' as a discipline taught and researched within Indian universities.[139] Increasingly, however, the subject of tensions research was not so much the analysis of tensions between hostile social groups, but the study, as instructed by government policymakers, of popular responses to government

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[138] Letter to Invitees, File No. F-15-29/51. A5, Records of the Ministry of Education, NAI. For Azad's speech at the Seminar see Maulana Azad, 'Tensions and the Gandhian Outlook', *Speeches of Maulana Azad, 1947-1955* Delhi (Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1956), p. 10-11. For Nehru's contribution see Jawaharlal Nehru, **'The Gandhian Way of Relieving Tensions'**, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Series 2, Vol. 21 (1 January 1953 – 31 March 1953)* (New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund)*,* pp. 9-11.

[139] For the continuation of the tensions research and its impact on social psychological teaching and research in in India see H.P. Maiti, 'Special Report on the Teaching of Social Psychology', p. 188.

policies. At the same time, in the period after 1952, the ambitions attached to tensions research would subside greatly. From a bold programme of action-orientated research, the study programme would soon become little more than an academic pursuit conducted by university researchers independent of the government supervision or interest. 'Though the Social Tensions Project itself went on year after year, and a great deal of work was done', reflected Gardner Murphy in 1967, there was 'never a recapitulation of the behavioural science studies that were launched in 1950'.[140] While the project launched by the Ministry's 1948 memorandum limped on, creating its own legacies in the process, the notion that the psychological study of tension held the key to national peace had soon found that its moment had come and gone.

## Conclusion

As it happened, the fall from grace experienced by India's tensions research was mirrored by the fate of its international progenitor. At Unesco, where the psychological approach to tension had so captured the imagination of post-war internationalists, tensions research would also find itself marginalized, and gradually forgotten, during the course of the 1950s. The crucial factor here was not so much the symbolic sensitivities and that had embroiled the Indian project, but the shifting tenor of international relations. With the escalating geopolitical rivalry of the Cold War, Unesco's ambitious bid for 'world community' soon found itself out of sync with a new set of international priorities focused on combatting communist influence. Increasingly, Unesco programmes would begin to focus less on the development of mechanisms for fostering world unity than on initiatives that, bearing the imprint of global Cold War, placed the imperative of economic and social 'development' at centre-stage.[141] As 'world community' recoiled from centre-stage at Unesco, so too did the study of the tensions that stood in its way.

And yet, despite its restricted lifespan, the enterprise of tensions research had established a pattern of interaction that would be repeated many times over in the decades to come. In the context of the tensions research, Indian leaders had come to view social scientific thinking as a potent means with which to address contemporary problems. In doing so, they had also drawn freely on the ideas from American psychological science. As the global peacebuilding

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[140] Gardner Murphy to Stig Lindholm, 16 October 1967, Folder 14: India – UNESCO, 1950-56, Box 1262, GLMP.

[141] For one telling examples of the ways in which Unesco became increasingly subject to Cold War agendas see Charles Dorn and Kristen Ghodsee, 'The Cold War Politicization of Literacy: Communism, UNESCO and the World Bank', *Diplomatic History,* 36: 2, 2012, pp. 373-398.

imperative that had facilitated this process soon gave way, the years that followed would witness the emergence of new sites and spaces within which contemporaries would look to do the same. These psychologizing enterprises would bear the hallmarks of a new set of imperatives, most notably those attached to the development agenda of the 1950s and 60s. The first of these would be the pursuit of rural 'Community Development'.

# Chapter two

## Between the American neighbourhood and the Indian village: 'Community Development', rural sociology and primary group dynamics

On 2 October 1952, at an inauguration ceremony in the district of Alipur, near Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru launched the programme of rural 'Community Development' (CD). Timed to coincide with the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the ceremony marked the initiation of a new government-backed enterprise of uplift targeted at India's rural population. 'The work that we are starting today not only in Alipur but also in many parts of India', remarked Nehru, 'is of supreme importance'. Beginning with 55 experimental 'Community Projects' covering 27,388 villages, he explained, CD would seek to transform the conditions of India's rural populace through the generation of new patterns of community 'self-help'.[1]

The launch of CD spoke of a quite different set of circumstances to that which had underpinned the enterprise of 'tensions research'. More specifically, it signalled the arrival of a new set of priorities associated with the birth of Nehruvian development 'planning'. In 1951, the Government of India had formally adopted its First Five-Year Plan. Drafted by a Planning Commission comprising senior government policymakers, and chaired by Nehru himself, the Plan brought with it a new concern for policies geared towards the economic, social and political development of the new nation. In doing so, it positioned CD as the principal 'method' through which the state would seek 'to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages'.[2] CD set out with a particular vision of how this process of transformation would occur. Fusing Gandhian constructive work with a Nehruvian modernization agenda, it held that the key to the development of rural areas lay in the active participation of the people themselves. Through a holistic programme, covering agriculture, health, sanitation and education, CD sought 'to build up the community and the individual and to make the latter a builder of his own village centre and of India in the larger sense'.[3] During the 1950s, CD would come to occupy centre-stage in the government's plans for the development rural areas, in the process acquiring its own dedicated government

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[1] Jawaharlal Nehru, 'This Sacred Work', *Jawaharlal Nehru on Community Development* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958), p. 22. For a first-hand account of Nehru's inaugurating speech, written by an unnamed observer, see 'The Journey Begins', *Kurukshetra: A Symposium on Community Development in India (1952-1955),* (New Delhi: Publications Division, for the Community Projects Administration, 1955), pp. 54-55.
[2] *The First Five-Year Plan* (New Delhi: Planning Commission, Government of India. 1952), p. 223.
[3] Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Community Projects' (Speech at Community Projects Conference, New Delhi, 7 May, 1952), in *Jawaharlal Nehru Selected Speeches, Volume 2: 1949-1953* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1957), p. 69.

agency – the Community Projects Administration. By the end of the decade, the programme would extend to encompass almost every village in the nation.

In this chapter, I trace how the bold new enterprise of CD, marking as it did a departure from the post-partition concern with 'tension', created new opportunities for the transference of American social psychological ideas to the Indian scene. Established during a period of tumultuous geopolitical change, the CD programme dovetailed not only with shifting domestic priorities, but also with transformations in the nature of American engagement with the Asian arena. Amidst a growing American concern with 'development' as an antidote to communist insurgency, India's CD programme quickly became more than just a national endeavour; it became a key site of American ambition too. American support for CD came in the form of funds and resources, but it also came in the form of expertise. Funded by US Government, Ford Foundation and UN agency funds, American experts arrived in India keen to demonstrate how their own American models of rural development could help the CD programme to achieve its aims.

Set against this backdrop, the chapter explores the trials and travails of a body of US rural social scientists, reared on the agricultural programmes of the American New Deal, who later became advisers to the Indian CD programme. The social scientists in question – men like Carl C. Taylor, Douglas Ensminger, Oscar Lewis and Milburn L. Wilson – were not psychologists *per se*. Nevertheless, they shared an understanding of rural development shot through by prevailing social psychological ideas. As part of a broader belief in the need for development efforts to be sensitive to local cultural contexts, they espoused the need to *work with* local structures of rural group-leader organization – with rural 'primary group dynamics' – as the key to ensuring popular participation in agricultural development programmes. In the context of the New Deal, social scientists had used these ideas to forward a specific set of arguments about the need to engage (and mobilize) 'natural neighbourhood groups'.

In seeking to apply this same approach to Indian CD, American social scientists would face a new set of questions. What was the 'natural' group unit of Indian rural society? And how could it be used for purposes of the CD programme? In search of an equivalent to the 'neighbourhood' group, I argue, American sociologists would soon encounter a powerful set of discourses on the structure and ontology of the Indian rural society. Reflecting the influence of both colonialist and nationalist strains of thought, this discourse held the Indian countryside to be a land of once autonomous, self-sufficient 'village communities', whose

essential character, though weakened by the colonial experience, remained intact. The discourse on the village community formed a key underpinning of the Indian CD programme. Developing new patterns of rural self-help, according to community developers, was a task of 'restoring' village communities to their former autarkic state.

The idea of the village community had its detractors, including those who stressed the deeply divided features of rural social life. Rural sociologists, however, chose to go with rather than against the consensus. As advocates of rural development based on the mobilization of local groups, they settled on an understanding that the participation of rural people in self-help programmes hinged on working *with* the social psychological fabric of existing 'village communities'. Charting these intersections between the neighbourhood and the village, this chapter argues that social psychological claims about rural group dynamics helped to justify an approach that worked through the influence of local 'village leaders'. As embedded members of the local village group, social scientists argued, such leaders could be relied upon to mobilize their fellow group members for participation in CD. During the 1950s, the practice of working with village leaders would become a core strategy of the CD programme. As it did so, however, experiences on the ground would also begin to highlight the limits and dangers that came attached to such approaches.

### Self-help rural uplift: situating 'Community Development' in post-independence India

The programme launched at Alipur, in 1952, formed part of a broader international flowering of 'community development' programmes during the post-war years. Shaped by diverse influences, including colonial 'fundamental education' campaigns and American agricultural 'extension' techniques, community development offered an alluring, transnational vision for how problems of poverty, 'underdevelopment' and post-war reconstruction might be addressed. Focused on rural areas, community development stressed the need for local communities to come together to address their own problems, through their own initiative, as a means of building self-reliance. Its foundational principle, explained one UN brochure, was the recognition that people 'had in their own hands and tools, and in their own ideas, the means of greatly raising their standard of living'.[4]

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[4] Glen Leet, 'Greece Finds One Key to Development, A United Nations Bulletin Reprint, (United Nations, Department of Public Information, 1951)', File No. 25(10)UN 1/51, Records of the Ministry of External Affairs, National Archives of India (hereafter NAI), p. 2.

Community development, Daniel Immerwahr has argued, was anti-modernizing in its orientation. In prizing the efforts of rural communities to address their own local problems, community development rejected the notion that large-scale societal transformations, such as urban-industrial modernization, represented the only effective route towards social and economic progress.[5] In the brave new world of post-war welfarism and developmentalism, this 'low-modernist', self-help approach to development had soon come to occupy a central place. In 1940s Africa, as British colonial regimes embraced a new 'development-minded colonialism', community development programmes became a key feature of those efforts.[6] In post-war Greece, meanwhile, UN-assisted reconstruction programmes embraced community development as an organizing principle for the regeneration of rural areas.[7] By the mid-1950s, according to Immerwahr, community development had become 'easily the primary rural development strategy at the United Nations'.[8]

While part of this broader contemporary movement, in India, CD drew its inspiration primarily from more local thought and experience. Perhaps the most important influence, in this regard, was the legacy of Mohandas K. Gandhi. As part of a broader vision of decentralized, low-technology, village-based development known as 'villagism', Gandhi had argued that meaningful development called for the 'reconstruction' of Indian villages into self-contained and self-reliant social, political and economic units. In the context of his own constructive programme, he had emphasized the need to work with villagers in order to instil both a desire and a capacity for 'self-sufficiency' across all domains of rural life – from agriculture, to handicrafts, to sanitation and hygiene.[9] For Gandhi, cultivating rural self-reliance across these areas represented a vital step towards a broader goal of individual, as well as national, self-rule. By freeing villagers from inherently violent processes of economic

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[5] Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), pp. 1-15.

[6] On the shift towards development-minded colonialism in Africa, see Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), chs. 2 and 3. For an argument critiquing the sincerity of this new welfarist model of colonial occupation, see Charlotte Lydia Riley, 'Monstrous predatory vampires and beneficent fairy-godmothers: British post-war colonial development in Africa', unpublished PhD dissertation, University College London, 2013. For the place of community development within post-war colonial development policy, see Rosaleen Smith, 'The Roots of Community Development in Colonial Office Policy and Practice in Africa', *Social Policy and Administration*, 38:4, 2004, pp. 418-436; Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), ch. 6.

[7] Leet, 'Greece Finds One Key to Development'; see also 'Community Development in Greece', *Mass Education Bulletin,* 2:2, 1951, pp. 29-31.

[8] Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small*, p. 55.

[9] On Gandhian constructive work as a lineage of the CD programme see Subir Sinha, 'Lineages of the Developmentalist State: Transnationality and Village India, 1900–1965', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1:1, 2008, pp. 61-71.

and administrative 'centralisation' he argued, increased self-reliance would also pave the way for a non-violent economic, social and political order.[10]

With its aim of helping villages to become individual self-help communities, India's CD programme articulated the strong hold of Gandhian villagist philosophy over the post-colonial imagination. At the same time, the Indian CD programme reflected other lineages too. One was the rural uplift work of Gandhi's fellow nationalist figurehead Rabindranath Tagore. From the 1920s onwards, at his Sriniketan institute in rural Bengal, Tagore had overseen a rural reconstruction experiment that fused his own moral and philosophical concerns with an emphasis on educating villagers in habits of 'self-reliance'.[11] Another key influence was the rural experiments of Francis L. Brayne, a British colonial official and the leader of an ambitious programme of self-help-based village development in the district of Gurgaon, near Delhi, between 1920 to 1927.[12] Still another was the 'low-modernist', self-help model of rural reconstruction pioneered by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and in particular its leading agronomist, Duane Spencer Hatch, during the interwar years.[13] Each of these nationalist, colonialist and missionary-led experiments had their own distinct points of emphasis.[14] At the same time, however, each helped to propagate an assumption that it was the development of new patterns of community self-help that formed the key to effective rural development.

If shaped by these various lineages, however, the Indian CD programme owed both its existence and its distinct character to one particular rural uplift experiment: that of the American architect, Albert Mayer. Arriving in India in 1943, Mayer seemed an unlikely figure to become a pioneer in the field of rural development. A town planner with interests in urban planning and communitarian design, Mayer had come to India on a wartime assignment, sent by the US Government to build airstrips in Bengal. Soon, however, he had

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[10] M.K. Gandhi, *The Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Trust, 1941), p. 10-11.
[11] Uma Das Gupta, 'Tagore's Ideas of Social Action and the Srineketan Experiment of Rural Reconstruction, 1922-1941', *University of Toronto Quarterly,* 77:4, 2008, pp. 992-1004; Bipasha Raha, 'Transformation of Agricultural Practices: An Indigenous Experiment in Colonial Bengal', in Deepak Kumar and Bipasha Raha (eds.), *Tilling the Land: Agricultural Knowledge and Practices in Colonial India* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2016), pp. 122-144.
[12] Frank L. Brayne, *Better Villages* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937). For a second-hand account of Brayne's Gurgaon experiment see Clive Dewey, *Anglo-Indian Attitudes: The Mind of the Indian Civil Service* (London and Rio Grande, 1993), pp. 61–101.
[13] Harald Fischer-Tiné, 'The YMCA and Low-Modernist Rural Development in South Asia, c. 1922-1957', *Past and Present,* 240:1, 2018, pp. 193-234.
[14] For a discussion of some of both the differences and similarities between these projects see Sinha, 'Lineages of the Developmentalist State', pp. 61-71.

developed a deep interest in the problems of India's rural areas. Following an invitation to meet Jawaharlal Nehru, in 1945, Mayer soon forged a close relationship with the Prime Minister in waiting, the two engaging in 'intimate talks until far into the night' on the topic of rural development and model villages.[15] Nehru, one contemporary recalled, was in search of a 'symbolic way of showing concern for the needs of the mass of the people in the Indian countryside'.[16] Prepared to let the architect try, in 1946, the Prime Minister in waiting had given Mayer permission to establish his own pilot rural development project in the district of Etawah, in Uttar Pradesh.[17]

Drawing eclectically upon earlier rural experiments, Mayer's project would inherit prevailing assumptions about both the problems facing rural society, and the potential solutions to them. Much like Gandhi, Tagore, Brayne and Hatch, Mayer's principal aim would be to find ways of tackling rural problems by harnessing villagers' energies towards a new pattern of 'self-help'. At Etawah, Mayer would suggest that the key to cultivating this pattern lay in a bottom-up, grassroots approach. Rather than imposing plans for improvement upon villagers, then asking them to partake in them, he argued, development workers needed to work *with* rural people in order to help them understand and address their own 'felt needs'. It was only when people saw it was possible to address their own needs, according to Mayer, that a new 'spirit of change' would be instilled within them.[18]

The grassroots approach also shared much with what had gone before. At Etawah, however, Mayer would add his own slant to it in the form of a new development agent: the village level worker (VLW). A multi-purpose development agent, the VLW had two principal functions. On the one hand, he would act as a skilled elicitor and interpreter of local felt needs. On the other, using knowledge acquired through training in health, sanitation, education and agriculture, he would demonstrate to villagers how they might develop plans to address those needs. VLWs would seek opportunities to introduce villagers to 'new' techniques – from commercial crop rotation methods, to smallpox vaccinations, to DDT spraying. At the same

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[15] Albert Mayer et al., *Pilot Project, India: The Story of Rural Development at Etawah, Uttar Pradesh* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 6.

[16] Alice Thorner cited in F. Tomasson Jannuzi, *India's Persistent Dilemma: The Political Economy of Agrarian Reform* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 90.

[17] For more detailed accounts of Mayer's relationship with Nehru, and the foundations of the Etawah pilot project see: Alice Thorner, 'Nehru, Albert Mayer and Origins of Community Projects', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 16:4, 1981, pp. 117-120; Nicole Sackley, 'Village Models: Etawah, India, and the Making and Remaking of Development in the Early Cold War, *Diplomatic History*, 37:4, 2013, pp. 749-778; Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 77-93; Immerwahr, *Thinking Small,* pp. 71-76.

[18] Sackley, 'Village Models', p. 756.

time, they would also seek opportunities to enmesh these innovations within existing cultural frameworks and value systems, 'disguising new ideas in old practices' in a way that smoothed the process of adoption by the villager.[19]

Etawah offered a model of rural development well-suited to Nehruvian sensibilities. Nehru, though broadly sympathetic to Gandhi's ideas about village reconstruction, maintained a deep scepticism towards Gandhian attempts to orient villages towards subsistence cultivation and handicraft production. Village development, according to Nehru, was an enterprise deeply entwined with a larger vision of industrial modernization, one that called for villages to be turned not into pockets of subsistence, but into productive agricultural units capable of feeding growing urban populations. When it came to agricultural production, he argued, villagers did not need encouragement to use 'outdated methods', with little concern for what they produced; they needed education in modern techniques that would enable them to produce 'twice or thrice as much' as they did currently.[20] In this regard, Etawah's fusion of Gandhian-style rural reconstruction with an emphasis on exposure to new 'scientific' innovations held great appeal. What was compelling about the pilot, Nehru explained to Mayer, was its promise to fit the 'modern technique' to 'Indian resources and Indian conditions', without 'breaking up the old foundations'.[21]

If it struck prevailing intellectual chords, however, Etawah also produced striking results. In the years after the project's inauguration, in 1948, the villagers of Etawah soon set about building everything from roads, to culverts, schools, libraries, sanitary wells and hand pumps using their own materials and labour. Most notable of all, however, were the observed increases in agricultural yield. By 1950, the villages of Etawah witnessed, on average, nearly three-fold increases in agricultural output.[22] Occurring at a time of pressing national food shortage, amplified by the failure of the 1951 monsoon, these increases soon captured the attention of Nehru and the Planning Commission, spurring hopes that an expansion of the Etawah model might produce the more general increases in agricultural production that India desperately needed.[23]

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[19] Ibid., pp. 759-761.

[20] Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Self-sufficiency in food', *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: Vol. 20 (19 October 1952 – 31 December 1952) (*New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1997), p. 86.

[21] Cited in Sackley 'Village Models', p. 754.

[22] As Nehru told one press conference, at Etawah 'the food situation has improved so much that the average of nine mounds per acre has become an average of twenty-three mounds per acre'. Cited in Ibid., p. 767.

[23] Here, Etawah's productive promise also persuaded Nehruvian planners that a holistic, participative approach to rural development and the redressal of India's food situation were compatible, rather than oppositional,

It was on this basis that, in 1951, the Government of India initiated efforts to expand the Etawah model. Establishing 15 experimental 'Pilot Blocks' (each comprising 100 villages) in areas chosen for their high potential agricultural yields, the government assigned ten VLWs to each Block (one for every ten villages). In each case, Block-level 'technical advisers' – covering agriculture, health, sanitation and education – were also appointed to assist VLWs in their work. From here, the effort to create more 'Etawahs' gathered pace swiftly. Already by 1952, 55 new 'Community Projects' had been created, each of which comprised three Pilot Blocks, thereby bringing a further 16,500 villages into the fold. The official inauguration ceremony, on 2 October 1952, turned this sprawling enterprise into an official programme of 'Community Development', with its own coordinating body – the Community Projects Administration (CPA) – located under the purview of the Planning Commission. By 1953, with the creation of a National Extension Service (a subdivision of the CPA) the government had signalled its intention to extend CD to every village in the nation.[24]

To head the CPA, Nehru appointed Surendra Kumar Dey. An engineer by training, Dey had spent the late 1940s coordinating his own pioneering rural development experiment. On a patch of deserted swampland near the village of Nilokheri, in eastern Punjab, the former General Electric employee had led the construction of a new rehabilitation project for partition-displaced refugees. At Nilokheri, Dey combined training in basic skills such as masonry, carpentry and blacksmithing with constant invocations to practice discipline, self-reliance and a commitment to 'work'. By 1952, the project had morphed from a series of scattered tenements into a flourishing township of approximately 6,000 people.[25] What had happened at Nilokheri, according to Nehru, had captured 'the main ideas of Etawah'.[26] Dey, meanwhile, as an advocate for fusing Gandhian constructive work to an 'agro-industrial'

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pursuits, thereby silencing those that had pushed for a programme focused exclusively on agricultural production: 'It is now increasingly recognised' explained Planning Commission Secretary Tarlok Singh in 1952, 'that while increase of agricultural production must remain the central objective, agricultural development has to be conceived as part of the wider process of rural development. The problems of rural community development have to be attacked simultaneously from several directions and there has to be the fullest cooperation among the various agencies set up by the Government as also between those agencies and the people'. Tarlok Singh to All State Governments, 12 January 1952' File No. 5-13/50-T: 1, Records of the Ministry of External Affairs, NAI.
[24] For an overview of the expansion of the Etawah project between 1951 and 1953, see 'The Ford Foundation in India 1951-1959', Report No. 003415, Box 51, Catalogued Reports 3255-6261 (FA739B), Ford Foundation Archives (hereafter FFA), pp. 40-53.
[25] For an historical account of the Nilokheri project see Jack Loveridge, 'Between hunger and growth: pursuing rural development in Partition's aftermath', *Contemporary South Asia,* 25:1, 2017, pp. 56-69.
[26] 'To Tarlok Singh, December 28, 1951', *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol. 17 (1 November 1951 – 31 March 1952)* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1995), p. 269.

model, spoke a language of development deeply in tune with the Prime Minister's own ideas.[27]

In India, then, CD came into being on the basis of an Etawah-brokered compromise between the dual impulses of Gandhian villagism, on the one hand, and Nehruvian developmentalism, on the other. While shaped by the Gandhian-inspired commitment to village self-sufficiency, CD nevertheless eschewed the emphasis on subsistence agriculture and handicraft production so central to Gandhian constructive work, opting instead to tether rural self-reliance to a more modernizing project of development. Here, new collective patterns of self-help would be combined with scientific approaches to agriculture, health and sanitation, thereby transforming villages into 'productive' economic units capable of supporting the parallel project of national industrial development. As will be seen, this compromise would have important implications for the way in which the CD programme developed during the 1950s, including for the way in which social scientists applied their expertise.

### An American opportunity

Etawah galvanized Nehruvian planners. But it would also capture the attention of another audience. Arriving in India in 1951, Chester Bowles, the new US Ambassador, had been among those most enraptured by the results of Mayer's pilot project. The appeal of this 'very remarkable program', he argued, lay in both its 'integrated' nature and its emphasis on 'a maximum of self-help'.[28] Meanwhile, in its capacity to demonstrate to a 'hungry', 'cheated' and 'exploited' peasantry that their government actually 'cared', a government-backed programme of CD had, according to Bowles, 'enormous political implications'.[29]

A liberal New Dealer and former Governor of Connecticut, Bowles' interest in CD spoke of a new set of priorities driving American foreign policy by the time of the Etawah pilot. Dovetailing with transformative geopolitical developments, including the 1949 communist victory in China and the onset of the Korean War, this set of priorities had begun to place new emphasis on the necessity of 'Third World development' as a bulwark against communist 'radicalization' and the foundation for a peaceful, politically stable world order. Encapsulated in President Harry S. Truman's 'Point Four' programme of overseas technical

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[27] Anumpama Arya, 'S.K. Dey's contribution to Indian political thought', *International Journal of Academic Research and Development,* 3:2, 2018, pp. 1736-1738.
[28] 'Reminisces of Chester Bowles, Oral History, 1963', Columbia Center for Oral History, Columbia University, pp. 522.
[29] Ibid., p. 521.

assistance, this growing American concern with development was global in its scope.[30] For Bowles, however, India represented its key crucible. Getting development right in India, he had advised Truman, formed nothing less than 'the key to Asia'.[31]

By the time of his assignment to India, Bowles had already been a prominent advocate of American support for Indian development. Between 1950 and 1951, for instance, he had championed an American wheat loan intended to help India through its period of monsoon failure.[32] In Etawah, he saw a model of development eminently worthy of American support. He and Nehru, he later recalled, spent long periods discussing 'endlessly' the 'whole field of rural development' and the 'great question of how you involve the people and bring them in as participants in the whole approach to growth'.[33] Meanwhile, Bowles also set about pulling American purse strings too. In January 1952, he successfully secured US Congress approval for a new Indo-American Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) promising $54 million of US support, the majority of it earmarked for the expansion of CD. Administered under the Point Four programme, the TCF funds would help to underwrite the establishment of both the CPA and the 55 'Community Projects' announced by Nehru later that year.[34]

American assistance came from other sources too. In August 1951, hot on Bowles' heels, Paul Hoffman, the new President of the Ford Foundation, had also arrived in India. A former corporate executive and lead administrator of the Marshall Plan, Hoffman sat at the head of a foundation which, following a large endowment of funds in 1947, sat eager to provide assistance to US-backed development programmes around the world.[35] Hoffman, a close associate of Bowles, had travelled to India to learn more about Etawah and the developments

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[30] On Truman's 'Point Four' programme see Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (London: Zed Books, 2014), pp. 69-89; Sergei Y. Shenin, *The United States and the Third World: The Origins of Post-war Relations and the Point Four Program* (Huntingdon, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 2000); Stephen Macekura, 'The Point Four Program and U.S. International Development Policy', *Political Science Quarterly,* 128:1, 2013, pp. 127-160.

[31] 'Reminisces of Chester Bowles', pp. 479-480.

[32] For details of the wheat loan see Srinath Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas: A History of the United States in South Asia* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), pp. 176-177; Dennis Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot: The United States and India's Economic Development, 1947-1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 63-73.

[33] 'Reminisces of Chester Bowles', p. 520.

[34] The signing of the Fund Agreement is described in Chester Bowles, *Ambassador's Report* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1954), pp. 198-202. See also 'PRESS NOTE: Indo-US Technical Co-operation Agreement Signed in New Delhi: America's Contribution of 50 Million Dollars', File No. 5-13/50-T, Records of the Ministry of States, NAI.

[35] The late 1940s had witnessed the dramatic transformation of Ford's scope and reach. With the death of Henry Ford, in 1947, several of Ford's estates passed to the Foundation, leaving it with nearly ninety percent of the Ford Motor Company stock. By 1950, the Foundation had approximately half a billion dollars in assets to its name, dwarfing those of its nearest rival, the Rockefeller Foundation. See Eugene S. Staples, *Forty Years, a Learning Curve: The Ford Foundation Program, 1952-1992* (New Delhi: Ford Foundation, 1992), pp. 4-9.

unfolding there. Impressed by what he observed, he saw 'no reason why all 500,000 of India's villages could not make a similar advance'.[36] Returning to New York, Hoffman quickly set about coordinating a package of foundation support for the expansion of CD. By 1952, Ford had approved initial grants of $3.75 million for the Indian programme.[37]

Nehru, of course, had his own reasons for accepting these funds. While the TCF provided much needed financial backing to support the government's own plans, Ford's assistance also provided a way of generating funds quickly, circumventing the lengthy and time-consuming process of securing Ministry of Finance approval.[38] Reflecting stipulations of the broader Point Four programme, most TCF assistance came in the form of equipment – from agricultural tools, to jeeps, to bicycles – shipped to India from the United States.[39] The initial focus of Ford funds, meanwhile, was the training of VLWs. By 1953, Foundation dollars had helped to establish 34 regional VLW training centres across the nation.[40]

It was not just American funds and equipment that flowed into CD, however. As new patterns of Point Four and Ford assistance came into being, they soon brought opportunities for US experts too. Social scientists would come to occupy a central place in this process, soon becoming one of the major forms of technical assistance that Americans sought to provide the CD programme. In this process, American social scientists would seize new opportunities to promote psychologized ideas as development expertise. To understand how they did so, it is first necessary to go back to the foundation of these ideas, in the context of the American New Deal.

### New Deal rural sociology and 'neighbourhood' group dynamics

Since its foundation in the early years of the twentieth century, the discipline of American rural sociology had always been animated by a belief that the study of rural society should be

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[36] Cited in Cullather, *The Hungry World*, p. 89.
[37] Between 1951 and 1959, one third of Ford's expenditure in India went on Community Development-related activities. The total funds provided through Ford grants during this time amounted to over $10 million. See 'The Ford Foundation in India 1951-1959', p. 54. These early interactions between Ford officials and the Indian CD programme are recounted in *George Rosen, Western Economists and Eastern Societies: Agents of Change in South Asia, 1950–1970* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 3-18.
[38] 'Introduction', Folder A.1, Box 1, Series 1, Douglas Ensminger Papers, Yale University, pp. 6-7.
[39] 'Technical Cooperation Programme Between the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America: Supplement to Operational Agreement No. 8: Community Development Programme', File No. Progs., Nos. A-68-4, 1953: Community Projects Programme: Records of the Western India States Agency, NAI.
[40] For more on the Foundation's role in establishing VLW training centres see 'The Ford Foundation in India 1951-1959', pp. 92-95; 'Training for Community Development, Ford Foundation Program Letter India: report no. 100', Report No. 001800, Box 69, Catalogued Reports 1-3254 (FA739A), FFA, pp. 1-4.

geared towards problems of 'concrete reality', as one contemporary put it, rather than 'abstract concepts'.[41] Influenced by John Dewey's conception of democracy as a cultural system that maximized individual and group participation, rural sociologists viewed the scientific study of rural life as a means to advance the participation of rural people in administrative processes – to 'stimulate [the] democratic process in the local community'.[42] Prior to the 1930s, however, rural sociologists had found few opportunities to put this principle into practice. Sociologists had, in fact, been employed at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) since 1919, when the formation of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life first brought the study of rural social structure under the Department's remit. The Division, however, remained peripheral to the USDA's overall operations, with little influence on broader departmental policies and programmes.[43]

The New Deal had changed all this. With its raft of measures to improve the conditions of post-Depression American society, the New Deal brought wide-ranging programmes of reform upon rural communities. New USDA programmes such as 'Agricultural Adjustment', 'Soil Conservation', 'Farm Credit' and 'Rural Rehabilitation' had greatly increased the contact between the USDA and rural people.[44] In doing so, they had given new significance to the question of how to best engage rural communities in government programmes. Against this backdrop, rural sociologists had emerged as champions of a particular approach to enhancing rural participation, one that had quickly come to shape thinking in the upper reaches of the USDA.

For the rural sociologists in question, a loose-knit body of agrarian intellectuals including Milburn L. Wilson, Carl C. Taylor, Douglas Ensminger and Arthur F. Raper, the best way to ensure popular participation in USDA reform programmes lay in moulding those programmes to fit the existing social and cultural lifeways of rural people. This meant ensuring that programmes addressed the actual needs of rural communities, rather than problems policymakers felt to be important. It meant framing programmes in a language rural

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[41] Carl C. Taylor, 'Sociology on the Spot', *Rural Sociology,* 2:4, 1937, pp. 373-374.
[42] For the connections between rural sociology and John Dewey's thought, see Jess Gilbert, *Planning Democracy: Agrarian Intellectuals and the Intended New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 15-21. For a recent intervention on Dewey's understanding of the role of expertise in democracy, see Tom Arnold Foster, 'Democracy and Expertise in the Lippmann-Terman Controversy', *Modern Intellectual History,* 9:4, 2017, pp. 1-32.
[43] Olaf F. Larson, Julie N. Zimmerman and Edward O. Moe, *Sociology in Government: The Galpin-Taylor Years in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1919-1953,* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press), pp. 11-25.
[44] For an overview of these programmes see Gilbert, *Planning Democracy,* pp. 126-141.

people could easily understand. Most importantly, however, it meant connecting the administrative architecture of new USDA programmes to the prevailing structures of rural social life.[45]

Here, rural sociologists forwarded a particular set of social psychological ideas. Following a tradition running back to the origins of the discipline, and its founding father Charles Horton Cooley, the sociologists framed rural society as a domain of 'primary group' relations.[46] Unlike urban settings, in which forms of group association were loose, transient and often based on short-term interest, they argued, in rural settings, people tended to live out their lives within 'cohesive human groups' based on locality, regular face-to-face interaction, and 'sympathetic, familistic' bonds.[47] The concept of rural primary group relations drew on the theory of *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* forwarded by the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies. Translating these concepts as 'community' and 'society' respectively, American sociologists followed Tönnies in arguing that these contrasting forms of social relations found their clearest expression in the differences between the urban and the rural. Europe's historic peasant villages exemplified the forms of communal solidarity and cultural integration associated with the *gemeinschaft*. But the contrast between 'society' and 'community' could also be found in the distinction between America's cities and its rural areas.[48] The steady 'stream of change' brought by urbanization and industrialization had forced rural people 'by necessity and by choice' to begin making 'new orientations to functions and processes which led far beyond local areas'. According to the sociologists, however, 'primary group attitudes and ideals' remained 'more dominant' in the rural setting than they did in the 'urbanite'.[49] The rural neighbourhood community, explained Carl C. Taylor, had 'never lost its locality orientation'.[50]

According to rural sociologists, the 'natural' neighbourhood groups to which most rural people belonged were quite different to the 'artificial' groups that existed in urban

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[45] For a good overview of the sociologists' approach see Jess Gilbert, 'Low Modernism and the Agrarian New Deal: A Different Kind of State', in Jane Adams (ed.), *Fighting for the Farm: Rural America Transformed* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 129-146.

[46] On Charles Horton Cooley's concept of the 'primary group' see Glenn Jacobs, *Charles Horton Cooley: Imagining Social Reality* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), pp. 108-112.

[47] Charles P. Loomis, Douglas Ensminger, and Jane Woolley, 'Neighborhoods and Communities in County Planning', *Rural Sociology,* 6:4, 1942, p. 339.

[48] For more on the sociologists' borrowing from Tönnies see Gilbert, *Planning Democracy,* pp. 182-183.

[49] Carl C. Taylor, 'Sociology Lecture – 4/15/1940', in Box 7, Carl C. Taylor Papers, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, New York (hereafter CCTP).

[50] Carl C. Taylor, 'Techniques of Community Study and Analysis as Applied to Modern Civilized Societies', in Ralph Linton (ed.), *The Science of Man in the World Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), p. 420.

environments. 'Informally or unconsciously organized in a way which served to develop human cooperation in attaining certain needs', rural groups had emerged slowly over time, 'out of the common needs of people'.[51] In the rural setting, group ties governed not only day-to-day patterns of social interaction and contact, but also attitudes, habits, and patterns of work. In neighbourhood groups, explained one contemporary, the activities of 'people working together' took on a certain 'naturalness, approaching almost instinctive action'.[52] The key to enhancing rural participation in USDA programmes, the sociologists claimed, was to reform the administrative structure of those programmes to reflect these natural patterns of neighbourhood group organization.
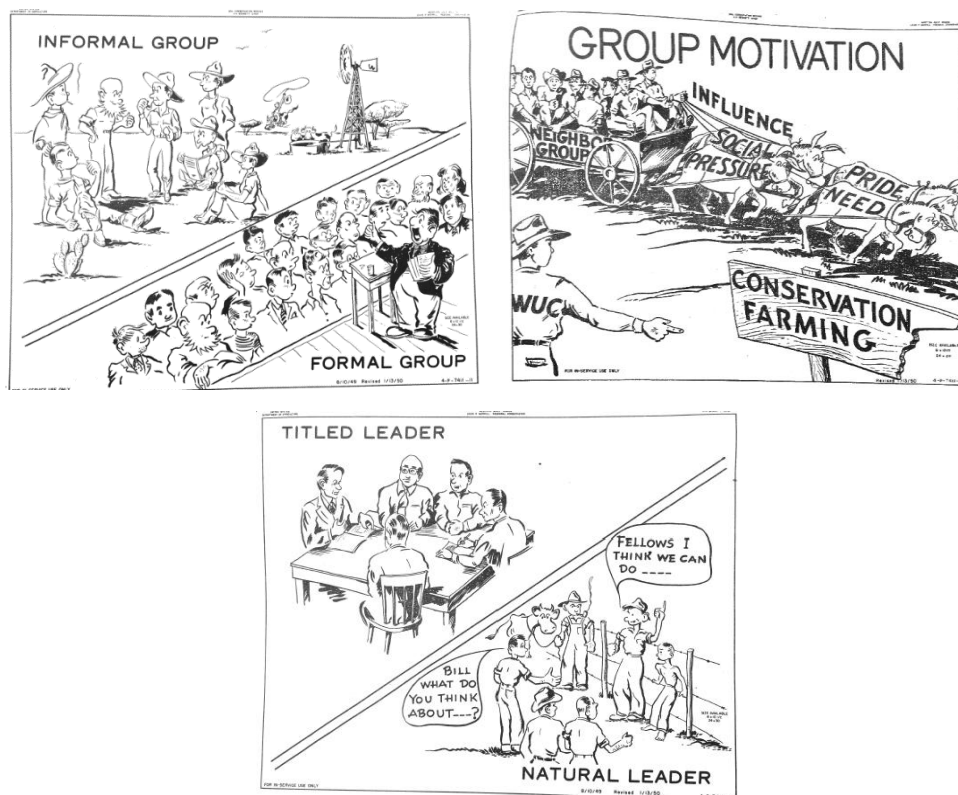


*Neighbourhood groups and their natural leaders*

**Figure 3. Slides from a USDA presentation on neighbourhood group dynamics**

(Source: 'Morris presentation slides', Nancy Nutting to Carl C. Taylor, 9 June 1952, Box 7, Carl C. Taylor papers)

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[51] 'Soil Conservation Service (for in-service use): Why work with groups?', Box 7, CCTP, p. 2.
[52] 'H.H. Bennett to All Soil Conservation Service Personnel', Box 7, CCTP, pp. 1-2.

As things stood, the sociologists argued, the administrative structure of new USDA programmes rode roughshod over these group structures. 'New and powerful Federal agencies' were 'barging into almost every local community, administering action programs that strongly affected local affairs'.[53] Local planning committees developed to oversee the implementation of New Deal programmes, for instance, bore little relation to actual patterns of group organization and leadership on the ground. The result had been low participation and, in some cases, active 'opposition' to USDA programmes.[54] An approach that worked with local neighbourhood group dynamics, rather than violating them from above, however, would help to ensure the participation of people in the government's reform programmes.[55]

In making this argument, sociologists drew on the findings of contemporary industrial psychology regarding the relationship between 'primary group relations' and worker productivity. Arguing that the close-knit relations established between factory workers demonstrated many of the same characteristics of rural 'primary groups', the Harvard University psychologist Elton Mayo had proposed that recognition of employee 'primary group' relations played a pivotal role in effective management. Where such groups were recognized and respected, he argued, productivity increased. Where they were ignored, disrupted or discouraged, alienation and low-morale prevailed.[56] Mayo's 'human relations' approach to management had thus framed attention to primary group dynamics as a key factor in the harnessing of productive human energies. Drawing explicitly on these arguments, rural sociologists argued that rural dwellers would participate more actively in USDA programmes if encouraged to work together in the local groups to which they 'already felt attached'.[57]

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[53] Milton Eisenhower and Roy I. Kimmel, 'Old and New in Agricultural Organizations', *USDA Yearbook of Agriculture,* 1940, p. 1131.

[54] Charles P. Loomis and Douglas Ensminger, 'Governmental Administration and Informal Local Groups', *Applied Anthropology,* 1:2, 1942, p. 43.

[55] When the structural and functioning patterns of communities are violated by outside pressure', argued Carl C. Taylor, 'local resistance develops; when they are used or amplified, local assistance is guaranteed'. Cited in Jess Gilbert, 'Democratizing States and the Use of History', *Rural Sociology,* 74:1, 2009, p. 8.

[56] For the original argument see Elton Mayo, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: Viking Press, 1933); and F.J. Roethlisberger and William J. Dickinson, *Management and the Worker: An Account of the Research Program Conducted by the Western Electric Company, Hawthorne Works, Chicago* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). For secondary accounts see Richard Gillespie, *Manufacturing Knowledge: A History of the Hawthorne Experiments* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991). For the uptake of the primary group/morale concept in the military context see Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Comple*x (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), ch. 3.

[57] 'Some farmers', explained Ensminger and Loomis, 'were in somewhat the same situation as would be the factory worker who, after having been accustomed to a definite routine with little change in his relations to the line and staff of his organization, suddenly would have to deal with many new bosses issuing contradictory

Sociologists made these arguments not from the margins, but from the epicentre of USDA political power. Indeed, by the late 1930s, rural sociologists had themselves come to occupy some of the most important roles within the USDA planning and administration. Milburn L. Wilson, a sociologist and agricultural economist trained at the universities of Iowa and Wisconsin, led this charge. Recruited to the USDA in 1933, by 1937 Wilson had risen to the position of Undersecretary of Agriculture, the second highest office in the Department. Together with a fellow economist and USDA administrator, H.R. Tolley, Wilson had taken concerted steps to extend the influence of rural sociology at the USDA. Under his influence, the Division of Farm Population and Rural Life (now the Division of Farm Population and Rural Welfare and placed under the Bureau of Agricultural Economics (BAE)), was assigned a key role in the planning and organization of USDA programmes. From 1936 onwards, the Division would be headed by Carl C. Taylor, a leading rural sociologist recruited from the University of North Carolina.[58]

In 1937, Taylor's Division began a process of reforming the structure of local USDA planning committees to reflect the structure of local neighbourhood groups. At the centre of this process sat the enterprise of 'community delineation'. Described as the 'systematic analysis of rural locality groups', community delineation used sociological research methods, including surveys, interviews and questionnaires, to identify the patterns of neighbourhood group association as they existed on the ground.[59] Conducted by BAE social scientists, assigned in teams to local areas, the delineations probed residents on the intricacies of their social ties with other people in the area. 'Each family', explained one report:

…was requested to indicate the three families with which it visited most frequently. Frequency of visitation and degrees of consanguinity were also ascertained. All visiting relationships and kinship patterns were then mapped by means of lines drawn between the dwellings of the families.[60]

Typically comprising between twenty and thirty families, the 'neighbourhoods' identified through these delineations were defined not by geographical proximity, but by the intensity of interaction and 'group feeling' between residents. Once delineated, these natural

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orders and requiring him to do things which he had never been expected nor hired to do.' Loomis and Ensminger, 'Governmental Administration and Informal Local Groups', pp. 42-43.
[58] For a detailed account of the sociologists' rise within the USDA see Andrew S. Kirkendall, *Social Scientists and Farm Politics in the Age of Roosevelt* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1966).
[59] Taylor, 'Techniques of Community Study and Analysis as Applied to Modern Civilized Societies', p. 434
[60] Loomis, Ensminger and Woolley, 'Neighborhoods and Communities in County Planning', pp. 339-340.

neighbourhood units were turned into the basis for a new structure of USDA planning committees, with committees assigned to represent each neighbourhood group.[61]
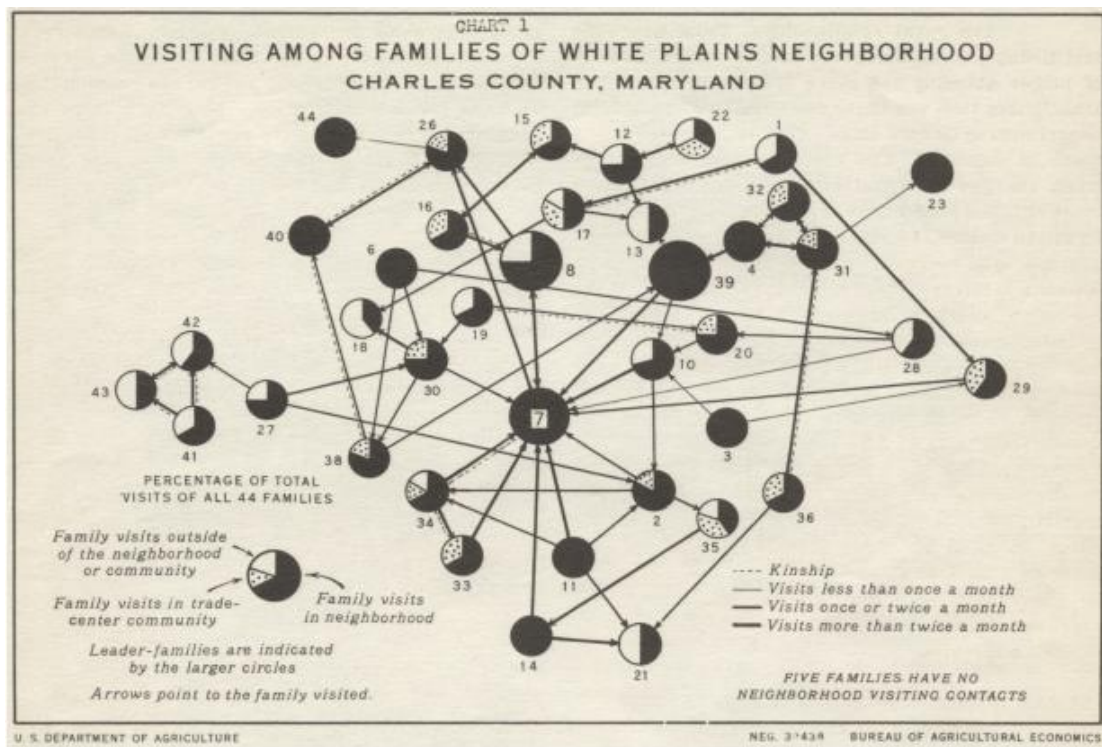


*Mapping the neighbourhood group*

**Figure 4. Sociogram of neighbourhood ties in Charles County, Maryland**

(Source: Charles P. Loomis and Douglas Ensminger, 'Governmental Administration and Informal Local Groups', *Applied Anthropology,* 1:2, 1942)

The identification of 'natural neighbourhood leaders' was a central part of community delineation. For neighbourhood groups to function as the basis of popular participation, the sociologists argued, it was essential that the representatives to the reformed local planning committees were 'natural leaders' of the neighbourhood group.[62] Such leaders were those who had 'won the confidence of their neighbors and to whom their neighbours turn for advice

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[61] Rising from the neighborhood, social scientists also delineated a second layer of committee representation – confusingly termed 'the community' – each of which comprised between 10 and 15 individual neighbourhood groups. For more on structure of reformed USDA planning committees see Gilbert, *Planning Democracy,* pp. 187-211.

[62] Here, they drew again on insights from contemporary industrial psychology, specifically the arguments of Chester Barnard's *The Functions of the Executive* with its claim that effective 'formal' leadership had its foundation in 'informal' social relations. Chester I. Barnard, *Functions of the Executive* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938). For references to Barnard's work by sociologists Loomis and Ensminger, 'Governmental Administration and Informal Local Groups', pp. 42; Loomis, Ensminger and Woolley, 'Neighborhoods and Communities in County Planning', pp. 341.

with respect to both their individual and mutual interests'.[63] In the process of community delineation, social scientists probed residents with questions intended to pinpoint these leaders. 'Natural leaders', they argued, were those who, while not necessarily having titular authority, acted intuitively as 'advisers', 'examples', 'spokesmen', 'informants', 'harmonizers' and 'planners' for the neighbourhood.[64] Some consciously avoided use of the term 'leader' in their efforts to discern who the real 'natural leaders' were. The best way to identify natural leaders, explained one delineator, was to ask who residents considered, above all else, to be a 'good neighbor'.[65]

According to sociologists, the appointment of 'natural neighbourhood leaders' as representatives to planning committees would ensure that USDA programmes were tailored to fit local needs and priorities. At the same time, as trusted and respected members of the community, natural leaders would also spur the engagement of local people in the planning process – they would 'mobilise the community for the improvement of rural life'.[66] By 1942, roughly two-thirds of all US counties had seen their USDA planning committees reformed on the basis of community delineations.[67] Those engaged in this process included Douglas Ensminger, a sociologist trained at Cornell University under the preeminent theorist of 'rural social organization', Ezra Dwight Sanderson.[68] Ensminger, as Taylor's right-hand man within the Division of Farm Population and Rural Welfare, would oversee several major county-wide delineation projects during the late 1930s and early 1940s.[69] Other figures engaged in community delineation included Oscar Lewis, a cultural anthropologist trained at Columbia

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[63] 'H.H. Bennett to All Soil Conservation Service Personnel', Box 7, CCTP, p. 1.
[64] Nancy Nutting to Carl C. Taylor, 9 June 1952, Box 7, CCTP, p. 5.
[65] Melville H. Cohee, 'Group Action in Soil Conservation: An Illustrative Case, re: Location of a Local Leader or Natural Neighbourhood and Identification of the Leader', Box 7, CCTP, p. 3. On the role of leaders see also Charles M. Hardin, 'Natural Leaders and the Administration of Soil Conservation Programs', *Rural Sociology,* 16:3, 1951, pp. 279-281.
[66] Ibid., p. 6.
[67] Gilbert, 'Democratizing States and the Use of History', p. 6.
[68] For an analytical summary of Sanderson's work written by his former student, see Douglas Ensminger and Robert A. Polson, 'The Concept of the Community', *Rural Sociology,* 2:1, 1946, pp. 43-51. For Sanderson's seminal text on rural social organization see E. Dwight Sanderson, *Rural Sociology and Rural Social Organization* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1942).
[69] See for example Irwin T. Sanders and Douglas Ensminger, *Alabama Rural Communities, A Study of Chilton County*, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S. Department of Agriculture/Alabama College Bulletin Vol. XXXIII, 1940; H.W. Beers, R.M. Williams, J.S. Page, D. Ensminger, *Community land-use planning committees: organization, leadership, and attitudes, Garrard County, Kentucky, 1939, Bulletin: Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station,* 1941, pp.141-236

University; Rensis Likert, a social psychologist and also a Columbia graduate; and Arthur F. Raper, a sociologist from the University of North Carolina.[70]

By 1942, however, the project of the rural sociologists had begun to unravel. Concerned about the impact of the delineation programme on its own political organizations, the American Farm Bureau Federation, an organization comprised largely of wealthy landowning farmers had, by 1942, turned firmly against Taylor's Division. In that same year, under heavy pressure from the Bureau, an anti-New Deal US Congress had taken the decision to cut funding for the process of local planning altogether. Thus, by the early 1940s, the sociologists' group-based approach to rural participation had quickly found itself marginalized from its former seat of power.[71] Marginalized at home, however, American rural sociologists would soon find solace in new locales. Following the new channels of post-war technical assistance, many would soon turn the transnational enterprise of rural development, rather than the project of domestic agricultural reform, into the principal object of their expertise.[72] In doing so, they would carry with them the ideas honed in the context of the New Deal. It was in India, and its US-backed programme of CD, that these opportunities would loom largest of all.

### Between the American neighbourhood and the Indian village

In November 1951, a few months after the visit of Paul Hoffman's delegation to India, the former BAE rural sociologist Douglas Ensminger, arrived in New Delhi. Once a leading figure in BAE's neighbourhood community delineations, Ensminger had come to India on a particular mission. Just weeks before his arrival, the sociologist-turned-administrator had been recruited to serve as the Ford Foundation's new India Representative. Convinced of the need for long-term Ford support for Indian rural development, Hoffman had set about looking for an individual to permanently lead the organization's activities in the country. Turning, in the first instance, to his contacts at the USDA, he had reached out to M.L. Wilson, now USDA Director of Extension Work, and H.R. Tolley, now serving as an adviser to the United

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[70] Joining the USDA in 1944, Lewis' specific role was to survey the effects of USDA programmes amongst rural neighborhoods and communities. In this capacity, he conducted a study tour of Texas, Mississippi, the wheat-farming counties of the Northwest and the states of the lower plains. See Susan M. Rigdon, *The Culture Façade: Art, Science and Politics in the Work of Oscar Lewis* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press), p. 20. For Arthur F. Raper's involvement in the BAE's work see Louis Mazzari, *Southern Modernist: Arthur Raper from the New Deal to the Cold War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), pp. 217-220.

[71] For detailed accounts of the sociologists' fall from grace, see Kirkendall, *Social Scientists and Farm Politics*, chs. 11-13; and Gilbert, *Planning Democracy,* pp. 238-242.

[72] For a short summary of where rural sociologists went during the late 1940s and early 1950s see Arthur F. Raper, 'Rural Sociologists and Foreign Assignments', *Rural Sociology,* 18:3, 1953, pp. 264-266.

Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, both of whom had recommended their former colleague for the job.[73] Reluctant at first, Ensminger had, with Hoffman's encouragement, soon come to see the posting as a unique opportunity to 'make a contribution to world peace'.[74] Establishing temporary offices in rooms at New Delhi's Ambassador Hotel, Ensminger quickly set about working with Nehru and other members of the Planning Commission to coordinate Ford support for the fledgling CD programme.[75]

Ensminger's appointment reflected a broader conviction on the part of US aid organizations and philanthropies like Ford that American agricultural experts had something to offer Indian CD. The crux of this was a belief that American experts, both at the USDA and beyond, had mastered and refined the techniques of what contemporaries called agricultural 'extension'. Extension comprised the development of methods for effectively demonstrating new agricultural techniques to farming communities. As a result of the New Deal, however, it had also come to signify a broader set of ideas about the use of applied expertise to foster civic engagement, including the approaches to community mobilization championed by Ensminger and his colleagues. From 1952 onwards, the transfer of American 'extension specialists' would become a key form of US Point Four and Ford Foundation assistance to Indian CD. As part of this process, many of the figures previously associated with the New Deal BAE would find themselves following Ensminger's path. Carl C. Taylor, the former head of the BAE Division of Farm Population and Rural Welfare, would make no fewer than six trips to India during the 1950s, serving as both a Point Four and Ford Foundation consultant on CD. M.L. Wilson, Oscar Lewis and Arthur F. Raper, all of whom had also worked with Ensminger and Taylor at the Division, would also spend time advising the Indian CD programme.

As self-styled 'sociological middlemen', American social scientists approached the pursuit of Indian CD through the lens of their experiences at home.[76] Much like the participation of American rural communities in New Deal programmes, they argued, the engagement of Indian villages in their own self-help required an approach that worked *with*, not against, local group dynamics. Effective CD, wrote Carl C. Taylor, required an approach that ensured

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[73] 'Introduction', DEP, p.12.
[74] Ibid., p. 13.
[75] For more on the circumstances of Ensminger's appointment and his tenure as Ford Foundation Representative see Nicole Sackley, 'Foundation in the Field: The Ford Foundation New Delhi Office and the Construction of Development Knowledge', in John Krige and Helke Rausch (eds.), *American Foundations and the Coproduction of World Ordering the Twentieth Century* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 232-60; See also Rosen, *Western Economists and Eastern Societies*, pp. 13-17.
[76] 'Notes on Dr Taylor's Trip, File 1', Box 7, CCTP, p. 2.

'the potentialities of local groups' were 'energized, mobilized and harnessed for [the] economic and social improvement of themselves'.[77] It was 'the purpose of countries which are promoting community development programs':

…not only to utilize…locally organized groups as channels for reaching the masses for their own technical assistance programs…but to develop the manpower, ingenuity and enthusiasm of the common people in their economic and social programs of national development.[78]

The emphasis on mobilizing local group energies reflected rural sociologists' deeply-held belief in the merits of development realized through the existing socio-cultural frameworks of rural people, as well as their belief in the universality of rural primary group dynamics. But the framing of CD in this way would also generate its own pressing questions. After all, what was the 'natural' group unit of India's rural society? In India, American sociologists would find no blank canvas when it came to this question. Indeed, when it came to the structure and ontology of Indian rural society, many Indian elites already subscribed to a particular set of ideas. Rural India, they held, was a social landscape marked by one particular institution: that of the 'village community'.

The idea of the historic village community was, in fact, a colonial creation. Its origins ran back to the nineteenth century, to the accounts of colonial administrators and scholars such as Charles Metcalfe and Henry Maine. Both Metcalfe and Maine had described India as a land of ancient, autarkic 'village communities', each representing a cohesive and self-contained unit of social, economic and political organization. Notwithstanding the many upheavals of Indian history, they argued, including the onset of British colonial rule, the basic character of these village communities had remained stable and unchanged.[79] In reality, the 'village republics' described in such accounts represented less an objective reality than a product – both physical and ideological – of the colonial experience. Physically, the appearance of India as a 'village society' owed much to economic and politico-legal developments of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. During that period, shifting commodity markets, extractive colonial revenue policies and the disruption of India's erstwhile centres of economic activity had set in motion processes of 'de-industrialization' and 'de-urbanization'

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[77] Carl C. Taylor, 'Basic concepts and facts about community development', Box 12, CCTP, p. 2.
[78] Carl C. Taylor, United States Department of Agriculture: Foreign Agricultural Service: Community Development in Economically Underdeveloped Areas, May 14 1953', Box 12, CCTP, p. 4.
[79] For the originals see *Appendix to the Report from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East-India Company, III— Revenue* (London, 1833); Henry Maine, *Village Communities in the East and West*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1890). For an historical critique see Clive Dewey, 'Images of the Village Community: A Study of Anglo-Indian Ideology', *Modern Asian Studies,* 6:3, 1972, pp. 291-328.

that forced large swathes of a previously urbanized, mobile population back onto the land.[80] Against this backdrop, colonial officials, eager to find ways to fix stable assets that could be seized in lieu of unpaid revenue, had enshrined 'traditional' forms of property right over market ones, thereby creating a layer of landed village elites that would serve as a direct line of control between the colonial administration and the locality.[81] By the mid-nineteenth century, then, driven in part by the colonial state's desire to create standardized, manageable sites for the maintenance of fiscal and political order, Indian society had undergone a process of 'sedentarization' and 'village-ification' that gave it the appearance of a patchwork of discrete village units.[82]

As colonial economic and political developments conspired to organize a previously fluid society around the economic and administrative unit of the village, Metcalfe, Maine and others proceeded to imagine the Indian village as hierarchical yet harmonious 'community' that had always been there. Such an imagining was, of course, not simply a misreading; but an interpretation tied deeply to colonial ideological imperatives. By portraying India as a land of timeless village communities, colonialists implicitly 'displaced' the subcontinent's complex pre-colonial polity with a vision of India as 'ancient' civilization, awaiting the 'modernity' of British rule.[83] The representation of India as a society of self-sufficient villages served to justify imperial rule in other ways. Since villages had always been autonomous social, economic and political units, the rulers of India in turn had always been, to some extent at least, outsiders presiding over a foreign terrain.[84]

Notwithstanding its deep colonial ties, the idea of the village community stuck firmly in the Indian imagination. Gandhi, above all, took the autarkic village communities of Maine's description to be the core of India's 'traditional' civilization – the essence of the 'real' India as it had existed before the disruptive impact of colonialism. 'Indian society', he observed, 'was at one time unknowingly constituted on a non-violent basis. The home life, i.e. the

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[80] David Washbrook, 'Economic Depression and the Making of Traditional Society, 1820–1855, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3, 1993, pp. 237-263; C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), ch. 4;

[81] Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire,* chs. 4 and 5.

[82] Ibid., ch. 5; Washbrook, 'Economic Depression', p. 244; C. Fuller, 'British India or traditional India? An Anthropological Problem', *Ethnos*, 3-4 (1977), pp. 95-121.

[83] Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (London: Hurst and Company, 1990), pp. 131-134.

[84] As Nicholas Dirks has argued, portraits of harmonious, autonomous village republics also served to reinforce arguments for a move towards a new peasant-based (ryotwari) revenue system through which the colonial state could increase the revenue intake from the Indian countryside. See Nicholas B. Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 28-29. For more on the uses of the image of the village community see Dewey, 'Images of the Village Community', pp. 291-328.

village, was undisturbed by the periodical visitations from barbarous hordes'.[85] Contrasting Maine's village communities to the subcontinent's urban centres, Gandhi would frame the latter as an expression, both material and symbolic, of British rule over India. Gandhi, was not alone, however. A broader coterie of nationalist leaders embraced the idea of the historic village community as well. Nehru too subscribed to the view of a precolonial 'agrarian system', based on the 'cooperative or collective village'. Prior to the arrival of the British, he explained, throughout 'foreign conquests…war and destruction, revolts and their ruthless suppression', the 'self-governing community' of the village had, nevertheless, 'continued'.[86]

According to both Gandhi and Nehru, colonialism had brought destruction and ruin upon the village community. For Gandhi, this problem centred on the corrupting influence of modern urban civilization on the village, a process that had reduced rural communities to a state of 'miserable dependence and idleness'. For Nehru, however, the blame resided in more specific quarters; namely, the colonial practice of 'landlordism'. By supporting landowner control over local land in order to bolster its own political power, he argued, the colonial state had created a system of exploitative agrarian relations that had immiserated the peasant classes, thereby undermining the delicate socio-economic equilibrium on which the village community had once been based.[87]

In India, however, American sociologists encountered more than just a belief in the existence of the historic village community. They also encountered a conviction that the semblances of those village communities, at least in some shape or form, remained in-tact. According to Gandhi, notwithstanding the deleterious material and psychological impacts of cities on the village, the essential spirit of the age-old village community could still be found. 'Go 30 miles from the railway line', he implored, 'and you will see that the people show a kind of culture which you miss in the west...you will find culture which is unmistakable'.[88] Animated by this belief, Gandhi had turned the restoration of India's village communities to their former autarkic state into the core principle of his constructive programme. Claims about the endurance of the village community were not the sole preserve of Gandhi, however. Such thinking found adherents in other post-colonial nationalists too. Nehru would reject Gandhi's wholesale romanticization of village life. He would also, as we have seen, reject Gandhian

[85] Cited in Surinder S. Jodhka, 'Nation and Village: Images of Rural India in Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 37:32, 2002, p. 3346.
[86] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India* (London: Meridian, 1951), p. 246.
[87] For a discussion of these differences see Jodhka, 'Nation and Village', pp. 3345-3350.
[88] Cited in Ibid., p. 3347.

attempts to orient village 'reconstruction' towards subsistence agriculture and handicraft production. Nevertheless, the idea that certain features of the erstwhile village community survived, and might be revived for the new purposes, formed a prominent feature of Nehru's own thought. 'The village', he explained:

…which used to be an organic and vital unit, became progressively a derelict area, just a collection of mud huts and odd individuals. But still the village holds together by some invisible link, and old memories revive. It should be easily possible to take advantage of these age-long traditions and to build up communal and cooperative concerns in the land and in the small industry. The village can no longer be self-contained economic unit...but it can very well be a governmental and electoral unit, each such unit functioning as a self-governing community within the larger political framework and looking after the essential needs of the village.[89]

The idea that the remnants of the village community both survived and could be utilized for the purposes of post-colonial development planning received vindication in the work of Indian social scientists too. 'There are aspects and characteristics of the life of a village', explained Rudra Dutt Singh, a sociologist working with Albert Mayer at Etawah, 'which clearly give it a distinct individuality'. 'Underlying its varied divisive features and encompassing all of them', Dutt argued, the village remained bound by 'strong sentiments and deeply entrenched habits of thought' Villages had not only been autonomous, autarkic communities, they also remained coherent sociological units that could galvanize people to 'act in the interest of the group'.[90]

The desire to rebuild the spirit of the village community suffused the way in which Nehruvian planners and officials approached CD. 'A community project', explained Tarlok Singh, the Secretary to the Planning Commission:

...[is] best thought of as a programme for the development in a co-ordinated and planned way of all the individual village communities comprised in it…The old village order has broken down…But, if we know our goal, through community development and planning at the village level, organized as a base for planning on a larger scale, the achievement of a new synthesis in rural life is a task that can be accomplished'.[91]

'The aim of Community Development', explained another official:

…is to create opportunities for village communities to reconstitute themselves on the fundamental basis of co-operation, so that human beings come together in order to shoulder

[89] Nehru, *Discovery of India,* p. 534-535.
[90] Rudra Dutt Singh, 'The Unity of an Indian Village', *The Journal of Asian Studies,* 16:1, 1956, pp. 16.
[91] Tarlok Singh, 'Planning at the Village Level', in *Kurukshetra: A Symposium on Community Development*, p. 173.

the burdens of life. In this consciousness of togetherness there is strength and common efforts of such groups will achieve great results.[92]

In India, then, American rural sociologists encountered a robust set of discourses concerning the centrality of the village as an historic, still surviving and serviceable unit of social structure. In turn, these discourses would exert a profound influence over the sociologists' own ideas about the natural group unit of Indian rural society. 'A few hundred years ago', explained Ensminger and Taylor, each village constituted an 'integral village community' bound by the 'universal caste honoured core of village integrity'.[93] And while colonial rule had 'degenerated' the 'heart and mind' of the villages, sapping the spirit of 'community action' that had once suffused them, every village remained, nonetheless, 'a highly-structured social entity':

Each recognized that notwithstanding its inter-village kinship and caste responsibilities, it did have local village responsibilities. Even though it had for generations not been permitted completely to govern itself, it had always been dealt with as a unity by overhead government, even by feudal owners and administrators…In spite of all its weaknesses, the result of long periods of decay, village settlement was and is sure to be for a long time to come one of the most basic social structures of Indian society.[94]

Indian villages were no longer 'pristine folk communities', the sociologists argued, but they continued to be 'self-contained and cohesive groups'. They were, as such, 'ready-made candidates for community development'.[95] The task of CD, explained Taylor, was to reawaken the latent collective spirit of these 'local village groups' – to 'convert thousands of "stagnant" village groups into dynamic social action cells of a great democratic society'.[96] Ensminger and Taylor would develop an analogy to describe this approach. As an attempt to re-energize extant village groups, they argued, CD could be likened to a process of 'pouring new wine into old bottles'.[97]

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While Taylor and Ensminger cosied-up to prevailing ideas about the village as a 'social entity', others took a different view. Oscar Lewis, an anthropologist and former BAE staffer,

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[92] B.H. Mehta, 'Our Village Community', in *Kurukshetra: A Symposium on Community Development*, p. 258.
[93] Carl. C. Taylor and Douglas Ensminger, 'The national development program of India with specific reference to its rural sector', Report No. 000614, Box 32, Catalogued Reports 1-3254 (FA739A), FFA, p. 3.
[94] Carl C. Taylor, Douglas Ensminger, Helen W. Johnson and Jean Joyce, *India's Roots of Democracy: A Sociological Analysis of Rural India's Experience in Planned Development* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), p. 93.
[95] Taylor, 'United States Department of Agriculture', p. 4.
[96] Carl C. Taylor, 'Community Mobilization and Group Processes', Box 34, CCTP, pp. 60-61
[97] Ensminger and Taylor, 'The national development program of India with specific reference to its rural sector', p. 17. See also Douglas Ensminger and Carl C. Taylor, 'New Wine in Old Bottles', in *Kurukshetra: A Symposium on Community Development,* pp. 75-82.

brought to India as a Ford Foundation consultant, was one. Arriving in 1952, Lewis' assignment was to help develop methods through which the CD programme could be evaluated. Confessing that his real interests lay 'fundamentally in research rather than administration', Lewis had suggested that the most valuable contribution he could make to the programme was an in-depth anthropological study of a 'typical' Indian village, thereby creating 'a baseline' from which change could be measured.[98] Following approval from officials at the Planning Commission's Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO), the research had been undertaken in the village of 'Rampur' near Delhi. Working closely with two Indian assistants, Lewis employed participant observation, interviews and survey methods to produce a detailed account of the village's political, social, economic and cultural life.[99]

Published in 1954 under the title *Group Dynamics in a North Indian Village,* Lewis' study offered a rather different take on the structure of India's rural society than that proposed by his American colleagues. The Indian village, it argued, far from a cohesive community, was a social space replete with divisions that 'cut across' any coherent sense of internal unity. At Rampur, Lewis identified a complex network of social sub-groupings, including caste, the extended family, and 'the faction' as basic features of 'traditional village social organisation'. Factions, he argued, as groupings based primarily on kinship and caste, operated as particularly 'cohesive units', playing a key role in social functions such as ceremonial occasions; court litigations; the operation of the village panchayats; and increasingly in district board, state, and national elections. These factional alignments served not only to divide villages into discrete, identifiable subgroups; they also 'reached out' beyond the village, connecting each factional group to an extensive network of others. Viewed from this perspective, the Indian countryside appeared not as a patchwork of discrete villages but as a vast interconnected web of factions: 'The village community', argued Lewis, 'in the American sense of a neighbourhood, hardly exists'.[100]

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[98] Oscar Lewis to Oliver LaFarge, 24 October 1952, Folder: Correspondence – India – 1952-1953, Box 140, Oscar and Ruth Lewis Papers, University of Illinois Archives, Urbana-Champaign (hereafter ORLP).

[99] Lewis would also use the Rampur research to develop a guide for VLWs and other development officials wishing to conduct similar baseline studies of village society and culture. See 'Preliminary Guide for the Study of Village Culture in North India', Folder: North Indian Village Reprints, 1954-56, 1962, Box 1.

[100] Oscar Lewis, *Group Dynamics in a North Indian Village* (New Delhi: Planning Commission Programme Evaluation Organisation, Government of India, 1954), p. 32.
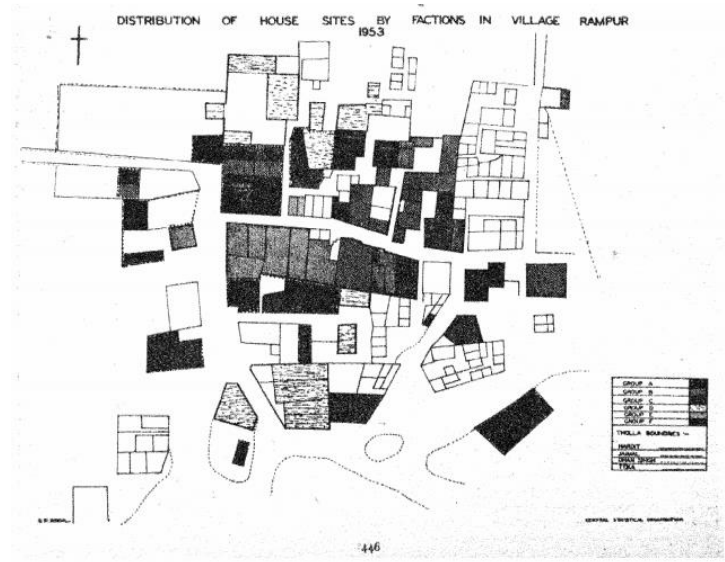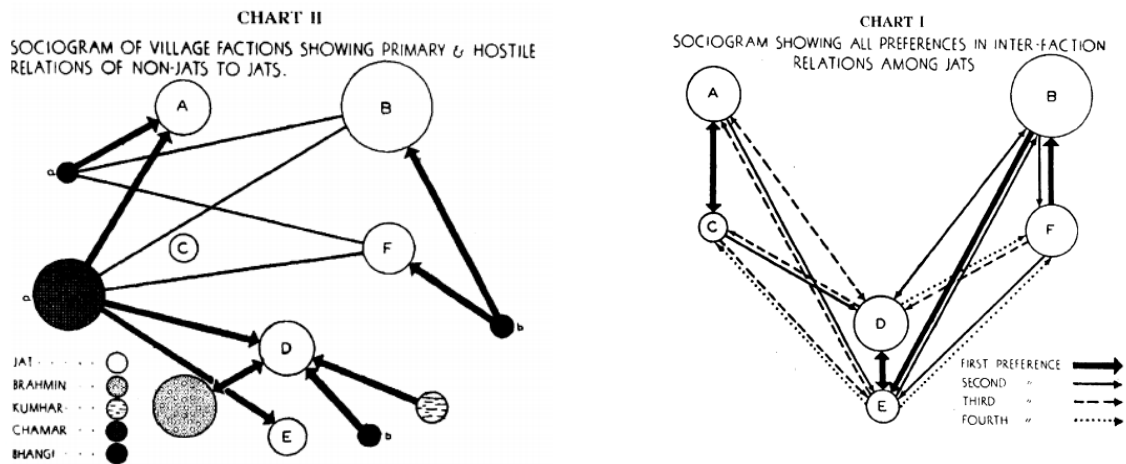
*Mapping the Indian faction*

**Figure 5. Sociograms and maps from the village of 'Rampur'**

(Source: Oscar Lewis, *Group Dynamics in a North Indian Village* (New Delhi: Planning Commission Programme Evaluation Organisation, Government of India, 1954)

For Lewis, it was the faction, not the village, that represented the 'natural' group unit of the Indian countryside. It was 'the small groups which we have called factions', he explained, (not village communities) that provided 'ready-made co-operative groups for community projects'. Moreover, because they constituted networks of intersecting alliances, as well as

coherent social units, factions held peculiar potential as 'channels' for the dissemination of information and ideas to rural people. [101]

Lewis was not alone in his willingness to question ideas about the enduring unity of Indian villages. Indeed, running in parallel to the Rampur study, a broader community of anthropologists had also begun to voice doubts about the coherence of 'the village' as a functioning social unit. This became clear during a series of seminars conducted at the University of Chicago in 1954. Organized by Robert Redfield, a University of Chicago anthropologist with a keen interest in India, the seminars brought together American, Indian and British anthropologists to discuss key ontological and methodological questions related to the study of the Indian village. During the seminar, participants voiced a full spectrum of opinions on the question of whether villages could be considered 'isolable' units of study. Some, such as the University of Baroda anthropologist M.N. Srinivas, answered in the affirmative, describing the village as 'a community which commands loyalty from all who live in it, irrespective of caste affiliation'.[102] Others, however, painted a different picture. The Indian village, argued McKim Marriott, Kathleen Gough and Gitel Steed, had long been enmeshed in dense 'regional networks of kinship, caste, and trade which divided village groups from one another and tempered much sense of village loyalty and cohesion'.[103] Had cohesive village communities ever existed, suggested others, the gradual incursion of railroads, cash crops, colonial revenue policies and other urbanizing influences had wrought changes that had long since destabilized those earlier patterns of social organization.[104]

Nor was it just anthropologists that challenged the idea of the cohesive village community. In B.R. Ambedkar, an economist, politician, jurist and social reformer, and a renowned campaigner for the rights of India's *Dalit* (untouchable) community, the concept of village

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[101] Ibid., p. 32-36. One of Lewis' Indian collaborators, an anthropologist named H.S. Dhillon, would go on to reiterate the argument in his own study of a southern Indian village, eventually published as a follow up by the PEO as H.S. Dhillon, *Leadership and Groups in a Southern Indian Village* (New Delhi: Planning Commission, Programme Evaluation Organisation, Government of India, 1955).

[102] M.N. Srinivas, 'The Social System of a Mysore Village', in McKim Marriott (ed.) *Village India: Studies in the Little Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 35.

[103] Nicole Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity: American Social Scientists, India and the Pursuit of Development, 1945-1961', unpublished PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2004, pp. 135.

[104] Oscar Lewis, recently returned from his assignment with Ford, also participated in the Chicago seminar. Delivering a paper that compared his experience in the village of Rampur (now referred to as 'Rani Khera') with earlier studies in the Mexican village of Tepoztlán, Lewis explained how the Indian village, unlike the Mexican, formed 'part of multiple intervillage networks…where a single village is related by affinal and lineage ties with over four hundred other villages, thereby making for a kind of rural cosmopolitanism'. Oscar Lewis, 'Peasant Culture in India and Mexico: A Comparative Analysis', in Marriott (ed.), Village India, p. 167. For a detailed analysis of the seminar see Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', pp. 120-142.

unity found its fiercest critic by far. Raised a *Dalit* in a rural area of India's Central Provinces, Ambedkar approached the village from a wholly different perspective to that of other nationalist leaders.[105] Far from an enduring social unit, he argued, the Indian village was little more than a symptom of the profound division that pervaded Indian society. According to Ambedkar, the village was segregated into two groups. On the one hand stood the 'major community' made up of all touchable castes. On the other, the 'minor community' comprising those born into untouchable groups. Far from equal members of a harmonious 'village community', the minor community held dependent status in every possible sense. Economically subservient, the untouchables also occupied separate quarters and were segregated from ceremonial occasions. 'I hold that these village republics have been the ruination of India', Ambedkar remarked famously. 'What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism?'[106] Ambedkar's emphasis on the village as a site of caste oppression made him deeply sceptical of Gandhian and Nehruvian attempts to reconstitute the village community as a basic unit of administration, representation and collective action. From the perspective of the *Dalits,* the enshrinement of the village community represented nothing less than a 'great calamity'.[107]

Neither Nehruvian planners nor American sociologists wholly denied the divisions, tensions and conflicts that Lewis, Ambedkar and others had highlighted. Nehru, for one, possessed a keen awareness of the potential caste and economic inequalities of contemporary village life. For community developers, however, the incongruent, oppressive features of the village coexisted alongside a deeper, underlying pattern of cohesion – as Nehru put it, an 'invisible link' – that bound members of the same village together. There remained, explained Rudra Dutt Singh:

 …symbols, ideas, and values which in certain circumstances and situations force people to forget their internal bickering and external ties, and which impel them to stand united in the face of danger of absorption from outside or of disruption from within. Looked at from the viewpoint of the integral aspect of the village community most of its internal conflicts and external relations then fall in place as features of normal processes of community living.[108]

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[105] For a discussion of the differences between Gandhi, Nehru and Ambedkar see Jodhka, 'Nation and Village', pp. 3343-3353.

[106] 'Draft Constitution – Discussion' in Vasant Moon (ed.), *Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Volume 13* (Bombay: Government of Maharashtra, 1994), p. 62.

[107] 'Untouchables or the Children of India's Ghetto', in *Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Writings and Speeches, Volume 5* (Bombay: Government of Maharashtra, 1989), p. 19.

[108] Dutt Singh, 'The Unity of the Indian Village', p. 11.

While political measures, such as reforms to the *zamindari* landholding system, would help to root out the oppressive features of agrarian relations, the underlying group ties of the village provided a raw social material that could be used to spur people towards collective action. The major 'sociological problem', explained Taylor, was:

…what the village has inherited from the past by way of social organization which can assist development, and what is required of the village if it is to play the roles expected of it in the development programme.[109]

Though recognizing the potential for discord and domination, then, both Nehruvian officials and American social scientists embraced the idea that 'the village' could still act as a conduit for the mobilization of people. In doing so, both would embrace the idea that villages – much like neighbourhoods – could be spurred to action through their own 'natural leaders'.

## Natural leaders of the village community

With its assumption that villages retained the remnants of a core social unity, the Indian CD programme proceeded on the basis that villages could be mobilized through 'village leaders'. 'One of the important ways village level workers can create an interest in all the people in wanting to learn how to farm and live better', explained the CPA's *Manual for Village Level Workers*, 'is to place trust and responsibility on local village leaders'.[110] 'One of the chief objectives of the rural community development program', explained one Indian official, 'is to arouse the self-confidence of the village people through their local leaders'.[111]

American sociologists provided support for this practice, based on their experiences of the neighbourhood group. 'Rural extension in the United States', explained M.L. Wilson, 'lays great emphasis on the place of local leaders in the development of the rural community':

…the "development of the community", headed by local leaders, has been a tremendous factor in creating understanding and in demonstrating and teaching better ways of farming and living. It has demonstrated that such leaders can quickly develop in the village, if given the opportunity, and assisted by training and education.[112]

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[109] Taylor et al, *India's Roots of Democracy,* p. 40.
[110] *Manual for Village Level Workers* (New Delhi, Community Projects Administration, Government of India, 1952), p.
[111] Baij Nath Singh, 'The Impact of the Community Development Program on Rural Leadership', in Richard L. Park and Irene Tinker (eds.), *Leadership and Political Institutions in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 358.
[112] M.L. Wilson, 'Comments on Community Development Projects and National Extension Service Blocks in India', Report 001097, Box 44, Catalogued Reports, 1-3254 (FA739A), FFA, p. 28.

According to Carl C. Taylor, the VLW could only be 'effective in his role as a consultant and as a bridge between the group and others only if he knows who the natural group leaders are and works with groups through them':

It should be taken for granted that there are hundreds of thousands of local group leaders in Indian villages. Nothing is more important in the community development programme than to locate, use, and develop them.[113]

For Ensminger, meanwhile, 'the essential step in creating the new village outlook' was to 'locate the village leaders':

…every village will have its leader-follower patterns…every person in the village is a functional part of some informal leader-follower pattern…Through close attention with these village leaders and by following appropriate and carefully applied extension methods the [VLW] should hope to develop in the minds of these village leaders new attitudes about their present patterns of living and methods of making a living….Since these village leaders will have a following one can expect that ideas well developed in the leaders' minds will be later interpreted and discussed in meaningful village terms within the informal leader-follower group. When this happens the seeds for change toward a new village outlook can said to have been sown.[114]

The search for village leaders underscored the need to work with existing forms of authority in the village. Those already prominent within the village councils (*panchayats*) and other village level institutions, for instance, were identified as key candidates for village leadership. 'As far as possible', described one account:

…[t]he Community Development Project sought the co-operation of existing village institutions…Persons holding offices in these bodies or otherwise prominent in their activities were regarded as 'village leaders', and the development officials made a special effort to work closely with them.[115]

'In almost all villages', the *Manual for Village Level Workers* explained:

…there are headmen…they are natural, sometimes hereditary leaders of the community…A village worker should keep this in mind and while approaching the village problems would do well to keep this village leader on to his side. If he is with him, more than half the village is with him…village Panchayats still wield enormous power. [The VLW] can make an approach through the members of these Council of Elders.[116]

Existing leaders had to prove their worth. In cases where such leaders failed to embrace the role of proactive change agents, for example, programme officials advocated the emergence

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[113] Carl C. Taylor, 'A Critical Analysis of India's Community Development Programme', Report 000561, Box 29, Catalogued Reports 1-3254 (FA739A), FFA, pp. 17-19.
[114] *A Guide to Community Development,* (New Delhi: Ministry of Community Development, Government of India, 1957), p. 13.
[115] S.C. Dube, *India's Changing Villages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), pp. 112-113.
[116] *Manual for Village Level Workers,* p. 18.

of 'new leadership' and the removal of traditional leaders' power. One Ford Foundation pamphlet, for instance, published in 1956, described how a ruling Brahmin family of one village had 'bitterly opposed' the development programme, only to be faced by opposition from new leaders. As villagers rallied round the new leaders to initiate new cooperative action programmes, the Ford report described, these programmes 'symbolised the final destruction of the traditional leader's power'.[117] The CD programme, explained one official, was a 'testing ground for traditional leaders', some of whom were 'losing their positions because of opposition to these calls for action when the majority have wished to rally to them'.[118] Nevertheless, while encouraging the downfall of those who 'resisted change', community developers also championed examples of those 'traditional leaders' who 'under the stimulus of the development programme' had emerged as 'real and vigorous' leaders, capable of enlisting the 'enthusiasm' and 'support' of village people.[119] Traditional leaders were to be given an opportunity to demonstrate that they possessed the desired qualities for leadership. The role of development officials, explained one guidance document, was to 'recognise healthy leadership where it already exists'.[120]

The vision of 'traditional leaders' as agents for village mobilization was one tied deeply to prevailing assumptions about the unity of the Indian village. Traditional elites, according to both CD officials and American social scientists, acted as guardians and trustees of the broader village community, whose role it had always been to coordinate village ceremonial undertakings, mediate between the interests of villagers, and represent the village to external parties.[121] In the eyes of community developers, the leadership of the *panchayat* and landed classes formed a sort of 'natural leadership', one that ran in confluence with, not contradiction of, the basic aims of CD. Here, community developers harked back, once again, to historical understandings of the village community. According to the accounts of Metcalfe, Maine, Gandhi and Nehru, the *panchayat* had always been an institution welded to the broader corporate body of the village. Its leaders acted, first and foremost, in the interests of

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[117] Douglas Ensminger and Jean Joyce, 'A Report on a Social Revolution in India. Ford Foundation Program Letter, India: Report No. 74, 8 May 1956', Report 001774, Box 69, Catalogued Reports 1-3254 (FA739A), FFA, pp. 1-3.
[118] Sushil K. Dey, 'Community Projects in Action in India', in Park and Tinker, *Leadership and Political Institutions in India,* p. 355.
[119] Jean Joyce, 'The Awakening: The Story of Twelve Villages in the Community Development Programme' (New Delhi: Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation, Government of India, 1959).
[120] 'Ministry of Community Development. Subject: Job Chart for Social Education Organiser', File No. F-21/58. B2, Records of the Ministry of Education, NAI, p. 3.
[121] See for example, Dutt Singh, 'The Unity of an Indian Village', pp. 13-14.

the community as a whole. American sociologists provided support for the idea that traditional leaders would work in the interests of the village. As 'guardians of the traditional ways of thinking and behaving', explained Ensminger, those leaders 'more than any others can also be counted upon to be the interpreters of the new'.[122]

The practice of working with existing elites thus reflected key intellectual assumptions underpinning the CD programme. As Subir Sinha has argued, however, it also meshed well with more practical dimensions of programme implementation. Many of the regional-level bureaucrats and development officials employed by CD were, after all, themselves members of a provincial rural middle-class whose own 'gender, class, and caste positions identified them closely with dominant rural groups'. Owing to 'family and caste networks, marriage, and their own stakes in rural landed property', these low-level officials harboured a 'natural affinity' towards existing village elites.[123]

In 1957, the government placed renewed emphasis on the role of leaders with the introduction of a new 'Gram Sahayak' (village leaders) programme. Framed as a response to concerns about the failure of CD to 'evoke popular initiative', this programme provided village leaders with new, structured forms of training that would improve both their understanding of CD and their ability to engage their fellow villagers. Combined with instruction on technical skills, such as agricultural techniques, the training was typically carried out through a 'series of special 3-day sessions in village camps', each attended by 'about 50 leaders'.[124] 'Anyone who has seen these camps', explained one Ford Foundation report:

…is strongly impressed with the initiative and the growing sense of responsibility the camps awaken among the village leaders…In block after block today, the dynamic and aggressive force for development is coming from these newly-found and newly-trained village leaders.[125]

A continued emphasis on the role of village leaders found further articulation with the implementation, from 1959 onwards, of a series of administrative reforms to the CD programme centred around the concept of 'Panchayati Raj'. Based on the recommendations of a Study Team convened under by Congress politician Balwantray Mehta, Panchayati Raj proposed the transfer of increased decision making authority, including decisions relating to

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[122] *A Guide to Community Development*, p. 13.
[123] Sinha, 'Lineages of the Developmentalist State', p. 81.
[124] Taylor et al., *India's Roots of Democracy,* p. 211.
[125] 'The Ford Foundation in India 1951-1959', p. 141.

CD projects and resources, out of local government agencies and into the hands of village-level *panchayats*.[126] In 1959, India's parliament passed new legislation enabling this system to be adopted by states. The adoption of Panchayati Raj reflected a broader agenda of 'democratic decentralization' pursued by the Nehruvian state. At the same time, however, it also reconfirmed the government's convictions concerning the role of village leaders in CD. In handing more power to the *panchayat*, Panchayati Raj sought to increase the role of village leaders in the planning, organization and implementation of local CD projects. Like the Gram Sahayak programme, then, it spoke of an enduring belief that local leaders, free from the interference of local government agencies, would act to engage their fellow villagers in bottom-up programmes of community self-help.

It was not long, however, before questions would be raised about the consequences of working with village leaders. From the mid-1950s, observers, both official and non-official, would begin to highlight a number of important points about the workings of the CD programme on the ground. The first concerned the nature of the programmes initiated under CD. In many areas, it seemed, programmes of so-called 'cooperative village action' launched under the auspices of CD had been projects of a particular kind. Often centred around modest physical undertakings, including wells, roads, irrigation and community buildings, these projects had in most cases offered benefits 'skewed toward the wealthy', ignoring alternative areas of action – such as land rights, education and caste reform – that might have a more significant impact on the lower orders of the village.[127]

At the same time, contemporaries also raised concerns about the nature of popular participation in CD. In cases where villagers provided support for CD-backed projects, one observer remarked:

Public participation…has mostly been in the form of participation in *shramadan* (people's voluntary unpaid labour). These devices often lasting a week, were organized under the direction of leader politicians of the village. They could manage to collect a reasonable number of people for this work but a great majority of participants had very little understanding of its purpose. There was not much overt resistance to it, but a very considerable proportion of the participants viewed it as a form of coercion and submitted to it in a spirit of obedience…it is difficult to see how this approach could generate in them a habit of democratic cooperative action.[128]

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[126] *Report of the Team for the Study of Community Projects and National Extension Service* (New Delhi: Committee on Plan Projects, Government of India, 1957).
[127] Immerwahr, *Thinking Small,* pp. 92-93.
[128] S.C. Dube, 'Some Problems of Communication in Rural Community Development', *Economic Development and Cultural Change,* 5:2, 1957, p. 144.

Popular participation, described another account, took the form of 'extorted labour': 'It was toil, pure labour contribution without the people themselves understanding why they were doing so and without being involved in decision making.'[129]

Village leaders were supposed to engage villagers in programmes of genuine cooperative action. What was actually happening, critics argued, was quite different altogether. Approached as 'natural leaders' of village groups, rural elites had used their privileged positions to instigate projects that served their own interests, not those of the community more broadly. Perhaps worse, they had used their social and economic influence to conscript villagers' labour for those projects as well. 'Village solidarity', one observer remarked:

…would be strengthened if the lower castes were recognized by the higher-born as having equal rights; if they really shared in the fruits of cooperative action, they would not grudge their share of the labour. Yet almost everywhere the attempts of the lower castes to raise their status are strenuously resisted. The civic sense of the villagers would be strengthened if the rich would accept the obligation to utilise part of their wealth for the good of the community. …Today, the ancient tradition of charity and selflessness has become faded.[130]

Working through village leaders, it seemed, created other problems too. 'In some villages' argued Adrian C. Mayer, an anthropologist studying CD in Madhya Bharat state, 'the individual leaders were at the head of distinct factions'. At times, such as when factional leadership was 'recognised by all' in the village, or when factions 'competed to outdo each other', the results could be positive, so far as the progress of CD was concerned. At the same time, however, the prevalence of factional alignments could also prove injurious for the CD programme. Factional leaders might seek improvements that benefited only their own group, and even seek to block the progress of other factions. There was also the possibility that 'development work itself may be taken as the main issue of opposition' between factions, thereby causing the programme as a whole to 'fall into disrepute'.[131]

Measures such as the Gram Sahayak programme and Panchayati Raj were supposed to address these emerging issues. Training sought to educate village leaders on the meaning of CD. Panchayati Raj, meanwhile, by introducing formal elections to the village *panchayats,* sought to widen the base of leadership, thereby loosening the grip of existing elites over areas such as CD. According to critics, however, such measures only deepened the problems facing the programme. The well-established social and economic positions of existing leaders, they

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[129] Garvin Karunaratne, 'The Failure of Community Development in India', *Community Development Journal,* 11:2, 1976, p. 101.

[130] Hugh Tinker, 'Authority and Community in Village India', *Pacific Affairs,* 32:4, 1959, pp. 374-375.

[131] Adrian C. Mayer, 'Development Projects in an Indian Village', *Pacific Affairs,* 29:1, 1956, pp. 41-42.

argued, enabled them to control the behaviour of their fellow villagers in council elections. In most areas, therefore, *panchayats* remained firmly in the hands of existing rural elites. 'It seems clear', explained one Ford Foundation report, 'that the more favoured class – more education, more land, more status and more caste – are chosen as the [panchayat] leaders':

One samiti president (a well-to-do land-owner) frankly said, "They vote as we tell them to" and admitted that the agricultural labourers (dependent for work, credit and goodwill on the landed farmers) were in effect threatened not even cajoled into "voting right".[132]

From this perspective, the passing of new powers down to these local bodies had merely provided existing elites with yet further means to steer CD projects in their own interests, thereby either ignoring or exploiting the 'weaker sections' of the village.[133]

In some places, it seemed, the passing of power to the *panchayat* had also further exacerbated the factional dimension of rural social relations. 'It is generally felt' concluded one meeting of Indian officials, 'that elections to the Panchayati Raj bodies have increased the number and intensity of the factions in the villages':

In fact, one can discern a vertical relationship between political factions at the state and even at the central level and the electoral factions at the samiti and panchayat levels. There is also no denying the fact that in quite a few cases office bearers of the panchayati raj institutions are devoting themselves more to political factions than to the development functions.[134]

As CD became subject to claims that it did little more than intensify the hierarchies and divisions within villages, the programme showed signs of lapsing from its original intentions in other ways. The focus on village leaders, it seemed, in addition to alienating and exploiting large segments of the rural population, had also paved the way for a programme that looked increasingly top-down, rather than bottom-up, in its orientation. Faced with declining popular participation in CD, for example, some development officials had begun to look to local leaders not as channels for the elicitation of local 'felt needs' but rather as conduits through which to push externally-mandated projects upon the people. In his history of the Indian CD programme, Daniel Immerwahr has described how this process of what he calls 'backhanded authoritarianism' became a progressively more significant part of the way CD operated on

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[132] 'Panchayati Raj in Andhra Pradesh – some observations and some unanswered questions', Report No. 017736, Box 935, Catalogued Reports 17727-19980 (FA739G), FFA, pp. 7-8.
[133] For one example of this perspective see 'Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the Consultative Council on Community Development and Panchayati Raj, 17th February, 1973', File No. Q-17011/6/70 – A&N: Combined Consultative Council on Community Development and Panchayati Raj, Records of the Planning Commission, NAI.
[134] 'Meeting of the Consultative Council on Panchayati Raj at 9:30m on 10th November 1970 – Agenda and Notes', File No. Q-17011/6/70 – A&N: Combined Consultative Council on Community Development and Panchayati Raj, Records of the Planning Commission, NAI.

the ground during the 1960s. Increasingly, he argues, 'encouraging the "participation" of the community did not mean encouraging poor people to craft their own plans but rather eliciting their consent to the government's programs'.[135] Community developers were themselves acutely aware of these problems. Rather than acting as 'beholden' leaders 'to local groups', feared Carl C. Taylor, some local leaders were becoming 'the mere tools or lackeys of the agencies whose services are now flowing into the villages'.[136]

As a programme aimed at mobilizing community self-help through natural village leaders, then, CD had soon become subject to criticism that it did nothing of the sort. By embracing a model of rural development tied to the idea of cohesive village communities, critics argued, community developers had not only overlooked the potential for divisions (both vertical and horizontal) within the village, they had also overlooked the ways in which a development programme built around the former assumption could have profoundly contradictory effects. The framing of villages as communities had opened the door to an understanding of village leaders, including existing leaders, as conduits for group mobilization. In doing so, it had allowed for the deferral of influence, resources and power to leaders whose actions, in some cases at least, spoke little of enduring 'close-knit bonds' or 'invisible links'. Those approached as natural group leaders not only failed to engage the lower social orders of the village, they had also used CD to entrench the deep structures of social, economic and political power that divided villages. By assuming villages formed cohesive units, then, CD had done more than just downplay the possibility of alternative social arrangements. In many cases, it had divided villages more than they had ever been divided before.

## Conclusion

As the problems pervading CD gradually became clearer, the programme itself soon began to unravel. Growing concerns about the programme's failure to reach those sections of rural society that needed it most were an important factor here. It was, however, renewed concerns about agricultural production that played the decisive role. In expanding CD throughout the 1950s, the Nehruvian state had hoped that it would enable India to meet national grain production targets by 1958. Between 1956 and 1958, however, failed monsoon rains across northern India had led to a ten percent fall in national agricultural production, leaving the

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[135] This increasingly top-down bent to CD would, according to Immerwahr, eventually turn the programme into little more than a 'bureaucratic husk'. As it slipped into an alliance between dominant local elites and government officials, CD morphed gradually from a grassroots self-help programme into 'a handle by which the state could grasp its rural populace'. Immerwahr, *Thinking Small,* pp. 94-97.
[136] Carl C. Taylor to Evelyn Wood, December 27, 1957, Box 35, CCTP.

government with no choice but to import, at great cost, millions of tons of grain.[137] In the early 1950s, we have seen, concern about food supply, when combined with Etawah's striking results, had created an opportunity for CD to claim the centre-stage. Now, however, it brought with it a gradual shift away from CD's broad self-help agenda and towards programmes targeted more explicitly at increased agricultural production as the central goal of rural development strategy. In 1960, the Government of India signalled the beginning of this shift with the establishment of a new Intensive Agricultural Districts Programme (IADP). Coordinated by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MFA), the IADP reoriented the administrative apparatus of CD towards the new goal of increasing use of fertilizers, farming equipment and credit within rural areas chosen for their high potential agricultural yield.[138] The shift towards agriculture would be pushed further by the decision, in 1966, to relegate the CPA (and by extension CD) to a subsidiary arm of the MFA. In this capacity, CD would linger on for several more years. From 1965, however, under its new Minister C. Subramaniam, the MFA's focus would shift towards increases in national wheat and rice production through investments in 'hard' agricultural science. As the promotion of pesticides, fertilizers and new strains of hybrid seed moved to the forefront, the foundations for India's 'Green Revolution' were in turn being laid.[139]

As the focus of Indian policymakers moved towards 'hard' agricultural science, the thrust of American assistance took a similar turn. During the 1960s, following a decade of support for the CD programme, the Ford Foundation also began to channel the majority of its funding for Indian rural development towards agricultural programmes, beginning, in 1961, with a new $11 million grant for the IADP.[140] The US Government, meanwhile, would also shift its

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[137] Sackley, 'Village Models', p. 28; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot,* p. 142.

[138] On the IADP and its effects see Rakesh Mohan and Robert E. Stevenson, 'The intensive agricultural districts programme in India: A new evaluation', *The Journal of Development Studies,* 11:3, 1975, pp. 135-154.

[139] On India's Green Revolution see: Akhil Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture and the Making of Modern India* (London: Duke University Press, 1998); John H. Perkins, *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution: Wheat, Genes, and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Francine R. Frankel, *India's Green Revolution: Economic Gains and Political Costs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971); Nick Cullather, 'Miracles of Modernization: The Green Revolution and the Apotheosis of Technology', *Diplomatic History,* 28:2, 2004, pp. 227-254; Cullather, *The Hungry World,* chs 6, 7 and 8; Govindan Parayil, 'The green revolution in India: A case study of technological change', *Technology and Culture,* 33:4, 1992, pp. 737-756; Adam B. Lerner, 'Political Neo-Malthusianism and the Progression of India's Green Revolution', *Journal of Contemporary Asia,* 48:3, 2016, pp. 485-507.

[140] Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', pp. 232-233. Ford, in fact, had played an important role in the launch of the IADP. In 1958-1959, the Government of India had invited the Ford Foundation to sponsor a team of agricultural economists to make recommendations for efforts to address the country's food production problems. The resulting report, entitled *India's Food Crisis and Steps to Meet It*, had recommended an increased focus of CD's VLWs on agricultural matters. The report would provide a major justification for the IADP. See Mohan and Stevenson, 'The intensive agricultural districts programme in India', pp. 136-137. For the Ford Foundation

focus in this direction. The most significant aspect of this was a new, concerted effort to build India's capacity in the field of scientific agricultural research. Increasingly, US Government assistance would target not sociological expertise for the CD programme, but faculty exchanges between Indian agricultural colleges and US land-grant universities.[141] The Rockefeller Foundation, another American philanthropy, would also come to play a key role here. In addition to funding for new Indian PhD programmes in agricultural science, Rockefeller would underwrite the expansion of new research institutions such as the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, focused, above all, on the development of new high-yielding varieties of seed.[142]

As parties on all sides drifted gradually away from CD, questions concerning rural sociological knowledge found themselves, in turn, pushed gradually from the centre-ground. The exchange of experts in agronomy and other agricultural sciences became increasingly more common during the 1960s; the transfer of experts in rural sociology and community group dynamics, increasingly less so. And yet, even as the CD programme ended in 'failure', the pursuit itself had set in motion processes that would leave a lasting imprint on both India and the United States. Through CD, American organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, had become invested in Indian development in new and unprecedented ways. Through CD, the notion that American expertise might have something to contribute to Indian development had gained a new sense of legitimacy and appeal. One of the most important legacies of CD, however, so far as this thesis is concerned, was the new relationship it had galvanized between Indian development and the Ford Foundation specifically. Out of its experience assisting the Indian CD programme, Ford would go on to establish not only a permanent residence in the country (at the head of which Ensminger would remain for over two decades), but also a broader commitment to support India's social and economic development in the longer term. As will be seen, Ford would go on to facilitate further attempts to apply American social scientific knowledge to Indian development. Here,

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report see *India's Food Crisis and Steps to Meet It,* Report No. 000520, Box 27, Catalogued Reports 1-3254 (FA739A), FFA.

[141] On the growing connections between Indian agricultural research and US land grant colleges, and the role of the US government (as well as Ford and Rockefeller) in sponsoring these connections, see Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', pp. 233-234; Merrill, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 177-178; Dinesh Abrol, 'American Involvement in Indian Agricultural Research', *Social Scientist,* 11:10, 1983, pp. 8-26.

[142] On the Rockefeller Foundation's role in supporting agricultural research in India and beyond see Gupta, *Postcolonial Developments,* pp. 56-61; Perkins, *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution*, pp. 140-186; Cullather, *The Hungry World,* pp. 180-204; Cullather, 'Miracles of Modernization', pp. 227-254; John H. Perkins, 'The Rockefeller Foundation and the Green Revolution, 1941-1956', *Agriculture and Human Values*, 7:3-4, 1990, pp. 1-13; Deborah Fitzgerald, 'Exporting American Agriculture: The Rockefeller Foundation in Mexico, 1943-53', *Social Studies of Science,* 16:3, 1986, pp. 457-483.

then, CD had brought into being a connection that would prove seminal to the enterprise of psychologized development moving forward.

If it brokered new institutional alignments, CD would also prove formative for psychologized development in other ways. More specifically, the fall from grace of CD's low-modernist, group-centric approach would create space for new ideas about the sociological and psychological underpinnings of development to come to the fore. In the next chapter, I turn to explore the emergence of new forms of psychologized development positioned in direct opposition to community developers' earlier claims. Tethered to a broader social scientific paradigm of 'modernization', these approaches would locate the basis of development not in 'group mobilization', but rather in a process of *individual* psychological adjustment. The principal sphere in which these claims would be tried and tested would be that of industrial entrepreneurship.

# Chapter three

## Modernizing the mind: modernization theory, motivation and Indian economic development

On 13 December 1957, in the secluded setting of Endicott House, a stately home some 20 miles southwest of Boston, leading American social scientists gathered together for a conference on 'Community Development and National Change'. Held against the backdrop of increasing American involvement in 'community development' programmes around the world, as well as increasing concerns about such programmes' shortcomings, the conference, convened by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Center for International Studies (CENIS), brought together social scientists, along with aid officials, donors and practitioners, in an attempt to clarify the aims of community development and to discuss the nature of the American contribution moving forward. During the final session of the conference, following three days of intense and, at times hostile, debate between participants, David C. McClelland, a young psychologist from the Harvard University Department for Social Relations, rose to speak.[1]

A little-known face among the eminent cast gathered at Endicott (among which included the renowned rural sociologist-turned-community developer Carl C. Taylor), McClelland nevertheless used the conference to outline a bold new understanding of what community development might mean. Addressing the apparent 'failure' of such programmes around the world, he argued that the problem lay in the fact that the concept of community development had itself been labouring under a misapprehension. Community developers, he argued, appeared to have 'agreed that group problem solving is not only the right method of achieving the objectives of community development but perhaps even a definition of community development itself'. In doing so, they had based their efforts around the idea that 'if people meet together [and] decide what their needs are', they 'will work out plans for meeting their needs', plans 'that individuals will then successfully and energetically execute'. There was 'no reason at all', McClelland explained, 'for accepting this as self-evident'.[2]

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[1] For a summary of the conference proceedings, see Irwin T. Sanders (ed.), *Community Development and National Change: Summary of Conference, Endicott House, December 13-15, 1957* (Washington DC: International Cooperation Administration, 1958).

[2] David C. McClelland, 'Community Development and the Nature of Human Motivation: Some Implications of Recent Research [1957]', Box 20, David C. McClelland Papers (hereafter DCMP), Harvard University Archives, Harvard University, pp. 23-45.

A preoccupation with techniques for group mobilization, McClelland went on, had caused community developers to overlook what cutting-edge psychological research had shown was the *real* driver of human action. For it was 'individual motivation', not 'group dynamics', that formed the true catalyst of change. People were moved to action not by the behaviour of their fellow group members, but as a result of their own 'intrinsic motive and value orientations'. It was 'in the end…always the individual who acts'.[3] During the course of the lecture, and throughout the next decade, McClelland would go on to suggest that the key to development lay in one particular form of motivation – what he called the 'need to achieve'. An observable, quantifiable psychological trait, the need to achieve represented the vital 'inner force' that underwrote an individual's capacity to behave in economically productive ways. Its widespread proliferation, McClelland argued, formed the touchstone of social and economic development.[4]

McClelland's critique of community development concerned more than simply the respective merits of individual versus group-based models of behavioural change. It also spoke of a more profound shift taking place within the American social sciences by the time of the MIT conference. More specifically, the argument reflected the emergence of a new way of thinking about development, one that stressed the need not for adaptation to local socio-cultural conditions and 'felt needs', but rather for the initiation of a prescriptive process of societal change centred around the concept of 'modernization'. Development, this new paradigm argued, was a process in which societies moved linearly *from* a state of 'tradition' *towards* a common endpoint of 'modernity'. In the process, they adopted not only new technologies and institutional forms but also a specific set of 'modern' social, cultural and psychological norms. McClelland's claim that development required a certain type of individual motivation thus formed part of a burgeoning consensus that conflated development – increasingly referred to as 'modernization' – with the emergence of a particular way of being.

Discourses on modernization framed development as a process requiring linear, predictable social and psychological change. According to most theorists of modernization, such changes represented the inevitable effect of more structural and institutional aspects of the modernization process. For McClelland, however, the opposite was true. Development, he

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[3] Ibid., p. 24.
[4] For a journalistic report on McClelland's lecture see Malvina Lindsay, 'Foreign Aid Test – 'N' Achievement', *Washington Post*, 26 May, 1958.

argued, was a process that hinged ultimately on 'changing people first'. During the course of the 1960s, McClelland would embark on a quest to prove that economic development in particular could be realized through the pre-emptive installation of the right 'motivational' conditions. In doing so, he would find his central proving ground in India.

This chapter explores the entanglements between McClelland's psychological approach to 'modernization' and development thinking and practice in the Indian arena. In India, it suggests, McClelland's claims about the need for pre-emptive psychological modernization found fertile ground among groups of officials, social scientists and business communities who saw in them a unique opportunity to realize Indian economic development from the 'bottom-up'. During the 1960s, these groups would come together to explore the potential of heightened 'motivation' to produce modernizing changes in economic life. At the same time, it was also in India that McClelland's psychological approach would ultimately face its most significant opposition.

I begin by situating McClelland's enterprise within different contexts of late 1950s American social science. Starting with emerging concepts of 'psychological modernization', I show how McClelland intervened in this discourse with a theory that stressed the role of psychological change as a cause, rather than an effect, of modernization. Tracing this theory from its origins in needs-based understandings of personality, I then place McClelland in dialogue with other contemporary theorists of economic modernization, exploring commonalities and differences in their understanding of the relationship between psychological variables and economic change. In the chapter's middle sections, I explore how McClelland's efforts to prove his theory led to the conduct of action research experiments in India. In doing so, I argue that the application of achievement motivation theory to Indian economic development was an enterprise driven not so much by Americans, but by the efforts of Indians themselves. Moreover, as McClelland conducted his own experiments, the motivational paradigm soon morphed into a broader feature of development thinking and practice in India.

The final sections of the chapter turn to explore forms of competition and contestation waged against McClelland's motivational approach. Here, I situate the motivational enterprise within a contemporary debate about Indian culture and economic development. While McClelland's ideas about the need for new psychological norms converged with a broader body of thought concerning the hindrance posed to economic development by Indian (and

more specifically Hindu) culture, others vigorously opposed the idea that the country's existing socio-cultural norms were somehow unsuited to economic development. Faced down by relativists on one side, McClelland's motivational approach would also find itself subject to other forms of rivalry. One came from Indian psychologists who, while embracing the motivational approach, nevertheless sought to re-work it to suit 'Indian' conditions. Another, however, came in the form of the increasing predominance of the particular model of development that McClelland had initially sought to refute. Indeed, while McClelland found in India a site to prove his own vision of economic development through psychological change, the country was simultaneously becoming an arena in which proponents of more economistic theories of development sought to prove theirs.

## McClelland, modernization and motivation

McClelland's claim that development required a particular type of individual motivation sat comfortably within a broader set of ideas rising to prominence within the American social sciences of the late 1950s, at the centre of which sat the totemic concept of 'modernization'. Downplaying ideas about the dialectical relationship between tradition and modernity – and the subsequent need to fuse development efforts to local social and cultural traditions – new discourses on 'modernization' framed development as a process that hinged on a linear transformation of societies *from* a state of 'tradition' *to* a fixed endpoint of 'modernity'. Forged in new interdisciplinary research centres such as the Harvard Department for Social Relations, the MIT CENIS and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Committee on Comparative Politics, modernization theory replaced nineteenth century ideas about racial and civilizational hierarchy with a new set of heuristic distinctions between traditional and modern. Now, however, the differences between societies were not fixed and static, but rather fluid and mutable; comprising changes which all societies would go through in the natural course of their evolution and growth.[5]

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[5] The rise of modernization theory within American social science – as well as its far-reaching implications – is now the subject of a vast literature. The most important works include Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (London: Johns Hopkins, 2007); David Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission: Modernization and the Construction of an American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Michael E. Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Michael E. Latham, *Modernization as Ideology: American Social Science and "Nation Building" in the Kennedy Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); various contributions to David C. Engerman et al (eds.), *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development and the Global Cold War* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press).

Proponents of modernization stressed the totalizing nature of the modernization process. In the transition to modernity, they argued, societies not only adopted new institutions and technologies, they also replaced 'traditional outlooks' with 'modern' social and psychological norms. The strength of the belief that modernization would bring with it predictable psychological changes was such that some social scientists dedicated themselves to the study of this process in action. Two notable exemplars, in this regard, were the Yale psychologist Leonard Doob and the Harvard sociologist Alex Inkeles. Doob, a behavioral psychologist by training and former contributor to John Dollard's *Frustration and Aggression* experiments, spent much of the post-war decades exploring the process of what he called psychological 'civilization' within African and Caribbean societies. Using the term 'civilization' to refer to the 'culture or the way of life possessed by modern literate and industrial nations in Europe and America', Doob suggested that civilized societies were marked by a particular set of psychological propensities, including tolerance, reason, self-reflection, objective problem solving, and abstraction, that contrasted markedly to the attributes of 'less civilized people'. Through interviews, surveys and projective tests, Doob looked not only for 'objective' evidence of what these psychological differences were, but also for signs that test subjects were themselves in the process of 'becoming more civilized'.[6]

Inkeles, meanwhile, a former wartime expert on Soviet 'national character' and a key figure within Harvard's Russian Studies Centre, would spend the 1960s conducting his own research on the psychological dimensions of 'modernization'.[7] Like Doob, Inkeles framed modernization as a process that necessarily entailed a psychological transition, one in which 'traditional' mindsets gave way to new 'modern' ones. Terming this endpoint 'Overall Modernity (OM)', Inkeles defined it by a series of character traits including 'an openness to new experience', 'the assertion of increasing independence from 'traditional' authority figures', 'high occupational and professional ambition', and even 'a preference for people to be on time'. Through study teams in six 'modernizing' countries (including one in India), coordinated under the umbrella of the Harvard Project on Social and Cultural Aspects of

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[6] Leonard W. Doob, *Becoming More Civilized: A Psychological Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960). See also the later Leonard W. Doob, 'Scales for Assaying Psychological Modernization in Africa', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 31:3, 1967, pp. 414-421.

[7] For the connections between Inkeles' work on Soviet society and his later interest in psychological modernization, see David C. Engerman, *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) pp. 54-57; and Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future,* pp. 95-96.

Modernization', Inkeles set out to measure and compare levels of OM among different social groups within the resident populations.[8]

For both Inkeles and Doob, the question was not just the categorization of differences between 'psychological modernity' and its opposite, nor simply whether test subjects showed signs of becoming more psychologically 'modern', but also the factors that gave rise to 'modern men'. Connecting to his earlier work, Doob would link the process of psychological civilization with the emergence of a combination of factors such as frustration, aggression, and a greater toleration for deferred gratification caused by increased contact between civilized and less civilized societies, a process expedited by the introduction of civilizing forces like education and mass communication.[9] Inkeles's research, meanwhile, coalesced around his conviction that the key factor in the making of individual modernity was 'the factory experience'. While forces like urbanization, education and exposure to mass media were themselves important in shaping thought and behaviour, he argued, it was the experience of industrial work, with its capacity to inculcate values of 'efficacy', 'readiness for innovation', and 'planning', that served as a uniquely effective 'school' in the making of modern minds.[10] Notwithstanding these different points of emphasis, both Doob and Inkeles shared a common view of psychological modernization as a process that would occur through the life experiences of individuals within a modernizing society. As 'modern' institutions, technologies and cultures were established, this view held, such changes would work to produce new mindsets within the people that experienced them. Psychological change, then, was an *effect* of modernity. In Inkeles's words, it was 'the great ends of the development process'.[11]

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[8] For write-ups of the research see Alex Inkeles and David H. Smith, *Becoming Modern: Individual Change in Six Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). See also Alex Inkeles, 'Making Men Modern: On the Causes and Consequences of Individual Change in Six Developing Countries', in *American Journal of Sociology,* 75, 2, 1969, pp. 208-225; and Alex Inkeles et al., *Exploring Individual Modernity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). For India-specific insights see Alex Inkeles and A.K. Singh, 'A Cross-Cultural Measure of Modernity and Some Popular Indian Images', *Journal of General and Applied Psychology,* 1, 1968, pp. 33-43.

[9] Doob, *Becoming More Civilized,* p. 71-101.

[10] Inkeles and Smith, *Becoming Modern*, pp. 158-164. 'There were people', explained Inkeles, 'like myself, who believed that one major element in their failure was a kind of socio-psychological factor of some kind, or something cultural, and in part that represented having a certain set of attitudes or values or orientations towards the world…I thought you could organize the work process in such a way that you'll get that effect. These people will then move out into the society and spread this influence'. Oral History with Alex Inkeles, Spencer Foundation Project, Columbia Center for Oral History, Columbia University.

[11] Inkeles and Smith, Ibid., p. 291. While I have singled out Doob and Inkeles here, there were others who held this consequentialist view of psychological modernization. The sociologist, Daniel Lerner, for example, became a proponent of the role of mass media in inducing psychological change in traditional societies. See Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: Free Press, 1958). For a

The theory of achievement motivation fed into this emerging discourse on the psychological dimensions of modernization. In doing so, however, it represented a specific take on the process. Distinct from the arguments of Doob and Inkeles, McClelland's theory would suggest that psychological change represented not so much an effect of the modernization process, but a necessary precondition of it. Modernization, according to McClelland, required 'changing people first'.[12]



*Theorists of 'psychological modernization'*

**Figure 6. Alex Inkeles, Leonard W. Doob and David C. McClelland (from left to right)**

(Source: John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation)

The theory had its origins in the laboratory, in theorization and experimentation in the psychology of human needs. Attempts to understand human personality and behaviour through the lens of human needs had become increasingly common within American psychology by the middle decades of the twentieth century. In 1938, the Harvard psychologist Henry A. Murray had published *Explorations in Personality*, a major new treatise in this field. According to Murray's thesis, all individuals possessed the same set of basic needs – some 'primary' (biological), some 'secondary' (psychogenic) – which together shaped human nature. While these needs were common to all, their distribution varied between individuals. The extent to which a person possessed particular needs, according to Murray, especially 'secondary' needs, determined their individual personality and behaviour.[13] In 1943, meanwhile, in an article entitled 'A Theory of Human Motivation',

recent historical biography of Lerner see Hemant Shah, *The Production of Modernization: Daniel Lerner, Mass Media, and the Passing of Traditional Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012).
[12] David C. McClelland, *The Achieving Society* (New York: D. Van Nostrand 1961), p. 337.
[13] Henry A. Murray, *Explorations in Personality* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938).

Abraham Maslow, a psychologist at Brooklyn College New York, published the first iteration of his own theory of personality based on human needs. Describing 'man' as 'a perpetually wanting animal', Maslow explained how individual personality and behaviour was determined, above all, by an individual's position within a hierarchical structure of needs. Beginning with basic 'physiological' needs, these needs rose through 'safety', 'love' and 'esteem' needs, eventually arriving at the need for 'self-actualization'. As needs at one level were fulfilled, Maslow argued, new needs emerged which in turn came to 'dominate the organism'.[14]

Upon receipt of a PhD in experimental psychology from Yale University in 1941, McClelland had entered enthusiastically into this emerging field of needs-based psychology.[15] Influenced by Henry Murray's work, McClelland developed an interest in the practice (already pioneered by Murray) of using projective techniques to measure and compare the need drives of individuals. Together with his colleague Christiana Morgan, Murray had developed the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) explicitly for this purpose. Presenting subjects with a series of indeterminate images, the test asked participants to use these to construct a 'fantasy' story, careful analysis of which, according to Murray, could reveal the unconscious need patterns that drove the individual.[16] Interested in Murray's use of the TAT as a 'technique for measuring motivation', McClelland brought a 'systematic approach' to its use.[17] Using the TAT to test thousands of individual subjects, most of them his students at Wesleyan University, his post-doctoral institutional home, McClelland meticulously analysed and coded the outputs to measure 'need patterns' within the imagery produced.[18] The results, he argued, pointed to the existence of *three* forms of motivational need – 'the need for power', 'the need for affiliation', and 'the need for achievement'. It was

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[14] Abraham Maslow, 'A Theory of Human Motivation', *Psychological* Review, 50:4, pp. 370-396. The argument would later be expanded in Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (New York: Harper, 1954).
[15] On McClelland's early interest in motivation, see 'David McClelland' in Richard Evans (ed.), *The Making of a Social Psychology: Discussions with Creative Contributors* (New York: Gardner Press, 1980), p. 85.
[16] For a brief but instructive history of the Thematic Apperception Test, see Rebecca Lemov, *Database of Dreams: The Lost Quest to Catalog Humanity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 27-43
[17] 'David McClelland'*,* pp. 87-88.
[18] One technique used here was that of 'motive arousal'. Here, the psychologists undertook to induce subjects into a particular motive state – e.g. a need for achievement – prior to taking the test, thereby allowing them to analyse what TAT output looked like when produced by an individual with a high need to achieve. The presence of similar themes within TATs produced in a 'normal' state were then claimed to be evidence of a high intrinsic need to achieve. See David C. McClelland, 'Methods of Measuring Human Motivation', in John W. Atkinson (ed.) *Motives in Fantasy, Action, and Society: A Method of Assessment and Study* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1958), pp. 7-42; David G. Winter, 'The Science of the TAT: Development of Empirically-Derived TAT-Motive Measures', Series: Correspondence, Box 87, DCMP. For the TAT images used by McClelland and his Wesleyan colleagues during this period see Atkinson (ed.), *Motives in Fantasy, Action and Society,* pp. 819-830.

differences in the distribution of these needs, McClelland argued, that underpinned differences in individual personality.[19]

As he delved further into the relationship between need orientations and personality, McClelland came to focus on one need in particular: the need for achievement. In his *Explorations,* Murray had also identified the 'need for achievement' as a basic human need, equating it with a desire to 'accomplish something difficult…to overcome obstacles and attain a high standard; to excel oneself; to rival and surpass others'.[20] Following this broad definition, McClelland argued that the results of TATs showed considerable variations in the proclivity of this need, as manifested in the level of 'achievement imagery' in the stories people told. Using situational tests, McClelland argued that those with a higher need for achievement also demonstrated consistent behavioural traits, among which included 'moderate risk-taking', 'personal responsibility', 'feedback', and 'realistic goal-setting'.[21]

According to McClelland, the need for achievement (or '*n* Achievement') was a 'socially acquired' motive.[22] All children had an inborn ability to feel satisfaction with the growth of their own skills and 'mastery' over their environment, he argued. It was those who had experienced this type of satisfaction more regularly, however, that would be more driven to seek it again in the future. A high need to achieve was thus the product of the systematic experience of the satisfaction that came from achievement. In most cases, it was related to a childhood in which realistic opportunities for self-improvement and achievement had been a regular occurrence. According to McClelland, subjects with a higher need to achieve tended to have been raised by parents who encouraged 'excellence' and expressed a healthy degree

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[19] For a summary of a later summary of these three different forms of motivation see David C. McClelland, *Human Motivation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp 223-267 (achievement); pp. 268-332 (power); pp. 333-372 (affiliation).

[20] Murray, *Explorations in Personality,* p. 164.

[21] For an account of McClelland's early experimentation on the need to achieve see David C. McClelland, John W. Atkinson, Russell A. Clark, Edgar L. Lowell, *The Achievement Motive* (New York: Appleton Century-Crofts, 1953). On the behavioural traits associated with the need to achieve see McClelland, *The Achieving Society,* pp. 36-46 and 205-239.

[22] For motives as 'acquired needs' see David C. McClelland, 'Toward a theory of motive acquisition', *American Psychologist*, 20:5, 1965, 321-333. By framing the need for achievement as an 'acquired' motive, McClelland diverged substantially from 'psychobiological' approaches to drive orientation prevailing elsewhere. For the psychobiological approach see Hans Eysenck, *The biological basis of personality* (Springfield, Illinois: Thomas Publications, 1967) and H. J. Eysenck (ed.), *Experiments in Motivation* (London: Pergamon Press, 1964). For a revealing intellectual biography of Eysenck see Roderick D. Buchanan, *Playing With Fire: The Controversial Career of Hans J. Eysenck* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

of 'emotional pleasure' in their achievements. By contrast, those with a lower need to achieve had typically experienced paternal 'dominance' or 'indulgence'.[23]



*Theorists of human needs*

**Figure 7. David C. McClelland with Abraham Maslow (left)**

(Source: University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Records of the Nebraska
Symposium on Motivation, 1955)

Initially, McClelland's work on the need for achievement remained theoretical. A 1953 publication entitled *The Achievement Motive*, co-authored by McClelland and several colleagues, consisted of little more than a detailed summary of the lab-based experiments conducted at Wesleyan and other locations during the intervening years.[24] During the course

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[23] On the sources of achievement motivation see McClelland, *The Achieving Society,* pp. 336-390. As Alice O' Connor has argued, McClelland's identification of child-rearing as a key factor in the production of achievement and (thereby productive economic behaviour) also reflected a tendency among post-war social scientists to stress the role of the family, and child-rearing patterns in particular, in the making of poverty. By framing poverty as a product of personality traits linked to cultural dynamics within the family, this approach reversed the assumptions of more 'sympathetic' anthropological approaches, including those which emphasized the role of impoverished circumstances in the production of certain behaviours. See Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy and the Poor in Twentieth-Century US History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), pp. 107-109.

[24] The other major site for achievement motivation research being Michigan University. McClelland et al, *The Achievement Motive,* pp. 319-334.

of the 1950s, however, McClelland would begin to turn the need for achievement into a causal explanation for the process of economic development writ large. This shift was complex but hinged ultimately on two key intellectual manoeuvres. The first was a claim that the personality traits associated with a high need for achievement – moderate risk-taking for example – were also the key features of successful economic entrepreneurship. Then, drawing on theories regarding the role of entrepreneurialism in economic growth – from Max Weber to Joseph Schumpeter – he began to ponder the possibility of an underlying causal connection between entrepreneurialism, economic development and the level of achievement motivation within a society.[25]

This burgeoning argument would find clear expression in his 1961 work, *The Achieving Society (TAS).* Styled as a counter-thesis to John Kenneth Galbraith's *The Affluent Society, TAS* employed an elaborate repertoire of techniques to make the case that the need for achievement and the process of economic development were inherently linked.[26] Among the methods employed was historical analysis. Combining detailed economic statistics with wildly creative methods for measuring societal motivational patterns, *TAS* argued that throughout history – from ancient Rome to pre-Inca Peru to eighteenth century Britain – major periods of economic growth had been *preceded* by surges in the need to achieve within

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[25] According to McClelland's colleague, David Winter, the move to apply achievement motivation theory to a problem like economic development reflected his 'Methodist background' and 'Quaker consciousness', which instilled within him a 'desire and energy to apply psychology to solving real-world problems'. David G. Winter, 'David C. McClelland (1917-1988): Obituary', *American Psychologist*, 55:5, 2000, p. 541. If this was the case, it is also true that McClelland's shift to 'real-world problems' dovetailed with changes in his personal circumstances. In 1952, he had taken up a position as Deputy Director of the Ford Foundation's Behavioral Sciences Division (BSD), the body responsible for administering the Foundation's sizeable endowment for social science research. Here, McClelland would later recall, he had 'absorbed' a new 'spirit of hope and enthusiasm for the role that knowledge of human behaviour might play in helping man control his destiny', with important consequences for his own research ambitions. McClelland, *The Achieving Society*, p. x. In 1956, meanwhile, McClelland had also joined the Harvard Department for Social Relations, an emerging centre of modernization theory under the leadership of the sociologist, Talcott Parsons. At the DSR, McClelland would encounter not only an emerging scholarly concern with the differences between 'modern' and 'traditional' societies, but also, encapsulated in Parsons' own work, an intellectual atmosphere thick with assumptions about the sociological and psychological underpinnings of 'rational' economic behaviour. On the Harvard DSR during this period see Nils Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future*, p. 78; Joel Isaac, *Working Knowledge: Making the Human Sciences from Parsons to Kuhn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), ch. 5. For more on the Ford Foundation's Behavioural Sciences Division and its role in shaping American social science, see Roger L. Geiger, 'American Foundations and Academic Social Science, 1945-1960', *Minerva,* 26, 3, 1988, pp. 315-341; Emily Hauptmann, 'The Ford Foundation and the rise of behaviourism in political science', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences,* 48, 2, 2012, pp. 154-173; Peter J. Seybold, 'The Ford Foundation and the triumph of behavioralism in American political science', in R. F. Arnove (ed.), *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad* (Boston: G. K. Hall & Co., 1980), pp. 269-303.
[26] The choice of the title *The Achieving Society,* explained McClelland, was 'partly to reflect the association of *n* Achievement with this kind of social expansion, and partly to contrast such societies with the "affluent society", popularized by Galbraith (1958) in which the emphasis is on the revere of what it is in the achieving society – namely on slowing down production rather than speeding it up'. McClelland, *The Achieving Society,* p. 63.

the respective population.[27] Analysing national economic performance between 1925 and 1950, McClelland then claimed that countries which experienced significant growth had also demonstrated higher levels of achievement motivation at the outset.[28] *TAS* combined these attempts to demonstrate the historical role of achievement motivation with a qualitative reformulation of the Weberian thesis. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism,* Weber had famously linked the rise of industrial capitalism in Europe and North America to the existence of a vigorous 'capitalistic spirit', one with its roots in Protestantism's 'this-worldly ascetism'.[29] In *TAS,* McClelland advanced Weber's claim by suggesting that the real impact of Protestantism had been its impact on the need for achievement. By encouraging 'independence and mastery' among followers, he argued, the Protestant Reformation had created 'a revolution in the family, leading to more sons with strong internalized achievement drives'. Protestantism had thus led to 'greater *n* Achievement, which in turn led to the rise of modern capitalism'.[30]

To McClelland, the finding that the historic rise and fall of economic fortunes could be linked to the presence of achievement motivation left little doubt that the key to economic development lay in the proliferation of the need to achieve. 'Civilization', he explained, 'at least in its economic aspect…is a positive creation by a people made dynamic by a high level of n-achievement'.[31] The argument had an obvious implication. For if the need to achieve formed the basis of economic development, then it necessarily followed that economic *under*development, where it persisted, was connected to a shortage of the 'right' motivational conditions. Weaving this into the ascendant discourse on modernization, McClelland suggested that a key difference between 'modern' and 'traditional' societies might well be the existence and absence, respectively, of the need for achievement. 'The precise problem of underdeveloped countries', he explained, 'is that they do not have the character structure, especially the motivational structure, which would lead them to act in the ways required'.[32] Linking back to themes in his earlier work, McClelland, located the cause of this disparity in

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[27] Among the techniques McClelland used to take readings of the motive forces in existence within societies, both present and historical, was the analysis of folk stories and children's literature. These and other 'imaginative products', he argued, could be used as a form of societal projective test – a means of probing the subconscious motivational patterns of entire populations. Ibid., ch. 3.
[28] Ibid., ch. 4.
[29] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Talcott Parsons (London: Allen & Unwin, 1930).
[30] McClelland, *The Achieving Society,* p. 47.
[31] David C. McClelland, 'The Achievement Motive in Economic Growth' Bert Hoselitz & Wilbert E. Moore (eds.), *Industrialization and Society* (Paris: UNESCO-Mouton, 1963), p. 84.
[32] McClelland, *The Achieving Society,* p. 429.

differences between the normative child-rearing practices in 'traditional' and 'modern' societies. While 'modern' cultures (especially Protestant ones) had developed child-rearing practices conducive to a high need for achievement, 'traditional' patterns of socialization typically stifled this need.[33] Here, then, was an alternative theory of psychological modernization, one that framed it as a process caused not by the transformative effects of modern economic institutions, but by changes to cultural systems that *preceded*, and then gave rise to, modernizing economic development.

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McClelland's argument regarding the psychological preconditions for economic development came with an unsavoury twist. Forwarded with the benevolent intention of identifying the roots of economic problems, it nevertheless suggested that the root cause of impoverishment lay in the psychological incapacities of those that suffered it. Applied to nations, achievement motivation theory offered a reading of Third World 'underdevelopment' that downplayed broader structural considerations – from investment to trade to histories of colonial exploitation – and stressed instead the innate cultural and psychological shortcomings of 'traditional' societies. This, it will be seen, was a reading that McClelland would carry with him in his later Indian experiments, including the belief that India's economic problems bore linkages to the retardational effects of 'Hindu' cultural norms.

Strange though it may seem, McClelland's framing of poverty as a consequence of the cultural and psychological defects of traditional societies found support in the work of other contemporary economic theorists. In 1962, for example, Everett E. Hagen, an MIT economist and former economic adviser to the Government of Burma, published his own treatise entitled *On the Theory of Social Change: How Economic Growth Begins*. Setting out to explore 'the factors which cause a traditional society to become one in which economic growth is occurring', Hagen turned to 'theories of personality', rather than straight economic considerations, arguing that the real causes of economic growth lay there. [34] Economic and technological progress, he argued, required the proliferation of 'innovational', 'creative' personalities 'unconsciously alert to new aspects of phenomena'. Such a personality, he

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[33] Ibid., ch. 9. For an account of McClelland's enterprise as part of a broader effort by post-war American actors and institutions to intervene in and shape patterns of child development around the world see Sara Fieldston, *Raising the World: Child Welfare in the American Century* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), ch. 6.

[34] Everett E. Hagen, *On the Theory of Social Change: How Economic Growth Begins* (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1962)*,* p. 1.

contended, assumed 'that the phenomena of the area of experience of interest to him form a system that he can understand and manage, and that therefore encountering unexpected aspects will lead him to new understanding, not to frustration'.[35] Like McClelland's high *n* Achievement individual, he also had a strong 'sense of duty to achieve'.[36] The problem, according to Hagen, was that such personalities represented an anomaly in 'traditional' societies governed by hierarchy, custom and restrictive social norms:

The member of a traditional society is uncreative for several reasons. He perceives the world as an arbitrary place rather than an *orderly* one amenable to analysis and responsive to his initiative. His unconscious processes are both inaccessible and uncreative. He resolves his relationships with his fellows primarily on the basis of ascriptive authority. He avoids the anxiety caused by facing unresolved situations in the physical world by reliance on the judgement of authority.[37]

'Traditional societies', according to Hagen, were characterized not by 'innovational', but by 'authoritarian personalities'.[38]

For economic growth to begin, then, traditional societies needed to experience a fundamental rupture in their dominant character structure. According to Hagen, the most likely source for such a rupture was among marginal groups. Connecting the discrimination and 'withdrawal of status respect' experienced by such groups with increased feelings of insecurity and 'frustration', Hagen argued that such factors made for a greater likelihood of 'breakdown' in the 'traditional' authoritarian family structure, thereby undermining one of the principal bastions of personality formation. By virtue of their marginalization and discrimination, minorities were more likely to develop innovational personalities, a process borne out, Hagen argued, by the successful entrepreneurialism of minority groups around the world.[39]

Another contemporary economist who found pure economic theories of development lacking was the University of Chicago scholar Bert F. Hoselitz. A graduate of the University of Vienna, drawn to economics through the work of Joseph Schumpeter among others, Hoselitz was a 'decided oddity among Chicago's economists of business cycles and market models'.[40]

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[35] Ibid., p. 96.
[36] Ibid., p. 97.
[37] Ibid., p. 98.
[38] On antipathy towards the authoritarian personality in Cold War America, and the construction of the 'creative', 'open-minded' self as its idealized antidote, see Jamie Cohen Cole, *The Open Mind: Cold War Politics and the Sciences of Human Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). See also Cohen-Cole, 'The Creative American: Cold War Salons, Social Science, and the Cure for Modern Society', *Isis,* 100, 2, 2009, pp. 219-262.
[39] Hagen, *On the Theory of Social Change*, chs. 9 and 10.
[40] Nicole Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity: American Social Scientists, India, and the Pursuit of Development, 1945-1961', unpublished PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 2004, pp. 162.

A prominent exponent of what he called the 'non-economic barriers to economic development', in 1952 Hoselitz established a new journal, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, dedicated to the examination of these barriers in more detail. 'Economic development', his introduction to the journal's inaugural issue explained:

…consists not merely in a change of production techniques, but also, in the last resort, in a reorientation of social norms and values…If the observation is made that among the prerequisites of economic development is the growth of a middle class, or the evolution of a spirit of ventursomeness [sic]…we are confronted with changes in the social organization and culture of a people rather than its economy.[41]

During later years, Hoselitz would further develop his ideas regarding the role of non-economic factors in economic development, in the process forwarding his own version of the argument that 'culturally marginal groups' played a vital role in entrepreneurship and economic development.[42] At the same time, however, Hoselitz would also expound important differences between his own thought and the McClelland-Hagen approach. Though stressing that psychological factors played an important role in the development of entrepreneurialism, and thereby in economic development, Hoselitz would come to suggest that the process of development could not be understood in purely psychological terms. 'Entrepreneurship', he explained:

…depends partly upon the appearance of persons with a psychological make-up for entrepreneurial activity, and partly on the social and economic environment that would make it an attractive venture to such individuals.[43]

Personality factors and economic inducements thus existed in a 'reciprocal' relationship, one which could not 'be arranged in any neat hierarchy of cause and effect'.[44] Interestingly, while McClelland and Hagen's psychological focus led them to assume that the requisite psychological conditions for development were fundamentally lacking, and requiring inducement, Hoselitz's belief in the interdependence of psychological and economic processes created space for the conviction that the requisite psychological potential might already be there, just awaiting the right conditions:

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[41] Bert F. Hoselitz, 'Noneconomic Barriers to Economic Development', *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 1:1, 1952, pp. 8-10.
[42] See Bert F. Hoselitz, 'A Sociological Approach to Economic Development' in *Sociological Aspects of Economic Growth* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960), pp. 61-62; and Bert Hoselitz, 'Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth', *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology,* 12:1, 1952, pp. 97-111.
[43] Bert F. Hoselitz, 'The Entrepreneurial Element in Economic Development, 1962-1963 (UN Conference Paper'), in Box 2, Bert F. Hoselitz Papers (hereafter BFHP), Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago, p. 4.
[44] Bert F. Hoselitz, 'The Social Conditioning of Entrepreneurship' in Box 4, BFHP, p. 1.

…from the great number of traders scattered about the urban and rural areas of almost all developing countries, we may deduce that individuals who exhibit achievement-oriented personalities are available in developing societies. What is required is not so much the creation of new personality types, but rather the opening up of opportunities in the social, economic and political environment, in the scale and impact of government services, and in the intellectual equipment and training of the persons concerned.[45]

Though sharing a basic concern with the role of psychological factors in economic development, then, Hoselitz nuanced McClelland and Hagen's psychological determinism by stressing the potential of the right economic conditions to unleash *existent* entrepreneurial drives.

While it encountered subtle pushback in the form of Hoselitz's reciprocal thesis, McClelland's psychological approach encountered an altogether more substantial confrontation at the hands of other contemporary theorists of economic development. Most notable, in this regard, was the theorizing of the MIT economist Walt Whitman Rostow. The author of a landmark 1960 treatise on *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto,* Rostow would propose a model of economic development that, on one level, shared many of the assumptions of McClelland, Hagen, Hoselitz regarding the cultural underpinnings of economic development. In *The Stages,* an archetypal work of modernization theory, Rostow set out five key economic phases through which all societies would pass on the road to modernity. Beginning with 'traditional society', this staged trajectory ran through a pivotal 'take-off' phase, during which an economy made the transition into mature, self-sustained growth, culminating eventually in what Rostow called the 'age of high mass consumption'. Framing societies as 'interacting organisms' in which 'the worlds of politics, social organization, and culture' converged, Rostow explained how progression through each of these various 'stages' involved fundamental shifts in the prevailing values, attitudes and behaviours of society.[46]

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[45] 'The very fact that a substantial number of entrepreneurs [have] appeared in societies in which a short time ago little or no such talent seemed to be available', Hoseltiz went on 'makes one suspect that individuals with the required ambitious drive exist in all human societies, though they may not always make their impact felt with the same intensity. If economic development and industrialization are planned as goals of a society as a whole, would-be entrepreneurs will step into a very different environment from that which prevailed in the historical epochs which McClelland and his students, Hagen, and even Schumpeter have investigated'. Hoselitz, 'The Entrepreneurial Element', pp. 6-7.

[46] W.W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 2. '[T]he ultimate reasons why the approach to growth via mainstream economics is misleading', Rostow went on, 'are that cultural, social and political factors are all at work as well as economic factors; and that the process of growth is inherently interactive, yielding not only changes in the parameters but even in the rules of behavior'. Ibid., p. 247.

Though sharing in ideas about the necessity of 'cultural' factors in economic change, however, Rostow's stagist theory would ultimately forward a fundamentally different set of claims about the conditions that drove economic development. More specifically, Rostow would suggest that the key to economic modernization – and the 'take-off' stage in particular – lay in structural economic transformation brought about through targeted capital investment. Investment in an economy's productive sectors, he argued, to a tune of at least ten percent of national income, formed the key intervention that would catalyse the 'take-off' of an economy into a repetitive cycle of growth, profit and reinvestment, thereby ushering in the transition towards 'mature', 'self-sustaining' economic growth. Once initiated, Rostow argued, this self-sustaining cycle would not only continue but also grow cumulatively. In due course, the full trappings of modern economic life – from modern institutions to modern attitudes – would follow.[47] Rostow's theory, it will be seen, would lead him to stress the transformative potential of American economic aid, with profound implications for American foreign policy. McClelland, meanwhile, would espouse alternative methods for turning theory into practice.

### From theory to practice: aid with ideology, India, and the 'Kakinada Experiment'

For Rostow, then, certain economic conditions – in particular those relating to productive investment – formed the key drivers of economic 'take-off'. During the 1950s, together with his MIT colleague Max Millikan, Rostow would use this argument to promote large-scale increases in American overseas aid. Targeted injections of American capital, he argued, made available at the critical 'take off' stage, would help to create the investment levels needed to 'push' underdeveloped countries towards self-sustained economic growth. In making this argument, Rostow and Millikan would present the case for American aid squarely in the terms of the global Cold War. By setting undeveloped nations on the path to economic development, they claimed, American capital would do more than just help decolonizing nations stand on their own two feet. In the process, it would also steer those nations' 'newly aroused human energies in constructive rather than destructive directions', thereby eschewing

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[47] For second-hand accounts of Rostow's stagist thesis see David Milne, *America's Rasputin: Walt Rostow and the Vietnam War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), pp. 59-68; Ekbladh, The Great American Mission, pp. 183-189; Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution,* pp. 51-58; Nicole Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', pp. 294-301; Kimber Charles Pearce, *Rostow, Kennedy and the Rhetoric of Foreign Aid* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), pp. 29-48, 75-86. For Rostow's views on agricultural development in particular see Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 149-155.

them away from radicalism, and ultimately communism.[48] Increasing the amount of US economic assistance to underdeveloped countries thus represented far more than a humanitarian endeavour. According to Rostow and Millikan, it was an act firmly in the American interest.

This argument would have a profound impact in American policy circles. Having begun his first presidential term with a foreign policy based on a conscious disavowal of large-scale economic aid – encapsulated in the famous dictum 'trade not aid' – President Dwight Eisenhower would be the first to embrace its logic. From 1956 onwards, influenced in no small part by Rostow's ideas, Eisenhower would oversee a gradual expansion of American aid programmes to underdeveloped countries in key strategic areas, including India. It was under the presidency of John F. Kennedy, however, that the influence of Rostow's theory would reach its apogee. Assuming the Presidency in 1961, Kennedy would make the MIT economist's ideas a central tenet of his foreign policy agenda. Under Kennedy, Rostow was appointed first deputy National Security Adviser and later head of the State Department's Policy Planning Council. Within a year of assuming office, Kennedy had announced a new international 'Decade of Development' underpinned by dramatic expansions in US overseas aid.[49] In November 1961, his administration established a new Agency for International Development (USAID) tasked with administering these funds.[50]

Published at this precise historical juncture, *TAS* offered an open critique of the notion that large increases in Rostovian economic aid would produce the rapid economic development that economists and policymakers sought. Engaging head-on with Rostow's and Millikan's argument that 'the more capital aid is poured into a country, the more rapidly it will be

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[48] Max F. Millikan and Walt W. Rostow, *A Proposal: Key to an Effective Foreign Policy* (New York: 1957), p. 8.

[49] For Kennedy's famous speech to the UN General Assembly, during which he called for the inauguration of a 'Decade of Development', see John F. Kennedy, 'Address to the UN General Assembly', New York City, 25 September 1961. Retrieved from: https://2009-2017.state.gov/p/io/potusunga/207241.htm (accessed on 24 October 2019).

[50] According to Kimber Charles Pearce, the influence of Rostow's ideas on US policymaking had much to do with Rostow's adept skill in the use of 'rhetoric' and economic storytelling. See Pearce, *Rostow, Kennedy and the Rhetoric of Foreign Aid,* pp. 1-10, 49-74. For details on the influence of Rostovian ideas on the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations see Milne, *America's Rasputin,* pp. 59-68; Ekbladh, *The Great American Mission*, pp. 183-189; Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution,* pp. 51-58; Gilman, *Mandarins of the Future,* pp. 174-202; Cullather, *The Hungry World*, pp. 149-155; Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', pp. 302-314; Srinath Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas: A History of the United States in South Asia* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), pp. 211-215; Amanda Kay McVety, 'JFK and Modernization Theory' in Andrew Hoberek (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to John F. Kennedy* (Cambridge, 2015), pp. 103-117. For Rostow's own first-hand account of economic aid programmes under both Eisenhower and Kennedy see Walt W. Rostow, *Eisenhower, Kennedy and Foreign Aid* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985).

developed', McClelland suggested that this line of reasoning, though appealing, neglected 'the human factor'.[51] 'Capital output ratios', he argued, showed wide variations in the level of investment needed to get the same output across different countries, variations which, in turn, were 'fairly closely associated with national $n$ Achievement levels'. Approaches that focused solely on capital aid thus failed to account for the fact that such aid only worked effectively when the appropriate psychological conditions were in place. 'Human resources', argued McClelland, made 'a large difference in the capital needed to speed up economic development'.[52]

McClelland did more than just critique existing aid practices for their neglect of 'human factors'. He also offered his own proposals for how diagnostic theory might be turned into remedial action. As an 'acquired' motive, the need to achieve was not conceived as fixed or immutable. It was, rather, a character trait that could be developed within individuals, including in later life.[53] Stressing the potential of various forms of 'psychological education' to induce changes in popular need orientation, McClelland argued that plans for accelerating economic growth needed to focus on elevating the presently scarce $n$ Achievement resources in underdeveloped countries.[54] His views about the possibility of cultivating rapid, widespread changes in motivational disposition contrasted with the ideas of many contemporaries, including the like-minded Hagen, regarding the difficulty of changing adult character structures. While not the only one to suggest psychological change was necessary for economic development, McClelland was unique in his belief that the required mental adjustment could be accomplished with relative ease.

According to McClelland, one way in which the required psychological change might be brought about was through a process of 'aid with ideology'. Rather than plying underdeveloped countries with 'material aid', he argued, 'we must try to develop what is called the "achievement mystique"'. This required 'selling people on the future of their own country' through 'the use of speeches, radio, newspapers and all the techniques of Madison Avenue'.[55] Saturating impoverished nations with ideas of achievement would create an

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[51] McClelland, *The Achieving Society,* p. 422.
[52] Ibid., pp. 422-423.
[53] For McClelland's views on the possibility of inducing personality change in adults see McClelland, 'Child Rearing versus Ideology and Social Structure as Factors in Personality Development [1975]', Series: Writings and Speeches, Box 95.
[54] Ibid., pp. 403-418.
[55] David C. McClelland, 'Foreign Aid is Only Effective When Men Seek Their Own Betterment', *Town Hall,* 1965, Box 25, DCMP, p. 2.

ideological environment conducive to a heightened motivation to achieve. It would instil the 'spirit which makes men seek their own betterment'.[56]

As an example of how this approach could work, he pointed to communism. Communist governments, he argued, had 'always stressed the importance of ideology, of propaganda, of whipping up enthusiasm for a new regime'.[57] Communist literature, for example, was saturated with 'achievement' themes. In both Russia and China, McClelland argued, this 'achievement concern' had worked to produce a spike in the need for achievement within society, thereby fuelling economic growth that outstripped that of the West and the nations it supported with economic aid. 'The communists are ideologically materialists', he explained 'they believe that economic and materialistic forces shape the course of history. Yet in actual fact much of their effort goes into changing people's [sic] ideas. They act as if they have realized unconsciously that it is really ideas that shape the course of history'.[58] Citing superior rates of Chinese over Indian economic growth, McClelland contended that this could be understood as a product, first and foremost, of the 'ideological fervour which the Russians exported to China'.[59]

While promoting 'aid with ideology', McClelland also proposed other ways in which the need for achievement might be propagated. Indeed, by the time *TAS* was published, his attention had turned decisively towards one question: to what extent was it possible to 'train' people in *n* Achievement? From 1961 onwards, McClelland and his Harvard colleagues would begin to promote the concept of 'achievement motivation training', a

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[56] Ibid., p. 1. On several occasions, McClelland would make the case for a new approach to aid in front of Congressional committees. See 'David McClelland's appearances in Washington', Box 25, DCMP. See also Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 141-142.

[57] David C. McClelland, 'Motivational Patterns in Southeast Asia with Special Reference to the Chinese Case', *The Journal of Social Issues,* 19:1, 1963, p. 17.

[58] Here, McClelland argued, was a strange paradox: 'The Communists are ideologically materialists: they believe that economic or materialistic forces shape the course of history. Yet in actual fact much of their effort goes into shaping people's ideas…Western democracies on the other hand, particularly the United States, are philosophical idealists yet practical materialists. The aid they have given is largely in the form of "guns and butter"'. Ibid., p. 17. This concern that, for all their faults, the communists might be doing 'development' better than the United States reflected a sense of anxiety (and arguably appreciation) towards the achievements of the Soviet Union not uncommon in American intellectual circles during the post-Sputnik years. See Engerman, *Know Your Enemy,* ch. 3. See also Zouyue Wang, *In Sputnik's Shadow: The President's Science Advisory Committee and Cold War America* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2009).

[59] This fervour, McClelland explained, had 'been more influential in modernizing the country than all the material aid that the Western democracies have exported so far either to China-Taiwan or to countries like India. In short this is just one more piece of evidence to support the growing conviction among social scientists that it is values, motives, or psychological forces that determine ultimately the rate of economic and social development.' Ibid., p. 18. McClelland frequently made the China-India comparison in other speeches and articles. See for example David C. McClelland, 'Business Drive and National Achievement', *Harvard Business Review*, 40:4, 1962, pp. 110-111.

psychotherapeutic model of behaviour change geared towards the inducement of the need to achieve. At the heart of achievement motivation training was a purposive reimagining of the instrument used to measure *n* Achievement: the TAT. The TAT was now turned into a learning technique for teaching subjects 'how to think like' someone with a high need to achieve. By repeatedly undertaking the test to 'improve' their *n* Ach 'score', McClelland argued, trainees would gradually build an 'associative network' centred around the need to achieve, thereby 'elevating' it within their internal motivational structure. Telling stories about achievement would turn the idea into a 'syndrome'.[60] 'Daydreaming aggressively', McClelland explained, was a first step towards fostering new psychological norms.[61]

McClelland and his colleagues set out to test this new model of psychological training in a number of locales. It was in India, however, that the Harvard psychologists would find their most important test site. To understand how, it is necessary to trace the particular set of institutional forces that pulled the enterprise of achievement motivation training in the country's direction. The influential actors in this process, it will be seen, were not just Americans but Indians themselves.

The key movers in this process were a group of officials, businessmen and social scientists associated with the Small Industries Extension Training (SIET) Institute, an agency of the Indian Ministry of Industry and Commerce located in Hyderabad. SIET sat at the confluence of a new set of priorities ascendant within Indian development planning by the latter half of the 1950s; namely those associated with the pursuit of planned industrial development on the 'small-scale'. Running parallel to the contemporary push for large-scale industrial development focused on capital goods (to be explored in more detail below), the push for small-scale industrialization followed the recommendations of an *International Study Team on Village and Small Industries* convened by the Ministry in 1954. Highlighting the key role that small industries could play in meeting the growing demand for consumer goods, providing essential agricultural equipment, and reducing population pressure on urban centres, the Study Team had presented the growth and 'rationalization' of such industries as the essential feature of any 'realistic program for India's industrial development'.[62] In doing so, it recommended the establishment of a 'nation-wide network' of 'extension service

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[60] David C. McClelland and David G. Winter, *Motivating Economic Achievement* (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 25.
[61] Patricia McBroom, 'How to Succeed: Dream Aggressively', *Inquirer¸* 9 April 1969, Box 25, DCMP.
[62] 'Ford Foundation Program Letter, report no. 40: The Planning Team on Small Industry Makes Its Report', Report 001448, Catalogued Reports 1-3254 (FA739A), Box 56, Ford Foundation Archives (hereafter FFA).

institutes' (combined with additional extension 'sub-units') geared towards teaching new production methods and tools to small-scale entrepreneurs and businesses.[63] During the late 1950s, under the auspices of a newly-appointed Development Commissioner for Small Industries, the Ministry had launched concerted efforts to build this network on the ground.[64]

Established in 1962, with support from the Ford Foundation, SIET was something of an anomaly among the Ministry's expanding network of extension institutes and service centres.[65] Most institutes adopted a narrow remit of technical activities, focusing on the provision of essential equipment and operational advice to trades within their locality. Owing in part to its connection with Ford, however, SIET, under the stewardship of its first Director R.N. Jai, quickly embraced an alternative role as a node for international (in most cases Ford-sponsored) 'experts' on small-scale industrialization. Within its first year of operation, the Institute had already appointed Joseph E. Stepanek, a Yale-educated chemical engineer-turned-economist to advise on its nascent programme of extension services.[66] Stepanek would use his time as a SIET consultant both to help build SIET's programme and to publish his own take on the importance of what he called *Industrialization Beyond the Metropolis*.[67]

It was through Stepanek that SIET officials would become aware of McClelland's work on achievement motivation. An admirer of *TAS*, Stepanek would recommend using 'McClelland-type training' to 'accelerate growth more rapidly than using economic inducements alone'.[68] For their part, Jai and SIET Institute leaders would quickly embrace the idea of achievement motivation training. Beginning in early 1963, they initiated efforts to bring the Harvard psychologists to Hyderabad. The key connection here was the knowledge that, in January 1963, McClelland and his colleagues had secured USAID funding to conduct achievement motivation training courses overseas.[69] Knowing this, SIET arranged for one of

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[63] Ibid., pp. 2-4.

[64] 'Ford Foundation Program Letter, No. 98: The Development of India's Small Industries: A Nation-wide Industry Extension Service Taking Shape', Report 001798, Catalogued Reports 1-3254 (FA739A), FFA.

[65] For a summary of Ford's involvement in the establishment of the SIET see 'Some suggestions on the future of SIET Institute' File No. 000394, Box 22, Catalogued Reports 1-3254 (FA739A), FFA.

[66] For a contemporary interview with Stepanek covering, among other things, his views on the importance of small-scale industrialisation and the role of Western experts see 'Unusual Rotarians', *The Rotarian,* November 1966, pp. 32-35.

[67] J.E. Stepanek, *Industrialization Beyond the Metropolis: A New Look at India* (Hyderabad: SIET, 1963).

[68] JE Stepanek to Gustav Raina, Dec 27, 1966, Box 113, DCMP, p. 1.

[69] As McClelland recalled, USAID officials were particularly interested in the more efficient use of 'what seemed to be a diminishing supply of money', and to this end were actively seeking out 'new methods' that could supplement the approaches of 'economic theorists and planners'. USAID was interested in the question of 'whether *n* Ach training might be a relatively effective and inexpensive way of accelerating economic growth'. McClelland and Winter, *Motivating Economic Achievement,* pp. 95-96.

its officials, Aziz Pabaney, to attend a summer planning meeting at Harvard Business School during which potential sites for the USAID-sponsored courses were discussed. At the meeting, Pabaney would make the case for SIET as an institutional collaborator. Meanwhile, in Hyderabad, SIET officials began scoping out possible locations for the training.[70]



*Industrialization through entrepreneurship*

**Figure 8. P.C. Alexander, Development Commissioner (Small Scale Industries), inaugurates the SIET with R.N. Jai (right)**

(Source: National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India)

Initially, McClelland and USAID had planned a comprehensive training experiment covering three continents.[71] In September 1963, however, USAID administrators informed the Harvard psychologists that the anticipated funding had been unexpectedly withdrawn.[72] While this sudden reversal led to the 'abandonment' of the proposed transnational study, the eagerness of SIET officials ensured that the prospect of overseas achievement motivation training did

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[70] Ibid., p. 101-104.

[71] Following the 1963 Planning Conference, the proposed study sites were India, Tunisia, and southern Italy. Ibid., pp. 97-98.

[72] The key factor in USAID's reversal was the Inspector General of Foreign Assistance, J.K. Mansfield. Mansfield had written to USAID Administrator, David Bell, advising that 'we find it very difficult to see how the large cost of this proposed project can be justified in terms of its contribution to the Agency's work'. He 'strongly recommend that AID not enter into [the] contract'. Ibid., p. 96. Interestingly, McClelland would later learn that Mansfield, a close ally of the late anti-communist campaigner Joseph McCarthy, had objected to the proposed project due to a perception that McClelland's earlier research, by virtue of its arguments regarding the connections between achievement motivation and Protestantism, was 'anti-Catholic'. [BurtonBlattInstitute], 23 May 2017, 'Master's Series on Field Research - Interview with Professor David McClelland, Harvard University [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taECrn9KUCU (accessed on 17 August 2019).

not collapse altogether. 'There was', McClelland recalled, 'some eagerness at SIET Institute to see whether achievement motivation training would help meet India's need by creating entrepreneurial spirit', thereby 'leaving 'one opportunity alive – the possibility of collaborating with the Small Industries Extension Training Institute in Hyderabad'.[73] Already in India when the USAID reversal was announced, McClelland met with SIET leaders to push ahead plans for achievement motivation training at the Institute. When a last-minute application to the Ford Foundation's New Delhi Office also fell through, SIET's Governing Council again made the decision to push ahead with the experiments backed by its own limited resources.[74] As Americans prevaricated on various fronts, it was SIET officials that helped to ensure the achievement motivation training experiment became a reality.[75]

Commencing in February 1964, the Harvard/SIET experiment set out to test whether intensive courses of achievement motivation training, designed by McClelland and his colleagues, could produce changes in the economic life of a community. Targeted at entrepreneurs and businessmen from the town of Kakinada, in Andhra Pradesh – a site chosen for its particular size, location, and economic characteristics – the training combined McClelland's bespoke methods of TAT-based motivational therapy with elements of 'self-study', 'goal-setting' and 'interpersonal support'. Self-study encouraged the subjects to 'perceive the newly conceptualized motive as consistent with the ideal self-image'. Goal-setting asked subjects to define long-term goals to 'keep the newly acquired associative pattern salient'. Interpersonal support focused on the cultivation of a social environment conducive to psychological transformation. Here, drawing upon the practices of self-help organizations like Alcoholics Anonymous, the training emphasized the importance of the 'retreat setting' and the 'new reference group' as factors that would facilitate the process of personality change.[76] It was, McClelland noted, 'a matter of ethical propriety to state

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[73] McClelland and Winter, *Motivating Economic Achievement*, p. 98.

[74] Ford would, in fact, provide a small grant to support follow-up surveys later in the project. Nevertheless, underpinned by personal differences and the perception that McClelland was driven more by his own 'curiosity' than the 'interests of Indian institutions', Foundation officials would adopt a stand-off approach towards the Harvard/SIET achievement motivation project. See various correspondence between McClelland and Ford Foundation officials in 'Winter, David, [1965-1985]', Folder 2, Series: Correspondence, Box 18, DCMP.

[75] Resource constraints on the SIET forced considerable revisions in the scope of the project, compared to the initial USAID proposal. What had been initially intended as a project covering seven Indian cities, for instance, was ultimately scaled-down to a single-site programme in the city of Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh. Moreover, owing to shortfalls in funding, some parts of the achievement motivation courses were run not by Harvard personnel, but by SIET staff and social scientists themselves. McClelland and Winter, *Motivating Economic Achievement*, pp. 99-105.

[76] Ibid. For 'self-study' inputs, see pp. 57-65; for 'goal-setting' inputs, see pp. 65-74; for 'interpersonal supports' pp. 74-78.

emphatically that the course does not manipulate or brainwash anybody…we want to demonstrate *how* a person can change his thinking and *why* he might want to do so'. In fact, when it came to motivation, McClelland argued, the desired psychological change could not be attained through coercive manipulation: it required 'commitment *by the individual*'.[77]



*Modernizing the mind*

**Figure 9. David C. McClelland and his wife Mary with Kakinada entrepreneurs, 1965**

(Source: 'Mrs McClelland's Diary', Box 116, David C. McClelland papers, Harvard University Archives)

Drawn from the local Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club and entrepreneurs' associations, the Kakinada entrepreneurs entered enthusiastically into the experiment, viewing it as a 'god sent' opportunity to 'break through the spirit of stagnation and helplessness that had gripped the community'.[78] At a meeting of the Kakinada Chamber of Commerce held to inaugurate

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[77] Ibid.*,* p. 67. For a later attempt by McClelland to distinguish motivational psychology from coercion and manipulation, see David C. McClelland, 'Managing motivation to expand human freedom', *American Psychologist*, 33:3, pp. 201-210. On the rise of debates about brainwashing in American society see Matthew W. Dunne, *A Cold War State of Mind: Brainwashing and Post-war American Society* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013); see Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 162-182; Rebecca Lemov, World as Laboratory: Experiments with Mice, Mazes and Men (New York: Hill & Wang, 2005); pp. 189-220.
[78] David C. McClelland, A.B. Pabaney, Elliot Danzig, M.S. Nadkarni, Udai Pareek, 'Developing the entrepreneurial spirit in an Indian community', Box 106, DCMP, pp. 9-10.

the experiment, reported Aziz Pabaney, members of the association came forward to 'publicly "own" the project as having been adopted by the city'.[79] As such, 'it did not prove difficult to get men who were eager to go to the course given at the SIET Institute'. In fact, 'the difficulty soon became one of deciding which ones should be chosen for the training'. In response, psychologists opted for a number of selection criteria. Alongside English language requirements and position within the local business community, the criteria included a 'serious interest in change and self-development'.[80]

Through guidance on 'the process of management', 'the kinds of help to small industries available from the Government of India', and 'opportunities for enterprise in the local community', achievement motivation training also helped participants to think about how their newly-acquired motivational drives could be put into practice in their professional life.[81] Courses ended with 'strong motivational reminders that the real test lay in the future after they returned home'.[82]

In the years that followed, McClelland, his Harvard colleagues, and SIET staff, would conduct regular follow-up studies on the Kakinada entrepreneurs. Through revised life-histories, TATs, and periodical business audits, they sought to measure both the psychological and the economic impacts of achievement motivation training on participants. The findings, they explained, provided new evidence regarding the 'peculiar relevance' of achievement motivation 'to improved economic performance'.[83] Following completion of the courses, they argued, many of the Kakinada entrepreneurs increased profit margins, developed new product lines, started new enterprises, and built new factories. Within only two years, the Kakinada entrepreneurs had 'invested twice as much in expanding their businesses and created twice as many jobs as a comparable group of businessmen who had not received this special type of psychological education'.[84] Many of the participants also showed clear signs of psychological alteration. A round of TATs conducted three years after the motivational courses, for instance, demonstrated significantly higher $n$ Ach scores on average compared to those performed at the outset.[85] According to one follow-up report,

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[79] McClelland and Winter, *Motivating Economic Achievement*, p. 121
[80] McClelland et al., 'Developing the entrepreneurial spirit in an Indian community', p. 12
[81] Ibid., p. 29.
[82] Ibid., p. 32.
[83] McClelland and Winter, *Motivating Economic Achievement*, p. 339.
[84] David C. McClelland, 'Trip around the world: A psychological path to rapid economic development', Box 94, DCMP, p. 7. For a full write-up of the economic effects of the training courses see McClelland and Winter, *Motivating Economic Achievement*, chs. 7, 8, 9 and 10.
[85] Ibid., pp. 324-325.

'many of the men' demonstrated not only 'a changed *perception of risk*' but a greater harmonization between entrepreneurial, profit-seeking activities and an ideal self-image.[86]

To McClelland's evident frustration, the results emerging from Kakinada eluded a neat correlation between these processes of economic and psychological change. Those men who became most economically 'active' after the course, for instance, were not necessarily those who had retained the best command of the *n* Ach 'associative network'. Equally, the economic impacts of the training appeared to be most pronounced among those who possessed stronger *n* Ach beforehand, indicating the possibility that achievement training might work best as a tool for better mobilizing existing psychological capacities, rather than for cultivating new forms of motivation. Perhaps most importantly, in a finding that seemed to lend weight to Hoselitz's (rather than McClelland's) model of development, differences in economic 'opportunity' also appeared to play a 'major role'. While heightened *n* Achievement tended to have a significant bearing on the economic behaviour of those who were in charge of their business, its impact on those not in positions of control was relatively small. Indeed, where few economic opportunities existed at all, increases in achievement motivation could 'actually lead to less activity'.[87]

If such observations gave cause for certain qualifications concerning the conditions under which heightened achievement motivation might contribute to economic development, to McClelland, the Kakinada Experiment had also done a great deal to validate his claims. At Kakinada, he concluded:

...change in people resulted in concrete increases in investment and employment…the business expansion was not in response to changes in the opportunity structure or to specific economic incentives or disincentives introduced by the government or the market…[the trainers] had to go about their task completely empty-handed, so far as material aids were concerned…All they had to offer is what are usually considered to be "soft" educational inputs, yet these inputs had a greater effect on "hard" economic outcomes than many aid programs that have made available large material resources and incentives.[88]

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[86] 'Before the course they had often had an idea for a new venture, but they felt that they could not undertake it, that somebody else would have to do it or help them do it'. Later, however, 'the men were more willing to make investment decisions than they had been previously. The change seemed to be a result of the training they received in moderate risk-taking during the course. They had learned to minimize the real risks by studying the situation thoroughly before deciding, and then to act on their own initiative rather than waiting for someone else to take responsibility'. Ibid., p. 193.
[87] For a summary of these various problems and their negation of a simple correlation between *n* Achievement and entrepreneurial activity see Ibid., pp. 334-335.
[88] Ibid., pp. 337-8.

## Motivating Indian development

As the Kakinada Experiment unfolded, the notion that heightened motivation held the key to development acquired a broader Indian following. Here again, the take-up of motivational thinking would have less to do with McClelland's own conscious efforts to promote the paradigm than with the soft-landing achievement motivation theory experienced amidst contemporary Indian strains of thought. Beyond Kakinada, McClelland's motivational approach tapped into a broader climate of elite opinion regarding the need for psychological transformation as an aspect of social and economic development, a view made explicit in statements such as the following, taken from Jawaharlal Nehru's *Discovery of India*. When it came to the process of industrial development, Nehru explained:

The real question is not one of quantitative adjustment and balancing of incongruous elements and methods of production, but qualitative consequences flow. The economic and political aspects of this qualitative change are important, *but equally important are the social and psychological aspects.* In India especially, where we have been wedded too long to past forms and modes of thought and action, new experiences, new processes, leading to new ideas and new horizons, are necessary. Thus we will change the static character of our living and make it dynamic and vital, and our minds will become active and adventurous.[89]

Nehru's emphasis on the 'psychological aspects' of modernization harboured a consequentialist tilt. The required psychological adjustment, he went on to clarify, would come about through 'new situations'– especially those associated with industrial work – that compelled the mind to 'adapt itself to a changing environment'.[90] Such a reading sat closer to Inkeles's and Doob's concepts of psychological modernization than it did to McClelland's pre-emptive formulation. Nevertheless, the motivational paradigm would find its own adherents in the Indian context. Moreover, in Indian hands, the motivational idea would soon be put to uses that even McClelland himself had not contemplated.

One such figure was Prayag Mehta, an educational psychologist at the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in New Delhi. Mehta, a psychologist trained at Delhi University, had been aware of achievement motivation theory since 1953, having read McClelland's first publication, *The Achievement Motive*. In 1962, he had joined NCERT, a new research institute created by the Government of India to advise on central and state education policies and programmes. Leading a team of social scientists in the Council's

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[89] Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994) p. 415. Emphasis mine.
[90] Ibid., p. 415.

Department of Psychological Foundations, Mehta soon began a process of applying McClelland's work on motivation to the school environment. Citing concerns about the high rate of failure in India's secondary schools, he suggested that the problem might be treatable through the creation of heightened motivational drives.

Under-achieving pupils, Mehta wrote to McClelland, tended to exhibit 'low norms of achievement', 'dependency' and 'lack of responsibility' linked in part to 'traditional values in the home'.[91] The existing school system, however, focused as it was on rote learning and examinations, did little to instil a concern for achievement. What was needed was an approach that turned schools into platforms for the propagation of achievement ideas. To test the hypothesis, Mehta and his colleagues developed an experiment that monitored 'the effects of classroom programmes designed to enhance concern for achievement and to boost aspirations'.[92] According to NCERT psychologists, the results provided general:

…support to the hypothesis that the teaching of characteristics of persons with high $n$ Achievement can produce improvement in the academic performance of underachieving high school boys…[and] that this can be done by means of a regular classroom programme given by teachers trained in achievement motivation.[93]

Mehta claimed that achievement-oriented pupils were not only academically superior, they also developed a stronger sense of 'personal responsibility' and 'self-confidence', attributes which they would carry into their adult working life. Linking economic productivity and entrepreneurship, Mehta argued that reorienting curricula around 'achievement' would help to ensure that education served as 'an instrument for national economic development'.[94] Together with his NCERT colleagues, Mehta would spend the 1960s encouraging recognition of the role of motivational factors by provincial education authorities across the country.

While educationalists saw increased achievement drives as the key to success in Indian classrooms and beyond, others employed the motivational approach in different ways. For Durganand Sinha, chair of the Department of Psychology at the University of Allahabad, the findings of motivational psychology called above all for a new approach to the enterprise of

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[91] Prayag Mehta to David McClelland, 11 December 1964, Box 105, DCMP.
[92] Rather than conduct these programmes themselves, the NCERT psychologists opted for a model that turned teachers themselves into achievement motivation trainers. First, Mehta's group ran courses in achievement motivation training for teachers in five Delhi schools. The teachers then ran four-month courses in 'Achievement Motivation' with select groups of 'Class IX' boys. The courses also included bespoke elements designed by Mehta, such as 'Aspiration Boosting Training'. Prayag Mehta, *The Achievement Motive in High School Boys* (New Delhi: National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1968), pp. 159-169.
[93] Ibid., p. 195.
[94] Prayag Mehta, *Managing Motivation in Education* (Ahmedabad: Sahitya Mudranalaya, 1976), p. 160.

rural development in India. In a series of works published throughout the 1960s, Sinha stressed that the existing programme of rural 'Community Development', though contributing in important ways to the improvement of the villages, had failed to bring about 'the psychological mobilization of urges that would ensure all-round rural development at an accelerated pace'.[95]

Effective rural development, according to Sinha, required certain social and psychological changes. It required a general 'change of attitude from contentment to that of striving and aspiring for one's betterment' and 'a proper channelization of motives among the rural population'. Such a proper channelization occurred only when the expression of human urges took 'concrete and specific form'. 'Instead of wanting everything', Sinha explained, 'there should be its expression in concrete terms, for example, want for more land, more production, better livestock, better health facilities, improved seeds, better food, and other material and social realities'. Concrete aspirations were more 'capable of being translated into concrete action'. They were also more likely to produce 'risk-taking' behaviour.[96]

Psychologically surveying the Indian countryside, Sinha found limited evidence that the necessary inclinations existed. Even in those villages where participation in Community Development had been strong, villagers' need tendencies typically remained 'general and vague in nature'. Moreover, attitudes of 'extreme caution and reluctance to take risk' created a 'general resistance with innovations and new techniques'. There was, according to Sinha:

…not much evidence that the masses in the village had begun to shake off their 'placid, pathetic contentment', nor was there much sign that new aspirations and urges for development had begun to pulsate in the rural population. Villagers by and large were still lethargic and indifferent to material progress.[97]

Sinha's was a critique launched from outside the Community Development programme. It therefore offered little concrete advice – save the general recommendation that aspirations needed to be raised – regarding how the necessary forms of motivation might be instilled within the rural population. Other social scientists, however, operating within the Community Development establishment, were working to re-shape that programme in light of

[95] Durganand Sinha, *Motivation of Rural Population in a Developing Country* (Calcutta: Allied Publishers, 1969), p. 49.
[96] Ibid., pp. 1-49.
[97] Ibid., p. 44. Sinha would also espouse the motivational approach to rural development in other articles and speeches. See Durganand Sinha, *Indian Villages in Transition: A Motivational Analysis* (New Delhi: Associated Publishing, 1969) and Sinha, 'A study of level of aspiration and motivation of the rural population in a developing country', XVIII International Congress of Psychology, Moscow, 1966.

motivational theory. Curiously, however, these efforts focused not on initiatives that would raise the general level of aspiration within the rural population, but on a reconceptualization of the nature of effective rural leadership. Challenging prevailing ideas about 'traditional leaders' as vectors for the mobilization of villagers to action, during the 1960s social scientists at the National Institute of Community Development began to stress the need to work with leaders who possessed the right psychological characteristics. Individual adoption behaviour, they argued, was linked less to group dynamics than it was to individual psychological variables such as the 'aspiration', 'risk-taking' and 'change-proneness'.[98] The success of Community Development thus hinged on its ability to mobilize these particular individuals to act as 'agents of change'.[99] As well as McClelland's ideas, these arguments drew on an ascendant theory on the 'diffusion of innovations' espoused by the University of Iowa sociologist, Everett Rogers. Based on studies of technology adoption in the American Midwest during the 1950s, Rogers had purported a universal pattern to the way in which innovations diffused within society, an important feature of which was the role of 'early adopters' – individuals whose unique psychological makeup made them more likely to take-up new innovations.[100] The claim that Indian rural development should focus on such individuals was one that, like Rogers' own theory, stressed the potential for differences in the psychological makeup of rural populations – for 'pluralities of persons in a cumulative cultural pattern'.[101] This, in turn, produced its own debate about the extent to which certain social groups possessed stronger motivational characteristics than others.[102]

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[98] S.N. Chattopadhyay, 'Psychological Correlates and Adaption of Innovations' in T.P.S. Chawdhari (ed.), *Selected Readings on Community Development* (National Institute of Community Development, Hyderabad, 1967), p. 37.

[99] W.B. Rahudkar, 'Communication Pattern in the Acceptance of Agricultural Practices', in Chawdhari (ed.), *Selected Readings on Community Development,* p. 34. By contrast, the leadership of those without the appropriate psychological characteristics was deemed to be 'retardatory, as far as the adoption of the maximum number of practices is concerned', p. 34.

[100] Everett Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: The Free Press, 1962). For more on the Rogers and the 'diffusion of innovations' theory see chapter five of this thesis.

[101] Chattopadhyay, 'Psychological Correlates and Adaptation of Innovations', p. 37.

[102] Here, the principal axis of debate was the question of whether high or lower socio-economic groups possessed higher achievement motivation. While some, like Durganand Sinha, found motivation to be higher among higher socio-economic groups, others, like Prayag Mehta, tended to argue lower socio-economic groups possessed higher motives (albeit with far fewer opportunities to realize them). Indeed, in a curious inversion of McClelland's own theory, Mehta would argue that it was precisely the lack of economic opportunity that underpinned deprived groups' higher sense of motivation. To understand how why it is necessary to comprehend his parallel concept of 'social achievement motivation', a point further developed in a later section of this chapter. For examples of Sinha's and Mehta's contrasting views on the distribution of motivation see Sinha, *Motivation of Rural Population in a Developing Country* (Calcutta: Allied Publishers, 1969), pp. 9-34; and Prayag Mehta (ed), *Social Achievement Motivation: Needs, Values and Work Organization* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing, 1994), pp. 18-24.

It was, however, in the realm of industrial entrepreneurship that the motivational approach found its firmest foothold. In the shadow of Kakinada, the 1960s and 70s witnessed the birth of a host of new entrepreneurial development programmes (so-called 'EDPs') that drew explicitly on McClelland's model of achievement motivation training. SIET, for its part, continued to run EDPs well into the next decade.[103] By the early 1970s, however, Kakinada-style EDPs had also been established at, among other locations, the National Institute of Motivational and Institutional Development in Mumbai, the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation, the Assam Entrepreneurial Motivation Training Centre and the Maharashtra Small Scale Industrial Development Corporation.[104] In 1988, a report prepared for USAID on entrepreneurship training in India would find 686 Indian institutions 'engaged part- or full-time in EDPs', funding for which was being provided by government agencies as well as a 'myriad' of non-governmental and private organizations.[105] As this new field of entrepreneurship development became entrenched across in India, it held one key principle at its core: that the key to developing entrepreneurship lay, first and foremost, in 'developing entrepreneurs'.[106] Meanwhile, psychologized entrepreneurship training also found enthusiasts within other parts of India's industrial landscape. Beginning in the late 1960s, a number of large Indian corporations, including Tata Chemicals, Larsen & Toubro, Air India and the State Bank of India initiated their own internal courses of achievement motivation training.[107] At the new Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) in Ahmedabad and Calcutta, 'laboratories on Motivation Development' also became a staple feature of the methods used to prepare Indian graduates and executives for corporate careers.[108]

In various spaces, then, McClelland's ideas began to inform Indians' own conceptions about what development meant, and what it entailed. But it was not only the case that McClelland shaped India: India shaped McClelland too. By 'proving' certain connections between psychological change and economic outcomes, the Kakinada Experiment would inspire

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[103] SIET Institute, *Entrepreneurial Motivation Development Programmes: Action Plan* (Hyderabad: SIET Institute, 1976).

[104] For more detail on each of these programmes see Somnath Chattopadhyay, 'Strategies for Motivation Development', in Rao and Pareek (eds.), *Developing Entrepreneurship: A Handbook* (New Delhi: Learning Systems, 1978), pp. 126-147.

[105] *Entrepreneurship Training: User's Guide - Management Training for Micro- and Small Enterprise Intermediaries Series* (Washington D.C.: Nathan Associates, 1990), p. 18.

[106] Rao and Pareek (eds.), *Developing Entrepreneurship: A Handbook,* p. 1.

[107] T.V. Rao, 'Organizational Development and Human Resource Development in India: A Historical Perspective', *Indore Management Journal,* 3:4, 2012, pp. 11-17. See also Somnath Chattopadhyay, 'Strategies for Motivation Development', pp. 139-140.

[108] Somnath Chattopadhyay, 'Strategies for Motivation Development', in Rao and Pareek (eds.), *Developing Entrepreneurship: A Handbook*, p. 140.

McClelland to go on promoting achievement motivation training in other contexts. Back in the United States, the historian Kira Lussier has shown, McClelland would promote the Kakinada model of achievement training as a cutting-edge technique of corporate management education through his own consultancy firm, McBer & Co. Beginning in the late 1960s, McBer would run achievement motivation training for business schools (Harvard and Stanford) as well as several large corporations (including IBM, General Electric and Mattel), thereby mirroring Indians' own attempts to apply motivational concepts to the corporate realm.[109] McClelland would also advocate achievement motivation training in other arenas. In 1967, for example, McBer received funding from the United States Economic Development Administration to run a 'Business Leadership Training Project' for deprived African-Americans in inner-city Washington D.C. The prescribed motivational courses, again following the blueprint of the Kakinada Experiment, sought to motivate black entrepreneurs to break the 'cycle of poverty' that had gripped them and their communities. The Washington project formed part of a longer series of engagements by McClelland's group in training enterprises for 'negro businessmen'.[110] Here, as with their attempts to motivate Indians out of 'underdevelopment', psychologists chose to understand the connection between race and poverty in terms of a nexus between cultural and psychological factors, thereby glossing over the role of other issues, including discrimination and segregation, in the impoverishment of black communities.[111]

Thus, motivational approaches to development, first trialled in the field of Indian industrial development, did more than just shape the areas they targeted; they also looped back to inform practices and programmes at home – from community uplift among black neighbourhoods to corporate culture in white executive boardrooms.[112] This pattern of backward looping was one that also shaped careers, at least in the case of Manohar Nadkarni, a SIET official who had worked with McClelland during the Kakinada Experiment. Acquiring a reputation as a skilled achievement trainer, Nadkarni would take the less-travelled route back to the United States during the late 1960s, securing positions as a trainer

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[109] Kira Lussier, 'Personality, Incorporated: Psychological Capital in American Management, 1960-1965', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2018, pp. 64-80.
[110] Ibid., pp. 80-93.
[111] O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*, pp. 107-123. For a contemporary write-up of these experiments see Jeffrey Timmons, 'Black is Beautiful—Is It Bountiful?' *Harvard Business Review*, Nov-Dec, 1971. For a journalistic account see Judith Randal, 'Negro Businessmen Learning 'Need to Achieve', *The Evening Star*, April 10, 1969.
[112] On McClelland's later shift away from the 'need for achievement' and towards an increasing preoccupation with the 'need for power', see Matthew J. Hoffarth, 'From achievement to power: David C. McClelland, McBer & Company, and the business of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), 1962–1985', *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences*, 2019; pp. 1-16.

on a number of motivational projects. Returning to India in the 1970s, he would eventually become a leading advocate for entrepreneurship development in his native state of Gujarat.[113]

### 'Hindu culture', personality and economic development in contemporary debate

There was, as one contemporary put it, something natural, 'almost inevitable' in the fact that India became the focal point of claims concerning the role of psychological change in economic development.[114] Since the nineteenth century, theorists of economic and social change, from Marx to Weber, had viewed Indian society and culture as the antithesis of the cultural complex that underpinned the 'modern' West. In search of reasons why the 'spirit of capitalism' had not emerged beyond Europe and North America, Weber had looked in part to the inhibiting features of Indian culture for answers. In *The Religion of India,* he contrasted the 'other-worldly' asceticism of Hinduism to the 'this-worldly' ascetism of Protestantism, arguing that the former acted to prevent the development of the ethic – and thereby the spirit – required for capitalism to take hold. 'No community dominated by inner powers of this sort could out of its own substance arrive at the 'spirit of capitalism'', Weber had argued. Nor could it be expected to develop industrialism as an imported 'artefact'.[115]

Weber's claims cast a long shadow. Half a century later, McClelland and likeminded thinkers would approach India through the same lens. India, they argued, was a society in which one encountered 'cultural, social and personal obstacles' to the development of achieving minds.[116] In an essay entitled *Some Themes in Indian Culture*, McClelland explained that a major barrier to the proliferation of achievement motivation was the tension between the twin values of 'gifting' and 'humility' in Indian culture. 'Giving as a repeated exchange', he observed, was 'at the centre of the natural and moral universe' of 'the Indian', forming as it did a way of 'imitating the divine creative force and 'initiating an exchange with the gods'. According to McClelland, however, this preoccupation with giving produced a curious and

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[113] For examples of Nadkarni's later work on entrepreneurship development see Udai Pareek and Manohar Nadkarni, 'Development of Entrepreneurship: A Conceptual Model', pp. 29-41; and Udai Pareek and Manohar Nadkarni, 'A Training Model for Entrepreneurial Development', pp. 42-57 in Pareek and Rao, *Developing Entrepreneurship: A Handbook.*

[114] A. K. Singh, 'Hindu culture and economic development in India', *Conspectus*, 1, 1967, p. 10.

[115] Max Weber, *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism* (New York: The Free Press, 1958)*,* p. 325. Recent historical reappraisals of Weber have sought to add nuance to his arguments on the relationship between capitalism and Hinduism. Weber's concern, it is now suggested, was only ever with the 'first unplanned, endogenous appearance of industrial capitalism', and not necessarily with its future potential. His argument that industrial society had not taken place in India (or elsewhere), it follows, did not equate to an argument that it could not. For these arguments see David Gellner, 'Max Weber, Capitalism and the Religion of India', *Sociology,* 16:4, 1982, pp. 526-543; Detlef Kantowsky, 'Max Weber on India and Indian Interpretations of Max Weber', *Contributions to Indian Sociology,* 16:2, 1982, pp. 141-174.

[116] McClelland and Winter, *Motivating Economic Achievement*, p. 249.

contradictory effect. On the one hand, because it necessitated having something to give, giving permitted the existence of strong desires to accumulate wealth, power and prestige. At the same time, however, this accumulative instinct also ran up against the parallel cultural values of humility and self-sacrifice, thereby leading to contradiction and confusion:

Indian children are…encouraged to accumulate resources…to become more knowledgeable, for example, so that they can give wise advice to others – but the system requires that they deny that they have any resources, [to] belittle themselves.[117]

Constructing a hypothetical example of a farmer keen improve their yield of wheat, McClelland contrasted how such a task might be pursued by an individual in a 'giving- or service-oriented' culture (like India), compared to the denizen of an 'achievement-oriented' culture. In the latter case, the farmer's 'central value centre[d] around his relationship to the environment (the wheat crop) rather than to his fellowman'. In the former, however, the farmer's:

…first and foremost goal is to get himself in a position where he can provide such a service to other people. It becomes centrally important to him to own a piece of land where the wheat could be produced or at least to get into a government institute where he can provide the service through the resources he controls…He is told that he must not compete, that he who is most humble is certain to win…He is [therefore] locked into power struggles within himself and with others which are extremely painful and self-defeating.[118]

McClelland posited links between this permanent, debilitating state of contradiction and the Hindu concept of 'withdrawal'. Here, he drew a direct comparison to the then prevalent 'double bind' theory of schizophrenia, according to which repeat experiences of contradiction in the childhood domestic environment, typically in the form of divergent parental instruction, created an internal state of paralysis (a double bind) within the individual, leading to the construction of a delusional internal world designed to escape it. 'The double bind resulting from power struggles over giving which forces withdrawal as an Indian cultural trait', explained McClelland, 'may more universally force a similar kind of withdrawal in

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[117] David C. McClelland, 'Some Themes in the Culture of India', in A.R. Desai (ed.), *Essays on Modernization of Underdeveloped Societies: Vol II* (Bombay: Thacker and Co., 1972), p. 272.
[118] Ibid., pp. 278-279. In exploring the significance of this cultural complex on Indian conceptions of work, McClelland argued that work itself was typically 'viewed as a form of giving, as providing service to others'. The result, once again, was that the principle value of work was not the outcome of the job, but its function as a mechanism for the giving of resources: 'A Block Development Officer, a clerk, or a Joint Secretary is in a sense doing a favour to people by working; that is, he is providing services, out of his own resources, for others. But of course he must *have* some resources – e.g. privileges, prestige, respect. So his major focus of interest is not the outcome of a job of work but whether or not he has the resources to do the work.' Ibid., pp. 284-285.

individuals whose extreme cases are labelled schizophrenic'.[119] As a by-product of this schizophrenic mindset, the typical 'Indian worker' was 'not achievement-oriented'.[120]

McClelland perceived other barriers to achievement motivation in Indian culture too, especially in the 'other worldly' nature of Hinduism, as he called it. 'Hinduism', he argued, stressed:

> …values that would hardly be expected to lead parents to behave in ways that would induce high *n* Achievement in their sons…Hinduism explicitly teaches that concern with earthly achievements is a snare and a delusion. The ultimate goal is to become "nonattached", to act without a concern for the consequences of action. If all parents were devout Hindus, it is hard to see how they would set high standards of excellence for their son's performance, or show great pleasure over his achievements or displeasure at his failures.[121]

By arguing that Indian culture thwarted the proliferation of achievement motivation, McClelland and his colleagues sat comfortably within a broader body of contemporary thought concerning the barriers posed to economic development by 'Hindu culture'. Under this rubric, some looked to the impact of Hindu cosmology and 'metaphysics' on economic behaviour. In a 1963 collection of essays entitled *Hindu Culture, Economic Development and Economic Planning in India,* for example, the American economist K. William Kapp explored how the 'cyclical concept of time', by connecting 'the actual finite human situation with the individual's previous incarnation', had the effect of 'spreading cause and effect over totally different lives'. The result, he argued, was that causation lost its continuity and assumed 'a fatalistic tinge'.[122] Seeing this and other features of Hindu culture as a barrier to rational economic behaviour, Kapp called for India to 'abandon those elements of her pretechnological civilization which stand in the way of the necessary secularization and modernization'.[123]

While Kapp focused on the obstructions posed by Hindu metaphysics, others, such as the Swedish economist, Gunnar Myrdal, argued that India's economic growth was thwarted by another feature of Hindu culture; namely, caste. Myrdal, a former UN executive and future Nobel winner, based his arguments on a period of several years spent in India during the 1960s, during which he developed close relations with Nehru and the leaders of the Planning

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[119] The 'double bind' theory of schizophrenia was most closely associated with the British anthropologist Gregory Bateston. See Gregory Bateson, Don D. Jackson, Jay Haley, John Weakland, 'Toward a History of Schizophrenia', *Behavioral Science*, 1:4, 1956, pp. 251-254.

[120] 'As I See It, An Interview with David C. McClelland', *Forbes Magazine,* 1969, Box 25, DCMP., p. 1.

[121] McClelland, *The Achieving Society,* p. 357.

[122] K. William Kapp, *Hindu Culture, Economic Development and Economic Planning in India: A Collection of Essays* (London, 1963), pp. 13-15.

[123] Kapp, *Hindu Culture*, p. 64.

Commission. In his subsequent three-volume study, *Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations,* he set out to explore the role of social and institutional structures that underpinned Asian 'underdevelopment'. Focusing on India, Myrdal argued that the caste system fixed rigidly social and economic hierarchies and impeded social and occupational mobility, thereby fostering an aversion to manual labour and a reluctance to acquire new skills and adapt oneself to new types of work.[124] The caste system thus gave rise not only to pervasive inequality but a general lack of competitiveness in economic life. It posed 'a major obstacle to economic growth'.[125]

Ideas about the obstructions posed to economic development by Hindu culture also found implicit expression in the work of social scientists studying personality development and child-rearing. In 1953, for example, the British psychiatrist Morris G. Carstairs published a study of 'Hindu personality' formation that offered just such an interpretation. Carstairs, a member of a Columbia University research project led by the anthropologist Gitel Steed, studied the relationship between child-rearing and personality traits among high-caste Hindu males in the village of Deoli, Rajasthan. In his observations, he argued that overgenerous patterns of maternal affection, followed by their abrupt removal, equated to a process of 'traumatic weaning' among subjects.[126] As a result, many adult males suffered from uncertainty, anxiety and an inability to handle frustration, thereby leading to marked propensities for 'aggression', 'mistrust', 'conformity' and 'passivity'. This had implications for economic development, Carstairs suggested, because it discouraged ambition, independence and risk-taking.[127]

Similar themes formed part of the work of John T. Hitchcock and Leigh Minturn, an anthropologist-psychologist duo studying personality development in the village of Khalapur,

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[124] Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama: An Enquiry into the Poverty of Nations – Volumes I-III* (London: Allen Lane, 1968). For the impact of caste on inequality and social immobility see pp. 1060, 1345; for aversion to manual labour and new types of work see pp. 745, 1067, 1237, 1382.
[125] Ibid., p. 579.
[126] The study of the effects of 'traumatic weaning' within 'traditional' cultures reflected a broader contemporary penchant of Western social scientists. For similar studies in East Africa see Erik Linstrum, *Ruling Minds: Psychology in the British Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), pp. 75-78; 195-197.
[127] Morris Carstairs, *The Twice Born: A Study of a Community of High-Caste Hindus* (London, 1957), pp. 146 and 158. Carstairs' account was preceded by a 1948 study of 'Basic Personality in Orthodox Hindu Culture', authored by the educational missionary, William Stephens Taylor. Taylor argued that the Hindu cultural system produced: 'a basic personality pattern in which personal initiative is replaced by the sense of conformity, in which responsibility is exercised without personal authority, in which security is associated with the sense of dependence and self-respect with a sense of helplessness, and in which opportunities for frustration and acute anxiety are minimized'. W.S. Taylor, 'Basic Personality in Orthodox Hindu Culture Patterns', *Journal of Abnormal Psychology,* 43:1, 1948, p. 12.

Maharashtra as part of the 'Six Cultures Project', a Harvard University project focused on the cross-cultural analysis of child-rearing patterns.[128] Though, like Carstairs, focused on questions other than economic development, Hitchcock and Minturn's work found that child-rearing patterns in Khalapur produced personality structures marked by traits that were naturally conformist and risk-averse. Focused again on high-caste Hindu males, *The Rajputs of Khalapur* reported a heavy reliance on 'punishment' and negative instruction to control children's behaviour, a pattern which seldom allowed children to solve their own problems. Subsequently, the children of Khalapur demonstrated signs of a lack of self-reliance, dependency and a disinclination to take responsibility for their own actions; traits which they carried with them into adult life.[129]

In a loose yet clearly discernible thread, then, 1960s social scientists worked to recapitulate Weberian idea that Indian (and more specifically 'Hindu') culture was producing the wrong type of person for economic development. Claims about the specific hindrances posed by Indian culture varied, as did their level to which these hindrances were explicitly stated or merely implied. There were also, again, important differences between those who emphasized the difficulties of changing culture and those, like McClelland, who stressed its relative ease. The loose thread was, nevertheless, a powerful one. As McClelland forwarded his ideas about the obstacles posed to development by Indian culture, he did so not in isolation but in alignment with ideas at the very mainstream of contemporary (and especially Western) social scientific thinking.[130]

There was, however, another perspective. In direct contrast to claims that Indian culture posed barriers to economic growth, a number of contemporary social scientists argued that in India, it was possible to see how economic development was a process that made active use

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[128] On the background of the Six Cultures Project, see Robert A. Levine, 'The Six Cultures Study: Prologue to a History of a Landmark Project', *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology,* 41:4, 2010, pp. 513-521.

[129] John T. Hitchcock and Leigh Minturn, *The Rajputs of Khalapur, India* (New York: Six Cultures Series, Vol III, 1966). For similar accounts of 'Hindu personality' see Philip Spratt, *Hindu Culture and Personality: A Psychoanalytic Study* (Bombay: Manaktala, 1966); and Dhirendra Narain, *Hindu Character: A Few Glimpses* (Bombay: Bombay University Press, 1957).

[130] With the passage of time, such arguments would look increasingly peculiar to social scientists, and especially to economists. When, in 1978, for instance, the Indian economist Raj Krishna described India's consistently low rate of economic growth since independence in terms of a 'Hindu rate of growth', he did so not literally but ironically. Like other economists of the time, Krishna would place the blame for India's economic stagnation not on the stymieing effects of Hinduism but on the negative effects of Nehruvian planning on the economy. In this sense, somewhat paradoxically, Krishna's coining of the 'Hindu rate of growth' actually pointed to the marginalisation of 'Hindu culture' as a serious explanation for economic underdevelopment by the late 1970s. On these shifts see Kunal Sen, 'New Interpretations of India's Economic Growth in the Twentieth Century' in Anthony P. Costa (ed.), *A New India? Critical Reflections in the Long Twentieth Century* (London: Anthem Press, 2008), pp. 23-42.

of existing cultural norms. The most prominent exponents of this line of argument were anthropologists, and perhaps most notable among them was the University of Chicago scholar Milton Singer. An associate of the anthropologist Robert Redfield, whose own renowned civilizational theory had stressed the dialogic interaction between 'great' and 'little' traditions and the danger of disruptive cultural transformation, Singer would emerge during the mid-1950s as a prominent advocate for the role of cultural 'tradition' in India's economic development.[131] Challenging what he called the 'negative thesis' of Weber and his followers, he argued that Hinduism was, in fact, replete with many of the spiritual sanctions associated with 'this-worldly' religions like Protestantism. 'In the traditional Indian pantheon', for example:

…material wealth and power have an important place…*Artha*, wealth and power, represents one of the four major ends of life, and there is a science of it in *arthasastra*. In the classic work of that name, wealth and power are indeed considered as essential in the scheme of things as are the other three basic values – *dharma* (duty), *mokhsa* (liberation), and *kama* (pleasure). And this judgment is supported by the stories of the epics in which wealth and power, usually the reward of virtue, are ever present. In their everyday behavior, too, Indians do not show less of that propensity to trade, barter, and exchange than Adam Smith found in the mainsprings of the wealth of nations.[132]

Addressing 'the traditional Indian philosophy of renunciation', meanwhile, Singer observed how this:

…smooths the transfer of holdings from generation to generation within the family, and it may also be used to lever a redistribution of property. In neither of these functions does renunciation constitute an obstacle to economic development. In fact…in performing these functions it furnishes an incentive for hard work on the part of the younger generation which is going to inherit the property renounced by the elder generation and holds out-to the poor and landless a prospect of redistribution in their favour.[133]

Thus, 'those values and motivations usually associated with the "materialism" of the West' were 'also commonplaces in India…it is not, therefore, their absence which is the source of that economic "underdevelopment" to which the Nehru government is now addressing itself'.[134] Indeed, according to Singer, India's 'traditional' culture, far from an obstacle to

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[131] On the connections between Singer's arguments and Redfield's project Nicole Sackley, 'Cosmopolitanism and the Uses of Tradition: Robert Redfield and Alternative Visions of Modernization During the Cold War', *Modern Intellectual History,* 9:3, 2012, p. 581.
[132] Milton Singer, 'Cultural Values in India's Economic Development', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 305:1, 1956, p. 82.
[133] Ibid., p. 83.
[134] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

economic development, was 'perfectly capable of providing the spiritual incentives and disciplines of a modern industrial society'.[135]

Another important example of this line of thinking can be found in the work of a close associate of Singer, the University of Baroda sociologist, M.N. Srinivas. While not focused on the question of economic development *per se*, Srinivas's well-known theory of 'Sanskrization', articulated most clearly in his 1952 work, *Religion and Society Amongst the Coorgs of South India,* offered an interpretation of the caste system that differed markedly from those, like Myrdal, who lamented its static, rigidifying nature. For Srinivas, the modernizing interpretation of caste as a bulwark of social and economic hierarchy missed important features about the way in which the system worked in practice, including its role as a capillary-like social network connecting villages to urban economies in ways that fostered, rather than prevented, economic change. Where Myrdal framed caste as a barrier to social mobility, Srinivas painted an entirely different picture, one in which inequalities in social and economic status could be set right through the efforts of lower and middle caste groups to adopt the 'Sanskritic' rituals and practices of higher castes.[136]

Singer, Srinivas and Redfield formed part of a cohesive group of anti-modernization scholars associated with the University of Chicago during the 1950s, a group which had helped to define the contours of community development's 'low modernist', culturally sensitive approach to development.[137] But the claim that development did not necessarily entail disruptive changes to Indian culture was also espoused by other anthropologists not so closely tied to this group. One such figure was Cora Du Bois. A leading light in the 'culture

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[135] Ibid., p. 86. As Singer explained elsewhere, a major problem with the 'negative thesis' was its 'hypothetico-deductive' approach. Weber had studied certain institutions, doctrines and values and assumed that they automatically produced certain types of behaviour, he argued. In doing so, he had failed to understand the ways in which cultural frameworks actually translated into lived realities. By adopting an inductive approach, Singer argued, what emerged was the flexibility and adaptability with which existing cultural frameworks guided everyday action. Milton Singer, 'Religion and Social Change in India: The Max Weber Thesis: Phase Three', *Economic Development and Cultural Change,* 14:4, 1966, pp. 497-505. For other works on this theme see Milton B. Singer, *When a Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization* (New York: Praeger Press, 1972); Milton B. Singer (ed.), *Entrepreneurship and Modernization of Occupational Cultures in South Asia* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1973).

[136] M.N. Srinivas, *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952). On the development of the Sanskritization theory see Simon Charsley, 'Sanskritization: The Career of an Anthropological Theory', *Contributions to Indian Sociology,* 32:2, 1998, pp. 528-549. Srinivas' account of the dynamic nature of caste acquired a broad following among Indian anthropologists. For a critique of account of the 'lop-sided' account of caste provided within Myrdal's *Asian Drama,* written by one such follower see T.N. Madan, 'Caste and Development', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 4:5, 1969, pp. 285-290.

[137] On the connections between Srinivas and the Chicago anthropologists, and their connections to community to development see Nicole Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', ch. 2; Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014), pp. 56-61.

and personality' school of anthropology during the interwar years, best known for her 1944 study of the inhabitants of the island of Alor, Du Bois had taken up a professorship at Harvard University in 1954, the emerging centre of 'modernization theory'. Throughout the next decade, however, as colleagues at the Harvard Department for Social Relations (including McClelland) rallied around the concept of 'modernization', Du Bois looked instead for opportunities to explore alternative understandings of the relationship between development and socio-cultural change.

In 1961, Du Bois initiated her own Indian research project in the city of Bhubaneshwar, the new capital of the state of Orissa. The aim was to examine evidence for 'change and stability' in the city's 'old' and 'new' towns respectively. Quickly, however, the Bhubaneshwar project morphed into an expression of Du Bois's personal desire to debunk universalizing theories of socio-cultural change. Working predominantly through graduate students, both American and Indian, Du Bois encouraged her researchers to study how processes of modernization occurring at Bhubaneshwar constituted 'process of adaptation' that drew on existing cultural frameworks and resources, not linear transitions from traditional to modern.[138]

Drawing on evidence from Bhubaneshwar, Du Bois challenged the 'centrifugal' understanding of modernization that underwrote arguments about the need for cultural change. As countries like India experienced economic development, she argued, they would naturally seek to replicate the technologies, institutions, and practices of countries deemed to be 'modern'. Where linear theories of modernization were mistaken, however, was in their assumption that this necessarily implied a broader 'imitative' process. As features of Western society were adopted in new contexts, she argued, they would inevitably be re-shaped by the cultural norms into which they were received. 'The traditional hierarchy of caste', she told one audience:

…fits closely into the modern hierarchy of bureaucracy and is reinforced by the educational system which is in itself an echo of the traditional in the modern. Thus traditional and modern institutions of education and bureaucratic organizations reinforce each other with unforeseen neatness, at the expense of modern individualistic and egalitarian values.[139]

Du Bois's take on the 'absorptive and reinterpretative' process of modernization unfolding at Bhubaneshwar placed her firmly at odds with efforts to induce processes of cultural change

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[138] For a fuller account of Du Bois' career, and of the Harvard Bhubaneshwar Project see Susan Seymour, *Cora Du Bois: Anthropologist, Diplomat, Agent* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), ch. 9.

[139] Cora Du Bois, 'Modernizing India's Society (Lectures, Radcliffe-Harvard Alumnae Association and Radcliffe Graduate Society)', Series: Articles, Reviews and Speeches, Box 73, Cora Alice Du Bois Papers (hereafter CDBP), Tozzer Library, Harvard University, p. 21.

as a prerequisite for modernization. If modernization necessarily drew on existing cultural frameworks, attempts to change culture in order to create 'modernity' made little sense. Moreover, for Du Bois, existing cultural frameworks showed little sign of being ill-equipped for modern institutions or economic arrangements. As people moved back and forth between villages and the new capital, changing roles and economic functions as they went, they did so 'with psychological ease', not hampered by absent motives or an inability to behave as rational economic actors.[140] Claims regarding the necessity of cultural change for Indian development, Du Bois contended, were profoundly mistaken in their belief that modernization could not succeed in the absence of conditions associated with the Western experience. Weber had confused 'an accidental adhesion in the West for a necessary condition'.[141] As a reformulation of the Weber thesis through a psychological lens, McClelland's claims regarding the 'need-for-achievement', reflected an 'overly simple, overly specialized…culture-bound' viewpoint.[142]

### Indian psychologists and collectivist motivation

In India, then, McClelland's claims for psychological modernization encountered sharp opposition from those, both Indian and American, who rejected its claims regarding the inimical relationship between 'traditional' culture and economic development. But achievement motivation theory would also encounter other, more subtle forms of reproach. For it was not long before Indian psychologists, many of whom were ardent enthusiasts of the motivation-based approaches to development, posed their own questions of achievement motivation theory. Here, unlike their anthropologist counterparts, psychologists critiqued not so much the claim that economic development required a particular set of cultural and psychological conditions, but rather the idea that a concern with 'achievement' was itself the key psychological driver of development. The need for achievement, Indian psychologists argued, while a powerful force for economic change, was also an 'individualistic' form of motivation, one that produced tendencies for competition, acquisition and 'resource hoarding'. On its own, a concern with achievement could not produce effective development, especially in impoverished countries like India.

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[140] 'Colloquium (sophomore) draft re: India field work, Spring 1963', Series: Articles, Reviews and Speeches, Box 73, CDBP, p. 7.
[141] 'Lectures, Swarthmore College: "An Anthropologist Looks at Modernization" typed drafts (documents) April 7, 1967', Series: Articles, Reviews and Speeches, Box 74, CDBP, pp. 24-5.
[142] Ibid., p. 5.

One clear expression of this sentiment can be found in the work of Udai Pareek. A psychologist trained at Calcutta and Delhi universities, Pareek had initially come to motivational theory during a period of employment at SIET in the early 1960s, during which he had worked alongside McClelland on the Kakinada achievement motivation training. Emerging, in subsequent years, as a leading figure within the entrepreneurship development movement in India, this self-proclaimed 'behavioral scientist' would put his own spin on what he called the 'motivational paradigm of development'. While agreeing that 'achievement motivation had 'been shown to be responsible for entrepreneurial activity in a society', Pareek contended that:

> …development (economic and other) is not a function of achievement motivation alone. Concern for other people or the society also seems to be important…I call it [an] "extension motive" – a need to extend the self or the ego and to relate to a larger group and its goals. A superordinate goal probably arouses this motive. Such goals may therefore be important not only in developing harmony but also in sustaining continued motivation of people in development.[143]

According to Pareek, the importance of 'extension motivation' as a catalyst of development could be evidenced in a number of ways, some of which directly inverted McClelland's claims about achievement. For instance, while McClelland had argued that communism provided a good example of achievement motivation in action, Pareek suggested that what communist countries were in fact demonstrating was the importance of 'extension motivation'. China's economic growth, he argued, was a product of its leaders' ability to create 'an extension motivation "mystique"' (and not an achievement one) through an 'emphasis on work *for society*'.[144] Meanwhile, looking back at history, there seemed to be 'enough evidence' to suggest 'that many social changes, including economic development, were in the past designed and executed by people who showed great concern for others'.[145] Pareek's was a view quite different from those who stressed the role of 'tradition' in India's

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[143] Udai Pareek, 'A Motivational Paradigm for Development', *Journal of Social Issues,* 24:2, 1968, p. 119. In a separate essay, Pareek would define 'extension motivation' as a regard for other persons, co-operation with others for the achievement of a common goal, faith and trust in members of the group, and involvement in goals which concern not only oneself but society at large. See Udai Pareek, 'Motivational Patterns and Planned Social Change', *International Social Science Journal,* 20:3, 1968, p. 469. For a reflection on Pareek's theory by one of his disciples see T.V. Rao, 'Beyond management: some conceptual contributions of Dr. Udai Pareek to the modern world' in T.V. Rao and Anil K. Khandelwal (eds.), *HRD, OD and Institution Building: Essays in Honour of Udai Pareek* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2016, pp. 196-199.
[144] Pareek, Motivational Patterns and Planned Social Change', p. 469.
[145] 'The extension motive', explained Pareek, 'has certainly been significant in non-economic development-social reforms, anti-orthodox movements, promotion of liberal values, etc. Such changes have indirectly contributed to economic development of a country. The speeches of Indian "leaders" – spokesmen of the nation – during the period of struggle against British colonialism and the period of economic development appear to contain a large amount of imagery related to this motive. 'A Motivational Paradigm for Development', p. 119.

economic development. While 'religions' had in the past satisfied the extension motive by 'helping an individual extend his self or ego and relate to larger entities', he argued, the 'modern world', in which religions had 'outlived their utility', called for new 'rational systems of developing [extension] motivation'.[146] According to Pareek, one approach to developing such extension motivation was an adapted form of motivational training focused on 'superordinate goals'.[147]

Pareek's call for extension motivation was part of a broader tendency of Indian psychologists to reorient the motivational paradigm towards 'social' goals. For J.B.P Sinha, a psychologist based at the Patna Institute of Social Studies, a key limitation of McClelland's achievement motivation theory was its failure to account for how limits on the availability of resources affected behavioural, and thereby economic, outcomes. 'When resources are limited', he argued, 'endeavours to maximise achievement necessitate resource-hoarding behaviour':

…a situation is thus created in which competition with a standard shows itself in contriently independent behaviour, whereby attempts to extend control over resources results in disproportionate resource allocation.[148]

Sceptical that the promulgation of achievement motivation in a 'low resource environment' (like India) would do anything more than result in 'destructive and injurious' competition, Sinha suggested that a more appropriate model of motivation for such environments would emphasize the need for what he called '*n* Co-operation'.[149]

Sinha's argument drew on an experiment conducted at Ranchi University in Bihar during the mid-1960s – the experiment with which this thesis began. Assigning small groups of students a simple 'cube construction task', Sinha had varied the conditions under which groups completed the activity. To some, he provided an abundance of cubes, thereby reflecting an 'unlimited resource' condition. To others, he provided the minimal amount for completion of the task. Borrowing techniques from McClelland's earlier work, Sinha then 'verbally aroused' motives of either 'achievement' or 'co-operation' within the groups.[150] In scenarios where resources were 'limited', he argued, it was groups aroused to co-operation that performed the task most successfully. Indeed, under limited resource conditions, groups

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[146] Ibid., p. 119.
[147] Pareek, 'Motivational Patterns and Planned Social Change', pp. 469-473.
[148] J.B.P. Sinha, 'The n-Ach/n-Cooperation under Limited/Unlimited Resource Conditions', *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,* 4, 1968, p. 234.
[149] Ibid., p. 235.
[150] In the former case, groups were encouraged to complete the task at any cost; in the latter they were encouraged to work together. For a full description of the experiment see Ibid., pp. 236-238.

induced towards achievement demonstrated not only a poorer performance, but also a greater discrepancy in individual scores and a greater tendency towards conflict between members. According to Sinha, the results demonstrated the increased likelihood of both economic inequality and social tension that would come with efforts to raise $n$ Achievement in low resource environments.[151]

The argument that development required more than simply a desire for personal achievement would find yet further expression in the concept, developed later by the educational psychologist Prayag Mehta, of 'social achievement motivation'. According to Mehta, however, it was not just that development would work better when people were motivated towards collective goals. What was also true was that people in low-income environments like India were actually more likely to be driven by 'social' forms of motivation. Interestingly, Mehta turned not to cultural frameworks of caste or kinship to make this argument, but instead to the psychological concept of 'fraternal deprivation', according to which socially and economically-deprived persons were more inclined towards 'group thinking'. Drawing on this theory, Mehta argued that deprived persons were more predisposed towards 'group action' – that is, they were more likely to strive not just for personal and work-related achievements, but for improvements to their broader social environment too. 'Stimulated by an increasing awareness and an increasing sense of deprivation', the deprived individual learned 'to think in terms of group or social achievement goals and acquire such a need'.[152] Mehta's theory led to another significant conclusion, alongside the claim that 'socially and economically deprived persons tended to think in terms of group goals rather than/or in addition to personal goals'; it implied that people in poverty – contrary to the assumptions of McClelland and others – were not devoid of motivation at all. Indeed, in what looked increasingly like an inversion of McClelland's theory, Mehta's emphasis on 'social achievement motivation' led him to argue that it was actually those from 'socially-disadvantaged and underprivileged groups that [tended] to show a higher need for achievement'.[153]

Pareek, Sinha and Mehta's shared interest in collectivist, rather than individualist, motivation was by no means coincidental. The calls for 'extension motivation', '$n$ Co-operation' and 'social achievement motivation' were, in fact, each responses bearing the distinct imprint of

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[151] Ibid., p. 235.
[152] Mehta, *Social Achievement Motivation,* p. 26.
[153] Ibid., p. 23.

the Nehruvian moment. According to Pareek, the system of government best suited to the cultivation of 'extension motivation' was a 'socialist' one because, though not compromising individual freedom, 'socialist countries…explicitly [linked] individual goals with higher social goals'.[154] This argument, of course, could easily be read the other way. Extension motivation was an important motive in development precisely because it reflected – more than achievement motivation did – the aims and objectives of contemporary Nehruvian socialism. Like *n* Co-operation and social achievement, extension motivation thus reflected a desire to cultivate forms of behaviour deemed conducive to contemporary political ideals. As well as an insistence on the importance of collective goals, all three concepts were united by a shared suspicion of competitive, acquisitive forms of behaviour.

There were clear resonances here with the broader Nehruvian ideas about the social foundations for a 'socialistic' society. As Nehru himself explained, the pursuit of 'democratically planned collectivism' required more than a broad programme of economic reorganization, delivered through 'careful and continuous planning'. It also necessitated certain quotidian habits conducive to 'more equitable sharing' and 'a progressive tendency towards equalization'. Such a change, he explained:

…would mean upsetting of the present-day acquisitive society based primarily on the profit motive. The profit motive may still continue to some extent but it will not be the dominating urge, nor will it have the same scope as it has today…Collectivism [also] involves communal undertakings and cooperative effort.[155]

For Nehru, there were clear synergies between the called for behaviours and existing Indian culture:

It would be absurd to say that the profit motive does not appeal to the average Indian, but it is nevertheless true that there is no such admiration for it in India as there is in the West. The possessor of money may be envied but he is not particularly respected or admired. Respect and admiration still go to the man or woman who is considered good and wise, and especially to those who sacrifice themselves or what they possess for the public good. The Indian outlook, even of the masses, has never approved of the spirit of acquisitiveness.

The spirit of co-operation was, moreover, 'fully in harmony with old Indian social conceptions, which were all based on the idea of the group'.[156] Psychologists, as we have seen, were either more sceptical of the claim that India already possessed all the necessary motivations for socialistic development, or, in Mehta's case, chose to articulate this argument

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[154] Pareek, 'A Motivational Paradigm of Development', p. 119.
[155] Nehru, *The Discovery of India,* p. 521-522.
[156] Ibid., p. 522.

in different ways. Nevertheless, by stressing the need for drives that prized collective over individual good, they forwarded a distinctly Nehruvian understanding of the behaviours deemed necessary for effective development, one that re-worked McClelland's ideas in light of their own convictions and prevailing concerns.

## Aid over achievement: the United States, India and the triumph of economistic development

McClelland's psychological enterprise was to encounter a third form of rivalry in India, one that would ultimately prove more consequential than the critiques of either relativist anthropologists or collectivist psychologists. This was a rivalry that centred not on questions of modernization versus cultural tradition, nor on individual versus collectivist motivation, but rather on the matter of where the real trigger of economic development actually lay. McClelland's efforts to cultivate economic development through psychological change, we have seen, had been formed as a direct challenge to prevailing ideas about the potential impacts of 'material' economic aid. As McClelland found in India a site to pursue this psychologistic vision of development, however, the country was simultaneously becoming the principal test case for the very model of development he sought to disprove.

The rise of American economic aid to India was borne out of the same processes that had underpinned the more general increase in American development assistance; namely, the rise of Rostovian economic theory. As Rostow and Millikan developed their arguments about the stages of economic growth during the 1950s, they soon homed-in on India as a key exemplar for how a programme of aid-backed investment might propel the process of economic growth. At the midpoint of the twentieth century, they argued, India stood as one of the few countries on the cusp of 'take-off' – the vital stage of development at which an economy made the transition into self-sustaining growth. With increases in grain production between 1951 and 1954 having seemingly resolved the food supply issues facing India at the time of independence, India appeared to be ideally positioned for a concerted push of investment designed to build 'industrial momentum'. 'They can use some additional capital right now' Rostow had explained, 'in the course of five years they could absorb a helluva lot more'.[157]

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[157] W.W. Rostow, *Eisenhower, Kennedy and Foreign Aid,* p. 96. For accounts of the MIT economists' interest in India and its relation to stagist economic theory see Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', pp. 268-278; Dennis Merrell, *Bread and the Ballot: The United States and India's Economic Development, 1947-1963* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990), pp. 153-155; Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: the United States, India and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 261-262.

Rostow and Millikan's emphasis on the Indian case reflected more than just economic considerations. It spoke of the MIT economists' concerns about the impact of prevailing US policies in South Asia too. Alongside a broad aversion to aid spending overseas, President Eisenhower had come to power with a deep scepticism of Nehruvian India's 'non-aligned' foreign policy. Interpreting this, together with India's support for Chinese membership of the United Nations and its fierce critiques of US action in Korea, as a refusal to denounce communism in favour of the 'free world', Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, had quickly set about forging a new set of diplomatic relationships in South Asia, culminating, in 1954, in the signing of an extensive military pact with India's northern adversary Pakistan.[158] To Rostow and Millikan, as well as other American liberals, this pro-Pakistan tilt of Eisenhower's foreign policy had only one logical outcome; the strengthening of ties between India and the Soviet Union. As the death of Stalin, in 1953, paved the way for a rapprochement between Moscow and New Delhi, including new announcements of Soviet economic assistance to India, a new approach to India was, according to Rostow and Millikan, necessary to prevent the wholesale 'loss' of India to the communist bloc.[159]

In addition to economic considerations and Cold War concerns, Rostow and Millikan's emphasis on aid to India bore the imprint of another factor. In 1954, the Government of India had begun formulating the details of its own Second Five Year Plan for economic development. Following on from the first iteration, in 1951, and in light of the rosier conditions now facing Indian planners, the Second Plan presented an opportunity for increased levels of investment in the Indian economy: in short, precisely the sort of intervention that the MIT economists held necessary for economic growth. Downplaying the potential contradictions between the Plan's commitment to a 'socialistic pattern of society' and their own economic vision, Rostow and Millikan would suggest that India's underdeveloped status, together with its mixed economy, provided good reason for Indian policymakers to focus initially on large-scale public-sector activity and infrastructure.[160] Moreover, by lending support to such undertakings, they argued, the United States would help ensure domestic Indian savings were channelled into private investment. The Second

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[158] On Eisenhower's tilt towards Pakistan between 1953 and 1954 see McMahon, *Cold War on the Periphery,* pp. 123-188; Srinath Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas: A History of the United States in South Asia* (New York: Basic Books, 2018), pp. 191-199; Paul G. McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia: Britain, the United States and the Indian Subcontinent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 16-25; Dennis Kux, *Estranged Democracies: India and the United States, 1941-1991* (London: Sage Publications, 1993), pp. 105-115.
[159] Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', pp. 273-274.
[160] Merrell, *Bread and the Ballot,* p. 155.

Plan would not only convince Rostovians of the imminent possibility of Indian economic take-off. It would also give a specific locus to the argument for the importance of Indian aid.[161]

Claims about the importance of economic assistance to India would suffuse the arguments of Rostow and his colleagues regarding the need for a new approach to US foreign policy during the 1950s.[162] By 1956, the Eisenhower administration had begun to show clear signs of accepting this approach. Faced with rising levels of Soviet assistance, and continued signs of accord between Moscow and New Delhi, encapsulated in President Khrushchev's tour of India in December 1955, Eisenhower's White House would soon instigate nothing less than a wholesale reorientation of its positions towards India. Drawing explicitly from the MIT economists' arguments, in 1957 Eisenhower's National Security Council would pass a new statement on US foreign policy in South Asia. The statement, known as NSC 5701, called for 'economic and technical assistance to India, placing emphasis on projects and programs having the maximum potential support of the goals and aspirations of India's second five-year plan'.[163] Meanwhile, from 1956, Einsenhower would also sign-off on a series of high-profile aid agreements to New Delhi. Beginning with a $75 million development assistance grant in that year, American aid contributions to India would grow from $89.8 million in 1958, to $137 million in 1959, to $194 million in 1960.[164] In 1957, meanwhile, the US Government also approved a $225 million loan consisting of Export-Import credits and Development Lending Facility funds.[165] Thus, as Eisenhower's administration relinquished its earlier stance in favour of a new Rostovian-inspired aid strategy, it was to India that the bulk of its new aid funding would flow.

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[161] On the importance of the Second Plan for the MIT economists' arguments on India see Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', pp. 276-278.

[162] For examples, including several reports submitted to a US Presidential Commission and a special Senate Committee, see Merrell, *Bread and the Ballot*, pp. 155; Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', pp. 298-302.

[163] 'National Security Council, NSC 5701: Statement of Policy on U.S. Policy Toward South Asia, January 10, 1957', in Robert J. McMahon and Stanley Shaloff (eds.) *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1955-1957* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1987), pp. 36.

[164] In 1960, under its PL480 food assistance programme, the US Government would also conclude a four-year accord with India to the tune of US$ 1.276 billion. Importantly, much of the US funding that came to India from 1956 onwards was also a response to a looming 'foreign exchange crisis' caused by overspending of India's US dollar reserves through overspending on arms as well as capital goods, For rising US aid spending to India under Eisenhower, including the context of foreign exchange crisis, see Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas*, pp. 214-215; Merrell, *Bread and the Ballot,* pp. 143-144; McMahon, pp. 235-236; Engerman, *The Price of Aid: The Economic Cold War in India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018)*,* pp. 159-190.

[165] Ibid, pp. 215.

It was with the inauguration of the Kennedy administration in 1961, however, that US economic aid to India would reach its apogee. Framing Indian economic development in terms of both Cold War geopolitics and personal political ambition, Kennedy would keenly embrace arguments about the importance of Indian economic aid.[166] In 1958, prior to his election as President, he had already tabled a resolution to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee calling for US support for multilateral aid to India to the tune of $1.2 billion.[167] Upon election, Kennedy would quickly take measures to increase the levels of American support to India beyond those already initiated by Eisenhower. A special preinaugural task force on Indian economic growth convened by Kennedy, chaired by Max Millikan, would recommend a recurring annual figure of $500 million in economic aid to India.[168] Accordingly, in 1961, the Kennedy administration allocated $500 million of its total $900 million developmental budget for 1962 to India, with similarly high levels in subsequent years.[169] Designated as 'non-project' aid, the bulk of these funds would go towards investments in infrastructure and capital goods, including hydroelectric power, irrigation and large purchase of steel and machinery parts, designed to spur industrial development under both the Second and Third Five Year Plans.

Peaking at precisely the moment of McClelland's arrival in India, increases in American aid ran in direct contravention to psychologists' attempts to spur economic development through motivational change. But, then again, so too did the model of economic development endorsed by the Indian state itself. Indeed, while American economists, politicians and aid officials sought to kick-start Indian economic development through infusions of capital, the Government of India was itself practising an approach to economic development that, in its own way, put structural economic considerations above individual psychological ones. Developed by its own cast of expert economists, most notably Nehru's chief statistical

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[166] According to Nicole Sackley, while firmly believing in the significance of Indian economic development in the context of the global Cold War, Kennedy also saw 'three immediate, political benefits accruing from his association with the India cause: the chance to be seen as statesman on the international stage; the opportunity to appease left-liberal members of the Democratic Party; and, a foreign policy strategy distinct from Eisenhower's. Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', p. 309. For more on the centrality of Indian economic development in Kennedy's foreign policy see Merrell, *Bread and the Ballot,* pp. 170-175; McMahon, pp. 272-281; McGarr, *The Cold War in South Asia,* pp. 89-98; Raghavan, *Fierce Enigmas,* pp. 229-237.

[167] The resolution, though unsuccessful due to objections in the House, would ultimately lead to a $350 million emergency aid deal to India underwritten by the United States, the United Kingdom, West Germany, Japan and Canada under the umbrella of the World Bank. Merrell, *Bread and the Ballot,* p. 144.

[168] Ibid., p. 170.

[169] While Congress would cut back on the administration's overall lending authority, India would still receive $465.5 million in United States loans in 1962. In the same year, the Kennedy administration would also sign up to a $1 billion loan in support of broader multilateral World Bank loan in support of the India's Third Five Year Plan. Ibid.*,* p. 175.

adviser, the Bengali economist P.C. Mahalanobis, the Second Five Year Plan had also prioritized large-scale investment, especially in heavy industries, as the key driver of national economic progress. Increased investment in the heavy industries, according to Mahalanobis, when combined with the development of smaller-scale industries would help to tackle head-on the intertwined problems of unemployment, low personal consumption, and low income growth that underpinned India's economic underdevelopment. In the process, it would generate significant further investment potential, which could then be used to fund the growth of other sectors of the economy. [170] Compared to the First Plan, the Second stipulated a fivefold increase in investments in industry, to be paid for by deficit spending together with foreign grants and loans. Planned industrialization, as we have seen, would create sites and spaces in which McClelland's psychological enterprise would flourish. Its overarching emphasis, however, ran in the opposite direction.

There were, as already noted, important distinctions between the vision of development put forward by the Second Five Year Plan and that championed by advocates of Rostovian aid. For Nehruvian planners, the endpoint of economic development culminating was not the arrival of an 'age of high mass consumption', but the creation of a 'socialistic pattern of society'. Drawing from the Soviet example, the 'Mahalanobis model' therefore emphasized 'state ownership of the strategic means of production'. In this version of economic modernization, the driving force of industrialization would be played by state-backed public enterprises focused, in the first instance, on the production of capital goods. Kennedy, Rostow and other liberally-minded economists, we have seen, would downplay these differences, framing the strong statist element of Indian planning as a necessary measure given the country's prevailing economic circumstances.[171] Occasionally, however, the differences between these two visions of economic development would also fall into sharp

[170] For primary and secondary accounts of the Mahalanobis model of economic planning see P.C. Mahalanobis, 'Draft Recommendations for the Formulation of the Second Five Year Plan, 1956-1961', in *Papers Relating to the Formulation of the Second Five Year Plan* (New Delhi: 1955), pp. 41; P.C. Mahalanobis, 'The Second Five Year Plan: A Tentative Framework', in *Papers Relating to the Formulation of the Second Five Year Plan* (New Delhi: 1955), pp. 81; T.N. Srinivasan, 'Professor Mahalanobis and Economics', in Ashok Rudra (ed.), *Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis: A Biography* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 224-252; T.J. Byres, 'From ivory tower to the belly of the beast: the academy, the state, and economic debate in post-independence India' in T.J. Byres, *The Indian Economy: Major Debates Since Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 77-80; Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (London: Penguin, 2001), pp. 81-95; Benjamin Zachariah, 'The Development of Professor Mahalanobis', *International Journal of Human Resource Management,* 26:3, 1997, pp. 434-444.
[171] One historian has referred to this as a 'global Keynesianism' promoted by Rostow and like-minded thinkers, and ultimately embraced by White House from the late 1950s onwards. See Merrell, *Bread and the Ballot,* p. 171.

relief. One such instance occurred, for example, when researchers at a CENIS research centre, established in New Delhi in 1958, clashed fiercely with Indian planners over details concerning the level of public ownership envisioned by India's Third Five Year Plan.[172] American and Indian elites' shared conviction that structural economic change formed the lynchpin of development thus ran in parallel to, at times, divergent opinions on the ultimate goal of development (a process that mirrored psychologists' own debates about the merits of individual versus collectivist motivation).

The entanglements between American aid and Indian economic development spoke of a broad willingness on the part of American policymakers and economists to push aside these latent tensions – to 'reject the conservative rhetorical conflation of the "free world" and the "free market"' and claim Indian development 'as the free world's own'.[173] They also spoke of the way in which Nehruvian elites, as targets of Cold War economic largesse, drew flexibly on external support while pursuing their own particular vision of development.[174] To McClelland and likeminded thinkers, however, the connections between Rostovian economic aid and Nehruvian economic development were ultimately the symptom of a deeper problem. As American dollars were ploughed into Indian hydroelectric dams and steel plants, they articulated the way in which policymakers in both Washington and New Delhi had come to see development through one lens in particular: the lens not of psychology, but of economics. In this process, it seemed, protagonists on both sides had mistakenly placed an emphasis on economistic modes of thinking over what really mattered in development: the modernization of the mind.

**Conclusion**

In India, then, McClelland's psychologistic vision of economic development had come to shape thinking within the spheres, including entrepreneurship development, rural development and education. In diverse sites and spaces during the 1960s, Indians had come to see economic development, first and foremost, as a matter of heightened motivation. What is

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[172] For a detailed account of this clash see David C. Engerman, 'West Meets East: The Center for International Studies and Indian Economic Development' in David C. Engerman, Nils Gilman, Mark H. Haefele, Micheal E. Latham, *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development and the Global Cold War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), pp. 199-233. See also George Rosen, *Western Economists and Eastern Societies: Agents of Change in South Asia*, *1950–1970* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 101-146.
[173] Sackley, 'Passage to Modernity', p. 292.
[174] For a broader exploration of the way in which Indian actors approached American aid during this time, including the different meanings attached to it by different individuals, see Engerman, *The Price of Aid,* chs. 3 and 4.

more, achievement motivation theory had arrived in India not so much as an imposition of McClelland and his American associates, but as a result of the active efforts of Indian actors and institutions to appropriate these ideas. As we have seen, however, the motivational approach had also encountered numerous forms of opposition in India, not least in the form of prevailing approaches to economic development adopted by American and Indian policymakers. While McClelland's motivational paradigm sat in broad alignment with a new, hegemonic set of claims about the need to 'modernize' 'underdeveloped' societies, its psychologistic leaning was one that ultimately fell foul of more dominant economistic models of change.

McClelland's motivational enterprise would by no means be the last attempt to apply psychological expertise to Indian development, however. As the Indian state pushed ahead with its agenda of planned industrialization, that same agenda – notwithstanding its basic economistic overtures – would create further spaces in which contemporaries would, once again, seek opportunities to mobilize psychological forms of knowledge. In the next chapter, I turn to explore how the broader rise of discourses on 'management', forged in direct response to the Nehruvian industrialization drive, brought with it a turn towards other forms of psychologized thinking on the question of effective corporate leadership.

# Chapter four

## Managing development: industrial development, management, and psychologized corporate leadership

In 1964, amidst the clanging of steel and the blasting of concrete that characterized Nehruvian India's planned industrialization drive, in the city of Hyderabad, a group of businessmen sat down together and talked about their feelings. Seated on chairs arranged in a small, intimate circle, the men took it in turns to share their perceptions of themselves, their fellow participants, and the group as a whole. They discussed relationships, and what made them effective. They discussed leadership, and each member's capacity for it. They talked frankly, confronted each other openly, and sat through long periods of silence. As they did so, a psychologist, seated among them, took notes on their interactions and the overall 'group climate'.[1]

Strange though it may seem, the experience of these Hyderabadi businessmen was not uncommon in India during the 1960s. On the contrary, it represented one of hundreds of similar 'training group' exercises conducted across the country during the heyday of Nehruvian industrial development. As plans for rapid industrialization gathered pace, this curious brand of business workshop-cum-behavioural therapy session became a central feature of the training provided to prepare corporate leaders for the task. Proponents of 'T-group training', as it was commonly known, argued that the placement of individuals in an intimate, unstructured group environment would help them to learn the value of certain forms of leadership over others. More specifically, T-group training would help to cultivate 'democratic' leadership based on sensitivity, trust and consensual decision making deemed necessary for effective organizational management. The rise of T-group training pointed to the centrality of the human dimension within contemporary efforts to realize industrial progress. It also pointed to a new site in which the allure of psychologized development had taken hold.

This chapter traces the way in which new discourses on the need for 'management', articulated in response to India's planned industrial development drive, created new spaces for the proliferation of American psychological knowledge. Discourses on 'management for

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[1] This description is based on the reports of sensitivity training conducted at the Hyderabad Small Industries Extension Training (SIET) Institute in Udai Pareek and R.P. Lynton, 'Sensitivity Training in Regular Courses - 1', Report 017662, Box 936, Catalogued Reports, 13949-17726 (FA739F), Ford Foundation Archives (hereafter FFA), Rockefeller Archive Center.

development', I argue, emerged as a matter of broad consensus in India during the 1950s, linking industrialists, scientists and government officials in a belief that rapid industrial development required the propagation of new, 'professionalized' approaches to organizational leadership. The call for management fed off concerns about the perceived inadequacies of 'colonial' institutional structures for modernizing development. In extrapolating this discourse, the section focuses on the ideas of its most important exponent: the scientist, industrialist and institution-builder, Vikram Sarabhai. For Sarabhai, the need for management emerged not just as a broad set of ideas on the need to professionalize managerial functions, but as a precise vision about the structures and forms of leadership that effective organizations required. At the centre of this vision sat the concept of 'horizontal control'.

From the late 1950s, Sarabhai would become a key figure in the development of 'management education' in India, ultimately becoming the prime mover behind the creation of the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA) in 1962. In the second part of this chapter, I use the creation of the IIMA as a lens to explore the birth of management education in India. Together with its sister institute, the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, the IIMA was a distinctly Nehruvian creation – part of a broader trend in which India's post-colonial elites sought to catalyse development through the growth of applied, technocratic forms of advanced education. At the same time, I argue, the IIMs also formed part of a more global spread of the management education concept, a process in which contemporaries looked to the United States as a key source of 'management knowledge'. I explore this process through the IIMA's collaboration with the Harvard Business School. Here, I also examine the ways in which Sarabhai sought to construct the IIMA as a model of horizontal control.

In the third section, I explore how the creation of new management education institutions like the IIMA created space for psychologized forms of leadership training like the T-group. Tracing the T-group's lineage from Lewinian 'group dynamics' research to American corporate culture, I show how this therapeutic approach to learning, centred around the cultivation of 'democratic' leadership styles, came to occupy a central place within the programmes designed to train Indian corporate leaders. For its proponents, I argue, the T-group offered a behavioural technology capable of producing precisely the forms of leadership that horizontal control required.

# Management, development and 'horizontal control'

'That a developing economy needs management even more than resources is now becoming abundantly clear to all students of growth' explained Prakash Tandon, the Punjabi industrialist and Chairman of Hindustan Lever in 1968.[2] Published in the foreword to a series of essays entitled *Managerialism for Economic Development*, the statement encapsulated a cause to which its author, together with many other Indian leaders, had associated himself during the course of the preceding two decades. From the early 1950s, Tandon and like-minded thinkers had emerged at the forefront of a new wave of thinking on development. Posed against more economistic approaches, this was a movement that framed national economic progress as a process tied intrinsically to the rise of 'modern management'.

The discourse on modern management reflected shifts in India's development agenda, specifically the emergence of industrialization as the core priority of Nehruvian development planning. In 1956, India's Second Five Year Plan set out a roadmap for the expansion of key industrial sectors, focusing in particular on capital goods such as iron, steel and the manufacture of heavy machinery. Arising at this juncture, discourses on the need for management reflected a series of anxieties about the suitability of India's existing organizational and managerial landscape for the planned industrialization drive. The first set of anxieties, in this regard, related to the perceived ineptitudes of the prevailing structure of commercial organization in India; the so-called 'managing agency system'. A product of desire of nineteenth century British businessmen to maintain overseas investments without a physical presence, the managing agency system had been formed to enable companies formed and registered in Britain to subcontract operational and management responsibilities to 'agents' – in most cases British expatriate firms – resident in India. During the course of the nineteenth century, driven by factors such as shortages of capital and poor access to banking facilities, many Indian companies had themselves begun to use managing agencies. Others, meanwhile, had established their own managing agencies to cater to domestic demand. By the early twentieth century, the agency system had evolved to become the dominant form of industrial organization in India.[3]

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[2] Prakash Tandon, 'Foreword', in S. Benjamin Prasad and Anant R. Neghandi, *Managerialism for Economic Development: Essays on India* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), p. 1.
[3] On the managing agency system see Geoffrey Tyson, *Managing Agency: A System of Business Organisation* (Calcutta: Houghty Printing, 1960). See also Maria Misra, *Business, Race and Politics in British India, c. 1850-1960* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp.17-67.

Post-colonial elites saw two major problems arising from the managing agency system, the first of which was its reduction of the scope of managerial decision making. Under the agency system, contracts agreed between companies and agents subsumed much of the former's decision making power. As such, the growth of the agency system had the effect of condensing industrial management responsibilities into the hands of a small group of managing agency firms. This was problematic, according to many observers, because it removed decision making from business operations themselves. The second problem related to the character of the agencies themselves. As they grew, Indian managing agencies had developed an organizational structure 'coterminous with the familial organisation'. Headed, in most cases by the patriarchal head of the family, agency firms reserved their senior management positions for male relatives. They had fostered a pattern of industrial leadership based, as one contemporary put it, on 'familial connections' rather than 'managerial skills'.[4]

A second set of anxieties concerned the capacity of India's administrative system to lead a process of industrialization. Drawing from Keynesian as well as Soviet economic models, we have seen, the Second Five Year Plan had set out a key role for the public sector in India's planned industrial transformation. The Plan, therefore, placed emphasis on the expansion of new public enterprises that would 'function alongside private enterprises in a mixed economy, acting as a counterweight to the cyclical swings and fashions of private investment'.[5] These new public enterprises were to be managed by government ministries, with new executive bodies such as the Ministry for Iron and Steel created for this explicit purpose. While arrangements varied between cases, a general pattern here was that executive roles within new public enterprises were assumed by high-ranking officials drawn from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). The placement of IAS officials at the heart of public enterprise management provoked concern not only about the lack of commercial experience held by these administrators, but also about the capacity of a colonial bureaucracy, built along lines of command and control, to lead a dynamic process of planned industrial transformation.[6]

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[4] Kamla Chowdhry and Ram S. Tarneja, 'India', File: Chowdhry, Dr Kamla, 1964-5, Box 2, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad Records (hereafter IIMAR), Special Collections, Baker Library, Harvard Business School, p. 100.
[5] Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (London: Penguin, 1997), p. 77.
[6] The Second Year Plan itself acknowledged this concern, noting that 'questions bearing on the methods of management and personnel policies in public enterprises', were 'under constant review'. *Second Five Year Plan* (New Delhi: Planning Commission, Government of India, 1956), p. 54.

Amidst concerns about the inability of 'colonial' institutions to lead a process of industrial development', the call for 'management' advocated the rise of a new, Weberian model of enterprise management 'in which major policy-making decisions and nearly all other positions in the hierarchy are held by persons on the bases of alleged or demonstrated technical competence rather than on relationships to a family or a political regime'.[7] 'Modern productive activity', two leading exponents of this argument proclaimed:

…whether it takes place in an advanced or an advancing country, requires a complex blending of the skills and talents of people into a mosaic of tasks and functions in an effective manner…this we refer to as "managerialism"'.[8]

According to its proponents, there were two overarching ways in which a shift towards 'managerialism' might be brought into being. The first was legal and institutional; namely, the prohibition of the managing agency system. The second was education. New forms of management training, it was argued, would help to produce a new type of 'professionalized manager' equipped with a 'high degree of generalized and systematic knowledge'. Professional managers, it was argued, unlike their nepotistic forbears, would manage organizations not in ways established by custom and tradition, but in the most efficient and productive way possible. Alongside legalistic approaches to reforming archaic management structures, then, education would yield individuals capable of reforming and rationalizing organizations from within.

The need for new management found adherents in leading industrialists like Tandon. But it also found footing among India's governmental elite. According to Douglas Ensminger, the Ford Foundation Representative in New Delhi, the need for professional management had three key proponents within the Government of India during the 1950s: the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Sir. V.T. Krishnamachari; the Minister of Commerce and Industry, T.T. Krishnamachari; and the Finance Minister, C.D. Deshmukh.[9] Each of these figures, it will be seen, would go on to play a key role in the establishment of management

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[7] Prasad and Neghandi, *Managerialism for Economic Development*, p. 22. Here, Indians like Prasad and Neghandi drew on a definition of professional management put forward by American economists Frederick Harbison and Charles A. Myers in Harbison and Myers, *Management in the Industrial World: An International Analysis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), pp. 76-77.

[8] Ibid.*,* (preface).

[9] 'The Ford Foundation and Management Education in India', Folder B.7, Box 9, Series II, Douglas Ensminger Papers (hereafter (DEP), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University, p. 5. As the next section will elucidate, Ensminger and Ford would go on to play a prominent role in the development of India's first management education institutions during the 1960s.

education institutions in India. It was in the figure of Vikram Sarabhai, however, that the cause of modernizing management would find its most indefatigable exponent.

At first sight, Sarabhai seems an unlikely figure to have led a campaign for a management-centred approach to development. The scion of a wealthy Ahmedabad millowning family with close connections to India's nationalist elite, Sarabhai typically enters the narrative of post-colonial Indian history for other reasons. A talented cosmic-ray physicist, and the recipient of a PhD from the University of Cambridge in 1947, Sarabhai would go on to profoundly shape the fields of atomic science and space research in India during the post-colonial decades. In 1962, he founded the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSAR), what would later become the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Between 1966 and his untimely death in 1971, he also became Chair of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), the body responsible for overseeing India's programme of nuclear research. Narrating these aspects of his career, historians have rightly positioned Sarabhai as a key figure in the development of India's modern scientific establishment.[10]

The emphasis on Sarabhai the scientist has, however, also worked to obscure other dimensions of his career. As a prolific institution-builder and industrialist, Sarabhai would spend the 1950s and 60s acting as a tireless advocate for the idea that development hinged, ultimately, on the way in which institutions were managed. Like others, Sarabhai would champion the need to rationalize and professionalize managerial functions. At the same time, however, he would also frame 'modern management' in uniquely specific terms. Modern management, he argued, required more than mere professionalization. It also required a particular approach to the structure and functioning of organizations: it required 'horizontal control'.

The concept of horizontal control had its origins in Sarabhai's observations concerning the organization of scientific research.[11] As a young scientist, he later recalled, he had been

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[10] On Sarabhai's role in space research see various contributions to Padmanabh K. Joshi (ed.), *Vikram Sarabhai: The Man and the Vision* (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 1992); P.V. Manoranjan Rao (ed.), *From Fishing Hamlet to Red Planet: India's Space Journey* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2015). On atomic research see Robert S. Anderson, *Nucleus and Nation: Scientists, International Networks, and Power in India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), ch. 15; Itty Abraham, *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Postcolonial State* (London: Zed Books, 1998), ch. 4.

[11] It is also conceivable that the concept of 'horizontal control' drew upon Sarabhai's own experiences, including those of his childhood. At the request of his parents, Ambalal and Sarladevi Sarabhai, the young Vikram had been educated in a home-school setting styled on the 'Montessorian' principles. This education, one associate has noted, 'placed the teacher 'not so much in the imparting of knowledge as in stimulating the pupil in its [own] love and pursuit'. J.S. Badami, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai: My Student, Employer and Friend' and C.J. Bhatt, 'Boyhood Days of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, in *Electronics Today,* 1972, pp. 42-45

greatly impressed by the organizational ethos of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission under its first Director, Homi Bhabha. Rather than build the AEC around a formal hierarchical structure extrapolated through an 'organisational chart', Sarabhai explained, Bhabha had established a loose system of oversight in which control was 'largely inherent and contained in professional commitments'. The AEC's decision making was therefore conducted, in the main, 'through discussion and the judgement of peers, with administration performing largely the role of service'. According to Sarabhai, this emphasis on flexibility and autonomy had proved conducive not only to the performance of the organization as a whole but to the self-development of individual AEC researchers too.[12]

From this example, Sarabhai developed a firm conviction that effective scientific research required the creation of organizational structures that allowed practitioners freedom to innovate and self-direct, rather than ones that controlled them from above. Research, he argued, worked better when the individuals or groups conducting it were given space and autonomy to pursue their own interests and needs; when management systems fostered 'direct interaction' between individuals 'at the same level', rather than elaborate hierarchical procedures for 'reporting and feedback'. What scientific organizations needed were 'horizontal' – not 'vertical' – systems of management and control.[13]

The concept of horizontal control was fluid and multifaceted. At its core, however, was an eschewal of all semblances of top-down, hierarchical authority. On the one hand. this meant a commitment to organizational structures that allowed for delegation, freedom and 'trust', and to decision making based on deliberation, discussion and consensus. At the same time, it also called for certain types of organizational leadership. 'In horizontal control systems', explained Sarabhai:

…a leader, if one chooses to identify one, has to be a cultivator rather than a manufacturer. He has to provide the soil and the overall climate and environment in which the seed can

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[12] Vikram Sarabhai, 'Science and National Goals' in Vikram Sarabhai, *Science Policy and National Development*, *edited by Kamla Chowdhry* (New Delhi: Macmillan and Co., 1974), p. 5. See also Vikram Sarabhai, 'Organisation for Developmental Tasks: Atomic Energy Commission of India' in Vikram Sarabhai, *Management for Development*: *A Collection of Papers, edited by Kamla Chowdhry* (Vikas Publishing, Delhi, 1975), pp. 1-31. Bhabha, for his part, had modelled the AEC's institution-around-man' approach from the Kaiser Wilhelm Society (later renamed the Max Plank Institute), a scientific research institute in Berlin, citing that organization's motto that 'the Kaiser Wilhelm Society shall not first built an institute for research and then seek out a suitable man, but shall first pick up an outstanding man and then build an institute for him'. He styled the AEC's management style as a contrast to the planning-centred approach of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CISR), established by the Government of India in 1942. *Homi Jehangir Bhabha: Collected Scientific Papers, edited by B.V. Sreekantan, V. Singh, and B.M. Udgaonkar* (Bombay: Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, 1985), p. 57.
[13] Sarabhai, 'Science and National Goals'*, p. 5.

grow. One wants permissive individuals who do not have a compelling need to reassure themselves that they are leaders through issuing instructions to others rather they set an example through their own creativity, love of nature and identification to what one may call the 'scientific method'.[14]

For Sarabhai, horizontal approaches offered more than just greater efficiency over hierarchical ones; they also offered a model of management more suited to democracy as well. '[I]f we are to base the growth of this country on the application of science and technology within the democratic framework', he argued, 'we shall have to increasingly rely on horizontal controls'.[15]

Upon his return to India from Cambridge, in 1948, Sarabhai would soon find himself presented with a number of institution-building opportunities of his own. In each case, he would use these opportunities to create institutions which, in their own way, embraced the concept of horizontal control. The first of these, the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), was an institution born directly out of Sarabhai's interests as a physicist. Established in Ahmedabad, in 1947, with funding from the Bombay Provincial Government, the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research and the Ahmedabad Educational Society (a fund support by benefactors from the textile industry), the PRL would conduct research in cosmic ray and astrophysics, building on the foundations of Sarabhai's own doctoral research. In establishing the PRL, notes Robert S. Anderson, Sarabhai was building 'the home of his professional life as a physicist'.[16]

At the PRL, Sarabhai took great pains to create an organizational structure that modelled horizontal control. Like their AEC counterparts, PRL scientists were given considerable autonomy over their own areas of research. At the centre of the Laboratory's organizational structure, meanwhile, stood a 'committee system' through which all significant decisions relating to scientific research and administration were taken. Each committee comprised employees from different levels of the organization, with a chairmanship shared between committee members by rotation. This system ensured that control over institutional decision making remained diffused amongst members, not concentrated within any one individual. To keep senior management informed of the functioning of the committees, every individual

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[14] Cited in Parikh, K., 'The "Permissive" Leader' in Joshi, P.K. (ed.), *Vikram Sarabhai: The Man and the Vision* Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 1992, pp. 109.
[15] Vikram Sarabhai, 'Development through Pace Setting: Horizontal and Vertical Control Systems' in *Science Policy and National Development.,* p. 41.
[16] Anderson, *Nucleus and Nation,* p. 283.

scientist also met regularly with the PRL Director. At the root of the PRL's committee system, writes Padmanabh Joshi, 'was an attempt to avoid a hierarchical control system'.[17]

Sarabhai's second major scientific institution building pursuit of the 1950s, the Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association (ATIRA), reflected more explicitly his connections to the Ahmedabad industrial community. The concept of a textile industry research institute had emerged during the mid-1940s, the product of millowners' dual interest in sponsoring pioneering scientific industrial research, on the one hand, and finding ways to reduce the tax burden incurred from substantial wartime profits on the other.[18] Following an agreement with the Government of India whereby funds set aside for scientific research would be treated as tax-exempt, in 1947 the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association (AMA) had formally registered ATIRA with the goal of conducting 'operational, applied and fundamental research to improve understanding of men, materials and processes in industry'. The government, keen to promote the development of industrial research, agreed to provide its own financial backing.[19]

Appointed as ATIRA's first Director in 1950, Sarabhai set about structuring the Association's eight divisions into a format that avoided top-down lines of authority.[20] Instead, he built an organizational structure focused around three interlinking 'clusters of control'. The first of these comprised the top-level policy-making body, consisting of board members including Sarabhai himself. The second consisted of ATIRA's researchers. The third cluster consisted of the city's textile mills – the targets and ultimately the beneficiaries of ATIRA's

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[17] Padmanabh K. Joshi, 'Dr. Vikram Sarabhai: A Study of Innovative Leadership and Institution Building', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Gujarat, 1985, p. 136.

[18] Both the first and second world wars proved enormously profitable to Ahmedabad's textile mills, the principal reason being that reduced shipping services served to protect domestic textile production from foreign competition. The 'swadeshi' movement, meanwhile, also ensured a thriving domestic market for Indian-produced clothing and garments. Howard Spodeck, 'The "Manchesterisation" of Ahmedabad', *The Economic Weekly*, 17, 1965, pp. 483-490. For more on this, and for the ways in which Ahmedabad millowners saw these profits as a means to transform the institutional and cultural life of the city, including through institutions like ATIRA and the IIMA see Howard Spodeck, *Ahmedabad: Shock City of Twentieth Century India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), pp. 117-118, 128-130.

[19] 'ATIRA – The Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association, pamphlet issued on the occasion of the foundation stone laying ceremony of the ATIRA laboratories by the hon'ble Sardar Vallbhbhai Patel, 1 November 1950', File Number 4(8).46. Vol IV, Records of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, National Archives of India (hereafter NAI). For the agreement between the millowners and the Government of India see: Letter from the Secretary, Ahmedabad Millowners' Research Association the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Industries and Supplies, 30 August 1947', File Number 4(8).46. Vol IV: Ahmedabad Millowners' Proposal for the Establishment of a Textile Research Institute, Records of the Ministry of Education, Government of India, NAI.

[20] The eight units were Physics, Chemistry, Statistics, Psychology, Liaison, Technology, Library and Documentation and Administration. See Vikram A. Sarabhai, 'Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association', *Nature,* 174, 1954, pp. 578-580.

scientific research. Decision making concerning research priorities and processes was taken across these three clusters with Sarabhai helping to ensure the meaningful contribution of all three layers. As with the PRL, decision making across the clusters was also participative and discussion based. ATIRA's researchers enjoyed 'freedom of work and trust', and license to plan, budget and implement tasks with autonomy.[21] Sarabhai, recalled one ATIRA employee, viewed his role, in relation to researchers as being to 'nourish their developing capacities, to permit them to move in directions that made sense to each'.[22]

Among the polymer chemists and textile engineers recruited to ATIRA during the early 1950s was an individual who would come to exert an important influence on Sarabhai in the years to come. Her name was Kamla Chowdhry. Chowdhry, the daughter of an aspiring civil service family and a former student of Rabindranath Tagore's Shantiniketan school, had been awarded a PhD in social psychology from the University of Michigan in 1949, there working alongside a leading figure in the burgeoning field of industrial psychology, Rensis Likert. During a chance encounter following her return to India, Chowdhry had made an instant impression on Sarabhai, who soon invited her to establish a programme of psychological research at ATIRA. Chowdhry's Psychological Research Division would conduct studies of attitudes, labour-management relations, incentives and the effects of physical working conditions on the health and efficiency of workers. Its first major project, beginning in 1951, was a series of enquiries into labour-management 'tensions' conducted as part of the Ministry of Education's tensions research.[23]

At ATIRA, Sarabhai and Chowdhry would develop an intimate working relationship, with important consequences for both.[24] Chowdhry, for her part, would quickly come to embrace Sarabhai's thinking on horizontal control systems.[25] In doing so, she would also seek to

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[21] Joshi, 'Dr. Vikram Sarabhai: A Study of Innovative Leadership and Institution Building', p. 116 At ATIRA, recalls Joshi, 'an organic structure emerged out of common experiences of team work in which administration played the role of support and services', pp. 114.

[22] Kamla Chowdhry, 'Institution Building and Social Change: The Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association', *Indian Journal of Public Administration,* 14:4, 1968, p. 956.

[23] For the write-up of this research see Gardner Murphy, *In the Minds of Men: The Study of Human Behaviour and Social Tensions in India* (New York: Basic Books, 1953), ch. 9.

[24] The memoirs Kamla Chowdhry's nephew, Sudhir Kakar (himself a renowned personality psychologist) bring to light the intimate personal, as well as the professional, relationship between Sarabhai and Chowdhry during this period. See Sudhir Kakar, *A Book of Memory: Confessions and Reflections* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2001), ch. 6. See also Prakash Tandon, *Return to Punjab: 1961-1975* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), pp. 115-119.

[25] For examples of Chowdhry's thinking on horizontal control systems see Kamla Chowdhry, 'Institution Building: Two Approaches in Contrast' in Ravi Matthai, Udai Pareek, T.V. Rao eds., *Institution-building in Education and Research* (New Delhi: All India Management Association, 1977), pp. 12-18; Kamla Chowdhry, 'Organization and Administration of Scientific Institutions: A Case Study of Atira', *Management International*

connect these ideas to the latest 'human relations' insights of the day. As will be seen, the most important aspect of this would be the promotion of new psychologized techniques for promoting leadership norms deemed conducive to horizontal control, at the centre of which sat the enterprise of T-group training.



***The horizontal leader***

**Figure 10. Vikram Sarabhai participating in a seminar on radio protection in Trombay**

(Source: *Nuclear India,* 10:5, 1972)

According to Sarabhai, the concept of horizontal control was of particular relevance to scientific organizations like the PRL and ATIRA. This was because scientists, together with other 'professional groups', possessed a set of values uniquely suited to work under horizontal controls.[26] During the course of the 1950s, however, Sarabhai would begin to widen the scope of this argument by claiming that vertical control systems were inimical to all organizations wherein 'innovation', rather than 'preservation' formed the central operation or task. [27] Soon, he would demonstrate this conviction through attempts to promote horizontal

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*Review*, 9:6, 1969, pp. 97-104; Kamla Chowdhry, 'Organizational Innovation in Universities: Relevance of Industrial Experience', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 4:35, 1969, pp. 97-100.

[26] Rather than 'money, hierarchical status and power', Sarabhai argued, it was the need for 'autonomy of working conditions and opportunities', 'discussion' and 'peer-judgement' that came first in the mind of most scientists. Vikram Sarabhai, 'Approaches to the Administration of Scientific Organisations', in *Science Policy and National Development,* p. 23.

[27] Vikram Sarabhai, 'Preservation and Innovation: The Tasks of Government', in *Science Policy and National Development*, pp. 32-38.

approaches across a broader spectrum of institutions. Here, he would make use of his privileged position within the Ahmedabad corporate sphere.

On his return to India, alongside institution building opportunities afforded by the PRL and ATIRA, Sarabhai had also assumed senior management positions within a number of enterprises within the Sarabhai family group, some of which he himself had also helped to establish. These companies included Swastik Oil Mills (in Bombay), Standard Pharmaceuticals Limited (in Calcutta), Sarabhai Chemicals, Sarabhai Glass and Sarabhai Engineering Group (all in Baroda). Across each of these enterprises, Sarabhai would work to promote norms of corporate management that eschewed vertical forms of control.[28] 'Vikram's approach', recalled one Swastik Oil Mills employee:

…was democratic. He believed in the delegation of powers and group discussions to arrive at sound management decisions. The working of the company was discussed in detail at monthly meetings. Each person whatever his position was encouraged to express his thought freely and to criticise constructively without any inhibition. This gave the staff a feeling of involvement in the decisions and a rare opportunity for training and for building up their morale…He believed in the delegation of duties. At staff meetings, even when he was present, he would insist that the Chief Executive should take the chair and he would sit as an ordinary member even though he was the Chairman of the Company.[29]

According to Sarabhai, the world was full of examples of the benefits of horizontal control systems; from the way in which individuals interacted within their own communities, to the manner in which prices were kept down through the self-regulation of the market. The 'prevention of armed conflict between the USA and the USSR during the last 20 years', he even suggested, spoke of the merits of '*horizontal interaction* without anyone from the top ordaining that there should be no war'.[30] From quotidian circumstances to the relations between nations, he argued, things just worked better through the natural checks and balances of horizontal control. To Sarabhai, the merits of horizontal over vertical systems had important implications for the way in which India went about its pursuit of planned industrial development. A programme of public enterprise-led industrialization, he argued, could not be successful if it relied on top-down models of management. Here, he questioned the efficacy

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[28] N.R. Nadkarni, 'Dr. Sarabhai – the Industrialist' in *Electronics Today,* 1972, pp. 95- 98.

[29] J.S. Badami, 'Dr. Vikram Sarabhai: My Student, Employer and Friend, pp. 47-49 *Electronics Today,* 1972, pp. 48.

[30] 'Most people', explained Sarabhai, 'would agree that it is not the existence of the UN or the superior power of an organisation at a higher level which has preserved peace. It has been through the operation of mutual deterrents or what is known as the balance of terror. Each side is aware that to resort to arms for the settlement of a dispute would entail its own population being subjected to unacceptable damage. In consequence peace is preserved by *horizontal interaction* without anyone from the top ordaining that there should be no war'. Ibid., p. 40. Emphasis mine.

of the prevailing model of public enterprise organization, in which top-down 'committees of management', consisting of ministers and senior civil servants, held responsibility for decision making without any direct involvement in day-to-day company affairs:

Can the vertical controls of a Board of monolithic corporations or of the Bureau of Public Enterprises, or of the Parliamentary Committee on Public Enterprises, or the Auditor General provide adequate substitutes for what can be gained through accountability for task performance in a situation of survival and growth in a competitive economy?…Top bodies involved in such control can rarely function in anything but roles of strategic decision-making. When they involve themselves in the decision-making process of day-to-day administration, the system indeed gets fouled up. I would suggest that since [these] vertical controls inhibit innovation and remove the decision-making process from the operating level, they are unsuitable as a system for the developmental tasks of government.[31]

What was needed, according to Sarabhai, was a new approach to public enterprise management, one that embraced the concept of horizontal control and modelled it as an example for others to follow:

In our country where we ideologically promote the public sector, the Government has a wonderful opportunity of priming the process of development by setting up pace setting industries and organisations which through exercising horizontal controls stimulate the overall level of economic development.[32]

Sarabhai stopped short of a wholesale critique of planned industrial development. 'We are not suggesting here the abdication of supreme authority at the topmost echelon of government', he explained. 'One is talking of a self-restraint and exercise of power based on an understanding of the control systems appropriate to developmental functions'.[33] As a critic of the tendency of planning to propagate vertical controls, then, Sarabhai remained, in the words of one colleague, 'a socialist – strictu sensu' with deep ties to the Congress and its vision of planned development.[34] Here, Sarabhai's call for modern management resonated with a broader inclination of the discourse on management as it emerged in the Indian context; namely, a tendency to see management as a means of realizing the Nehruvian vision of state-led development. Significantly, this was a view that contrasted to later discourses, wherein

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[31] Sarabhai, 'Science and National Goals'., p. 6.

[32] Sarabhai, 'Development through Pace Setting: Horizontal and Vertical Control Systems', p. 40.

[33] Ibid., p. 40. This was a message that Sarabhai would promote repeatedly during public speeches from the 1950s onwards, as well as in 'Observations on Planning' submitted to the Planning Commission. See Vikram Sarabhai, 'Some Observations on Planning', File. S.N. 65, Subject Files, Planning Commission, Asok Mitra Papers (hereafter AMP), Nehru Museum and Memorial Library.

[34] B.S. Rao (Guest Editor), 'Between Ourselves', *Electronics Today,* 1972, p. 33.

the call for 'management' would become a tool with which to challenge the basic assumptions of the Nehruvian project.[35]

## Instituting management at Ahmedabad

Discourses on management produced more than just claims about the sort of individuals needed for effective industrial development; they also gave rise to concerted attempts to create those persons in the flesh. In the context his own institution-building pursuits, Vikram Sarabhai had been busy trying to cultivate what he saw as the norms of 'modern management' throughout the 1950s. It was, however, in the watershed years of the early 1960s that the first concerted moves to build new national institutions for the production of modern managers would emerge. During the early 1960s, an eclectic network of stakeholders – public and private, Indian and international – would come together to pioneer a new form of education hitherto unknown to the Indian landscape: 'management education'. Drawing from an American model, management education would comprise instruction in a range of technical fields deemed conducive to the leadership of modern organizations. In India, this new form of education would be spearheaded by new state-backed Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).

As chronicled by institutional historians, the story of IIMs begins in the year 1955, with the creation of a Committee, under the purview of the Ministry for Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, to explore the prospects and possibilities for the growth of management education in India.[36] Placed under the chairmanship of T.T. Krishnamachari, the Committee reflected the strength of emerging ideas about the role of professional management in industrial development. Under its auspices, Krishnamachari had sent a group of researchers to explore the approaches to management education then in use within the United States.

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[35] In the hands of the anti-Congress liberal politician Minoo Masani, for example, the discourse of management would be used in precisely this way. As a founder member and MP for the Swatantra Party, Masani would repeatedly make the claim that public enterprise-led development exemplified 'bad management'. See for example Minoo Masani, 'Public Accountability', S.N. 37, File 7, Minoo Masani Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

[36] The first account of the establishment of the IIMs was provided by Thomas M. Hill, Warren W. Haynes, Howard J. Baumgartel, *Institution Building in India: A Study of International Collaboration in Management Education* (Boston: Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1973). The study was based on an internal Ford Foundation report entitled 'Management Education in India: A Study of International Collaboration in Institution Building', Report No. 001973, Catalogued Reports 1-3254 (FA739A), FFA. More recent institutional histories include Prafull Anubhai, *The IIMA Story: The DNA of an Institution* (New Delhi: Random House, 2011); T.T. Ram Mohan, *Brick by Red Brick: Ravi Matthai and the Making of IIM Ahmedabad* (Kolkata: Rupa and Co., 2011). For recollections of the early IIMC see *Citizens and Revolutionaries: An Oral History of IIM Calcutta* (New Delhi: Rupa Publications, 2012).

Though of little immediate consequence, the Krishnamachari Committee would set in motion a series of developments that would culminate ultimately in the creation of the IIMs.[37]

In 1956, sensing an opportunity, the Ford Foundation's Representative in India, Douglas Ensminger, had arranged for two Harvard Business School professors, Richard Merriam and Harold Thurlby, to prepare their own Ford Foundation report on the prospects for management education in India. The report, published in 1957, contained the first proposal for a new Indian institute of management.[38] In 1959, the Indian Planning Commission commissioned a second study, this time undertaken by George W. Robbins, the Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). Again facilitated by Ford, the Robbins report reiterated the need for an 'All-India Institute of Management'.[39] On 28 December 1959, a meeting of the Indian Planning Commission endorsed the recommendations of the Robbins report, thereby confirming that the Government of India would establish a new management education institute. Accepting the recommendation of both Merriam-Thurlby and Robbins, the Planning Commission recommended that any such institute should also be independent of university control.[40]

The decision to establish a management education institute was a characteristically Nehruvian move. Though part of a broader international embrace of American approaches to management education, it also formed part of a more specific trend in which Indian post-colonial elites sought to catalyse India's development through the creation of elite, technocratic forms of professional education delivered through institutions situated outside the traditional academic system. Preceding the advent of the IIM, Nehruvian policymakers had already pioneered the creation of new Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) dedicated to the provision of higher education in engineering and related fields of science. Following the recommendation of a commission headed by the economist N.R. Sarkar, IITs would be established in the cities of Kharagpur, Bombay, Madras, Kanpur and Delhi between 1951 and

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[37] For more on the 1955 Committee see Anubhai, *The IIMA Story,* p. 3.

[38] Ibid., p. 4.

[39] Ibid., p. 4. For a copy of the Robbins report see 'Appendix 3A: Recommendations for an All-India Institute of Management: A Report by George W. Robbins, Associate Dean, Graduate School of Business Administration, University of California, Los Angeles, and Consultant to the Ford Foundation, New Delhi', in 'Management Education in India: A Study of International Collaboration in Institution Building', pp. 1-34.

[40] A summary of this meeting can be found as 'Appendix 3B: Summary of an informal meeting held on December 28, 1959 in Room 63, Udyog Bhavan, to consider a draft report by Dean Robbins, Consultant to the Ford Foundation, regarding an All-India Institute of Management', in 'Management Education in India: A Study of International Collaboration in Institution Building', pp. 1-2.

1963.[41] The proposal for an IIM thus formed one expression of a broader Nehruvian tendency to view education as a means of producing 'trained manpower'. As Bhikhu Parekh has argued, this tendency was also one that, by implication, relegated investment in primary and secondary education to marginal concerns in the onward march to progress.[42]

The city of Bombay appeared the most likely location for an IIM. Owing to its diverse range of industries and large cosmopolitan population, both the Merriam-Thurlby and Robbins reports had hinted at Bombay as a desirable location for such an enterprise. Indeed, during the course of their research, Merriam and Thurlby had even met with representatives of the University of Bombay to discuss how such an institute might work.[43] The idea of a Bombay institute, however, would soon become untenable. The key issue here was the proposal that the Institute should be independent. This emphasis on autonomy sparked opposition from local university leaders, including the economist and former tension researcher C.N. Vakil, who insisted that any management education institution would work better within the existing institutional structures. Meanwhile, influenced by the university's concerns, the Government of Maharashtra also adopted a 'lukewarm' stance towards the proposal.[44]

As Bombay prevaricated, an opportunity emerged for other sites to come forward. Ahmedabad, a comparatively small, single-industry city, of regional rather national significance, had not initially appealed to government planners. Soon, however, a proactive group of figures in the city moved to put it in the frame. At the forefront of this process sat Vikram Sarabhai.[45] Sarabhai mobilized his extensive network of political contacts, including Jivraj Mehta, Chief Minister of Gujarat, M.S. Thacker, Secretary at the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs and V.T. Krishnamachari, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, in support of an Ahmedabad institute. [46] He also called upon the services of his long-time friend and patron, Kasturbhai Lalbhai. Lalbhai, a prominent Ahmedabad millowner, brought not just his own substantial political influence but also the backing of the

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[41] On the establishment of the IITs see Ross Bassett, 'Aligning India in the Cold War Era: Indian Technical Elites, the Indian Institute of Technology at Kanpur, and Computing in India and the United States', *Technology and Culture*, 50:4, 2009, pp. 783-810; Sabil Francis, 'The IITs in India: Symbols of an Emerging Nation', *South Asia Chronicle,* 1, 2011, pp. 293-326; Shahi Tharoor, *The Elephant, The Tiger and the Cellphone: Reflections on India in the Twenty-first Century* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2007), pp. 20-22. For an anthropological study of the IIT in contemporary India see Ajantha Subramanian, 'Making Merit: The Indian Institutes of Technology and the Social Life of Caste', *Comparative Studies in History and Society,* 57:2, 2015, pp. 291-322.
[42] Bhikhu Parekh, 'Nehru and the National Philosophy of India', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 26:1/2, p. 36.
[43] Anubhai, *The IIMA Story,* p. 4.
[44] TT Ram Mohan, *Brick by Red Brick,* p. 9.
[45] For a first-hand account of Sarabhai's role see Tandon, *Return to Punjab,* pp. 115-133.
[46] Anubhai, *The IIMA Story*, pp. 8-9.

Ahmedabad industrial community. Before long, the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association, the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and the Ahmedabad Management Association had all publicly declared their endorsement for the proposed institute. The Ahmedabad Education Society, a charitable fund backed by millowner contributions (and chaired by Lalbhai) promised generous financial support.[47] For Ahmedabad's millowners, the decision to support the management institute represented the latest in a series of cooperative investments in pioneering research and educational institutions in the city (including Sarabhai's earlier ventures at the PRL and ATIRA). In this sense, it spoke of a longer trend in which the city's wealthy industrial families pooled resources to develop progressive institutions that, while serving the national cause, also protected their own corporate interests.[48]

The efforts of the Ahmedabad lobby paid dividends. On 11 December 1961, following Government of India approval, a new 'Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad Society' was formed. Tasked with overseeing plans for an Ahmedabad Institute, the IIMA Society was a multi-stakeholder body comprising representatives from central government departments, the provincial Government of Gujarat, the industrial community and, following an agreement to provide assistance to the project, the Ford Foundation. The IIMA resembled something like the Public-Private-Partnership of more recent times, with funding and planning responsibilities shared across various parties. The Government of Gujarat and the Bank of India each provided loans to facilitate the purchase of land in the Vastapur district of the city. The Ahmedabad Education Society, meanwhile, funded the construction of Institute's new campus buildings. Ford, for its part, agreed to fund the provision of technical assistance from American institutions (a topic discussed further below).[49]

By the time of the IIMA Society's creation, meanwhile, developments elsewhere had also conspired to turn the government's plan for an 'institute' of management into plans for 'institutes'. The change coincided with the appointment, in 1959, of Humayun Kabir (formerly of the Ministry of Education) as the new Minister for Scientific Research and

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[47] Industrial backing was considered important for two reasons. Firstly, because industry represented a potential source of funds. Secondly, because any new management institute would need to be seen as legitimate by the industrial interests it was ultimately intended to serve. Ibid., p. 8.
[48] On this trend see Spodeck, 'The "Manchesterisation" of Ahmedabad', pp. 483-490; Spodeck, Ah*medabad: Shock City of Twentieth Century India,* ch. 2. On the broader history of the Gujarati millowning community Dwijendra Tripathi and M.J. Mehta, 'Class Character of the Gujarati Business Community', in Dwijendra Tripathi (ed.), *Business Communities of India: A Historical Perspective* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1984), pp. 151-171; Markand Mehta, 'Gandhi and Ahmedabad, 1915-1920'*, Economic and Political Weekly*, 40:4, 2005, pp. 22-28.
[49] Anubhai, *The IIMA Story*, pp. 9-11.

Cultural Affairs. A Bengali with close personal ties to the Chief Minister of West Bengal, B.C. Roy, Kabir had used his new position to push for Calcutta, India's second major industrial city, as a site deserving its own management institute. Securing Ford's support for this proposal, Kabir also appropriated the necessary Ministry and local government funds.[50] On 14 November 1961, therefore, the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIMC) was also established. In its early years, the IIMC would occupy a site on the Emerald Tower complex on Calcutta's Barrackpore Trunk Road.

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The IIMs were not the only institutions created to satisfy the demand for modern management. In 1957, for example, a Planning Committee established under the Government of India's Council for Technical Education, chaired by T.T. Krishnamachari, had established the Administrative Staff College in Hyderabad. Created to provide training for middle-level managers within both public and private sector enterprises, the Hyderabad Staff College drew its institutional blueprint directly from the model of the Henley Staff College in England. Henley was a product of wartime demand for the training of senior army officers, later converted into a more general management training facility for both civilian and military personnel. Its hallmark – the 'syndicate approach' – was an educational technique in which delegates worked through training courses as small groups (syndicates) with responsibilities for management rotated between participants.[51] As a response to the prevailing demand for professionalized management, the Hyderabad Staff College spoke of the enduring lure of a British model of administrative 'excellence'. At the IIMs, however, leaders would embrace an alternative educational model, one based not on British examples but on the model of the American business school.

The American business school was an institution with its roots in the late nineteenth century. Forged in response to changes in the structure of the US economy during that period – more specifically the transition from an economy based on 'perfect' market competition between 'traditional enterprises' to one based on large, integrated corporations – the business school reflected the attempts of American corporate leaders to professionalize the range of new

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[50] Kabir's role in negotiating the creation of the IIMC is described in 'The Ford Foundation and Management Education in India', Folder B.7, Box 9, Series II, Douglas Ensminger Papers (hereafter (DEP), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University, pp. 10-11.
[51] See Marshall E. Dinnock, 'The Administrative Staff College: Executive Development in Government and Industry', *The American Political Science Review,* 50:1, 1956, pp. 166-176; J.W.L. Adams, 'Henley and Hyderabad', *Indian Journal of Public Administration,* 4:1, 1958, pp. 66-78.

managerial tasks and functions that this transition entailed.[52] The foundation of business schools reflected more than simply a response to changing organizational demands, however. As Rakesh Khurana has argued, it also reflected a 'search for legitimacy' on the part of America's new executive classes, one that drew upon prevailing trends, such as growing organizational support for science, the increasing professionalization of other areas (for example law, medicine and the clergy), and the rise of the American research university, in its bid to legitimate managerial occupations.[53] Following the founding of the first university-based business schools – the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business (1881); the Dartmouth University Tuck School of Administration and Finance (1900); and the Harvard Business School (1908) – the number of business schools had grown steadily during the first half of the twentieth century. By 1955, at least 587 institutions were conferring business degrees in the United States.[54]

Influenced by progressivist understandings of what constituted a 'profession', the founders of America's first business schools sought to 'infuse the new occupation of management with values beyond the technical requirements of the job'.[55] At the core of this, Khurana has argued, sat an emphasis on a 'social compact' between the manager and society at large. At the Wharton School and elsewhere, early business educators framed their mission as one of creating managers that possessed, first and foremost, strong 'professional ideals' centred around ethical standards and social responsibility. During the course of its early twentieth century expansion, however, as private foundations such as the Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford came to play a key role in the funding of business education, the character of the American business school had undergone subtle yet significant changes. In an effort to raise the standards of business schools and adapt them to increasing popular demand, foundations had promoted an increasingly 'standardized' approach to management education. Contrasted to the earlier emphasis on promoting professional ideals, this new standardized model focused instead on the provision of management skills, competences and knowledge. Taught through functional, interdisciplinary courses comprising areas such finance, accounting, marketing, statistics and 'human relations', the management education offered by post-war

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[52] On the rise of professional management (and the business school) as a response to this economic transition see Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977).

[53] Rakesh Khurana, *From Higher Aims to Hired Hands: The Social Transformation of American Business Schools and the Unfulfilled Promise of Management as a Profession* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 6.

[54] Ibid., p. 196.

[55] Ibid., p. 16.

business schools was increasingly geared towards the production of 'rational managers' capable of running large, complex organizations in an efficient manner. By the middle of the twentieth century, then, the American business school had morphed from a values-based enterprise into one focused, first and foremost, on the dissemination of professional management 'science'.[56]

The decision to develop the IIMs on the model of the American business school reflected the prominent role of the Ford Foundation in the establishment of the two institutes. In agreeing to provide support to both the IIMA and the IIMCA, Ford earmarked its funding to cover direct collaborations between the new Indian institutes and partner business schools in the United States. At the same time, the move to import the American business school model also reflected a broader set of assumptions held by Indian elites regarding the cutting-edge nature of American management knowledge. 'If we look at the world from the point of view of efficiency with which business enterprises are managed', noted one contemporary:

…we immediately notice that a management gap separates the rich from the poor countries. We use the term Management Gap (MG) to refer to the difference between the effectiveness of the management of resources by business enterprises in the United States of America and in under-managed countries…[the] USA is a country which has the most efficiently managed enterprises in the world.[57]

This notion that American institutions provided a model of effective management drew strength from the United States' position as the world's dominant economic power.[58] It was also a notion based on two basic assumptions about the nature of management knowledge: first, that such knowledge represented a 'universal' science, 'akin to the physical sciences', discovered through a 'process a deduction and variously tested through positivistic methods'; second, that American institutions had been fortunate enough to discover this science first.[59]

At the IIMA, to which this section now turns its focus, Indian leaders did more than just embrace an American model of management education; they also discriminated over who their US collaborators were. From the time it had begun to push for a management education institute in India, the Ford Foundation had viewed the UCLA Business School as the most

[56] Ibid., pp. 201-210.

[57] A.N. Agrawala, 'The Problem of Management GAP in Under-Developed Countries', S.N. 457: Second Management Development Conference, Subject Files, Seminars/Conferences/Symposia, AMP, pp. 40-43.

[58] For this argument see J. Zeitlin, and G. Herrigel, (eds.) *Americanization and Its Limits. Reworking US Technology and Management in Post-War Europe and Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 1-49.

[59] Nidhi Srinivas, 'Mimicry and Revival: The Transfer and Transformation of Management Knowledge to India, 1959-1990', *International Studies of Management and Organization,* 38:4, 2008/2009, pp. 47-49.

likely US collaborator. This leaning reflected Ford's existing connection with the School, in particular the relationship between Douglas Ensminger and its Associate Dean, George Robbins. As Ahmedabad replaced Bombay as the site for the first IIM, Ford officials had operated on the assumption that UCLA would become the institutional partner for the project. The IIMA's leaders, however, had other ideas.

Though not opposed to an arrangement with UCLA, Sarabhai and other IIMA leaders preferred a collaboration with Harvard Business School (HBS). During the course of the 1950s, Sarabhai had already come into contact with leading figures at HBS, including its Associate Dean, Fritz J. Roethlisberger, of 'Hawthorne Experiment' fame.[60] In 1959, Roethlisberger had visited Ahmedabad personally, holding discussions with Sarabhai, his brother Gautam, and Kamla Chowdhry on the future of management education in India.[61] HBS also held a personal connection for other IIMA leaders, like Prakash Tandon, now a Member of the Institute's Board, who had attended a management course there in 1958.[62] 'The strange thing', Sarabhai wrote to M.S. Thacker, 'is that the Business School was never explicitly asked by the Ford Foundation…Most people would not dream of passing over an institution like Harvard'.[63] Thus, while IIMA leaders entered into discussions with Robbins and the UCLA Business School, by early 1961 they had also opened up parallel negotiations with HBS officials.[64] Believing that Ford might prove resistant, Sarabhai even entertained the idea of asking the then US Ambassador to India J.K. Galbraith, himself 'a Harvard man', to explore alternative sources of funding for an IIMA-HBS collaboration.[65]

Sarabhai's leaning towards HBS angered Ford officials, not least because it jeopardized earlier informal commitments made between the Foundation and UCLA.[66] Naturally,

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[60] On Roethlisberger and the 'Hawthorne Experiment' see Richard Gillsepie, *Manufacturing Knowledge: A History of the Hawthorne Experiments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[61] A year prior to this trip, Sarabhai had also visited Roethlisberger at Harvard, attending several lectures at the HBS during his visit. During Roethlisberger's time in Ahmedabad, he gave a lecture on 'New Directions in Human Relations' to over 200 members of the Ahmedabad industrial community. 'John B. Fox to Vikram Sarabhai, 14 November 1958', Folder 12, Carton 3; 'Kamla Chowdhry to Roethlisberger, 1 August 1959', Folder 12, Carton 3; and 'A Note on Management Training', Folder 4, Carton 1 in Fritz J. Roethlisberger Papers (hereafter FRP), Special Collections, Baker Library, Harvard Business School.

[62] Tandon, *Return to Punjab,* p. 119-122.

[63] Vikram Sarabhai to M.S. Thacker, 19 May 1961, File 1: Institution Building, Vikram Sarabhai Papers (hereafter VSP), Archival Collections, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad.

[64] Anubhai, *The IIMA Story,* p. 34.

[65] Vikram Sarabhai to Kasturbhai Lalbhai, 4 April 1961, File 1, VSP.

[66] One particular exchange between Sarabhai and the Ford Foundation official John Coleman illuminated this tension clearly. 'While it would obviously have been desirable to consult the potential 'users' of the school's product, as you have urged', explained Coleman, '[t]he Foundation felt a need long before this to begin the search for an American counterpart group. There was no intention of thrusting anything down anyone's throat; there was only a desire to line up the resources needed to get the job done. Where you and I have failed most

however, it piqued the interest of the leaders at Harvard. In early 1961, the IIMC had unveiled its own plans for a collaboration with HBS's Cambridge rival, the MIT Sloane School of Management. Wary of the reputational damage that 'MIT's move' could cause for HBS's own standing, HBS leaders, including Harry L. Hansen, a senior marketing professor, stressed the need to move 'with some alacrity' in response to the developments in Ahmedabad.[67] In November 1961, sensing the changing mood, the UCLA Business School advised the Ford Foundation of its decision to withdraw from the IIMA negotiations, thereby opening the door for formal talks with HBS.[68] Quickly adapting, Ford would help to arrange a visit of HBS faculty, led by Hansen, to Ahmedabad in January 1962. By May, the proposal for a five-year partnership between the two institutions had been approved by both the IIMA Board and the HBS's parent body, the Harvard Corporation.[69]

The HBS-IIMA collaboration took one form in particular: exchange of personnel. Between 1962 and 1967, 17 HBS faculty and research associates, together with a small number of graduate students, swapped the banks of the Charles for the Sabarmati, with a similar number of IIMA faculty sent in the other direction. At Harvard, IIMA staff observed and received instruction on HBS's model of management education. In Ahmedabad, HBS staff provided assistance with respect to both curriculum development and teaching.[70] Moulded by these exchanges, the IIMA's early academic programme came to reflect several key features of the HBS's own approach. Its curriculum, comprising instruction in administrative practices; business policy; cost and financial administration; marketing and sales; production management; and organizational behaviour, mirrored directly that of HBS's own interdisciplinary focus. The IIMA's first two course offerings, meanwhile – a two-year post-graduate diploma and a three-tier industry-focused Program for Management Development – drew directly on Harvard's own Masters in Business Administration and Advanced Management Program respectively.[71]

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significantly to see eye-to-eye is on the role which this American counterpart is to play in the Indian Institute…The key factor for India regarding any such school should not be its distinctive way of doing things, for that way is American-made and not suitable for export. Rather, the key factor is the school's commitment to high quality and meaningful education and research', John Coleman to Vikram Sarabhai, 29 April 1971, File 1: Institution Building', VSP.

[67] Harry Hansen to Stanley F Teele, April 11, 1961, File: Correspondence, 1960-1965 (1/2), Box 3, IIMAR.

[68] Anubhai, *The IIMA Story,* pp. 36-37.

[69] Ibid., p. 40.

[70] Ibid., p. 45.

[71] Kamla Chowdhry, as Director of IIMA Programmes, spent much of the period between 1964 and 1965 in Harvard trying to acquaint herself with the Harvard AMP programme. Kamla Chowdhry to John B Fox, March 16 1965, File: Chowdhry, Dr Kamla, 1964-5, Box 2, IIMAR.

Another telling example of Harvard's imprint on the IIMA was the Institute's adoption of the 'case method' of teaching. Developed initially by the Harvard Law School, the case method prioritized the analysis of actual business cases over a 'traditional' lecture-based format, presenting this as a form of learning that stressed 'the possibilities of alternatives in deciding on a profitable course of action', thereby forcing individuals 'to perceive economic and social relationships' and improving 'the decision-making ability of the student'.[72] By the post-war decades, the case method had become a defining feature of HBS's educational platform.[73] As the IIMA's academic programme took shape, the method became a core feature of the Ahmedabad Institute's educational philosophy too.[74]



*Planning the IIMA*

**Figure 11. Scene from an early IIMA Board Meeting** (those pictured include Kasturbhai Lalbhai (third from left), Prakash Tandon (fourth from right) Vikram Sarabhai (third from right) and Kamla Chowdhry (second from right).

(Source: *IIMA: India's Management Athenaeum (1961-2011),* (Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, 2010)

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[72] 'Case Method in Management Education', File: Miscellaneous File (Melvyn R. Copen), 1964-1969, Box 7, IIMAR.

[73] Anthony Chase, 'Origins of Modern Professional Education: The Harvard Case Method Conceived as Clinical Instruction in Law', *Nova Law Review,* 5:3, 1981, pp. 323-363.

[74] The IIMC, for its part, did not make significant use of the case method.

If the IIMA's educational programme took its cues from the HBS model, the Institute's broader organizational culture bore the indelible imprint of Vikram Sarabhai. Much like Sarabhai's earlier pursuits, the IIMA was an institution built with the explicit intention to model the concept of 'horizontal control'. This began at the top, in the relationship between the IIMA and the government. The IIMA had been founded as a 'semi-autonomous' Institute under the auspices of a triumvirate comprising the Government of India, the Government of Gujarat and Ahmedabad industrialists. Unlike other similar institutions, however, which in practice found themselves subject to a significant degree of governmental interference, Sarabhai insisted firmly on the preservation of the IIMA's genuine autonomy and self-determination. Together with Kasturbhai Lalbhai, Sarabhai successfully convinced the participating government departments to limit their representation (both quantitatively and qualitatively) on the IIMA Board. This, they argued, would give the Institute's leaders more freedom over policymaking, avoiding interference from above.[75]

An aversion to vertical authority was also instilled in the day-to-day organizational structure of the Institute. When it came to teaching and research undertaken by the IIMA, 'tasks and activities were accomplished through "management by committees"':

The committees consisted of not those who held academic positions or had senior rank but of faculty members who were responsible for performing a group of activities to fulfil a need. These committees implemented policy decisions with the advice and approval of the total faculty and the Director. In such a system of management, the initiative and responsibility for accomplishing tasks was spread widely among the faculty and other task groups. Thus the need for a hierarchical structure for academic decision making was avoided.[76]

Within the committees, decision making worked on the basis of 'persuasion and mutual discussion'.[77] 'Right from the beginning', recalled one account, Sarabhai and the Institute's leaders 'encouraged self-driven responsibility rather than authority-driven responsibility'.[78]

As an educational philosophy, the case method merged neatly with this desire to avoid vertical control. The reason for this, as one internal memorandum explained, was that

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[75] Samuel Paul, 'Building on a Solid Foundation', in *Ravi J Matthai et al., Institution Building: The IIMA Experience – Vol. I: The Early Years* (Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, 1993), p. 93. As one former faculty member has noted, the ability of the IIMA to secure such concessions owed no small debt to the esteem and influence of its leading figures, in particular of Sarabhai and Lalbhai. S.K. Bhattachaya, 'The Early Years of Institutional Development', in Matthai et al., *Institution Building: The IIMA Experience,* p. 17.

[76] Ishwar Dayal, 'Early Years at IIMA', in Matthai et al., *Institution Building: The IIMA Experience,* p. 58.

[77] Ibid., p. 58.

[78] Dwijendra Tripathi, cited in *IIMA: India's Management Athenaeum (1961-2011),* (Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, 2010), p. 24.

notwithstanding its acclaimed educative merits, the case-based approach also had the capacity to democratize the learning experience:

Under [the] case system teacher and students are in possession of the same basic materials in the light of which analysis are made and decisions arrived at. Each, therefore, has an identical opportunity to make a contribution to the body of principles governing business policy and practice. There is a significant aspect of democracy in the classroom in the sense that it provides a new axis for personal relationships...It is a question of dealing with a rather large number of equals and contemporaries whose approaches, attitudes, values and criticisms must be faced, comprehended and used. Every one is on par and everyone is in competition.[79]

The case method didn't just make people better decision makers. According to IIMA leaders, it also modelled a form of learning based around horizontal controls.

The philosophy of horizontal control pervaded Sarabhai's choice for IIMA leadership too. Owing to his various other commitments, Sarabhai assumed a temporary position of 'honorary director' of the IIMA, until such time as a permanent appointment could be made. In seeking out a full-time leader, he would take great care to identify an individual that possessed the unique characteristics required for effective horizontal leadership. 'Sarabhai', recalls one institutional history, 'judged that it was better to have somebody with the qualities of a good manager and a value system that fitted in with IIMA's own, than somebody with great credentials'.[80] Bypassing a number of senior figures, including the then Indian Ambassador to the United States, B.K. Nehru, the man he chose for the job was the largely unknown figure of Ravi J. Matthai. An English literature graduate with only ten years' corporate experience (plus one year teaching at the IIMC), Matthai was not only relatively underqualified; at 38, he was also extremely young to assume such an esteemed position. For Sarabhai, however, what mattered was Matthai's commitment to leadership based on 'freedom', 'autonomy' and 'trust' and his faith in non-hierarchical institutional structures.[81] Following his appointment in 1965, Matthai would go on to:

…strengthen the foundations laid by Sarabhai…Not only did he give freedom to the faculty, he also gave it autonomy…Ravi ensured that the academic management was insulated against ingress and interference from the [Board]…He encouraged experimentation and innovation as long as it was all oriented towards the goal.[82]

Even the IIMA's physical architecture was intended to provide, among other things, an expression of the virtues of non-hierarchical control. Designed by the American architect,

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[79] Prof. S.C. Kuchhal, 'Case method of instruction' File: Test Case Seminars, 1963, Box 7, IIMAR, p. 1.
[80] Mohan, *Brick by Red Brick,* p. 76.
[81] Ibid., pp. 65-80.
[82] Anubhai, *The IIMA Story,* p. 117.

Louis Kahn, with close input from Sarabhai and Lalbhai, the IIMA campus buildings prioritized the creation of spaces that facilitated the 'open and easy interaction between teachers and learners, between teachers and teachers, and between learners and learners'.[83] Open arches, rather than restrictive doorways, demarcated the space between students and faculty, thereby encouraging individuals to move freely between spaces. Classrooms, meanwhile, took the form of 'amphitheatres with large wells and wide aisles' in which the professor could roam and ruminate, thus reinforcing the idea that their job was to integrate with students and be at one among them, not to direct and dispense wisdom from the 'safety of the lectern'.[84] Physically as well as administratively, the IIMA was built to model a form of human relations that was, at its core, horizontal.

According to IIMA leaders, building the IIMA around the concept of horizontal control served dual purposes. On the one hand, it meant the Institute was structured around what Sarabhai and others believed to be the most effective forms of organizational management. At the same time, it also reified those forms of conduct to those attending IIMA courses. 'If it was [to be] accepted that the Institute's work would result in changes outside', explained Ravi J. Matthai:

…then the Institute itself must have a culture of innovation and change…It was felt, therefore, that norms should evolve in a self-regulating community rather than having large volumes of rules and regulations which would constrain individual behaviour.[85]

The attempt to build the Ahmedabad institute around the concept of non-hierarchical control was not, however, entirely without problems. Belying Sarabhai's own claims about the merits of self-regulation, autonomy and trust, IIMA employees frequently complained of the challenges of making effective decisions under the Institute's systems. When it came to the faculty committees, for example, there was a 'general feeling among the task and the sentient group heads…that they had the responsibility for results but no authority to deal with errant members'.[86] 'Meetings', explained one member of staff:

…were long and frequent and decision making…extremely difficult. Discussions in these meetings were frustrating and many senior members of the faculty remained absent from a large number of task related meetings.[87]

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[83] *IIMA: India's Management Athenaeum,* p. 32.
[84] Ibid., p. 69.
[85] Ravi J Matthai, 'The Underlying Basis of IIMA Organization', in Matthai et al., *Institution Building: The IIMA Experience,* p. 1.
[86] Dayal, 'Early Years at IIMA', p. 57.
[87] Ibid., p. 57.

Reverence for horizontal control, it seemed, was not without its drawbacks; namely, a foregoing of what some considered to be an equally essential component of modern management – operational efficiency.

Moreover, as Sarabhai and others endeavoured to build the IIMA as a monument to horizontal logic, some complained that the relations between themselves and their Indian counterparts amounted to anything but. The key issue here concerned the restrictions, imposed by IIMA leaders, on HBS participation in the Institute's high-level decision making. As one Ford Foundation report put it: 'some of the faculty, and particularly the Americans, believed that the "new culture" should include greater faculty involvement in the top level creative process'.[88] Privately, one HBS faculty member complained that by freezing out Harvard personnel from the decision making process, the IIMA system had squandered 'free and open discussion' in favour of 'Vikram's dictatorship'.[89] At one level, the desire of IIMA leaders to keep institutional decision making under their own purview, rather than opening it up to their HBS colleagues, seemed an entirely reasonable one, especially in view of the temporary nature of Harvard's engagement. At the same time, however, HBS's protestations also underscored a subtle irony at the heart of the bid to build the IIMA's new culture. Like all attempts to inculcate values within a system, the decision to orientate IIMA around the concept of horizontal control required, in the first instance, a top-down decision to pursue such a path. As an ardent advocate of horizontality, Sarabhai showed few signs of recognizing that the power to create such systems rested on his own (vertical) authority.

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In the eyes of its founders, the IIMA held a sense of mission tied intimately to 'national' goals. The recollections of Sudhir Kakar, an early IIMA staffer (and later a renowned personality psychologist), bring this out clearly:

My memory of the atmosphere at [the] IIM is of the enthusiasm and idealism of its pioneering days. The faculty and the first batch of 40-odd students who were admitted to the 2-year postgraduate programme in 1963 saw themselves as the vanguard of a revolution that would change the functioning of Indian institutions…all those involved in the project of setting up a management education institute believed that they were in the forefront of nation-building efforts…Even when most of the first graduates of the institute found jobs industry and commerce, they still viewed their work as part of nation building, of bringing new skills

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[88] 'Management Education in India: A Study of International Collaboration in Institution Building', section 6, p. 17.
[89] Melvyn Copen to Harry Hansen, September 9 1964, File: Copen, Melvyn, 1963-5, Box 3, IIMAR. The fall out is briefly described in George Rosen, *Western Economists and Eastern Societies: Agents of Change in South Asia, 1950–1970* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), pp. 94-96.

into running the vital sectors of the Indian economy. The future of management education, where the end goal of students was a well-paying job in multinational corporations, banks and international consultancy firms, was still a couple of decades away.[90]

The 'revolution' envisioned by IIMA leaders targeted public as well as private institutions. Attendees to the Institute's management development programmes therefore hailed not just from industrial corporations, but from public enterprises, government departments and development programmes as well.

The sense of management development as a project linked to 'national' development would also spur the creation, in time, of new branches of management training and research geared towards acutely Indian problems. In 1970, the IIMA would pioneer a new Programme for Management in Agriculture focused specifically on the application of management principles and science to questions of agricultural development.[91] Ultimately, the drive to apply management to areas of national importance would also give rise to new institutions created specifically for this purpose. The Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA), established in 1979 in rural Gujarat, was one such example. Founded by the social entrepreneur, Verghese Kurien, the IRMA aimed to provide management training, research and consultancy to support rural co-operatives and development organizations. IRMA would later go on to play a pivotal role in a widely acclaimed transformation of dairy production in India – the so-called 'white revolution'.[92] As an institution, IRMA neatly encapsulated the distinctly national ambitions attached to Indian management education during its early decades. At the same time, it also encapsulated just how intimately connected that field was. Kurien, as founder-leader of the IRMA, was a cousin of the IIMA's first Director, Ravi Matthai. Both Matthai and Kamla Chowdhry, meanwhile, as key figures in the early history of the IIMA, would go on to play a major role in the founding of the IRMA.[93]

At the centre of all of this was the indubitable logic of horizontal control. Indeed, while Sarabhai and other IIMA leaders worked to promote an organizational ethos centred around

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[90] Kakar, *The Book of Memory,* p. 150.
[91] *IIMA: The First Decade, 1962-1972* (Ahmedabad: Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, 1973), pp. 19-20.
[92] Bruce A. Scholten, *India's White Revolution: Operation Flood, Food Aid and Development* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2010).
[93] The founding of IRMA was tied to a project, initiated by Ravi Matthai, to apply the forms of corporate management taught at IIMA to problems of rural development. Beginning in mid-1970s, Matthai ran an experiment in which IIMA management scientists worked with impoverished groups in the Jawaja block of Rajasthan to help them build livelihoods and start commercial enterprises. The 'Jawaja Experiment', as it became known, provided momentum for the creation of a 'rural university' dedicated to management education. See Ravi Matthai, *The Rural University: The Jawaja Experiment in Educational Innovation* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1985).

the rejection of hierarchical authority, the management education that their new institute (and others) now promoted was also opening the door to new forms of knowledge and practice which, in their own way, promoted a non-hierarchical logic. Focused on leadership behaviours, these forms of knowledge would espouse the virtues of horizontal forms of management not merely in terms of principle or conviction, but in the language of social psychological 'science'. It is to this expanding sphere of behavioural expertise that the final section of this chapter will now turn.

### Creating horizontal leaders: psychologized management and the enterprise of T-group training

The forms of professionalized management that new management institutions sought to cultivate were, in large part, technical and operational. For this reason, management education comprised instruction in a range of functional skills, from administrative practices, to business policy, to marketing. At the same time, however, the education provided by new institutions like the IIMA also framed management as an inherently behavioural enterprise. Effective organizational leadership, it suggested, comprised not just the ability to perform certain operational tasks, but also the capacity to conduct oneself in certain ways. Forwarded under the rubric of 'Organisational Behaviour' (OB), this mode of instruction taught managers that the key to effective management was, at root, social and psychological. 'While managers may be specialists in accounting, economics, manufacturing, finance, marketing or personnel work', one IIMA publication explained, 'they must also manage'.[94]

The most important element of this field was an ostensibly bland sounding set of practices referred to as 'T-group training'. Perceived as a technology for instilling new leadership behaviours, the T-group employed 'laboratory-based' group interactions to help individuals explore the effects of different forms of leadership conduct on themselves and others. In the experimental environment of the T-group, proponents argued, participants would learn *through experience* the merits of 'participative', 'sensitive' and 'democratic' leadership styles. T-group training would thus lay the foundations for a new type of manager, one characterized by these particular behavioural traits. During the 1960s, this psychologized brand of training would emerge as the central feature of the 'OB' courses provided by India's new management institutes. Here, once again, Indian leaders would approach development through the lens of American psychological science.

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[94] 'Management Education', File: Publicity: Catalogue and Newsletter, 1963-1967, Box 7, IIMAR, p. 5.

The T-group traced its origins in a series of experiments conducted by social psychologists at the University of Iowa during the late 1930s. Conducted by the German Jewish émigré Kurt Lewin together with his colleagues Ronald Lippitt and Ralph White, the 'Autocracy/Democracy' studies set out to compare the effectiveness of different forms of leadership on groups of young children. Organizing the participants into randomized groups, Lewin, Lippitt and White observed the respective behaviours of the children under three types of adult leader: 'autocratic', 'laissez-faire' and 'democratic'. Autocratic leaders dictated to members and took all decisions for themselves. In laissez-faire groups, the social climate was essentially leaderless, leaving children more or less to their own devices. In democratic groups, meanwhile, leaders participated as 'a regular group member in spirit'. They encouraged group members to make decisions based on group action and discussion, and endeavoured to be 'objective' and 'fact-minded' in their criticism and praise.[95]

Concealed from view, the psychologists observed the impact of contrasting leadership styles on the children's behaviour. The results, they argued, were clear and consistent. Under contrasting leadership styles, the children quickly began to demonstrate starkly different forms of behaviour. In autocratic groups, children were often productive in the presence of their leader but became rapidly disorganized and despondent in their absence. They also tended to exhibit extreme variations towards either aggressiveness or apathy and little in the way of cohesive group identity. In laissez-faire groups, children were chaotic and unproductive. Groups under democratic leadership, however, were marked by an altogether different set of behavioural outcomes. Here, children cooperated constructively towards the group goal, and demonstrated a capacity to 'give and take…objective criticism without personal involvement'. Compared to autocratic groups, children in democratic groups experienced only mild levels of aggression, a greater amount of 'we-centeredness', and 'more occurrences of praise and expressions of friendliness'. They were also more consistently productive when it came to completing tasks.[96]

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[95] Ralph K. White and Ronald Lippitt, *Autocracy and Democracy: An Experimental Inquiry* (New York: Harper, 1976); Kurt Lewin, Roland Lippitt and Ralph K. White, 'Patterns of Aggressive Behaviour in Experimentally Created "Social Climates"', *The Journal of Social Psychology,* 10:2, 1939, pp. 269-299; Ronald Lippitt and Ralph K. White, 'An Experimental Study of Authoritarian and Group Atmospheres', *Studies in Topological and Vector Psychology: University of Iowa Studies in Child Welfare*, 16: 3, 1940, pp. 45-193; Kurt Lewin and Ronald Lippitt, 'An Experimental Approach to the Study of Democracy and Autocracy: A Preliminary Note', *Sociometry*, Vol 1, No. 3/4 (Jan – Apr 1938), pp. 292-300. For historical accounts of the experiments see Jenna Feltey Alden, 'Bottom-up Management: Participative Philosophy and Humanistic Psychology in American Organizational Culture, 1930-1970', unpublished PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2012, ch. 1.
[96] Lewin et al., 'Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created 'Social Climates'', pp. 269-299.

In a period of ongoing debate about the merits of 'progressive' education, the Autocracy/Democracy experiments had been intended, first and foremost, to provide evidence of the impact of participative leadership styles on the capacity of children to learn.[97] For the psychologists, however, they soon came to underpin a broader conviction. Lewin in particular began to argue that the participative, consensual forms of interaction and decision making modelled by Iowa's democratic groups held the keys not just to effective educative practice, but to effective organization in all manner of political, social and economic environments. In fact, Lewin would come to argue that meaningful democracy itself hinged on the proliferation of the democratic leader-group relations witnessed at Iowa. In the years that followed, he would work tirelessly to turn these ideas into practice.[98]

Following a period of wartime work as an adviser to the US Office for Strategic Services, Lewin had spent the period between 1944 and his death in 1947 promoting the merits of 'democratic group relations' through research spanning a number of fields.[99] During this period, he also established a new Research Center for Group Dynamics, based at MIT, dedicated to furthering social scientific knowledge on the functioning of democratic groups. It was in the context of a 1946 project commissioned by the Connecticut State Interracial Commission, however, that Lewin would hit upon a breakthrough in his understanding of democratic group formation, a breakthrough that would eventually lead to the concept of the 'T-group'.

Lewin, together with Lippitt and two other psychologists, Kenneth Benne and Leland Bradford, had been appointed by the Connecticut Commission to conduct 'action research' on measures to improve local community relations, in response to which they had established an experiment to study the impact of group discussions between community representatives. One evening, when several of the community representatives asked if they too could be included in the psychologists' nightly review meetings, the researchers struck upon a realization: giving group participants themselves an opportunity to provide insight on the workings of the group actively helped to facilitate the creation of a harmonious group environment. 'Feedback', it seemed, formed a vital mechanism in the process of democratic

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[97] Alden, 'Bottom-up Management', pp. 48-49.
[98] Ibid., pp. 49-50.
[99] Among the sites in which Lewin's led action-research on group dynamics were the Harwood textile manufacturing company in Virginia and the American Jewish Congress. Ibid., ch. 4.

group formation.[100] Based on this experience, Lewin, Lippitt, Benne and Bradford turned the feedback-based approach into a new methodology for creating democratic group-leader interactions: they called it the 'Basic Skills Training Group'. In 1947, in the town of Bethel, Maine, the psychologists established a new institution, the National Training Laboratories for Group Development – soon shortened to the National Training Laboratories (NTL) – dedicated to its promulgation.[101]

Lewin died suddenly in 1947. Lippitt, Benne and Bradford, however, carried forward the endeavour. Before long, the psychologists had turned the Basic Skills Training Group (quickly shortened to 'Training Group', or 'T-group') into a well-rehearsed technique for the cultivation of effective (democratic) group-leader dynamics. In the NTL's T-groups, non-directive 'trainers', most of whom were psychologists, led small groups through a series of intimate, experiential and unstructured workshops in group development, placing considerable emphasis on the role of open and honest feedback. The practice hinged on a notion that open group dialogue facilitated heightened awareness of oneself and of others, which in turn helped people establish effective group relations. The idea was that participants, many of whom were themselves leaders of some sort in their own local settings, would carry the experience home with them, thereby helping to extend both self and group awareness more broadly.

In its early days, the NTL marketed T-group training toward a wide range of community actors including leaders of labour unions, churches, social service, welfare agencies, and educational associations. Soon, however, the T-group began to find footing in one place more than any other: the corporate sphere. As Jenna Alden has argued, this shift reflected changes in the NTL's own orientation, specifically the decision of NTL trainers to provide T-groups for members of the same organization. The move towards internal T-groups represented a departure from Lewin's original aims, but it opened up new opportunities for the NTL. 'Rather than working with diverse delegates toward abstract aims of democratic participation and awareness of group dynamics', Alden argues, 'the NTL could [now] help corporations,

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[100] For an account of the Connecticut experiment see Leland P. Bradford, *National Training Laboratories: Its History, 1947-1970: Originally National Training Laboratory in Group Development and Now NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science* (Bethel: Bradford, 1974), pp. 34-38. See also Alden, 'Bottom-up Management', pp. 171-175.

[101] Bradford, *National Training Laboratories,* pp. 40-50. For more on the history of the NTL see: Leland P. Bradford, Jack R. Gibb, Kenneth D. Benne (eds.), T-*Group Theory and Laboratory Method: Innovation in Re-education* (New York: Wiley, 1964); Jerrold I. Hirsch, *The History of the National Training Laboratories 1947-1986* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1987); Kurt W. Back, *Beyond Words: The Story of Sensitivity Training and the Encounter Movement* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1972).

non-profits, and government agencies work toward the solution of distinct, organization-based problems'.[102] During the 1950s, it was industrial corporations that would become the most active consumers of the NTL's T-group training. Here, the T-group would morph gradually from a mechanism for promoting democratic citizenship into a targeted technique for training corporate leaders in democratic, group-based leadership styles. Corporate engagement in the T-group method reflected a broader wave of interest in the merits of 'participative' management for workforce productivity. By the mid-1950s, corporate T-group training – often referred also as 'laboratory training' or 'sensitivity training' – had become one of the core features of the management training offered by American business schools.[103]

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In India, the T-group first arrived not via the IIMA, but through a curious and lesser-known figure by the name of Rolf P. Lynton. Lynton, a German émigré like Lewin, had fled Nazi Germany for Britain, studying at the British Institute of Management in London during the 1930s. During a subsequent teaching fellowship at HBS, Lynton, had become engrossed in the application of social science to industrial processes, avidly consuming lectures on the 'human relations' approach to management given by his Harvard professors. It was, however, the ideas emerging from Bethel that most captured Lynton's imagination.[104] Studying personal feelings 'in the "here and now" and the group as we developed it', he later recalled:

…was quite new to me…That I had never done, and it actually went quite against the grain of all that I had grown up with in Germany and then in England…[In] the T-Group, personal openness was not merely encouraged; developing the group depended on it.[105]

In 1954, Lynton reached an agreement with the World Assembly of Youth to head a new international development organization that made the T-group the core of its praxis. 'Aloka', as it became known, was a training institute for young community leaders in developing countries. From a small office in rural Ceylon, Lynton ran T-group training as a means of nurturing youth leaders into 'flexible instruments of change'.[106] In doing so, he developed a

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[102] Alden, 'Bottom-up Management', p. 293.

[103] The rise of corporate T-groups is described in Ibid., ch. 7.

[104] Lynton experienced a T-group for the first time when the NTL conducted a T-group at Harvard in 1954. The experience is described in Fritz J. Roethlisberger, George F. F. Lombard, Harriet O. Ronken, *Training for Human Relations* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954). Harriet Ronken, a graduate student who participated in these experiments, would end up marrying Lynton and eventually travel with him to India, ultimately writing several novels inspired by her experience. See for example Harriet Ronken Lynton and Mohini Rajan, *The Days of the Beloved* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

[105] Rolf P. Lynton, *Social Science in Actual Practice: Themes on My Blue Guitar* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), p. 125.

[106] Rolf P. Lynton, *The Tide of Learning: The Aloka Experience* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), p. x.

reputation for insisting that the details of every single group interaction be meticulously recorded.[107]

In 1957, Lynton moved to India, taking Aloka with him. Here, he continued the practice of using the 'laboratory method' as a form international leadership training, now from a larger office on the fringes of the city of Mysore.[108] The move to India would open up new opportunities. By 1963, Lynton had secured a new position as a consultant at the Small Industries Extension Training (SIET) Institute in Hyderabad. The SIET, as we have seen, had been established in 1961 to promote the development of small-scale industries in Indian towns. Funded jointly by the Government of India and the Ford Foundation, the Institute sought to promote innovative approaches to the growth of small industries using the latest insights from economics and other forms of social science. During the 1960s, the SIET would become the principal test-bed for the entrepreneurial development courses pioneered by David McClelland and his Harvard colleagues. In 1963, Lynton arrived at the Institute as an 'extension consultant', tasked with studying the effects of T-group training on small businessmen engaged in the SIET's 'area development programmes'.[109]

At the SIET, Lynton would encounter the same group of social scientists with whom McClelland was then working, and it was with Udai Pareek that he would forge a particularly close attachment. To his own intellectual 'playfulness', Lynton recalled, Pareek brought a 'discipline', a 'breadth' of knowledge, and a 'rigor of method'.[110] Working together as

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[107] For an account of Lynton's meticulous recording by a colleague see Udai Pareek, 'A Biography of Rolf Lynton', *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science¸* 35:4, 1999, pp. 398-400. Lynton's penchant for documentation would later get him into trouble. At the Hyderabad Small Industries Extension Training (SIET) Institute, to which he would move after Aloka, he even extended his recording to the interactions of staff meetings. The practice created discomfort and tension among SIET colleagues, some of whom even began to suspect he was a spy. Tensions grew so high, in fact, that the Ford Foundation which as the funder of Lynton's appointment at SIET, was forced to intervene. The experience is described in 'The Ford Foundation's Contribution in the Field of India's Village and Small Industries', Folder B.2, Box 4, DEP, pp. 21-22.
[108] Upon moving to Mysore, Aloka took on the additional name of the International Advanced Training Centre. It also hired additional faculty, took larger groups of students, and also established a nursery school. A brief account of the Mysore centre can also be found in Rachel Aber Schlesinger, 'Concerns for Children Are World Wide…A Nursery School in India', *Childhood Education,* 38:2, 1961, pp. 65-69.
[109] For Lynton's report of his time as an SIET consultant see 'R.P. Lynton, Terminal report -- Small Industry Extension Training Institute, 1961-5 (mimeo)', Report No. 017675, Catalogued Reports 13949-17726 (FA739F), FFA.
[110] 'Within mere days', the two 'did everything together'. When at the end of his tenure as an SIET consultant, Lynton headed to North Carolina, Pareek followed him there, securing himself a two-year appointment as a Visiting Professor in Psychology at the University of North Carolina. At Chapel Hill, the two collaborated on their first publication, a book on 'training for development'. When Lynton was appointed to lead a new educational training project in Indonesia, he invited Pareek to join him there, leading to more work and more publications. Reflecting. in later years, Lynton would refer to Pareek as a 'virtual twin brother'. Lynton, *Social Science in Actual Practice,* pp. 118-119. See also, Rolf Lynton, 'Memoirs from a Professional Twin Brother', in TV Rao and Anil Khandelwal (eds.), *HRD, OD and Institution Building: Essays in Honour of Udai Pareek*, pp.

'virtual twin brothers', Lynton and Pareek would take joint ownership over the development of T-group training at the Institute. Through laboratory training, they argued, the entrepreneur and businessmen would learn 'how to be a skilful leader as well as a skilful member of the group'.[111]

Following the example of the NTL, Lynton and Pareek's T-groups forced participants:

…to interact in an unstructured situation; the group is not defined, the leadership is not offered by the trainer, behaviour is not prescribed…the group evolves through a natural process. The laboratory offers a climate conducive to open discussion and learning of trusting behaviour…when an individual feels comfortable to behave as he likes, he can find out that part of his behaviour which is not effective with other persons.[112]

In the course of this 'natural process', Lynton and Pareek argued, managers would come to 'increase their sensitivity or perceptibility to what and how they do (behave), how others see them behaving, and how other people behave, effectively and ineffectively, in different situations'.[113] What is more, the T-group would not only demonstrate the virtues of certain types of leader behaviour, it would also provide 'intensive personal opportunities' for actually 'practicing' leadership of this type.[114] Out of the laboratory experience, claimed Lynton, would emerge 'new patterns of relationship' that could be 'projected into the workday world'.[115]

The arrival of the IIMs opened-up new horizons for the practice of T-group training. By 1964, for example, 'sensitivity training' had become a core feature of the IIMA's graduate and executive management courses, with Lynton and Pareek providing technical support.[116]

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xxv-xxx. For the first collaboration see Lynton and Pareek, *Training for Development* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1990).

[111] Udai Pareek and R.P. Lynton, 'Sensitivity training for personal and organisational development', *Indian Management,* 4:3, 1965, p. 2. For detailed accounts of the T-group training undertaken at the SIET Institute see Udai Pareek and R.P. Lynton, 'Sensitivity Training in Regular Courses – 1', Report 017662, Catalogued Reports, 13949-17726 (FA739F), FFA; Udai Pareek and R.P. Lynton, 'Sensitivity Training in Regular Courses – 2', Report 017665, Catalogued Reports, 13949-17726 (FA739F); Udai Pareek, 'Laboratory Training in Regular Courses – 3', Report 017662, Catalogued Reports, 13949-17726 (FA739F), FFA; R.P. Lynton, 'Developing leadership skill through sensitivity training', Report 017668, Catalogued Reports, 13949-17726 (FA739F), Box 936, FFA.

[112] Ibid., p. 72.

[113] Pareek and Lynton, 'Sensitivity training for personal and organisational development', p. 40.

[114] Lynton, 'Developing leadership skill through sensitivity training', p. 2.

[115] R.P. Lynton, 'Leadership in a Developing Society', Report 017665, Catalogued Reports 13949-17726 (FA739G), Box 936, FFA, p. 3.

[116] For Lynton and Pareek's involvement in IIMA T-group training see Rolf P. Lynton and Udai Pareek to Paul R. Lawrence, 1 January 1965, File: Lynton, Rolf P. 1961-1978 (Folder 5), Carton 3, Paul R. Lawrence Papers (hereafter PRLP), Special Collections, Baker Library, Harvard Business School; 'Programme for Management Development, 1964', File: PMD Brochure, 1965, Box 16, IIMAR. Others who led T-group training at the IIMA included K.K. Anand, a former military psychologist recruited to the Institute in 1964, and Al Cohen, an HBS graduate student.

At the IIMA, T-groups would be presented as a behavioural technique geared towards cultivation of precisely the forms of horizontal leadership that Sarabhai and other Institute leaders espoused. In the experimental environment of the T-group, it was argued, prospective managers would undergo a series of 'learning experiences' in both interpersonal relations, the result of which would be new forms of leadership behaviour based on 'participative', 'sensitive', and 'democratic' principles. This 'systematic' form of training, explained Lynton, would assist the 'development of those *horizontal* relationships that are necessary for modern technology and administration'.[117]

At the IIMA, the key driver of T-group training was Kamla Chowdhry. Chowdhry, a social psychologist by training, was well-acquainted with Lewinian theories of democratic group dynamics. Indeed, her time studying at Michigan had coincided with the university's assumption of administrative control over Lewin's Centre for Group Dynamics, originally established at MIT.[118] In 1957, in her capacity as an ATIRA researcher, Chowdhry had led a series of T-group laboratories for the managers of Ahmedabad's textile mills. Here, she collaborated not just with Rolf Lynton, but also with social scientists of the London-based Tavistock Institute for Human Relations, a UK counterpart to the American NTL.[119] Appointed as 'Director of IIMA Programmes' in 1962, Chowdhry quickly moved to put T-groups at the forefront of the Institute's new educational agenda. The 'use of sensitivity training as a method of teaching human relations', she reported to HBS, made her and other IIMA colleagues 'very excited about the possibilities'.[120]

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[117] R.P. Lynton, 'Laboratory Training for Organizational Development', Report 009233, Catalogued Reports 6262-9268 (FA739C) Box 383, FFA, p. 2. Emphasis mine.

[118] Chowdhry's supervisor, Rensis Likert, was also a prominent advocate of group dynamics research see Alden, 'Bottom-up Management', ch. 8.

[119] 'Fritz Roethlisberger to Mr F L Glimp, 4 February 1958', Folder 12, Carton 3, FRP. The latter collaboration formed part Tavistock researchers formed part of a longer set of engagements between Ahmedabad industrialists and the Tavistock Institute. Earlier in the 1950s, the Sarabhai group had invited Tavistock researchers to provide 'socio-technical' advice concerning the introduction of automated textile loom sheds at the family-owned Jubilee and Calico Mills. Rice's solution – a reformulation of worker roles and responsibilities including the allocation of group responsibilities for individual sets of looms and the introduction of new flexibilities in task allocation (rather than rigid divisions of labour) contained many crossovers with the concept of horizontal control. For more on this engagement see A.K. Rice, *Productivity and Social Organization – The Ahmedabad Experiment: Technical Innovation, Work Organization and Management* (London: Routledge, 2007). For more on the early history of the Tavistock Institute see Eric Trist, Hugh Murray, Beulah Trist (eds.), *The Social Engagement of Social Science: A Tavistock Anthology, Volume I: The Socio-Psychological Perspective* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

[120] Kamla Chowdhry to Harry Hansen, 7 October 1964, File: Chowdhry, Dr Kamla, 1964-5, Box 2, IIMAR. For their part, Harvard faculty members also saw the T-group as 'a forceful way of relating theory to practical skills in group leadership'. Warren Hayes to K.K. Anand, 22 December 1964, File: Anand, Kewal Krishnan, 1964-1965, Box 1, IIMAR.

*Pioneers of horizontal control*

**Figure 12. Vikram Sarabhai and Kamla Chowdhry**

(Source: D. Merriam, K. Marshall, and L. Chen, (eds.), *In Service to Humanity: Kamla Chowdhry: A Loving Tribute to Her Life and Spirit* (New York: Ruder Finn, 2008)

For Vikram Sarabhai, the T-group concept pushed the limits of what was practical when it came to methods for promoting horizontal control. At first, he explained, 'the significance of the training through group living…was lost on me':

I suspect it was puzzling and frustrating to the participants that the [training] often concerned itself with feelings and group interactions in seemingly pedestrian situations rather than teach some of the new techniques of management and organization.[121]

Before long, however, Sarabhai too would come to see T-groups as an essential form of management training. When it came to the 'training of leaders who could contribute to the process of change' in 'under-developed areas', he explained, the laboratory-based training provided by the NTL, the Tavistock Institute and Rolf Lynton's Aloka experiment stood out as programmes that 'bring to bear on the problem the new insights which have come from the study of the behavioural sciences'.[122] All such programmes were 'of great significance to

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[121] Vikram Sarabhai, 'Foreword', in Lynton, *Tide of Learning,* p. ix.
[122] Ibid., p. ix.

those who are interested in the problem of change – in industry, in agriculture, in public administration, in education, in the community'.[123]

But it was not only at the IIMA that the T-group concept was taking root. In Calcutta, the IIMC was also becoming a site of T-group training. The key here, it seems, was the IIMC's connection with the MIT Sloane School of Management. Between 1964 and 1966, visitors to the IIMC included Warren Bennis, a young MIT psychologist rapidly making a name for himself as an expert T-group trainer; Douglas McGregor, the exponent of a new theory of participative industrial management encapsulated in his 1960 work, *The Human Side of Enterprise*; and Howard Baumgartel, a psychologist at the University of Kansas acquainted with 'applied group dynamics' through a stint at the NTL.[124] At the IIMC, recalled one faculty member, leaders saw 'tremendous possibilities in the T-group approach to planned organisational change'.[125] Responding to this demand, Bennis, McGregor and Baumgartel would help to turn the T-group training into a core element of the new management programmes offered by the IIMC. This included an 'Executive Development Programme on Managerial Leadership and Conflict Resolution', and a 'Leadership Lab', offered as part of the IIMCs' Advanced Management Programme. To run T-groups, the Institute would recruit social scientists from a range backgrounds, including Dharni Sinha, an anthropologist trained at the University of Lucknow and the University of Southern Illinois.[126]

As well as carrying T-groups forward within the Institute's own curriculum, the IIMC's OB specialists would develop an exportable model of T-group training geared towards organizations. Entitled 'Leadership and Organisational Development', the training course followed the NTL's own assumption that T-groups run for organizations – 'peer labs' – could be a more effective tool for organizational change than those run for diverse individuals – 'stranger labs'. From 1967 onwards, the IIMC's Behavioural Sciences Group ran peer lab training for a wide range of Indian corporations, including the State Bank of India, the Kamani Group, Tata Iron and Steel Company, the Allahabad Bank, and Larsen and Toubro. IIMC also experimented with T-group training in other areas, including union

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[123] Ibid., p. x.
[124] For a first-hand account, see 'Howard Baumgartel', KU Endacott Society Oral History Project, University of Kansas, pp. 30-34.
[125] The birth and growth of T-group training at the IIMC is described in Dharni P. Sinha, *T-Group Team Building and Organisational Development (New Delhi: Indian Society of Applied Behavioural Science, 1986)*, pp. 18-21. See also, Dharni P. Sinha, *Learning from Life* (New Delhi: Excel Books, 2007), pp. 107-116.
[126] On Sinha's journey to the IIMC see Sinha, *Learning from Life,* pp. 74-84.

representatives, student leaders, and hospital staff.[127] The range of organizations involved in IIMC T-group training was significant. In 1965, Warren Bennis and Rolf Lynton had teamed-up to host an 'inter-institutional' workshop on T-group training in the town of Dalhousie, Punjab. The workshop, proceeding 'along the general lines of the work pioneered by the National Training Laboratories', had been attended by a similarly eclectic audience, with representatives attending from the Indian Aluminium Company, the National Institute of Health Administration and Education, the Central Family Planning Institute and the State Bank of India. [128] In 1969, an American psychologist named Ross Pollock ran 'sensitivity training' courses for the Indian Institute of Public Administration.[129] As the T-group entered the Indian arena, then, its unique laboratory methods sparked the interest not just of management educators per se, but also of leaders across a wider network of institutions. By the same token, T-group trainers pushed the merits of this training beyond the limits of the corporate realm.

As the T-group paradigm took hold in India, a process of transnational exchange soon developed. American T-group specialists continued to advise Indian institutions throughout the 1960s. At the same time, however, Indians also travelled in the opposite direction. During the mid-1960s, at least 15 Indian social scientists underwent training in 'applied behavioural science' at the NTL.[130] There, Indians rubbed shoulders with the founders of the T-group movement, including Leland Bradford, Kenneth Benne and Ronald Lippitt.[131] The training provided at Bethel was practice-based, with all 'interns' gaining first-hand, intensive experience of the laboratory group method. As Dharni Sinha, put it:

Bethel was a great experience in self-discovery…The first two weeks of the lab focused intensively on the self – its awareness, understanding and exploration…It was self-disclosure at different levels of depth, and exploration by participants that sometimes appeared as interrogation with facilitators making almost no intervention, but encouraging dialogue

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[127] Sinha, *T-Group Team Building,* pp. 19-21.
[128] R.P. Lynton, 'Inter-Institutional Faculty Development Programme, Dalhousie Punjab, April 14 – May 2, 1965', Folder B.2, Box 4, DEP.
[129] At the Indian Institute of Public Administration, sensitivity training was led by an American psychologist Ross Pollock, as a Ford Foundation consultant. Pollock ran a series of conferences for Indian civil servants during which he explained how these new methods of training 'used widely in the United States' could help to develop 'skills in human relations, leadership and supervision'. See 'Conference on Sensitivity Training: Laboratory Training Techniques for Organizations', Report 018035, Catalogued Reports 17727-19980 (FA739), Box 935, FFA.
[130] Those that made the journey included K.K. Anand (IIMA), Manohar Nadkarni (SIET) and Prayag Mehta (NCERT), as well as Ishwar Dayal, Suresh Srivastava, Nitish De and Dharni Sinha (all from the IIMC). A description of this network is provided in Ibid., pp. 19-21. See also Dennyson F. Pereira, 'My Professional Journey in HRD: Some Reflections' in Rao and Khandelwal (eds.), *HRD, OD and Institution-Building,* pp. 3-8.
[131] 'Over the years', recalled Bradford', 'NTL staffers would work in helping India build institutes employing these techniques'. See Bradford, *National Training Laboratories,* p. 94.

among the interns. We all sat in a pit, a triangle in the centre of the room; everyone squatted or lay down on the floor that was littered with small cushions. The facilitators occupied the three corners, as if by design…It was an egalitarian setting, informal and open.[132]

All such training was paid for by American money, either through Ford Foundation or USAID grants. According to one Ford Foundation official in India, the NTL's 'human relations insights' represented 'one of the most exportable commodities which the United States has developed'.[133]

Returning to India, Indian social scientists not only drew on their experiences at the NTL; they also developed their own version of it. The Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Science (ISABS), established in 1971, was the creation of a group of 'social scientists drawn from sociology, psychology, anthropology, education and industrial relations', all of whom had 'gone through T-Group experience in the United States or in India'.[134] Its aims, its founding Resolution explained, included to 'share and develop professional skills' with respect to the laboratory method, 'advance conceptual knowledge' and to promote the T-group 'to as yet unserved areas of public interest'.[135] The Model', explained Dharni Sinha, 'was the NTL'.[136] ISABS would dedicate itself to the provision of training opportunities in the T-group method. Its 'internship programme', run from its small offices in the south of Delhi, trained T-group experts across fields ranging from management education, to public health, to community development.[137]

According to its exponents, the behavioural norms learnt and practised in the T-group setting would help to catalyse a new pattern of organizational leadership in India, one based not on 'leadership of authority' but on 'leadership of shared goals and norms', 'autonomy', and 'functional collectivity'.[138] Moreover, as managers came to understand the value of democratic approaches to leadership, they would, in turn, apply these same principles to the 'systems and procedures' they created within organizations. Reflecting the lessons of the T-group, it was argued, organizations would increasingly be designed to account for the 'the

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[132] Sinha, *Learning from Life,* pp. 83-4.
[133] Cited in Alden, 'Bottom-up Management', p. 301.
[134] Sinha, *T-Group Team Building,* p. 45.
[135] Ibid., p. 32.
[136] Ibid., p. 45.
[137] On the ISABS experience see Somnath Chattopadhyay, 'An Ideology-Based Institution: Some Values and Dilemmas – An ISABS Experience', in Rao and Khandelwal (eds.), *HRD, OD and Institution Building,* pp. 231-256.
[138] Nitish R. De, 'Organisational Development – An Interim Balance Sheet', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 6:22, 1971, p. 43.

autonomy needs of the subordinates', as much as the manager's own 'control needs'.[139] In this sense, the manager would not only manage in a particular way, they would also act more broadly as a 'change enzyme in an organisation system'.[140] Proponents of horizontal control argued that effective organizations required both horizontal structures and horizontal leaders. T-group trainers, while sharing in this dual idea, framed the growth of horizontal systems as a process that began, in the first instance, with the making of horizontal men. Theirs, then, was a psychologistic view of organizational change, one that framed changes to institutions (and by extension economies) as a process rooted in pre-emptive individual adjustment. There were clear resonances here with the vision of development espoused by David McClelland and his associates. While McClelland framed economic development as a process hinging on entrepreneurial 'motivation', however, for T-groupers, it was the deferential, horizontal characteristics of leaders that mattered.

For many, the T-group was a behavioural technology uniquely relevant to the Indian situation. The reason, they argued, was the 'traditional reliance on hierarchical relationships' that characterized Indian culture.[141] Both within organizations and more generally, T-groupers argued, Indians suffered from a leaning towards management systems of 'centralized authority'. Many Indian organizations represented little more than 'a descendent of the feudal system'. Indian families, meanwhile, remained 'full of sons who find it difficult or "impossible" to move their fathers'.[142] 'Laboratory training', explained Lynton, 'seems better than anything else we know for getting significantly at the dimensions of personal and organisational development in India today'.[143] In a T-Group, he argued, participants went through a staged transition in which 'traditional' conceptions of authority would be replaced by a new, 'modern' understanding of what it meant to be a leader. Initially, he explained, when realizing the unstructured nature of the group situation, participants instinctively sought out opportunities for 'submission to the control of a strong man', a process which reflected 'the tendency in developing societies to political dictatorship'. Gradually, however, as trainers encouraged 'frankness and openness' between group members, and challenges to authoritarian leadership, 'a new pattern emerged'. The 'series of stages through which managers and officers in a training group pass', Lynton argued, provided 'an example in

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[139] Nitish R. De, 'Persons to Reperson Nonperson', S.N. 245, Series: Articles/Speeches/Writings by Others, AMP, p. 6.
[140] Ibid., p. 8.
[141] Lynton, 'Laboratory Training for Organizational Development', p. 2.
[142] Ibid., p. 3
[143] Ibid., p. 8.

miniature not only of the strains of leadership in a developing society, but also of the sequence in which the strains may be overcome and a new society born'.[144] The description highlighted another important feature of the T-group enterprise: its conviction, again shared with McClelland, that urban-industrial modernization necessarily required the emergence of new personality types.

The T-group would extirpate prevailing tendencies towards hierarchy. But it would also cultivate forms of leadership necessary for industrialization in a segmented social structure like India's. As the growth of industries produced increasing opportunities for physical and social contact between caste and other social groups, the democratic leadership behaviours cultivated within T-groups would help to smooth over tensions between groups, thereby alleviating the potential for conflict during a period of rapid social change.[145] The democratic leader would, then, become a catalyst for social integration, both within corporations and within society more broadly. 'National integration' hinged on the right approach to 'business organisation'.[146] Here, the industrial organization was a synecdoche for the nation.

What is perhaps most striking about the T-group paradigm, however, is that it forwarded a vision of effective industrial leadership remarkably similar to that which contemporaries were busy espousing in other areas. In the context of India's rural 'Community Development' programme, sociologists-turned-community developers had, influenced by the same Lewinian discourses as their T-group counterparts, promoted precisely the same norms of behaviour – group-centred, consensual and 'democratic' – as the keys to effective leadership in the village. As Matthew Hull has argued, the call for this form of leadership also found footing in the context of India's urban development projects, wherein city planners and urban sociologists worked together to promote community representatives whose 'democratic leadership' would engage and foster forms of Lewinian-inspired 'democratic group life'.[147] The T-group thus formed part of a broader movement to apply distinctly American ideas about the social psychological basis of effective leadership to problems of Indian development. Rooted in Lewin's 'scientific' experiments, this movement forwarded a

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[144] R.P. Lynton, 'Developing leadership skill through sensitivity training', p. 4.
[145] Ibid., p. 3.
[146] Nitish R. De, 'Business Organisation and National Integration', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 13:42, 1961, pp. 1639-1642.
[147] Matthew S. Hull, 'Democratic Technologies of Speech: From WWII to Postcolonial Delhi', *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 20:2, 2010, pp. 257–282. See also Matthew S. Hull, 'Communities of Place, Not Kind': American Technologies of Neighbourhood in Postcolonial Delhi', *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 53:4, 2011, pp. 757-790.

decontextualized, universalist understanding of what made for effective leadership, applicable, in equal measure, to the village, the urban slum, and the corporate boardroom.

## Conclusion

To the founders of Indian management education, the success of post-colonial development hinged ultimately on the rise of 'modern management'. 'There is a totality about the process of development', Sarabhai would argue:

which involves not only advanced technology and hardware but imaginative planning of supply and consumption centres, *of social organisation and management*, to leapfrog from a state of backwardness and poverty'.[148]

Training a new generation of managers would do more than prepare individuals for prosperous careers; it would nurture a cadre of organizational leaders that would transform the fortunes of the nation as a whole. In tracing this discourse on 'management for development', this chapter has argued that for Sarabhai and others, it revolved around one particular set of ideas; namely, those concerning the concept of 'horizontal control'. Horizontal control was by no means the only way in which contemporaries understood modern management. In the eyes of many, however, it formed a key organizing principle for effective organizations. Framed as a mode of organizational functioning suited to 'democratic conditions', the concept of horizontal control would give rise to new institutions built to reify its principles. As Indian agendas merged with concepts of post-war American management science, it found its ultimate expression in the psychologistic enterprise of T-group training.

The pursuit of horizontal control formed a powerful strain of contemporary development thought. But it also sat in tension with key features of Nehruvian planning. As Sarabhai and others called for the replacement of vertical structures with new horizontalist norms, the Nehruvian state, for its part, was busy embracing an approach to industrial development that eschewed functional autonomy in favour of top-down management plans. In Nehruvian public enterprises, commercial and operational decision making would be characterized not so much by deferral and delegation, but by intense scrutiny from central management committees. Horizontalists pushed for the upheaval of 'colonial' institutions. Nehruvian planning, by contrast, would be marked by an embrace of them. Most significantly, perhaps, Nehruvian industrial planning would place great faith in the capacity of the Indian

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[148] Cited in 'Vikram Sarabhai – Some Recollections', *Nuclear India,* 10:5, 1972, p. 4. Emphasis mine.

Administrative Service – the inherited bureaucratic machinery of the British colonial state – to organize and spearhead the process of state-led industrial transformation. The call for 'management' had sought to address potential problems associated with a civil service-led industrialization drive. In public enterprises across the nation, however, managerial responsibilities would be assigned not to 'horizontal leaders', but to senior administrators drawn from the upper echelons of the IAS hierarchy.[149]

To Nehruvian planners, such measures were necessary in order to ensure industrial enterprises served the national interest. To those who advocated horizontal control, though, the refusal of officials to disavow top-down approaches was a source of deep regret. Presented with a unique opportunity to 'set the pace' for organizational change, Sarabhai would lament, successive administrations had continued to rely on outdated, restrictive, verticalist modes of operation. For Sarabhai and likeminded thinkers, the pursuit of horizontal control was thus an enterprise tinged by a keen sense of failure. As an organizing principle at institutions like the IIMA, the idea of horizontal management had also, it seemed, failed to make inroads into a political system, as well as a broader national culture, still wedded to hierarchical notions of control.[150]

If the concept of horizontal management encountered limits to its influence, however, the fate of management education itself was an altogether different story. From its humble beginnings at the IIMC and the IIMA, management education would become an engrained feature of the Indian landscape. By 1980, there were 118 recognized management education institutions in India. By the year 2000, there were 744, including six IIMs.[151] The IIMA and IIMC, for their part, would remain among the leading centres of management education in India. Today, both feature regularly among lists of the top-ranked business schools in the world.[152] Discourses on horizontal management would remain part of Indian management education as it expanded, including behavioural technologies like T-group training. At the same time, the expansion of management institutions would also coincide with a shift towards new forms of management thinking, some of which ran in direct contravention of what had gone before.

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[149] Bidyut Chakrabarty, 'Jawaharlal Nehru and administrative reconstruction in India: A mere limitation of the past or a creative initiative?', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies,* 29:1, 2006, pp. 83-99. See also Dennis C. Potter, *India's Political Administrators: from ICS to IAS* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
[150] For a sense of this frustration see Vikram Sarabhai, 'Control and Management of Public Sector Enterprises', in Sarabhai, *Management for Development,* pp. 46-87.
[151] Ishwar Dayal, 'Developing Management Education in India, *Journal of Management Research,* 2:2, 2002, p. 101.
[152] 'ISB, IIM-B, IIM-C jump in FT Global MBA ranking', *Livemint,* 28 Jan 2019.

One example of this was a turn towards new concepts of effective organizational leadership based on so-called 'Indian' cultural norms. Founded on a belief that Western management concepts had proved unsuited to India's 'hierarchical' culture, the search for an 'Indian management style' would seek to make use of 'Indian' 'concepts and processes for managerial effectiveness and quality of work-life'.[153] Here, the quest for models of management would depart from intellectual assumptions that had accompanied the enterprise of T-group training. Rejecting the use of universalist ideas concerning the social psychological basis of effective leadership, it suggested instead that there existed a distinctly Indian set of psychosocial norms and characteristics that could be used in order to achieve organizational goals.[154]

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[153] S.K. Chakraborty, *Management by Values: Towards Cultural Congruence* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. xiv. For other examples see Garg, P.K., and I.J. Parikh, *Young Managers at the Crossroads: The Trishanku Complex* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993); Anand Prakash, 'Organizational Behaviour in India: An Indigenous Perspective', in Girishwar Misra (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Psychology in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 327-343.

[154] For an analysis of these attempts to 'indigenise' management, as well as a later, post-liberalisation swing back to American models, see Srinivas, 'Mimicry and Revival', p. 52-57.

# Chapter five

## Communication and population: 'communication studies' and population control during the long 1960s

Psychologized thinking had permeated diverse spaces by the 1960s: from social tension, to rural development, to entrepreneurship, to industrial management. There was, however, at least one more theatre of development in which it would come to exert its alluring hold. That theatre was population control. Underpinned by arguments about the negative implications of a growing population for national economic development, the drive to control population growth would become an explicit goal of Indian post-colonial development planning; the subject of targeted policies and programmes to prevent unwanted births. Like other development pursuits, population control would generate demand for new forms of knowledge production and technical expertise. Here, it would once again open the door to American social science.

In India, population control has been a subject typically associated with one period: the Emergency of 1975-1977. During the Emergency, historians have shown, the government of Indira Gandhi embarked on an authoritarian approach to economic development and poverty eradication, at the centre of which sat an increasingly coercive programme of population control. At its height, the Emergency would witness government officials addressing national overpopulation through forcible sterilization campaigns targeted at society's poorest. Such practices became so prominent that in some parts of India, one scholar has shown, the period between 1975 and 1977 is referred to not as 'the Emergency', but as *nasbandi ka vakt* (the time of sterilization).[1] The conflation between population control and the Emergency has not been without reason. In recent years, however, historians have also been at pains to stress the pre-Emergency history of population control in India. Emergency period 'excesses' in this sphere, it is now clear, must be understood against the backdrop of a longer-term effort to limit population growth. Indeed, not only did population programmes predate the Emergency, so too did the deployment of coercion in the pursuit of national population goals.[2]

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[1] Emma Tarlo, 'Body and Space in a Time of Crisis: Sterilization and Resettlement during the Emergency in Delhi' in Veena Das (ed.) *Violence and Subjectivity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 242.

[2] Matthew Connelly, *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008); Connelly, 'Population Control in India: Prologue to the Emergency', *Population and Development Review*, 32:4, 2006, pp. 629-667; Rebecca Jane Williams, 'Storming the Citadels of Poverty: Family Planning under the Emergency in India, 1975–1977', The Journal of Asian Studies, 73:2, 2014, pp. 471-

Tracing a longer history of population intervention has done more than place Emergency period population control measures in wider context; it has also drawn attention to the deeply transnational facets of India's population control movement. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is now clear, controlling population growth emerged as a global project shared in by both Western and non-Western elite reformers. The population control movement in India, therefore, cannot be understood without reference to a dense international network of actors and organizations that aided and abetted Indians' own population concerns. During the post-colonial period, historians such as Matthew Connelly have explored the deep entanglements between Indian population control efforts and an American 'population establishment' comprised of government officials, private bodies, academics and activists.[3] One key focus here has been the role of American demographers, most notably those associated with the Princeton University Office for Population Research, in forging new understandings of the relationship between overpopulation and economic development. Another has been the role of American non-governmental organizations, in particular the Ford Foundation and the Population Council, in funding India's population control programmes.[4]

Drawing on these turns towards pre-Emergency and transnational histories of Indian population control, this chapter brings to the fore a new set of connections that shaped population thinking and practice in India during the long 1960s. Focusing on the field of post-war 'communication studies', the chapter explores how forms of knowledge produced by American communications experts came to exert increasing influence over the thinking of Indian population control enthusiasts. Forged at the intersection of wartime propaganda analysis, marketing research and media theory, communication studies emerged as a new interdisciplinary formation within 1950s American social science, uniting practitioners from fields such as psychology, sociology and political science. During the post-war years, protagonists within this field were engaged in the advancement of a new 'scientific'

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492; Gyan Prakash, *Emergency Chronicles: Indira Gandhi Democracy's Turning Point* (Princeton University Press, 2019), ch. 7.

[3] On the 'population establishment' see Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*, ch. 5.

[4] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception*; Kathleen D. McCarthy, 'From Government to Grassroots Reform: The Ford Foundation's Population Programs in South Asia', *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations,* 6:3, 1995, pp. 292-316; Oscar Harkavy and Krishna Roy, 'Emergence of the Indian National Family Planning Program', in Warren C. Robinson and John A. Ross (eds.), *The Global Family Planning Revolution: Three Decades of Population Policies and Programs* (Washington D.C: The World Bank, 2007), pp. 301-323; Oscar Harkavy, *Curbing Population Growth: An Insider's Perspective* (New York: Springer, 1995), ch.5; John Caldwell and Pat Caldwell, *Limiting Population Growth and the Ford Foundation Contribution* (London: Frances Pinter, 1986), chs. 3, 6 and 9.

understanding of the way in which communication processes shaped human behaviour, an understanding that centred on the dynamic, dialogic relationship between 'mass' and 'interpersonal' forms of communication.

Communication studies took shape independently of population concerns. From the late 1950s, however, influenced by growing concerns about global overpopulation, many communications scholars had begun to consider the application of communications science to population problems. Effective communication strategies, they suggested, backed by the latest forms of social scientific knowledge, could make a decisive contribution to fertility reduction programmes. Mimicking contemporary advertisers' use of communication to sell consumer products, communications scientists would advocate the use of 'scientific communication' to sell new reproductive choices instead. This communication-based approach to family planning, I argue, would come to exert a profound influence over population control efforts in India. Beginning in 1959, with the establishment of new institutions for 'family planning communications action research', Indian officials and social scientists, together with American communications experts, would explore the ways in which strategic communication techniques – centred on a combination of mass and interpersonal channels – could produce rapid changes in fertility behaviours. In due course, the idea that effective 'communication' could promote family planning would become a central feature of India's population programme. In what follows, I explore how this manifested both in ordinary programme practice and in the extraordinary setting of the 'vasectomy camp'.

Amidst escalating concerns about the economic consequences of population growth, India's family planning programme would take on an increasingly urgent tenor during the late 1960s. Here, strategies such as 'incentives' for sterilization would become a key part of efforts to control population, therein laying the foundations for the Emergency period. Targeted at poorer areas, incentive-based strategies deployed a logic that looked less like persuasion and more like direct coercion. It is the final argument of this chapter that this coercive agenda and communication science would become deeply intertwined.

## Situating population control in post-colonial India: development, demography and the 'clinic approach'

The emergence of population control as a feature of India's post-colonial development discourse was rooted in a longer history. As early as the nineteenth century, drawing on ideas set out in Thomas Malthus' famous 1978 *Essay on the Principle of Population,* British colonial administrators had explained Indian famines (and in turn justified indentured labour

migration policies) in terms of a Malthusian logic of imbalance between population and food supply.[5] It was during the inter-war decades of twentieth century, however, that the seeds of India's post-colonial overpopulation discourse would begin to be sown. During this period, historians have demonstrated, for various reasons, ideas about the need to control population growth gained new precedence in India. On the one hand, driven by concerns about rising maternal and infant mortality during the 1920s and 30s, colonial public health officials began to frame these problems increasingly as the result of overpopulation.[6] Colonial census reports of the period, meanwhile, also began to make increasing reference to a 'population problem'.[7] The interwar years also witnessed the emergence of a growing 'civil' engagement in matters relating to overpopulation and birth control, with diverse motivations. Middle-class women's reform groups, such as the All India Women's Conference, promoted birth control primarily as a means of improving maternal and infant health. Eugenicists and 'neo-Malthusian' groups, meanwhile, emphasized the need for birth control not only to avoid population growth, but also to improve the 'quality' of populations.[8]

Proponents of intervention in birth control faced opposition on several fronts. Mohandas Gandhi, India's most prominent nationalist leader, vehemently opposed contraception on the grounds that it encouraged licentious sexual conduct, rather than the discipline and control that, as he saw it, true 'self-rule' required.[9] The colonial state for its part, fearing a backlash of Indian opinion, refused to adopt official policies regarding population control. For this reason, the principal focus of late colonial population control advocates was the promotion of clinical birth control facilities.[10]

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[5] S. Ambirajan, *Classical Political Economy and British Policy in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), chs. 2 and 3; Mohan Rao, *From Population Control to Reproductive Health: Malthusian Arithmetic* (New Delhi: Sage, 2004), chs. 1 and 2.

[6] Rahul Nair, 'The Construction of a 'Population Problem' in Colonial India 1919–1947', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 39:2, pp. 227-247.

[7] David Arnold, 'Official Attitudes to Population, Birth Control and Reproductive Health in India, 1921–1946', in Sarah Hodges (ed.) *Reproductive Health in India: History, Politics, Controversies* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2006), pp. 22-50.

[8] For studies that trace this growing civil participation in birth control, as well as the many differences between different activist groups, see Sarah Hodges, *Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce: Birth Control in South India, 1920–1940* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008); Sanjam Ahluwalia, *Reproductive Restraints: Birth Control in India*, 1877–1947 (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Rao, *From Population Control to Reproductive Rights,* ch. 1. For a fascinating study of the way in which interwar concerns about population control often displayed less concern with biopolitical questions, such as reducing individual fertility, and more with geopolitical questions such as distribution, food production and land see Alison Bashford, *Global Population: History, Geopolitics and Life on Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

[9] On Gandhi and birth control see Anna Aryee, 'Gandhi and Mrs Sanger Debate Birth Control: Comment', in Hodges, *Reproductive Health in India*, pp. 227-234.

[10] Hodges, *Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce,* ch. 1, Ahluwalia, *Reproductive Restraints*, ch. 4.

During the 1940s, a series of developments would lead to increasing concern about overpopulation among India's nationalist leadership. The first was the emergence of new arguments concerning the relationship between population and economic development. Departing from prevailing economic ideas about the role of colonial exploitation in India's impoverishment, economists Gyan Chand and Radhakamal Mukherjee contested that it was gaps between 'production' and 'demand' (population) that posed the foremost threat to an economically viable independent nation.[11] The 1944 Bengal Famine Inquiry Commission provided another important turning point. Established to examine the causes of the preceding year's famine, the Commission's findings would stress population increase, alongside natural causes, as a possible factor in the crisis.[12] In 1946, a Health Survey and Development Committee, chaired by the civil servant Joseph W. Bhore, called for a new national programme of population control citing the damaging effects of population growth on key areas of public health like child and maternal mortality.[13]

Meanwhile, in the United States, demographers associated with the Princeton Office for Population Research were themselves beginning to pose new arguments about the role of overpopulation as an impediment to economic development through a reformulation of 'classical' theories of demographic transition. According to 'classical' theory, the prevailing birth rate of a society reflected its broader state of 'modernization', with decreases in fertility only taking place once broader processes of urban-industrial development (together with attendant social and cultural change) had occurred. Population, in other words, represented a dependent variable.[14] By 1945, Princeton demographers Frank Notestein and Kingsley Davis had begun to challenge this classic formulation. High fertility, they argued, was not just a symptom of underdevelopment, it could also serve as an impediment to modernization by subsuming gains in productivity, thereby preventing industrialization from getting off the ground. This re-reading, Simon Szreter has argued, was one tied deeply to Cold War geopolitics. Forged in the shadow of China's 1949 communist turn, the inversion of classic demographic transition theory spoke of the Princeton demographers' deep concerns about the potential of overpopulation to breed economic and political instability (and by extension

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[11] Sarah Hodges, 'Governmentality, Population and Reproductive Family in Modern India', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 39:11, 2004, p. 1160.

[12] Ibid., p. 1160.

[13] For the links between the Bhore Committee findings and broader late colonial discourses on overpopulation see Nair, 'The Construction of a 'Population Problem' in Colonial India', p. 240.

[14] For an example of this classical formulation see Warren S. Thompson, 'Population' *American Journal of Sociology*, 34:6, pp. 959- 75.

communism) in underdeveloped nations. In response, Notestein and Davis turned population into an independent variable, control of which could help to remove instability and improve development's chances of success.[15] Here, Notestein and Davis also introduced a particular form of modernization thinking, one that focused not on the sources of modernization *per se* rather on the impediments to it.[16]

With these new developments, India's nationalist leaders soon also began to stress the importance of population matters, notwithstanding Gandhi's own reticence. Already in 1940, a subcommittee on population established by the Indian National Congress's National Planning Committee (NPC), chaired by the economist Radhakamal Mukherjee, had remarked on the need for future economic development programmes to be accompanied by efforts to limit 'excessive population pressure'.[17] A decade later, in 1951, a new subcommittee on population (now under the auspices of the Planning Commission) provided further endorsement of the need for national measures to address overpopulation.[18]

On 7 December 1952, the Government of India formally announced its adoption of the world's first official policy of population control. Embracing the assumptions of revised theories of demographic transition, the policy, set out within the government's First Five Year Plan, explained that:

The recent increase in the population of India and the pressure exercised on the limited resources of the country have brought to the forefront the urgency of the problem of family planning and population control… While a lowering of the birth rate may occur as a result of improvements in the standards of living, such improvements are not likely to materialise if there is a concurrent increase of population. It is, therefore, apparent that population control can be achieved only by the reduction of the birth-rate to the extent necessary to stabilize the population at a level consistent with the requirements of national economy.[19]

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[15] On this inversion of demographic transition theory see Simon Szreter, 'The Idea of Demographic Transition and the Study of Fertility Change: A Critical Intellectual History', *Population and Development Review*, 19:4, 1993, pp. 659–701; Susan Greenhalgh, 'The Social Construction of Population Science: An Intellectual, Institutional, and Political History of Twentieth-Century Demography', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38:1, 1996, pp. 26-66; Dennis Hodgson, 'Demography as Social Science and Policy Science', *Population and Development Review,* 9:1, 1983, pp. 1–34; Frank Furedi, *Population and Development: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997). Advocates of this revised demographic transition theory had a keen interest in the Indian case. In his influential 1951 work, *The Population of India and Pakistan,* for instance, Kingsley Davis set out the case for overpopulation as a potential barrier to Indian economic development. Kingsley Davis, *The Population of India and Pakistan* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1951).
[16] This revised demographic transition theory, Michelle Murphy has argued, formed part of a broader reframing of population as an entity to be governed and controlled 'for the sake of the macrological figure of "economy"'. See Michelle Murphy, *The Economizization of Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), p. 6.
[17] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception,* pp. 141-2.
[18] Ibid., pp. 145-6.
[19] *The First Five Year Plan* (New Delhi: Planning Commission, 1952), p. 522.

The 'main appeal' of population control, however, according to the Plan, was to be found in its implications for 'the health and welfare of the family'; in securing 'health for the mother and better care and upbringing of children'.[20] For this reason, the Plan assigned control over the family planning programme to the Ministry of Health.

In adopting population limitation as a goal of state policy, India took a step beyond what most other governments were willing to countenance. In communist China, for example, a nation with similar levels of population growth, arguments about the negative impacts of overpopulation, though mooted by many policymakers (including Mao himself), would find no such articulation in state-backed programmes of population control during the 1950s. Indeed, restrictions on sterilization and abortion were lifted. Instead, China's political leadership would seek to tackle the country's population problems through a comprehensive agenda of development – 'a great leap forward' – that would establish the economic and social conditions for low fertility. The cornerstone of this agenda, a programme of forced agricultural collectivization and small industry development, would ultimately lead to famines resulting in the death of approximately twenty million people.[21]

In adopting the world's first official programme of population control, however, Indian planners nevertheless proceeded cautiously. Constrained in part by Jawaharlal Nehru's belief that rural and industrial progress should occupy the principal focus of development planning, the initial budget assigned to the family planning programme was only 6.5 million rupees, a fraction of the First Five Year Plan's overall outlay.[22] At the same time, the programme also faced considerable pushback from Gandhians concerned about the use of contraception to deliver reductions in the birth rate. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, India's first Minister for Health, was one such sceptic. A committed disciple of Gandhi, Kaur believed that the most effective way to address population growth was through improvements in education and the promotion of living standards. At the Ministry, Kaur would wage 'rearguard action' intended to steer the

[20] Ibid., p. 522.

[21] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception,* pp. 179-180. For an overview of the causes and consequences of the Chinese famine see Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *Hunger and Public Action* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 210-215. China, of course, would later dramatically revise this approach by adopting a mandatory one-child policy. For an account of this shift, as well as a detailed analysis of the implementation and effects of the one-child policy, see Thomas Scharping, *Birth Control in China, 1949-2000: Population Policy and Demographic Development* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[22] Nehru, for instance, professed optimism that increased food production would keep pace with population growth and that improvements in the standard of living would help to reduce the rate of population increase. For examples of this view see Nehru to Chief Ministers, May 28, 1959, in G. Parthasarathi (ed.) *Jawaharlal Nehru Letters to Chief Ministers 1947–1964*, vol. 5 (London: Oxford University Press, 1989), 250–257; see also Jawaharlal Nehru, 'Foreword', in S. Chandrasekhar, *Population and Planned Parenthood in India* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1961).

family planning programme away from contraceptives and towards the promotion of the so-called 'rhythm method'.[23] For these reasons, the scope of the programme remained limited during the early 1950s. Working in close collaboration with the Family Planning Association of India, a voluntary association founded in 1949, the Ministry of Health focused most of the population efforts on strengthening the existing network of clinical birth control facilities.[24] By the end of the First Plan period, Ministry funds had helped to set up 147 clinics across India, the majority of them located in urban areas.[25]

With the adoption of its Second Five Year Plan, in 1956, the Government of India took steps to raise the profile of the family planning programme. Outlining a fivefold increase in funding for population control, the Second Plan also introduced a series of changes to programme administration. Though remaining formally under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, oversight of the family planning programme now passed to a Central Family Planning Board comprised of representatives from various government departments (by 1959, State Family-Planning Committees had also been established in all Indian states).[26] Day-to-day management of the family planning programme, meanwhile, passed to a new permanent Director of Family Planning in the form of Lieutenant Colonel B. L. Raina, a former Indian army medical officer with a longstanding interest in birth control.[27] The Plan introduced additional changes. At the Indian Council of Medical Research, the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in Calcutta and the Central Drugs Research Institute in Lucknow, the Ministry now began to sponsor programmes of contraceptive research for the first time. In Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Trivandrum, meanwhile, new demographic research centres were also established.[28]

Such changes reflected the increasing concern about the consequences of population growth for economic development. 'The conclusion is inescapable', the Second Plan explained:

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[23] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception,* p. 146.

[24] K. Srinivasan, *Regulating Reproduction in India's Population: Efforts, Results and Recommendations* (New Delhi: Sage, 1995), pp. 30-32; Dhanvanthi Rama Rau, *An Inheritance: The Memoirs of Dhanvanthi Rama Rau* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), pp. 265-267.

[25] Ibid., p. 31. For the urban-rural breakdown see G.R. Madan, *Indian Social Problems (Vol. 1): Social Disorganization and Reconstruction* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 2009), p. 295.

[26] Rao, *From Population Control to Reproductive Health,* p. 29.

[27] During the 1930s, Raina had helped to establish a maternal health and family planning centre, the 'Help Our Mothers Society' (Matra Sewa Sang), in the city of Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh. Margaret Sanger, the prominent American birth control advocate, was a member of the centre's board. Harkavy and Roy, 'Emergence of the Indian National Family Planning Program', p. 307.

[28] Srinivasan, *Regulating Reproduction*, pp. 32.

…that an effective curb on population growth is an important condition for rapid improvements in incomes and in levels of living. This is particularly so, if one bears in mind that the effects of improvements in public health and in the control of diseases and epidemics is to bring about an almost immediate increase in survival rates...population pressure is likely to become more acute in the coming years. This highlights the need for a large and active programme aimed at restraining population growth, even as it reinforces the case for a massive developmental effort.[29]

Nevertheless, despite these changes, the basic operational strategy of the family planning programme remained much the same as during the early First Plan period. Though embracing certain new elements, such as greater efforts to distribute contraceptives through health outlets, training in family planning methods for doctors and nurses, and limited sterilization programmes in some areas, the overarching focus of India's family planning programme continued to be the expansion of clinical birth control facilities.[30] As several commentators have noted, this clinic-based approach to family planning reflected more than just the legacy of earlier birth control efforts, it also reflected certain prevailing ideas about the nature of popular demand for family planning; namely, an assumption that there existed already considerable 'unmet demand' for family planning.[31] Such ideas had received support from the new demographic transition theories of Notestein and Davis, who, in challenging the 'classical' notion that fertility reduction followed large-scale economic and social change, implied that a desire to lower fertility might already exist within underdeveloped societies. Notestein and Davis had thus framed population control as, fundamentally, a problem of contraceptive provision. Following a similar logic, India's early family planning programme would embrace the idea that, provided with the opportunity, many would naturally avail of the contraceptive services provided by new birth control facilities.[32]

### 'Communication studies', media theory, and 'family planning communication'

As India's population programme took shape during the 1950s, the same period witnessed the birth of a new, at first sight unrelated, field of social scientific enquiry in the United States. Pioneered by interdisciplinary research institutions such as the Columbia University Bureau of Applied Social Research (BASR), the Stanford University Institute for Communications Research and the University of Chicago National Opinion Research Centre, 'communications studies' was a field born directly out of the mobilization of American social scientists during the Second World War. Fusing wartime propaganda studies with insights from public opinion

[29] *The Second Five Year Plan,* (New Delhi: Planning Commission, 1956), p. 7.
[30] Ibid., pp. 31-32.
[31] Rao, *From Population Control to Reproductive Health,* p. 26. See also Ibid., p. 30.
[32] Ibid.*,* p. 30.

polling and commercial marketing research, the new post-war field of communication studies turned the question of 'how communication processes worked' into the central object of its enquiry. Forged against the backdrop of new forms of mass mediation within mid-twentieth century American society, the growth of communication studies reflected the desire of post-war American elites to turn these media from a potential threat into a knowable (and usable) set of tools.[33]

During the 1950s, American communication scientists – an eclectic body of experts comprising psychologists, sociologists and political scientists – were engaged in the promulgation of a new 'scientific' understanding of the communication process, at the centre of which sat the unifying theory of 'limited effects'. Disregarding popular concerns about the all-powerful nature of mass communication, the theory of 'limited effects' argued that the direct, transformative impact of mass media on popular opinion was neither straightforward nor necessarily significant. Rather, the effects of mass media hinged on a more complex, dialogic interaction *between* 'mass' forms of communication, on the one hand, and the social psychological dynamics of communication in the 'interpersonal' domain.[34]

Two theories formed the central pivot around which this 'weak' conceptualization of media influence revolved. The first was the theory of 'two-step flow'. Coined by the Columbia University sociologist and radio researcher Paul F. Lazarsfeld, the two-step flow had its origins in a study of the 1940 US presidential election, published under the title *The People's Choice*: *How a Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign.*[35] Co-authored by Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, two colleagues at the Columbia BASR, *The People's Choice* argued that, during the election campaign, the majority of people had received party

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[33] For histories of the formation of communication studies as told by pioneers of the field see Everett M. Rogers, *A History of Communication Study: A Biographical Approach* (New York: The Free Press, 1994); Steven H. Chaffee and Everett M. Rogers (eds.) *The Beginnings of Communication Study in America: A Personal Memoir – by Wilbur Schramm* (London: Sage, 1997); Everette E. Davis, Ellen Ann Wartella, *American Communication Research: The Remembered History* (New York: Routledge, 1996). For revisionist accounts see Timothy Richard Glander, *Origins of Mass Communications Research During the American Cold War: Educational Effects and Contemporary Implications* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000); David W. Park and Jefferson Pooley (eds.), *The History of Media and Communications Research: Contested Memories* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); Hanno Hardt, *Critical Communication Studies: Essays on Communication, History and Theory in America* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[34] For contemporary overviews of the centrality of this 'limited effects' thesis within early communications research see Joseph T. Klapper, 'What We Know About the Effects of Mass Communication: The Brink of Hope', *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 21:4, 1957, pp. 453-474; Eliot Friedson, 'Communications Research and the Concept of the Mass' *American Sociological Review*, 18:1, 1953, pp. 313-317.

[35] Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice: How a Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948). For a recent study of Lazarsfeld's contribution to communications research and sociology more broadly see Hynek Jeřábek, *Paul Lazarsfeld and the Origins of Communications Research* (London: Routledge, 2017).

political messages not directly as such, but via a stepped process in which local 'opinion leaders' received, interpreted and passed-on information to others.[36] Opinion leaders tended to be those more interested in the subject matter (in this case politics) and more exposed to external forms of media. Widely distributed throughout society, they played a vital role in transmitting mass messages via informal, word-of-mouth interactions within their local settings. It was the influence of these opinion leaders, Lazarsfeld argued, more than the mass media itself, that had been the most significant factor in influencing voter decision making.[37]

According to Lazarsfeld and his colleagues, this 'two-step flow' was not merely a consequence of the limited reach of the media. Rather, it reflected a more fundamental truth about the way in which the communication process worked. The intermediary role of opinion leaders observed during the voting study highlighted that people responded to media not as 'disconnected individuals', but through the lens of the interpersonal and group influences that suffused their daily lives.[38] 'Personal influence', Lazarsfeld argued, was a key factor in shaping the way in which individuals reacted to external ideas, even in cases where exposure to the media was widespread.[39] Here, Lazarsfeld tied the two-step flow to a broader sociological argument. The discovery of interpersonal influence in the communication process, he suggested, provided ample proof that the technological advances of modernity, including the growth of mass forms of communication, had *not* turned societies into a mass of independent isolates. Rather, it pointed to a social fabric in which patterns of interconnectedness, including the bonds of the 'primary group', remained firmly intact.[40]

The two-step flow theory did not disregard the role of the mass media. Mass forms of communication, Lazarsfeldians argued, with their capacity to 'daily address tremendous cross-sections of the population with a single voice', played a key role in the dissemination of ideas and information within a society.[41] At the same time, however, Lazarfeldian media theory placed the influence of the mass media within a broader communication continuum, one in which messages broadcast via mass media intersected with a dense 'nexus of mediating factors and influences'.[42] Effective mass communication, it followed, hinged on

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[36] Ibid., p. 151.
[37] Ibid., pp. 135-152.
[38] Elihu Katz, 'The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-to-Date Report on an Hypothesis', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 21, 1957, p. 61.
[39] Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communications* (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955), pp. 15-42.
[40] See for example Lazarsfeld, Berelson, Gaudet, *The People's Choice,* pp. 137-145.
[41] Klapper, 'What We Know About the Effects of Mass Communication', p. 471.
[42] Ibid., p. 457.

the ability of communicators to understand and account for these mediating influences. It required, according to one theorist, a 'phenomenistic' approach.[43]

A second key theory within post-war communication studies was that concerning the 'diffusion of innovations'. Emerging from the field of US rural sociology, this theory traced its origins to a study of technology adoption conducted at Iowa State University during the 1940s. There, two sociologists, Bruce Ryan and Neal C. Gross, had examined the adoption patterns of Iowa farmers in relation to a new strain of hybrid seed corn made available in 1928. Sensing that sociological, rather than just economic, factors played a role in the farmers' adoption decisions, Ryan and Gross had interviewed members of two sample communities to discern what factors had affected their decision to either use or reject the new seed. The results, they argued, pointed to significant patterns in the way in which the seed corn had been adopted. [44]

The first pattern concerned the rate of adoption. According to Ryan and Gross, this rate ran in the form of an 's-shape' curve over time, from an initial period of low take-up, through a later period of accelerated adoption, and ultimately to a plateau as the number of farmers left to adopt became smaller. The second significant finding concerned the role of different forms of information during the diffusion process. During the early stages of adoption, Neal and Gross argued, formal sources of information had played a crucial role in creating awareness of the new seeds among farmers. When it came to actual adoption decisions, however, most farmers had depended not so much on these outside sources than on the informal, word-of mouth accounts of friends, neighbours and peers. While some early adopters had not necessarily awaited these forms of reassurance, Ryan and Gross argued, for many the crux of the adoption process had been a process of 'informal' information-exchange in which farmers shared their own personal experiences regarding the new seed.[45]

The Iowa seed corn study would give rise to 'diffusion studies' as a new research specialism within rural sociology. In the hands of one sociologist, however, another Iowa researcher named Everett Rogers, the concept of diffusion would be taken to new heights. Reviewing the results of the many diffusion studies conducted by the mid-1950s, Rogers argued that they pointed to a set of common patterns that underpinned the diffusion of *all* innovations.

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[43] Ibid., p. 456.
[44] Bruce Ryan and Neal C. Gross, 'The Diffusion of Hybrid Seed Corn in Two Iowa Communities', *Rural Sociology*, 8:4, 1943, pp. 15–24.
[45] Ibid., p. 19.

The 's-shaped' adoption curve, the 'cosmopolite' characteristics of 'early adopters', and the role of informal exchanges in the later stages of the adoption process – all were features of a more pervasive model of innovation diffusion that formed 'a kind of universal micro-process of social change'.[46]

Much like Lazarsfeld's two-step flow model, Rogers' universalist understanding of diffusion stressed the dual role of mass and interpersonal communication dynamics in the way in which new ideas were received and acted upon. According to Rogers, individual adoption comprised five key stages: 'knowledge', 'persuasion', 'decision', 'implementation' and 'confirmation'. At the knowledge stage, 'impersonal' information sources, including information gleaned via the mass media, played an important role. At later stages, however, the individual sought:

…information in order to reduce uncertainty about an innovation's expected consequences. Here an individual wants to know the innovation's advantages and disadvantages in his or her own situation. Interpersonal networks with near-peers are particularly able to carry such evaluative information about an innovation. Such subjective evaluations of a new idea are especially likely to influence an individual at the decision stage, and perhaps at the confirmation stage.[47]

In the process of diffusion, then, the decision to accept innovations invariably required active validation from 'localite' sources 'homophilious' to the individual.

Together, the theories of 'two-step flow' and the 'diffusion of innovations' provided the core canon of post-war communication studies.[48] By stressing the ways in which the dissemination of new ideas and practices worked through interpersonal, as well as mass, forms of communication, both theories offered an understanding of the communication process that departed from 'direct' theories of media influence – what Lazarsfeld referred to as the 'hypodermic needle' theory of media effects.[49] In turn, both theories forwarded a particular set of claims about the way in which 'communication' *could* be used to bring about social

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[46] Everett M. Rogers, 'A Prospective and Retrospective Look at the Diffusion Model', *Journal of Health Communication,* 9:1, 2010, p. 16.

[47] Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: The Free Press, 1962)*,* p. 21

[48] For a study of the role of two-step flow theory on communication studies, see Jefferson Pooley, 'Fifteen Pages that Shook the Field: *Personal Influence,* Edward Shils and the Remembered History of Mass Communication Research', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* 608, 2006, pp. 130-156.

[49] Bernard Berelson, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, and William N. McPhee, *Voting: A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), p. 233. For the argument that Lazarsfeld and his colleagues deliberately simplified earlier communication theories as a legitimating strategy for their own enterprise see Deborah Lubken, 'Remembering the Straw Man: The Travels and Adventures of Hypodermic', in Park and Pooley, *The History of Media and Communications Research,* pp. 19-42.

change, one in which the manipulation of the interpersonal took centre-stage. Virtually all of the research on which these ideas were based had taken place in an American context. To communications theorists, however, emerging theories of communication had universal resonance: they could be applied everywhere.

In post-war America, the concepts forwarded by communications theorists found application in a number of different sites, from market research to Cold War psychological warfare.[50] Initially, though, population control was not one of them.[51] During the course of the 1950s, new intellectual and institutional alignments within American society would begin to change this. Building upon decades of prior American involvement in debates on population control – from the work of the Princeton demographers to the interwar campaigning of the nurse, educator and birth control activist Margaret Sanger – the 1950s would witness the rise of new levels of concern with the problem of global overpopulation among American elites, perpetuated, in many cases, by a tendency to view population questions through a Cold War lens. Aided by the work of Notestein and Davis, this Cold War perspective held that population growth, by inhibiting the development of already 'underdeveloped' regions of the world, posed not just a humanitarian problem, but an existential threat to the stability and security of the prevailing world order. This rising catastrophic consciousness would find expression in new institutional formations like the Population Council, a New York-based non-profit organization established in 1952, dedicated to the promotion of research on population control. Funded by Rockefeller and Ford Foundation dollars, the Council sat at the heart of a growing network of American academics, donors, foundation officials and activists – what Matthew Connelly has called a 'population establishment' – dedicated to the task of arresting global population growth.[52]

As the profile of global population problems rose within American intellectual circles, communications scientists soon began to tether themselves to this movement. A number of key figures led the way, one of whom was Donald J. Bogue. Bogue, a classical demographer

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[50] On Lazarsfeld's pre-and post-war connections with market research see Chaffee and Rogers (eds.), *The Beginnings of Communication Study in America*, pp. 43-63. On applications of communications theory within psychological warfare see Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy*: *Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001); Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion*: *Communication Research and Psychological Warfare, 1945-1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).
[51] The post-war years had witnessed attempts to apply emerging communications insights to the promotion of health-related behaviours, thereby leading to the formation of 'health communication' as a new field of study. The significance of birth control to the health communication agenda was, however, limited, however, as the latter's international scope. Manon Parry, *Broadcasting Birth Control: Mass Media and Family Planning* (London; Rutgers University Press, 2013), p. 4.
[52] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception,* p. 170.

by training, had taken up a position in sociology at the University of Chicago in 1954, thereby becoming affiliated with the National Opinion Research Centre, an emerging hub of communication studies under the leadership of Harold Laswell.[53] Influenced by the Centre's work, by the late 1950s Bogue would begin to advocate the application of strategic communications techniques to the family planning movement. Visiting several countries (including India) during this time, he argued that decisions to limit fertility required the existence of a number of preconditions, among which included 'awareness of the possibility of family planning and its benefits', 'knowledge of how to prevent conception', 'public discussion', legitimation, and 'interpersonal support'.[54] Each of these conditions could be brought about by improved strategies for the communication and dissemination of family planning ideas. As such, he argued, effective population control called for 'ambitious' programmes of 'family planning communication' employing 'the best principles and most effective techniques for stimulating attitude change'.[55]

Bogue was not alone. By the late 1950s, a broader coterie of American communications scholars had begun to reorient their expertise away from domestic concerns and towards the problem of global population growth.[56] Samuel Stouffer, a Harvard University sociologist and lead author of *The American Soldier,* a renowned study of attitude formation in the military, was another who made this move.[57] In 1959, Stouffer received funding from the Population Council for a new social science research project on family planning. Together

[53] For an introduction to Laswell's influence on early communications research see Chaffee and Rogers (eds.), *The Beginnings of Communication Study in America,* pp. 21-42.

[54] Donald J. Bogue, 'The Demographic Breakthrough: From Projection to Control', *Population Index*, 30:4, 1964, pp. 449-454. See also Donald J. Bogue, *Family Planning and Population Programs*: *Proceedings of the International Conference on Family Planning Programs, Geneva, August 1965* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 721-736.

[55] Donald J. Bogue, 'Some Tentative Recommendations for a "Sociologically Correct" Family Planning Communication and Motivation Program in India', in Clyde V. Kiser (ed.), *Research in Family Planning* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 504.

[56] While some turned to family planning specifically, others made the case for communication as a panacea for development more broadly large. In 1964, Wilbur Schramm, another leading communications theorist and founder of the Stanford Institute for Communications Research, published *Mass Media and National Development.* Within it, he explained the vital role that mass communication could play not just in creating demand for family planning, but in cultivating the social transformations necessary for development. National development, he argued, required 'new customs and practices' – in particular the rise of 'productivity' – behind which lay 'substantial changes in attitudes, beliefs, skills and social norms'. Here, Schramm explained, forms of mass media could act as 'agents of social change'. Mass communication could make impoverished populations aware of the deficiencies in their standard of living and of the opportunities for a better life. It could also focus minds on the needs and possibilities for change, inform them of the means and methods through which change could be brought about, and raise aspirations. Wilbur Schramm, *Mass Media and National Development: The Role of Information in Developing Countries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 114-115.

[57] For a recent intellectual biography of Stouffer see Joseph W. Ryan, *Samuel Stouffer and the GI Survey: Sociologists and Soldiers during the Second World War* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013).

with the BASR sociologist, J. Mayone Stycos, Stouffer examined how an understanding of different 'channels of communication' could assist a Family Planning Association of Puerto Rico campaign to promote new contraceptive methods.[58] The population movement would land another leading communications theorist in the form of Bernard Berelson, a colleague of Paul Lazarsfeld and co-author of *The People's Choice*. In 1961, Berelson would be appointed director of a new family planning communications research programme at the Population Council, soon penning a number of papers on the implications of communications research for global fertility reduction efforts.[59] In doing so, Berelson was laying the foundations for a deep and lasting involvement in population issues, culminating in his eventual appointment as President of the Population Council in 1968.

Significantly, what Bogue, Berelson and others were doing here went beyond just the application of communications knowledge to a novel area. By claiming family planning to be a norm producible through 'communication', they were also engaged in a conceptual reframing of reproduction itself. In this formulation, decisions to limit fertility were being presented as a behavioural choice, one which – much like the decision to vote or purchase a consumer product – could be influenced by communication strategies targeted at audiences. Fertility, then, was something open to manipulation by short-term variables, such as the dissemination of family planning ideas and information. Here, communications scientists, together with other sociologically-inclined demographers, diverged significantly from classical demographic theories about the deterministic role of long-term variables, such as urban-industrial modernization, in shaping fertility norms within a society.[60] At the same time, their behaviourist understanding of reproductive decision making also departed from

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[58] Stouffer would pass away in 1960. The Puerto Rico would therefore be published by his colleagues J.F. Kantner and J. Mayone Stycos as 'A non-clinical approach to contraception', in Clyde V. Kiser, (ed.) *Research in Family Planning*, pp. 573-590. See also 'Puerto Rico: The Emko Program', *Studies in Family Planning*, 1:1, 1963, pp. 7-9. For an example of Stycos' earlier work on communication, conducted firmly in the Lazarsfeldian mode, see J. Mayone Stycos, 'Patterns of Communication in a Rural Greek Village', *Public Opinion Quarterly,* 16:1, 1952, pp. 59-70.

[59] Bernard Berelson, 'Communication, Communication Research and Family Planning', Working Paper, Folder 2292, Box 248, Accession 2, Records of the Population Council (hereafter RPC), Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York. See also Bernard Berelson, 'On Family Planning Communication', *Demography,* 1:1, 1964, pp. 94-105.

[60] One such sociologically-inclined demographer was Ronald Freeman, a prominent demographer and founder of the University of Michigan Population Studies Center. See Ronald Freedman, 'The Transition from High to Low Fertility: Challenge to Demographers', *Population Index*, 31:4, 1965, pp. 417-430; Bernard Berelson and Ronald Freedman, 'A Study in Fertility Control', *Scientific American,* 210:5, 1964, pp. 19-37. For the longer-term impact of these arguments on demographic science see Greenhalgh, 'The Social Construction of Population Science', pp. 42-45.

the idea – implied by Notestein and Davis' revised transition theory – that the conditions for low fertility already existed, merely awaiting increases of contraceptive supply.

Like others before them, communication scientists would soon find that it was India that presented the best opportunities for turning psychologistic theory into development praxis. Indeed, during the 1960s, the idea that the key to population control lay in effective communication would move to the very centre of India's population control efforts. This deepening entanglement between communications research and Indian population control had its origins in the establishment, in 1959, of new government centres for 'family planning communications action research'.

### 'Family planning communications action research' and the 'Gandhigram Experiment'

It was against the backdrop of increasing scepticism towards the prevailing 'clinic' approach that the enterprise of 'family planning communications action research' took shape. By the late 1950s, this scepticism derived from numerous sources, one of which was the increasing sense of urgency attached to population control. In 1958, two more Princeton Office of Population Research academics, Ansley J. Coale and Edgar M. Hoover, published *Population Growth and Economic Development in Low-Income Countries: A Case Study of India's Prospects.*[61] Funded by the World Bank, the study used India, increasingly seen by American observers as the key crucible for global population control efforts, as a case study for the argument that population growth posed an obstacle to economic development. Coale and Hoover projected the impact of different population growth scenarios on economic indicators. The results provided evidence that reductions in fertility would lead to a greater proportion of national income being made available for investment in growth, with positive impacts for both per capita income and overall output. High population growth, on the other hand, by diverting incomes away from savings, would reduce the amount of capital available for investment, with negative consequences for incomes and output.[62] With the help of the Population Council, Coale and Hoover's analysis quickly secured a wide readership among Indian policymakers; its projections soon appearing in several government reports. According

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[61] Ansley J. Coale and Edgar M. Hoover, *Population Growth and Economic Development in Low-Income Countries: A Case Study of India's Prospects* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1958).
[62] Ibid., p. 335.

to one account, India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru was among those who began to cite the study as evidence of the pressing economic need for population control.[63]

As arguments about the economic dividends of population control gained influence, concerns about the capacity of the 'clinic approach' to address national population problems became more widespread. In most cases, contemporaries now asserted, the opening of a new family planning clinic meant little more than the appointment of one additional worker at an already overburdened primary health centre. Responsible for a population of approximately sixty-five thousand, by 1959, most of these 'clinics' were supplying an average of just eighteen condoms a day. Low levels of attendance at birth control facilities, meanwhile, raised deeper questions concerning the merits of a 'passive' clinic approach.[64]

It was in this context that B.L. Raina, Director of India's family planning programme would take steps to establish family planning communications research. In May 1959, Douglas Ensminger, the sociologist turned Ford Foundation representative in India, had written to Raina proposing a new strand of 'Ford Foundation assistance for strengthening the communication aspects of the Family Planning Program'. Suggesting a 'five year Family Planning Action-Research-Training Program in Communication', Ensminger recommended that the overarching aim of this programme would be:

> …scientifically to determine the role of all available methods of communicating information about family planning, for attracting interest, for gaining acceptances and for motivating continuous use of family planning practices.[65]

There were a number of ways, Ensminger explained, in which Ford might be able to assist this endeavour. In addition to funds, the Foundation could provide expert consultation to the Ministry, organize visiting fellowships abroad, and help to develop a central Family Planning Communication Research Committee.[66] In July, Raina informed Ensminger of the Ministry of Health's acceptance of the proposal. Articulating the desire of Indian population officials for 'a strong national educational programme to further the idea of family planning', Raina explained how the proposed 'action research effort' would provide 'a firm foundation for this

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[63] For more on the 'major influence' of the Coale and Hoover study on Indian policymakers see Connelly, 'Population Control in India: Prologue to the Emergency', p. 638; Rebecca Jane Williams, 'Storming the Citadels of Poverty', pp. 480-482.
[64] Connelly, *Fatal Misconception,* p. 184.
[65] Douglas Ensminger to B.L. Raina, 25 May 1959, Grant Files, Reel No. 3352, PA 59-482, Ford Foundation Archives (hereafter FFA), Rockefeller Archive Center, Tarrytown, New York.
[66] Ibid.

educational effort…testing, systematically, the most effective methods to communicate this message to people'.[67]

By late 1959, a grant of $330,000 for Family Planning Communications Action Research (FPCAR) had been agreed between Ford and the Ministry, soon followed by a second endowment of $603,000.[68] Coordinated by a central FPCAR Committee, comprising figures such as D. P. Karmarkar, the new Minister for Health. S. N. Ranade, the Principal of the Delhi School of Social Work, and P.C. Mahalanobis, the esteemed Statistical Adviser to the Planning Commission, FPCAR would proceed via the creation of a network of six new family planning communications research centres throughout the country.[69] Established between 1959 and 1963, the six centres were as follows: The Central Health Education Bureau, New Delhi (later transferred to the Central Family Planning Institute); the Demographic Training and Research Centre, Bombay; The Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta; The Department of Statistics, University of Kerala; The Planning Research and Action Institute, Lucknow; and The Institute of Rural Health, Gandhigram.[70]

The Ford Foundation assigned a number of American consultants to support the budding FPCAR programme. Herbert Lionberger, a rural sociologist grounded in the diffusion tradition, was one. Already in India as a consultant on Community Development at the time of Ford's FPCAR grant, Lionberger was quickly assigned to produce a report containing 'Observations Concerning the Nature and Scope of Action-Research in Family Planning'.[71] The report, essentially a review of literature deemed relevant to the FPCAR programme, referenced all the major publications of American communications theory and diffusion studies published during the post-war years, including Paul Lazarsfeld's various works.[72] The

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[67] B.L. Raina to Douglas Ensminger, 25 July 1959, Grant Files, Reel No. 2609, PA 59-482, FFA.

[68] See 'Request for Grant Action' (Request No. OD-582G), Grant Files, Reel No. 2609; PA 59-482, FFA; and 'Request for Grant Action' (Request No. OD-798G), Grant Files, Reel No. 2609, PA 59-482, FFA. For a more detailed account of the processes leading to the establishment of the FPCAR programme see Shashwati Goswami, 'The Role of the Ford Foundation in Shaping Family Planning Communication Policies in India', Research Report, Rockefeller Archive Center, 2013.

[69] Mahalanobis, though a 'convinced advocate' of the need for population control, was nevertheless somewhat sceptical of the role short-term factors such as communication could play in reducing birth rate. See P.C. Mahalanobis, 'Some Observations on Population Problems in India', *Keynote speech delivered at Eastern Regional Conference on Population Policy and Programmes, held at Lucknow (May 3-6, 1971)*, pp. 12-26, Folder B.1, Box 3, Series 2, Douglas Ensminger Papers (hereafter DEP), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

[70] For proceedings of the central FPCAR Committee during these early years see *Proceedings of Second Meeting of the Family Planning Communication Motivation Action Research Committee (27 January, 1962),* (Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health, Government of India, 1962).

[71] Herbert Lionberger, 'Some Observations Regarding the Nature and Scope of Action-Research in Family Planning, 1961', Report No. 017885, Box 936, Catalogued Reports 17727-19980 (FA739G), FFA.

[72] Ibid., pp. 26-37.

second key figure was Moye Freymann. A physician with a doctorate in public health from Harvard University, Freymann's encounter with India also predated FPCAR. In 1957, he had taken a position as a Ford consultant on health and sanitation, soon building a reputation for his application of social science to latrine-use programmes.[73] Appointed as Ford's lead consultant on FPCAR, Freymann would join Lionberger in promoting the latest insights of American communication studies as the basis for Indian family planning communications research.[74]

The most important early experiment in FPCAR took place at the Gandhigram Institute of Rural Health, in Tamil Nadu, between 1960 and 1964. Founded in 1947 by disciples of Mohandas Gandhi, Gandhigram seemed a highly unlikely site for an experimental programme of family planning communications research. Under the direction of its two leaders G. Ramachandran and T.S. Soundram, however, Gandhigram had soon made a name for itself as a Gandhian institute with a difference. Ramachandran, a social worker, and Soundram, a medical doctor, embraced an adaptive approach to rural uplift work, one that sought to propagate basic Gandhian principles while retaining 'an open mind' to the 'innumerable new situations and developments in India since the passing of Mahatma Gandhi'.[75] In 1952, to the censure of many orthodox Gandhians, the Institute had been among the first non-governmental organizations to embrace the Government of India's programme of rural Community Development.[76] Later, in 1959, with support from the Government of India, the Government of Madras, the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Ford Foundation, the Institute had also initiated a new 'Pilot Health Project' aimed at using 'action research' to evolve a new 'model pattern of Rural Health Services'.[77] Owing to its existing work in the field of action research, as well as its connections with Ford, Gandhigram had

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[73] Harkavy and Roy, 'Emergence of the Indian National Family Planning Program', p. 307.
[74] Knowledge of the 'vertical and horizontal lines of communication', Freymann explained, could play a vital part in catalysing 'the social and psychological changes needed for fertility reduction'. Moye W. Freymann, 'Population Control in India', *Marriage and Family Living,* 25:1, 1963, p. 59. Freymann and Lionberger would co-author another report on the topic entitled Moye W. Freymann and Herbert F. Lionberger, 'A Model for Family Planning Action-Research, 1961', Report No. 017888, Box 936, Catalogued Reports 17727-19980 (FA739G), FFA.
[75] 'Gandhigram: Ninth Annual Report, 1955-1956', Grant Files, Reel No. 0905, PA 58-29, FFA, p. 2.
[76] Ibid., pp. 2-3. For more on the tension between Gandhigram's leaders and other Gandhians, as well as the Institute's relationship with Ford during the 1950s and 1960s, see 'Need for Understanding the Gandhian Philosophy and Different Interpretations Expounded by Gandhian Followers', Folder A.13, Box 1, Series 1, DEP, pp. 10-16.
[77] 'Pilot Health Project, Gandhigram: A brief report on its activities since 1959 up to the end of 1963', Grant Files, Reel No. 0905, PA 58-29, FFA, pp. 5-6.

appeared as a natural location for a new centre of FPCAR. Accordingly, in August 1962, it began receiving a new funding stream for research on family planning communication.[78]

At Gandhigram, the enterprise of family planning communications action research would hinge on the central Lazarsfeldian question: to what extent could local forms of opinion leadership be used to communicate and propagate family planning ideas? According to the Institute's researchers, in order to engage with a new practice like family planning, couples required 'accurate information from a person or organisation they trust' as well as the 'approval' of 'their particular social group'.[79] Working with local opinion leaders, they argued, had the potential to 'lessen the social distance' between officials and the villagers. It would 'identify and use indigenous channels of communication'.[80]

In 1962, in villages of Athoor Block, the site of the Institute's ongoing pilot health project, Gandhigram's social scientists initiated a process of identifying, selecting and training 'village leaders' to educate their neighbours about family planning. The method was 'systematic'. First, within each village, male and female spouses were selected randomly from every tenth household and asked to provide names of persons that they would endorse as 'family planning leaders'. These leaders, the researchers advised, were to be individuals in whom the interviewees had among other things 'faith, confidence and respect'. Second, a list of named leaders was compiled and interviews undertaken to determine the interest of the 'candidates' in becoming family planning leaders. If the list was short, those who accepted the offer of leadership were duly selected. If not, candidates were themselves asked to express their own preferred leaders. The number of family planning leaders was to be sufficient to provide at least one male and one female leader for every hundred households in a community. It was necessary, explained the researchers, that selected leaders covered 'all major kinship or sub-groups'.[81]

This systematic approach contained both similarities and differences to the selection of village leaders in the case of rural Community Development. Like Community Development's 'village leaders', the 'family planning leaders' targeted by Gandhigram researchers were viewed as conduits for the engagement of rural people in government programmes. Their most important characteristic, therefore, was their established position

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[78] Ibid., pp. 6-7.
[79] 'Ford Foundation Program Letter India: Sarangpani leads his village to family planning', Report No. 001128, (FA739A), Catalogued Reports 1-3254 (FA739A), pp. 13-14.
[80] Ibid., p. 12.
[81] Ibid., pp. 17-21.

within existing social structures and groups (and not their own psychological traits or 'motivations'). Now, however, the emphasis on the social embeddedness of rural leaders was combined with new elements, such as those leaders' interest in and basic understanding of family planning ideas. More significantly, perhaps, by emphasizing the need for leaders to be drawn from various 'kinship and sub-groups', the concept of family planning leadership approached leaders as opinion leaders within discrete sub-units of the village, not, as Community Development had done, as mobilizers of 'village communities' *as wholes*.

Family planning leaders received briefings on the 'population problem in their own village', 'explanations of the reproductive processes and contraceptive methods', and guidance on educational methods (such as group discussions and visual-aids) that could be used to generate interest in family planning among their peers.[82] At the same time, family planning leaders were themselves appointed as contraceptive 'depot-holders' to whom couples could go for contraceptive supplies. In some villages, leaders formed family planning committees and conducted total village programmes of education and contraceptive distribution. In others, leaders acted individually within their own sub-groups. All such variations were encouraged, in keeping with the belief that 'leaders are able to mobilize group support for the acceptance of family planning practices in a way not possible for officials working directly'.[83]

In soliciting the support of local leaders, Gandhigram's researchers also attempted to frame family planning concepts in terms that villagers would understand. 'Staff members', explained one report:

…made careful observational studies of [villagers] life styles to identify their ways of doing things and specific tools and examples they use in everyday living. They analysed this information for items which might serve as a frame of reference or familiar concept through which complex, new ideas could be communicated meaningfully to the people. They developed analogies, tested them and if they found them effective, they taught them to village leaders.[84]

In one example, researchers described the attempts of a family planning leader to explain to villagers the function of a condom using the analogy of an unlit match:

[82] K. V. Ranganathan, K. Srinivas, Betty Matthews, *An Action Research Study on the Role of Community Leaders in Promoting Family Planning in Rural India* (Gandhigam, Madras: Gandhigram Institute of Rural Health and Family Planning, 1965), p. 10.
[83] Ibid., p. 14.
[84] 'Sarangpani leads his village to family planning', p. 2

He took out a match and struck it on the box. 'Result – fire! Now a second match, but this time I cover the head of it with this piece of cloth and then strike it against the box. Result – no fire!' 'Now here is the condom', he continued, as he passed it to [the villagers] for a closer look. 'When a man's seed is released, it may strike and enter the egg. In a woman's womb and, like the fire of the match, a baby is started. But the condom, like the cloth over the match, prevents the seed from striking the egg and just as we had no fire – no baby'.[85]

Intended for use during hookah smoking sessions – an important feature of day-to-day rural social life – the matchbox analogy formed part of a broader set of elucidatory techniques employed to communicate 'complex' family planning concepts to people on their own terms.[86]

Within two years of the project's initiation, Gandhigram's researchers had already begun to discern a significant impact on the villages of Athoor. 'In the 39 villages where the leadership programme is in vogue', explained one report:

…1,000 couples are using contraceptives regularly. The contraceptive intake for '63 and '64 were 44.8 and 144.2 gross of condoms and 734 and 1487 tubes of foam tablets. The number of vasectomy operations conducted in Athoor Panchayat Union area with the help of the above leaders during the year 1963 and 1964 were 62 and 957 respectively.[87]

Data obtained through fertility surveys provided further evidence of changing reproductive behaviours. Between 1959 and 1964, it suggested, the number of live births per one thousand of the population fell from 43.1 to 35.4.[88] By 1968, researchers would record a vasectomy rate of 8.5 per one thousand men, at that time the highest recorded anywhere in India.[89]

Later analysis would attribute these changes to other social variables, including a decrease in the number of married women of reproductive age.[90] From the perspective of the early 1960s, however, reports emanating from Gandhigram were taken as compelling evidence of the potential of strategic communication techniques to change reproductive behaviour. 'The utilisation of influential and interested leaders', explained one Institute report, had proved 'very effective as judged from the uptake of contraceptives as well as from the number of sterilisation operations carried out'.[91] 'Implementing the family planning program through village leaders', espoused another, 'is an effective way to reach the ultimate goal of reducing

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[85] Ibid., p. 1
[86] Ibid., p. 2
[87] 'Pilot Health Project, Gandhigram: A brief report on its activities since 1959 up to the end of 1963', p. 22.
[88] K. Srinivasan, A. Muthiah, S. Krishnamoorthy, *Analysis of the Declining Fertility in Athoor Block*, (Gandhigram, Madras: Gandhigram Institute of Rural Health and Family Planning, 1969), p. 40.
[89] 'The Ford Foundation in India, 1951-1959', Report No. 003415, Box 151, Catalogued Reports 3255-6261 (FA739B), p. 18.
[90] Srinivasan, A. Muthiah, S. Krishnamoorthy, *Analysis of the Declining Fertility in Athoor Block*, p. 40.
[91] 'Pilot Health Project, Gandhigram: A brief report on its activities since 1959 up to the end of 1963', p. 47.

fertility within a reasonably short period of time'.[92] Given its connections to the Institute, the Ford Foundation was particularly keen to underscore the significance of the 'Gandhigram Experiment'. When it came to the development of 'improved and effective methods of operations', Douglas Ensminger wrote to Ford's New York headquarters, the work done at Gandhigram had been 'outstanding'.[93]

Meanwhile, at a meeting of the Population Association of America in San Francisco, Donald Bogue, the recently appointed as President, implored his associates to recognize the 'demographic breakthrough' hailed by Gandhigram and other similar experiments. 'The years 1963-1964', he declared:

…will go down in demographic history as one of the great landmarks of social-science research progress. In twelve months from June 1963 to June 1964 researchers in fertility control began to get a string of successes that left no doubt that by planned intervention they had induced a downward change in the birth rate in high-fertility populations…the Gandhigram experiment in South India, the experiments of the University of California School of Public Health at Dacca, East Pakistan, the experiments of The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health at Lahore, West Pakistan, and the research of the Population Council in Korea are among these 'successes'…This discovery, and the refinements that will be made in the next five to ten years, may well lead to social-engineering work that will have as great an impact on the course of human history as any of the major inventions or discoveries in the physical sciences.[94]

For Bogue, the Gandhigram experience served to strengthen a conviction that improved communication strategies could be applied to produce changes in reproductive behaviour. But the Gandhigram Experiment would do more than just excite American foundation officials and social scientists. Soon, it would capture the imagination of Indian policymakers too. Indeed, taken in combination with other developments, the studies undertaken at Gandhigram would soon pave the way for a fundamental shift in the structure of the Indian family planning programme. Here, the promotion of family planning through strategic communication would become more than just a subject of experimental research; it would become a key element of programme practice too.

### 'Extending' family planning, expanding family planning communication

In October 1963, the Government of India declared an end to the clinic approach to family planning. Through a series of communiques issued to state governments at that time, the Ministry of Health called instead for a new 'integrative effort aimed at establishing the

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[92] 'Sarangpani leads his village to family planning', p. 21.
[93] Douglas Ensminger to George P. Grant, 8 April 1964, Grant Files, Reel No. 255, PA 64-290, FFA.
[94] Donald J. Bogue, 'The Demographic Breakthrough: From Projection to Control', pp. 449-450.

conditions conducive to adoption of family planning' – what it called an 'extension approach'.[95]

The shift to an extension approach was driven by the same factors that had underpinned the turn to communications research; namely, an increasing belief in the urgency of population control and a growing belief in the inadequacy of the clinic method. By 1963, this dual conviction had grown stronger still. In 1960, the Third Five Year Plan had declared that 'the objective of stabilising the growth of the population over a reasonable period must be at the very centre of planned development'.[96] Accordingly, the Plan had outlined a ten-fold increase in funds allocated to family planning.[97] The results of the 1961 census, meanwhile, which highlighted an annual rate of population increase approaching 2 percent (thereby exceeding expectations of a rate closer to 1.5), had lent further weight to the idea that a more proactive approach was required. In 1962 the Government of India had adopted a new target for reduction of the birth rate to 25 births per 1000 population by 1973.[98]

Against this backdrop, the new extension approach called for substantial changes in programme organization. Alongside clinical facilities, the Ministry now introduced a new national framework of family planning service and outreach. Beginning with multipurpose Family Planning Welfare Centres (*Parivar Kalyan Niyojan Kendra*) in local areas, the new framework also included family planning bureaus at the Block, District and State level. One aim of these 'units', explained the Ministry, was to 'increase the number of distributing centres' such that there would be 'no part of the country where people cannot readily get [contraceptive] supplies'.[99] The new units of family planning extension were also given other responsibilities, however. Emphasizing the need to 'accelerate the adoption of family planning', the Ministry called upon the new network of centres and bureaus to promote 'community level educational techniques aimed at helping people themselves to organise educational activities within their own groups for promoting family planning'.[100]

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[95] 'Ministry of Health letter No. 40-1/63-FP dated 4th October, 1963 to all State Governments: Subject:- Family Planning Programme – Reorganization of' in *Circulars, Letters and Orders Issued by the Government of India on Family Planning*: *Volume I, May 1953 to December 1965* (Department of Family Planning, Ministry of Health and Family Planning Works, Housing and Urban Development, 1966), p. 41.
[96] *Third Five Year Plan* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1961), p. 25.
[97] Ibid., p. 72.
[98] Harkavy and Roy, 'Emergence of the Indian National Family Planning Program', p. 306; Rosana Leadbetter, 'Thirty Years of Family Planning in India', *Asian Survey,* 24:7, 1984, p. 740.
[99] 'Ministry of Health letter No. 40-1/63-FP dated 4th October, 1963 to all State Governments', p. 41.
[100] Ibid., p. 41.

The extension model drew directly on the findings of family planning communications research. In memoranda circulated to Family Planning Welfare Centres, the Ministry called upon local officials to use methods identical to those employed at research centres like Gandhigram. The goal of fieldworkers, instructed the Ministry, should be to 'establish useful working relations' with 'family planning leaders' (*Parivar Kalyan Sahayaks/Sahayikas*). These leaders, it explained, would be those who held the:

…confidence, affection, and the respect of a group of people. They should be the type of village elder, panchayat member, school teacher, post master [or] social worker…whose advice and guidance is often sought for by the people when some new decision has to be taken…*Parivar Kalyan Sahayak/Sahayika* will therefore be drawn from amongst school teachers, panchayat members, village health committee members, representative of rural welfare organizations, married social workers, local leaders and *dasis*. There should be at least one male and one female worker in each village.[101]

According to the Ministry, local family planning leaders would serve a number of purposes. First, they would act as conduits for the 'easy availability of supplies and services'. Second, they would ensure the transmission of 'personal knowledge about family planning methods'. Thirdly, and most importantly, they would facilitate 'group acceptance of the small family size norm'. Family planning leaders, according to the Ministry, were 'not government functionaries'; they were 'honorary workers devoted to the cause of their own choice'.[102]

With the launch of an extension approach, then, techniques of opinion leadership and interpersonal communication moved to the centre of population policy. The core of the 'extension' approach, explained B.L. Raina, was a process of 'mobilising the forces of group pressure', involving:

…methods for identifying influential leaders among different sub-groups of the population, methods for encouraging them to gain knowledge and take interest in developing the small family norm among their group, methods of imparting to them and others basic information regarding family planning, and methods of helping them actively to promote family practices among their group.[103]

According to Raina, this approach would 'allow a single worker to reach much greater numbers of people than through primarily individual approaches'. It would, subsequently, be 'more effective in bringing change'.[104]

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[101] Ibid., p. 49.
[102] Ibid., p. 49.
[103] B.L. Raina, 'The Family Planning Program in India: Excerpts from the Director's Annual Report', *Studies in Family Planning,* 1:3, 1964, p. 2.
[104] Ibid., p. 2.

The embrace of opinion leadership as a key strategy of population control had important implications for India's family planning programme, the first of which was that it embraced communication scientists' particular understanding of fertility change. Downplaying arguments about the widespread existence of unmet need, and the entrenched relationship between fertility levels and socioeconomic contexts, the opinion leader approach opted instead for a view of reproduction as a choice alterable through narrow social psychological variables, such as the communication channels that existed between people. Another effect of the turn to family planning opinion leaders, Savina Balasubramanian has argued, was that it gave the population programme a distinctly gendered slant. Ministry guidance had suggested that fieldworkers seek out both male and female family planning leaders. In the context of a patriarchal social structure, however, wherein males were more likely to occupy positions of status and prestige deemed conducive to family planning leadership, the emphasis on leaders soon paved the way for a programme geared increasingly towards men. The tendency of men to dominate positions of family planning leadership reflected extant social conditions. According to Balasubramanian, however, it spoke of prevailing cultural assumptions as well. Both population planners and communication scientists, she argues, deemed men not only to be more accessible recruits, but also more suitable candidates for the role of family planning leader. The key here, she suggests, was a prevailing 'culture of masculinity', in which men were deemed more capable of the 'calculative reasoning' that fertility reduction decisions required.[105] As will be seen, the entanglement between a communication-based approach to population control and an emphasis on male targets would manifest in other ways during the 1960s, one of which would be the rise of communication campaigns focused explicitly on men.

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The extension approach to family planning comprised more than just interpersonal, opinion leader-based strategies. It also embraced mass communication techniques. The drive to mobilize mass forms of communication for population control began, to some extent, in 1963 with the issuance of Ministry instructions to state governments to promote family planning through newspapers and other forms of media. It gained added momentum, however, with the appointment of Indira Gandhi as India's new Prime Minister in 1966. Gandhi, a long-term advocate of the need for birth control, would quickly set about raising the profile of the

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[105] Savina Balasubramanian, 'Motivating Men: Social Science and the Regulation of Men's Reproduction in Post-war India', *Gender and Society,* 32: 1, 2018, p. 46.

population programme within national policymaking circles, establishing, among other things, a new and reformed Ministry of Health and Family Planning. Meanwhile, as former Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Gandhi would also stress the need for a new concerted national campaign to promote family planning through the use of mass media.[106] Here, she would be joined by other powerful voices within her administration, most notably Sripati Chandrasekhar, an esteemed demographer and first Minister for Health and Family Planning, and Asok Mitra, a senior civil servant and member of the Planning Commission.[107]

Developed jointly by the Ministry of Health and Family Planning, the Planning Commission, the Ministry Information and Broadcasting and the Ministry of Finance, the government's mass communication campaign sought to mobilize 'all available mass media' to 'accelerate the pace' of family planning nationwide.[108] By 1968, the programme had grown to encompass a dizzying array of media forms. Alongside the supply of 50,000 transistor radio sets to rural family planning welfare units, the campaign also included: specialized family planning 'programming cells' within 22 regional all-India radio stations; the development of short family planning films to be shown on the commercial theatre circuit; scripts for song and drama performances on family planning themes; advertisements in local newspapers, periodicals, billboards, posters and signs; leaflets and pamphlets in 13 languages (6 million copies of each); themed postage stamps; and telephone directory advertisements.[109] Some of these activities were administered centrally. Others, meanwhile, were implemented by states using funds allocated by the centre. In some cases, funds allocated for family planning communication activities were larger than the state's total information budget to date.[110]

At the head of the mass communication campaign sat Dharmendra K. Tyagi, an Assistant Commissioner within the Department for Family Planning and Frank Wilder, a Ford

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[106] At the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Gandhi had overseen programmes for the distribution of transistor radios to broadcast family planning messages. Connelly, 'Population Control in India: Prologue to the Emergency Period', p. 653.

[107] For Chandrasekhar's views on the importance of mass communications for population control see S. Chandrasekhar, 'How India is Tackling her Population Problem', *Demography*, 5:2, 1968, p. 644. Mitra, a former ICS officer and self-styled 'social scientist', 'demographer' and all-round 'man of letters' would champion mass family planning communication as part of a broader Schrammian conviction in the potential of mass media to catalyse modernizing social change. See Deena Khatkhate, 'Asok Mitra: One of a Kind', *Economic and Political Weekly,* 35:13, 2000, pp. 1063-1065; and Asok Mitra, 'Role of Communication in Promoting Social Change'*,* S.N. 29, Series: Articles/Speeches/Writings by Him, Asok Mitra Papers (hereafter AMP), Nehru Museum and Memorial Library, New Delhi.

[108] *Report, 1966-67, Ministry of Health and Family Planning* (New Delhi: Department of Family Planning, Ministry of Health and Family Planning Works, Housing and Urban Development, 1967), p. 215.

[109] 'Log Notes – India, February 1967, by Lyle Sanders', Folder: India – Log Notes/Papers – 1963-1969, Box 17, Population Program, Office Files of Oscar Harkavy, pp. 8-10.

[110] Ibid., p. 8.

Foundation consultant on mass communication. Tyagi, a civil servant by profession, had worked in the field of information and communications development since the early 1950s. Wilder, meanwhile, a former journalist and newspaper editor, had served as a communications consultant in Cambodia and the Philippines. Together, Tyagi and Wilder pioneered what they called an 'Indian formula for mass communication'. Rejecting arguments for a 'phased approach' to media messaging, wherein the focus of family planning slogans, designs and appeals would change over time, they opted instead for:

…a message that would be a *direct exhortation to have a specific number of children; to present this message in the same form in all media; to keep it simple and understandable*; and *to stay with it* until everyone knew, through this message, that family planning is legitimate and what it means.[111]

In the context of widespread rural illiteracy, Tyagi and Wilder argued, 'simplicity and repetition' would be more effective than an evolving set of messages and symbols. Repetition would also provide 'an illusion of saturation', and thereby a sense of 'legitimation', that would help stimulate increased 'public discussion' of birth control.[112]

The chosen 'message' was a basic design known as the 'four faces'. Comprising 'the stylized front-view faces of a smiling mother and father, a son and a daughter' accompanied by the text '*do ya teen bachche, bas*' ('have only two or three children…that's plenty'), the design retained simplicity while going beyond a vague appeal to 'practice family planning' to specify 'the limits of a "small" family' as well.[113] At the same time, Tyagi and Wilder also emphasized the need for a symbol that would 'communicate, identify and represent' the movement. Here, they struck upon an idea that would become one of the most distinctive features of the family planning programme: the 'Red Triangle'. A simple, unadorned vermillion triangle with its apex pointed down, the 'Red Triangle' was selected as an original, culturally-neutral symbol with no intrinsic meaning or attachment, therefore allowing it to be 'identified in people's minds only with family planning and with family planning services and products'. It was 'clearly identifiable', explained Tyagi and Wilder, and 'easy to reproduce anywhere'.[114]

Invariably positioned alongside each other, the 'four faces' and the 'Red Triangle' would become pervasive features of India's rural and urban landscapes during the late 1960s,

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[111] D.K. Tyagi and Frank Wilder, 'India's New Departures in Mass Motivation for Fertility Control', *Demography,* 5:2, 1968, p. 775. Emphasis in original.
[112] Ibid., p. 776.
[113] Ibid., p. 776.
[114] Ibid., p. 778.

appearing in everything from motion pictures, newspaper headers, billboards, posters, cinema slides, corporate letterheads, postage stamps and the sides of buses and buildings.[115] Tyagi, according to one account, displayed a unique level of personal commitment to the symbols of the communication campaign, even organizing his own private campaign in which an elephant, named 'Lal Tikon' (red triangle), marched between villages distributing pamphlets and contraceptives to residents. When Tyagi died suddenly in 1970, funeral attendees honoured his final wish by showering paper red triangles over his body. As the funeral march proceeded, Tyagi's favourite family planning song played in the background.[116]

According to population officials and communication scientists, the promotion of family planning through mass media channels would work in tandem with other aspects of the extension framework. While helping to convert some 'early adopters', it was argued, the changes produced by mass messages alone were always likely to be limited in nature. 'By themselves', explained Indira Gandhi, 'neither the posters nor the films' would truly 'reach the hearts of the people'.[117] The goal of mass media, rather, was to generate 'wide public awareness of family planning'.[118] In doing so, it would 'feed' informal channels of communication, thereby readying populations for conversion in the interpersonal domain.[119]

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The extension approach, then, produced concerted attempts to use communication – both interpersonal and mass – to generate acceptance of family planning. But it also gave fresh impetus to the enterprise of family planning communications research. During the 1960s, the number of institutions conducting FPCAR grew to 13, with new centres established in Bhubaneshwar, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Lucknow and Udaipur.[120] Here, government-sponsored research would continue to probe the relationship between communication processes and

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[115] On the reach of the 'Red Triangle' campaign see Chandrasekhar, 'How India is Tackling her Population Problem', p. 644; McCarthy, 'From Government to Grass-Roots Reform: The Ford Foundation's Population Programmes in South Asia', p. 299. For a rich account of the discursive differences between this state-backed mass communication campaign and later commercial contraceptive marketing campaigns during the period of liberalisation, see William Mazzarella, *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 61-98.
[116] B.L. Raina, *A Quest for a Small Family* (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 1991), pp. 205-206.
[117] Indira Gandhi cited in M.V. Desai, 'Technical Choice and Social Obligation: Some Issues for Communicators, S.N. 541, Series: Subject Files, AMP, p. 5.
[118] *Report, 1967-68, Ministry of Health and Family Planning* (New Delhi: Department of Family Planning, Ministry of Health and Family Planning Works, Housing and Urban Development, 1968), p. 190.
[119] B. Rao, 'Communication Media: Uses, Advantages and Limitations' S.N. 541, Series: Subject Files, AMP, p. 5.
[120] *Annual Report, 1967-68, Ministry of Health and Family Planning,* p. 189.

reproductive behaviours. Here, India would further cement its status as a laboratory for the study of 'family planning communication'.

This research proceeded along a number of fronts, one of which was the study of 'direct mailing' campaigns. Focused on local leaders (in most cases members of a rural panchayat), direct mailing campaigns targeted these leaders with a barrage of family planning literature in the hope of stimulating the 'transfer [of] information to others in the village through word-of-mouth'. 'The general expectation', as one social scientist commented:

…was that this kind of printed mass media [combined] with personal informal channels in a community would result in effective diffusion of family planning information, irrespective of class and literacy barriers.[121]

According to FPCAR researchers, direct mailing campaigns had an 'unusual potentiality' in the Indian countryside, wherein 'mail-getting' still had a particular 'prestige' and a notable 'psychological effect'. 'When a villager gets mail delivered at his home by name from an agency such as the Department of Family Planning', explained one:

…it is likely that he will feel honored, and consider himself associated with the people or agency behind the mail. This sensation is likely to make him a part of the family planning diffusion system in that village or among his friends and relatives.[122]

Targeting areas for direct mailing campaigns, communications scientists then descended upon villages to assess residents' awareness of the information contained in mailed materials. What mattered was not whether the inhabitants had read the material themselves – most villagers (though not village elites) were assumed to be illiterate anyway – but rather whether or not they had gleaned the information through others.
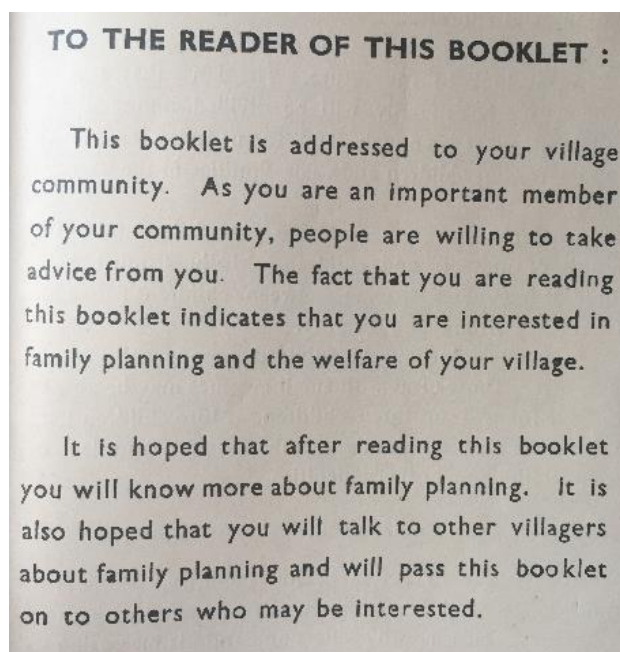
In areas targeted by direct mailing, researchers argued, villagers showed a marked increase in awareness and knowledge about family planning. Moreover, mailing campaigns also helped to provoke more 'public discussion' about birth control between residents.[123] What this meant for the actual adoption of family planning in practice was, of course, far from clear. To communication researchers, however, evidence that direct mailing had encouraged dissemination of information through 'word-of-mouth' had inherent significance. By

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[121] D.C. Dubey and A.K. Devgan, *Family Planning Communications Studies in India: Review of Findings and Implications of Studies on Communications*, (New Delhi: Central Family Planning Institute, 1969), p. 28.
[122] D. Bhaskara Rao, 'Direct mailing for family planning communication: its potentialities in the Indian context', Report 006277, Box 281, Catalogued Reports 6262-9286 (FA739C), FFA, p. 7.
[123] D.C. Dubey, B. Bhatia, A.K. Devgan, *A Study in Family Planning Communication – Direct Mailing* (New Delhi: Central Family Planning Institute, 1966), p. 17.

demonstrating that interpersonal communication channels had been activated, it highlighted the creation of an environment more favourable to altered contraceptive decisions.[124]

> TO THE READER OF THIS BOOKLET :
>
> This booklet is addressed to your village community. As you are an important member of your community, people are willing to take advice from you. The fact that you are reading this booklet indicates that you are interested in family planning and the welfare of your village.
>
> It is hoped that after reading this booklet you will know more about family planning. It is also hoped that you will talk to other villagers about family planning and will pass this booklet on to others who may be interested.

*Mobilizing 'interpersonal channels'*

**Figure 13. Excerpt from a family planning booklet distributed by direct mailing**

(Source: *A Study in Family Planning Communication – Direct Mailing* (New Delhi: Central Family Planning Institute, 1966)

A second strand of family planning communications research concerned the role of 'acceptor communication'. Here, scientists explored the proposition that those who had already accepted contraceptive ideas and methods could also act as leading advocates for the promotion of family planning more broadly. At FPCAR centres across the country, researchers tested this hypothesis by monitoring the behaviour of contraceptive acceptors within their local communities. In doing so, they found evidence that the majority of acceptors, both male and female, had spoken about their experience with others. Studies at the Demographic Training and Research Centre in Bombay, for example, showed that on average each female Intra-Urine Contraceptive Device (IUD) acceptor had spoken to five other women about their decision.[125]

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[124] For other important studies of direct mailing, in addition to the above, see B.L. Raina, Robert R. Blake and Eugene Weiss, *A Study in Family Planning Communication – Meerut District* (New Delhi: Central Family Planning Institute, 1967) and Kumudini Dandekar, 'Family Planning Studies conducted by the Gokhale Institute of Economics and Politics, Poona' in Kiser (ed.) *Research in Family Planning,* pp. 3-16.

[125] Cited in Dubey and Devgan, *Family Planning Communications Studies in India: Review of Findings,* p. 13.

In some cases, research showed that acceptor communication had a directly negative effect. Where users had experienced post-acceptance problems such as pain or ill-health, for example, this could easily lead to the circulation of damaging rumours about a particular contraceptive method.[126] Where experiences were positive, however, the tendency of acceptors to communicate with others helped to generate both increased awareness and increased public discussion. 'To the extent they are satisfied, adequately informed, and [understand] the implications of their acceptance', explained one study, 'acceptors' could be 'relied upon as the most effective and widely diffused family planning communication task force'.[127] Here again, the nature of the connection between awareness and adoption was assumed rather than verified. What mattered was that interpersonal channels had been mobilized.

Studies of 'direct mailing' and 'acceptor communication' sought to understand processes of information dissemination within communities. A third strand of FPCAR, however, probed the domain of 'inter-spousal communication'. Here, research revolved around communication scientists' conviction that a key factor in the decision to adopt family planning was open interaction between husbands and wives. 'One element in the crystallization of a desired family size', explained Thomas Poffenberger, a psychologist and Ford Foundation consultant on FPCAR:

…may be verbal communication with others most concerned with the problem, usually the spouse. Some idea of how many children one wants may develop but it is unlikely that this number becomes a firm attitude until the person has tested this attitude against the opinions of other people he regards as important…If there is little communication between husband and wife, it is likely that little family planning is taking place.[128]

Studying reproductive decision making in a village near Baroda, Poffenberger argued that the forms of inter-spousal communication necessary for family planning were, in many cases, 'blocked' by existing social norms. Within the joint family system, he argued, reproductive decisions were typically arrived at by the male, acting in consort with both other male members and the paternal mother-in-law, with little scope for meaningful dialogue between husbands and wives. Unlike reproductive decisions arrived at through husband-wife communication, wherein discussion and planning played an important role, reproduction

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[126] Ibid., p. 13-14.
[127] Ibid., p. 14.
[128] Thomas Poffenberger, 'The Measurement of Attitudes and Motivations Towards Fertility Control' in Report 017947, Box 936, Catalogued Reports 17727-19980 (FA739G), FFA, p. 4.

under the joint family setup was, according to Poffenberger, often unplanned.[129] For Poffenberger, the promotion of effective husband-wife communication thus called for a 'gradual weakening of the joint family resulting in closer husband-wife relationships and improved communication'.[130] Here, the promotion of husband-wife communication doubled-up as an endorsement of the Euro-American nuclear family as a key factor in proliferating a low fertility norm.[131]

By connecting family planning decisions to deeper changes in the structure of familial social relations, Poffenberger veered away from a narrow social psychological approach to population control. In general, however, it was a commitment to *asocial* thinking that formed the backbone of family planning communications research. What linked studies of 'direct mailing', 'acceptor communication' and many other avenues of FPCAR, in other words, was a sustained conviction that new reproductive choices could be cultivated not by changing the social structure itself, but rather by manipulating social psychological dynamics within the existing social fabric. At the forefront of this line of thinking during the 1960s was Dinesh Chandra Dubey, a sociologist and researcher at the Central Family Planning Institute (CFPI) in New Delhi. When it came to the application of social scientific expertise to family planning, Dubey argued, social scientists had the choice of two different approaches. One was the 'development approach'. Those who followed this strategy placed 'emphasis on the role of the socio-economic structure of the society and its institutional framework in prescribing norms of human reproduction and fertility'. The second option, by contrast, was the 'direct approach'. This approach concerned itself with the role of 'intermediate variables' – such as 'communication', 'reference groups', 'leadership' and 'socially valued goals' – in shaping reproductive choices. Its aim was 'to study the *behaviour* in its total context, within which individual couples decide to accept or not to accept family planning information and services made available to them'. According to Dubey, while both approaches held merit, it was the direct approach that ultimately held more promise when it came to the urgent challenge of arresting population growth.[132]

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[129] Thomas Poffenberger, 'Husband-Wife Communication and Motivational Aspects of Population Control in an Indian Village', Report 003683, Box 166, Catalogued Reports 3255-6261 (FA739B), FFA, pp. 109-113.

[130] Ibid., p. 118. For a similar analysis of husband-wife communication see Bishwa Nath Mukherjee, 'The role of husband-wife communication in family planning', *Journal of Marriage and Family,* 37:3, 1975, pp. 655–67.

[131] Savina Balasubramaniam, 'Motivating Men: Social Science and the Regulation of Men's Reproduction in Post-war India', *Gender and Society,* 32:1, 2018, p. 48.

[132] In addition to aforementioned studies, see D.C. Dubey, 'Communication and Diffusion of the IUCD: A Case Study in Urban India', *Demography,* 4:2, 1967, pp. 601-614; D.C. Dubey, *Adoption of a New Contraceptive in Urban India* (New Delhi: Central Family Planning Institute – CFPI Monograph Series No. 6, 1969).

Alongside Dubey, the FPCAR programme would play host to a broader coterie of social scientists who advocated the direct approach. Significantly, those that studied FPCAR in India during the 1960s included not just Indian social scientists, but American communication researchers too. Bogue in particular would play a key role in the development of FPCAR in India, including studies of direct mailing and studies of acceptor communication.[133] Everett Rogers, meanwhile, himself now a convert to the mission of 'defusing the population bomb', would use India as a base to test the applicability of his own 'diffusion of innovations' theory to the process of contraceptive diffusion. Claiming that the same universalistic pattern of diffusion did apply, Rogers would explore the ways in which both mass and 'informal' information exchange contributed to the spread and the adoption of family planning ideas.[134]

As India became a key site for experimentation with direct approaches to population control, it also sought to promote these approaches more broadly. In 1975, for example, the National Institute of Family Planning, a Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organization, ran a series of international training courses on 'Research in Family Planning Communication' from its base in south Delhi. Supported by Unesco, the courses brought together researchers and officials from across South and Southeast Asia in order to 'exchange, review and learn from the experiences of each participating country about the problems and research studies in family planning communication'.[135] 'In the field of family planning' one course document explained:

…especially in the developing countries…an army of researchers disciplined in accepted traditional ways, has to be created to tackle the problem of assessing the basic tenets which govern the behaviour of a community and steps which will divert its acceptance towards the more desirable social norm of a limited family. The factors of diagnostic, communication and action research plans must be ingrained as discipline into these workers.[136]

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[133] For a specific mention of Bogue's role in the initiation of direct mailing studies see Dubey, Bhatia, Devgan, 'A Study in Family Planning Communication – Direct Mailing', p. 1. For Bogue's views on the potential of such campaigns see Donald J. Bogue and Veronica S. Heiskanen, *How to Improve Written Communications for Birth Control* (Chicago: University of Chicago Community and Family Study Center, 1963).

[134] By 1973, Rogers would turn this into a broader argument about the factors involved in the diffusion of 'family planning innovations', published in a volume entitled *Communication Strategies for Family Planning* (New York: The Free Press, 1973).

[135] *Course on Research in Family Planning Communication, 6 May – 6 June 1975* (National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi, 1975), p. 6.

[136] Ibid., 1.

The courses drew attendees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Republic of Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Their basic objective was to promote and build knowledge surrounding the direct approach.[137]
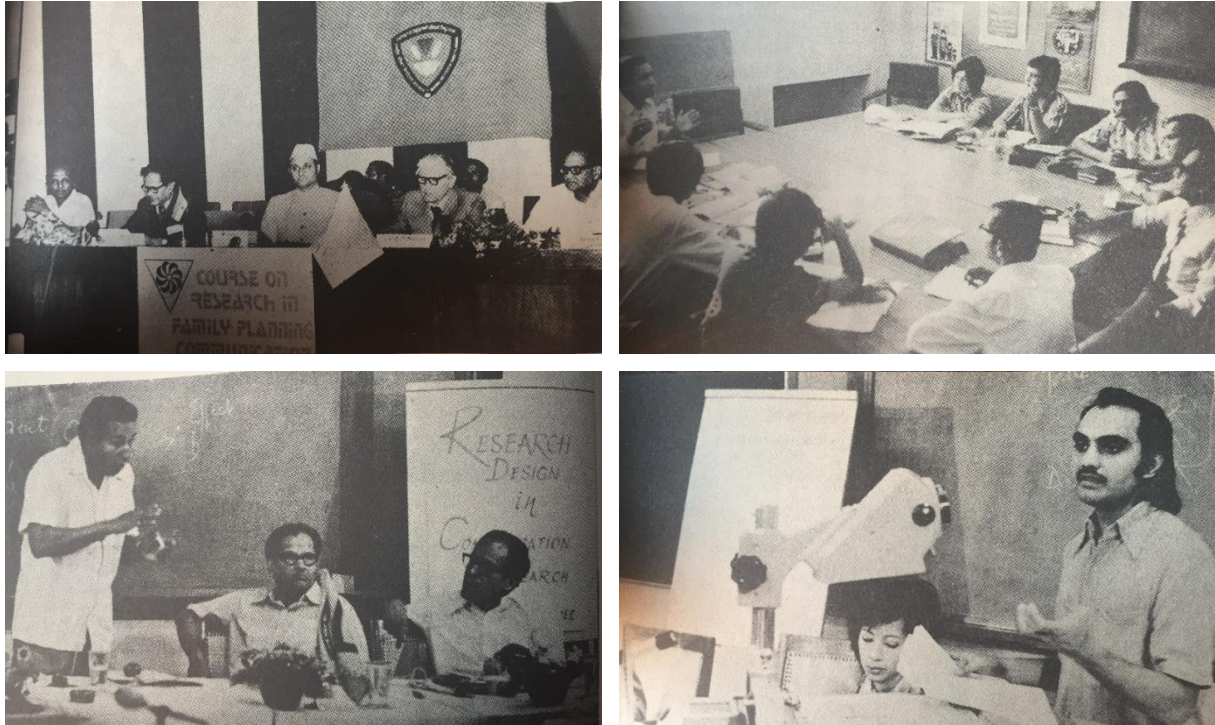


*Promoting 'family planning communications research'*

**Figure 14. Scenes from an international course on Research in Family Planning Communication hosted by the Government of India, 1972**

(Source: *Course Report – Vol I: Course on Research in Family Planning Communication, 6 May – 6 June 1975* (New Delhi: National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, 1975)

## Communication and coercion in the vasectomy camp

By the late 1960s, communication science had become an embedded feature of the Indian population programme. There was one setting, however, in which the idea that scientific communication strategies could instigate new reproductive choices would find its most overt expression: the vasectomy camp.

Vasectomy camps had become an important feature of the Indian family planning programme by the early 1970s. Vasectomy operations, for their part, had been a feature of Indian family

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[137] Such initiatives can be considered part of what Michelle Murphy, writing on Bangladesh, has referred to as the construction of 'extensive social science infrastructures that aspired to stimulate the "acceptance" of contraception'. Murphy, *The Economization of Life,* p. 60.

planning since the programme's initial 'clinic' phase, forming part of the package of contraceptive solutions offered by clinics in several states.[138] There had also been a notable spike in vasectomies performed in clinics and rural health centres following the launch of the 'extension' approach in 1963.[139] Beginning in the late 1960s, however, the vasectomy camp sought to generate widespread acceptance of vasectomy through the provision of substantial surgical facilities in a targeted area over a specific period of time. The decision to focus camps on male rather than female sterilization reflected the relative ease and rapidity with which such operations could be performed. Unlike time-consuming female alternatives such as tubectomy, most vasectomy operations could be performed in under fifteen minutes with local anaesthetic.[140] Another important factor here was a growing concern regarding the health risks associated with the female IUD contraceptive, thereby prompting policymakers to place more emphasis on male-centred interventions.[141] According to Savina Balasubraminan, the rise of the vasectomy camp also reflected prevailing assumptions, noted earlier in this chapter, that males represented more likely acceptors of birth control.[142]

One of the most important early examples of a vasectomy camp was that held in the district of Ernakulum, in Kerala, in December 1970. Coordinated by the District Family Planning Bureau together with other branches of local government, the Ernakulam camp took place within the grounds of the Cochin amphitheatre and town hall. Here, organizers established an extensive field hospital geared towards the conduct of vasectomy operations on a mass-scale. Unlike other early vasectomy camps, which sought to take vasectomy to the people in their local surrounds, Ernakulam officials opted instead for an approach that took people to the vasectomy camp.[143] Over the course of a month-long campaign, staff ferried busloads of 'patients' from surrounding towns and villages to the surgical facilities. By the end of the campaign, camp surgeons had performed over 15,000 vasectomies, marking what

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[138] Rao, *From Population Control to Reproductive Health,* p. 39.

[139] R.H. Cassen, *India: Population, Economy, Society* (Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1978), p. 160.

[140] Prakash, *Emergency Chronicles,* p. 267.

[141] For an account of the health concerns surrounding the IUD, and their impact on popular use see Connelly, 'Population Control in India: Prologue to the Emergency Period', pp. 651-662.

[142] Balasubramanian, 'Motivating Men', pp. 50-52.

[143] The contrast case here was the camp established by Dr. D.N. Pai during the late 1960s. Pai's aim was to take vasectomy to the people. He therefore established a vasectomy clinic in the heart of Bombay's main railway station, a site with a passenger traffic of over 200,000 people daily. Before long, Pai's camp was conducting thousands of vasectomies per month. Ibid., p. 162.

Ernakulam's District Collector, S. Krishnakumar, would call a 'tremendous breakthrough in India's family planning effort'.[144]

Following the success of the first camp, Krishnakumar quickly organized a second, larger version in 1972, this time securing the sterilization of more than 63,000 individuals.[145] In November 1971, meanwhile, a state-wide vasectomy campaign was launched in Gujarat. Running for two months, the campaign would see more than 1,000 Ernakulam-style camps established, within which a reported 221,933 vasectomies were performed.[146] By the middle of 1973, with the encouragement of the Department of Health and Family Planning, many other Indian states were running camps based on the Ernakulam model.[147]

In vasectomy camps, the attempted use of strategic communication to induce family planning played out in its most explicit form. In most cases, communication efforts began well in advance of the camp itself, with extended periods of publicity and awareness-raising throughout the local area. Employing various forms of media, including statements on local All-India Radio stations, loudspeaker announcements, wall posters, banners, cinema slides and roving cultural performances, these publicity drives drew on the energies of various cells of local government, from state information agencies, to health education units, to district family planning bureaus. Meanwhile, using data on marriages, ages of husbands and wives, and the number of children per household, lists of couples 'eligible for sterilization' (those in reproductive age with two or more living children) were also prepared. Eligible couples were then targeted by 'squad work' – house-to-house visits by teams comprising local family planning fieldworkers to encourage acceptance of sterilization. The intensity of these pre-camp 'publicity and fieldwork' activities, explained one report, 'reached a crescendo two days before the opening of the camp…reminiscent of a high powered election campaign'.[148]

During the camps themselves, publicity efforts were intensified. 24 hours prior to the scheduled 'operation window' for a given panchayat or municipality unit, officials and voluntary workers descended upon the area in droves. Here:

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[144] S. Krisnhakumar, 'Kerala's Pioneering Experiment in Massive Vasectomy Camps', *Studies in Family Planning,* 3:8, 1972, p. 177.
[145] Ibid., p. 177.
[146] V. H. Thakor and Vinod M. Patel, 'The Gujarat State Massive Vasectomy Campaign', *Studies in Family Planning,* 3:8, 1972, pp. 186-192.
[147] Rao, *From Population Control to Reproductive Health,* p. 40; Cassen, *India: Population, Economy, Society,* p. 163.
[148] Krisnhakumar, 'Kerala's Pioneering Experiment in Massive Vasectomy Camps', p. 179.

…the entire propaganda machinery in the district was concentrated in the particular localized area so that no eligible couple could miss the message of family planning. The house-to-house campaign and squad work were raised to maximum intensity. In addition large public meetings were arranged on this pre-operation day in each panchayat, pre-sided over by local leaders and, wherever possible, by the members of the legislative assembly from the area. Persons who had already undergone vasectomies were [also] encouraged to speak.[149]

At Ernakulam, some of these public meetings were attended by as many as 3,000 people.[150]

Camp publicity drives placed clear emphasis on the role of interpersonal persuasion in motivating individual acceptance of vasectomy. In addition to officials and fieldworkers, 'squads' established for canvassing work in local areas drew on the support of local 'family planning leaders' and prior contraceptive acceptors, thereby reflecting a belief that the most effective form of persuasion lay in individuals known to the community. The emphasis on interpersonal communication extended to other aspects of programme organization too. Most notable in this regard was the practice of sending would-be acceptors to vasectomy camps in groups. By making provisions for individuals from the same community to travel to surgical facilities together, it was argued, camp organizers:

…provided a psychological sense of security and support to each individual, allayed his fears, and reinforced his convictions. It took the focus off what, to the individual if he were alone, would loom large as a serious surgical interference with his reproductive physiology. The presence of friends and acquaintances reinforced the individual's sense that what he was doing was socially acceptable.[151]

'Individual motivation', explained one account, 'received group support'.[152]

For social scientists like D.C. Dubey, the vasectomy camp provided a model of effective family planning communication in action. Drawing on interviews conducted at camps in Kerala, Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar, Dubey argued that each of the camps had succeeded in creating a unique 'psychological atmosphere' conducive to the 'mass-scale acceptance of change'. One of the most notable features of the camps, he argued, had been their success in stimulating 'the maximum amount of interpersonal communication'. The responses of many interviewees indicated that 'people had never talked about [vasectomy] so freely and frequently'. In particular, the data suggested especially high levels of 'interspouse

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[149] Ibid., p. 179.
[150] Ibid., p. 178.
[151] Ibid., p. 181.
[152] 'Ford Foundation Program Letter India: Veena Sonia, The Ernakulam Vasectomy Camp: An Outstanding Success Story', Population Program, Office Files of Tim Rice, Box 4, FFA, p.8.

communication', with 79 percent of acceptors reporting that they had discussed the operation with their wives.[153]

According to Dubey, the effective activation of informal communication had played a key role in generating widespread acceptance of vasectomy. 49 percent of those undergoing sterilization, he observed, reported 'operated cases and local non-officials' as the persons who had convinced them most about accepting treatment.[154] Meanwhile, interviews with acceptors indicated that 'bringing people in groups to the camp and taking them back in groups after the operation' had indeed provided:

…opportunity for mutual group reassurance in favor of change. This acceptance in groups and the camp approach which created an impression of collective acceptance can be credited with making possible the phenomenon of large-scale social change.[155]

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The vasectomy camp, then, marked the apogee of the communication-based approach to family planning. At the same time, however, it also captured another emerging feature of the Indian population programme; namely, its increasingly coercive nature. In the context of the vasectomy camp, efforts to generate acceptance through scientific communication ran in parallel with methods that looked ever less like communicative persuasion and ever more like deliberately planned compulsion. The most important dimensions of this was the use of financial incentives.

'Incentives' were a central feature of vasectomy camps. In Gujarat, for example, acceptors received not only a basic payment for undergoing treatment (ranging between 65 and 75 rupees), but also a series of additional 'payments in kind' including a free *dhoti* (male garment), a plastic bucket, and a gift bag.[156] In its own right, the adoption of raw financial incentives signalled a departure from a purely communication-based approach. The camps' incentivization tactics veered still further from persuasion, however, by attempting to steer these forms of inducement specifically towards the poor. At Ernakulam, for instance, camp planners selected 'special pockets' of 'economic backwardness' in which they amplified the

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[153] D.C. Dubey and A. Bardhan, 'Mass Acceptance of Vasectomy: The Role of Social Interaction and Incentives in Social Change', in Moni Nag (ed.), *Population and Social Organization: Proceedings of the 9th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), p. 302.
[154] Ibid., p. 302.
[155] Ibid., p. 300. On this point see also Dubey, S.C. and A. Bardhan, 'A Case Study of Faridkot Mass Tubectomy Camp' (New Delhi: National Institute of Family Planning, 1974); and A Bardhan, 'Some Socio-Cultural Processes and Concepts of Importance to Communication', S.N. 541, Subject Files, AMP, pp. 8-9.
[156] Thakor and Patel, 'The Gujarat State Massive Vasectomy Campaign', p. 188.

intensity of their campaigns.[157] Guided by an assumption that poor people would be most likely to avail of financial reward, these methods consciously pushed sterilization towards those for whom acceptance was less a matter of free choice than one of economic necessity.

Vasectomy camps harboured coercion in other ways. As part of their incentivization strategies, most camps offered financial rewards not just to those who underwent sterilization, but also to local 'motivators' who successfully persuaded others to accept treatment. To camp organizers, the incentivization of these individuals promised to harness the power of interpersonal factors in mobilizing acceptance. In reality, however, the policy of rewarding motivators wedded the incentive system to the deeply unequal power structures at work within Indian society. In rural areas, local motivators often turned out to be 'men of influence'; local magnates, such as money lenders or landlords, with the requisite political, economic and social power to force people to participate in sterilization drives. In some areas, for instance, it was not uncommon for farmers to be refused credit or fertilizer supplies until they submitted to motivators' demands to accept sterilization.[158]

These coercive dynamics reflected a broader trend in the Indian family planning programme. Indeed, by the early 1970s, coercion had become a deeply engrained feature of Indian population control.[159] In 1966, the administration of Indira Gandhi had adopted a new policy on financial incentives for birth control, thereby increasing their significance within the repertoire of techniques used to promote family planning. Backed by a long list of international donors, including the Population Council, the Ford Foundation, the World Bank and the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the new policy saw central funds allocated to states for every tubectomy, vasectomy and IUD insertions performed (40, 30, and 11 rupees respectively).[160]

In the wake of this policy, the late 1960s witnessed a spike in the number of sterilizations and IUD insertions. Here, however, the extent to which the incentive-based approach compromised the supposedly voluntary nature of family planning decisions was again open to question. As many contemporaries were aware, states in which the most dramatic increases in sterilization took place, including Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orrisa and Uttar Pradesh, were also those in which extreme economic hardship was being countenanced. Bihar, where the

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[157] Krishnakumar, 'Kerala's Pioneering Experiment in Massive Vasectomy Camps', p. 178.
[158] Cassen, *India: Population, Economy, Society,* p. 164.
[159] Connelly, 'Population Control in India', p. 657.
[160] States were given control over who received these funds – whether patients, 'motivators' or programme staff. They could also – and some did – supplement them with their own financial contributions. Ibid., p. 656.

year 1966-67 coincided with a third year of drought, leading to famine conditions in many parts of the state, was perhaps the most telling example. In that year, nearly 100,000 people had come forward to avail of incentive payments, rising to 185,000 in 1968. Contrasted to the 2,355 operations performed in 1965, before the incentives were introduced, there could be little doubt that many were accepting sterilization simply in the hope of avoiding starvation.[161] As Marika Vicziany has shown, this poverty-adoption nexus was strengthened by efforts to keep adopters ignorant about less drastic methods of birth control, while the social pressure of local leaders and state officials (as it did in the vasectomy camp) turned many adoption decisions into anything but a 'free' choice.[162] Before and beyond the vasectomy camps, then, policies on incentives had thus already helped to forge a programme that waged population war not only through 'communication', but through knowing forms of coercion as well. By the late 1960s, in Vicziany's words, 'the myth of voluntarism' surrounding the Indian family planning programme had become increasingly 'hollow'.[163]

Communications scientists could hardly ignore the increasing role of incentives within the family planning programme. But the nature of their response was striking. As incentives, both within and beyond the vasectomy camp, established a coercive poverty-adoption nexus that made poor, illiterate and low caste groups the most likely 'consenters' to birth control, one might have expected communication experts to critique these practices sharply. In practice, however, many did precisely the opposite. Seeing the rise of incentives, many communication scientists opted to see these not as an intervention that undermined the voluntarism of family planning, but rather as a valuable addition to the communication process.

According to Dubey, the significance of incentives lay in their capacity to affect a process of 'cognitive dissonance' within the individual, one that ultimately made adoption decisions more likely. When most Indians had first learned of sterilization, he argued, the idea had sparked within them an initial process of dissonance – a contradiction between the idea that sterilization was a desirable path and an anxiety concerning its potential impact on their lives. In the absence of sufficient information to the contrary, most had achieved 'consonance' by

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[161] Ibid., pp. 656-657.
[162] For her extended discussion on the coercive nature of family planning in the decade prior to the Indian Emergency see Marika Vicziany, 'Coercion in a Soft State: The Family-Planning Program of India: Part I: The Myth of Voluntarism', *Pacific Affairs*, 55:3, 1982, pp. 373-402; and Vicziany, 'Coercion in a Soft State: The Family-Planning Program of India: Part 2: The Sources of Coercion', *Pacific Affairs*, 55:4, 1982-3, pp. 557-592.
[163] Vicziany, 'Coercion in a Soft State (Part 1), p. 402.

'freezing the issue and relegating it to the back of their minds'. The introduction of incentives, however, had provoked reconsideration of the issue, thereby 'recreating the stage of cognitive dissonance'. Here, incentives created a new opportunity for intervention to ensure that consonance was achieved not by dismissal, but by adoption instead. Combined with the intensive promotional and social persuasion tactics, as seen in settings like the vasectomy camp, Dubey argued, many individuals had resolved the dissonance created by incentives by 'taking a positive decision to accept vasectomy this time'.[164] Thus:

> …the incentive actually created situations favorable for more intense and fruitful extension education…the contention that incentive undercuts or is opposed to the extension-education approach does not seem to be true. If anything, the high incentives and mass camps together can be credited with having made the theoretical concept of extension education practical and a reality… The family planning program functioned in a most democratic way, respecting fully the freedom of the individual and faith in his ability.[165]

Another who chose to see incentives in this light was Everett Rogers. Like Dubey, Rogers was fully aware of arguments regarding the coercive implications of incentives. He too, however, opted to emphasize their benevolent communicative role. As he explained in his *Communication Strategies for Family Planning,* incentives provided 'inducements to change behaviour' and acted as 'trigger-mechanism' for those already well-disposed towards family planning. More significantly, according to Rogers, incentives also had the capacity to 'reverse' certain aspects of the diffusion process. While the 'classic' theory of innovation diffusion had emphasized the elite, 'cosmopolite' nature of the early adopter, incentives altered this pattern by catalysing early adoption among those of lower 'socio-economic' groups.[166] While acknowledging the tendency of incentives to appeal to the poor, however, Rogers refrained from describing this as a relationship coercion. Incentives, rather, encouraged adoption of family planning 'by different individuals than would otherwise adopt'.[167] They provided an 'important communication-motivation input in family planning programs'.[168]

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[164] Dubey and Bardhan, 'Mass Acceptance of Vasectomy', pp. 301-303. Here, Dubey drew on the theory of cognitive dissonance proposed by another American social psychologist, Leon Festinger. See Leon Festinger, *A theory of cognitive dissonance* (Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson & Co., 1957). Coincidentally, Festinger had developed this theory on the basis of studies of earthquake rumours in India. See Janak Pandey and Purnima Singh, 'Social psychology in India: social roots and development', *International Journal of Psychology,* 40:4, 2005, p. 242.
[165] Dubey and Bardhan, 'Mass Acceptance of Vasectomy', p. 303.
[166] Rogers, *Communication Strategies for Family Planning,* pp. 159-167.
[167] Everett M. Rogers, 'Incentives in the Diffusion of Family Planning Innovations', *Studies in Family Planning*, 2:12, 1971, p. 244,
[168] Everett M. Rogers, 'Incentives in the Diffusion of Family Planning Innovations [draft paper]', Report 006616, Catalogued Reports, 6262-9286 (FA739C), FFA, p. 3.

Rogers framed the payment of incentives to motivators in a similar way. On the one hand, he recognized the potential for coercive dynamics in the relationship between patients and what he called 'canvassers'. Those influenced by these individuals, he observed, were more likely:

…(1) to have undergone sterilization without their wife's consent, (2) to be motivated primarily by the adoption incentive, rather than to limit family size, and (3) to hold an unfavorable attitude toward vasectomy even after adoption. These points suggest a high degree of coercion by the canvassers. On all three counts, sterilizations motivated by canvassers were of lower "quality".[169]

This had important implications, Rogers argued, because 'a dissatisfied customer who adopted because of pressure from a canvasser is the worst kind of interpersonal advertisement for an innovation'. Notwithstanding these concerns, however, to Rogers, canvasser incentives also had an important role to play because they encouraged 'interpersonal communication about the innovation with peers'. The 'motivational' work undertaken by individuals 'similar to the potential adopter in socioeconomic status, life-style, and attitudes', he argued, was 'the greatest motivating force for adoption of family planning ideas'. The canvasser was therefore 'able to motivate more clients, and different clients, than could the professional field worker'.[170] Notwithstanding the potential opportunities for coercion, then, canvasser incentives also had the potential to 'accelerate' the diffusion process by stimulating interpersonal, homophilious communications which, according to diffusionist theory, produced adoption decisions.

What Rogers was doing here, argues Vicziany, was applying the classical 'diffusion of innovations' model to a situation which, in many ways, 'negated its basic assumptions'. According to Rogers, the adoption of sterilization could be understood as one iteration of a more general process of innovation diffusion. While this played down the coercive elements at work in the incentive-driven acceptance of sterilization, it also overlooked the manifest differences between sterilization and the forms of innovation on which the diffusion model's core assumptions had been based. Unlike adopters of hybrid seed corn, acceptors of sterilization did not have the opportunity to experiment with the innovation in advance, nor to accept it in a piecemeal fashion. Sterilization was instead 'a single and irreversible operation'. When it came to the adoption of sterilization, the 'cumulative momentum' associated with the diffusion of innovations was also notable by its absence. Rather than adhering to Rogers' gradual 's-shaped' curve, the number of sterilizations 'fluctuated wildly'

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[169] Rogers, 'Incentives in the Diffusion of Family Planning Innovations', p. 246.
[170] Ibid., pp. 245-246.

in accordance with both the provision of large financial incentives and circumstances of economic distress. By squeezing sterilization adoption into the classical model of diffusion, Vicziany contends, Rogers' approach ignored these fundamental differences. In doing so, it deliberately downplayed 'a more down-to-earth explanation of the effectiveness of incentives in a culture of poverty'.[171]

## Conclusion

Coercive approaches to population control reached their apotheosis during the Emergency period. During this time, the practice of coerced sterilization would seep into almost every facet of Indian life. The impetus here came from the top. Identifying population control as central to its plans for tackling poverty, in April 1976, the Emergency regime of Indira Gandhi adopted a series of new measures that strengthened the coercive tendencies of the programme. Now, financial assistance to states was made partly dependent on their family planning performance, along with new increases in the incentives paid to sterilization acceptors. New permissions allowing states to enact laws to promote sterilization were also adopted. The new measures, in turn, set the tone for an increase in the coercive measures adopted by states. Some began to offer incentives to civil servants agreeing to undergo sterilization; others penalized employees with more than two children. In states across the nation, meanwhile, basic services such as access to medical facilities, maternity care, or the distribution of ration cards were tied, among other things, to the presentation of a sterilization certificate.[172]

The Emergency witnessed more than just new coercive policies. In 1976, the Ministry of Health and Family Planning set an ambitious national target of 4.3 million sterilizations for the forthcoming year. The target, divided between states, set in motion a process of downward pressure that produced a dramatic upsurge in the forms of coercion practiced on the ground. As state leaders piled pressure on district-level subordinates to meet their targets, in many areas, the entire machinery of government became a lever through which acceptance of sterilization would be compelled. Here, the sterilization agenda dovetailed with another key feature of Emergency-era policy: urban beautification. As slum-dwellers found themselves forced out of their erstwhile homes, sterilization would be the price paid by many for resettlement. As states competed to set higher and higher targets, the number of

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[171] Vicziany, 'Coercion in a Soft State (Part 1), pp. 392-393.
[172] For a recent overview of these coercive policies see Prakash, *Emergency Chronicles*, pp. 279-289.

sterilizations rose to astonishing levels. In 1976-77 alone, more than 8 million sterilizations would be recorded.[173]

In later years, the widespread practice of forced sterilization would come to be seen as a symbol of the political repression of the Emergency, with the result that coercive population control measures would come to be equated with years 1975-1977 alone. Drawing on recent histories, this chapter has shown that coercive forms of population control predated the Emergency period. In doing so, it has also explored the ways in which these forcible approaches received legitimation from prevailing forms of social scientific knowledge.

Communication science, I have argued, had come to fundamentally reshape the terrain of population control in India. Beginning in 1959, as a marginal field of study, family planning communications research had soon provided insights that had helped to transform the focus of the national population programme. Communications research brought with it a particular set of ideas about the way in which a reduction in the birth rate might be achieved. Diverging from 'classic' demographic transition theory's claim that changed fertility patterns hinged on long-term social and economic variables related to urban-industrial modernization, it also took issue with a 'revised' transition theory's suggestion that there existed a widespread 'unmet need' for family planning within 'underdeveloped' societies. Instead, communication scientists framed low fertility as a norm requiring active cultivation in populations, a process possible through the manipulation of more short-term factors – Dubey's 'intermediate variables' – foremost among which were the flows of communication between people.

Population planners' embrace of communications theory formed part of a broader trend. Across the decolonizing world, Arvind Rajagopal has argued, post-colonial elites would turn to American concepts of 'communication' (as well as communication technologies) 'as a technocratic means for building a modern nation'.[174] One result of this, according to Rajagopal, was that in nations like India, 'communication' became a 'state subject, liable to monopoly control by government'.[175] In charting the embrace of communications concepts in the context of population control, this chapter has shown how its deep connectedness to state aims and objectives produced curious and contradictory effects. As the paradigm of family planning communication gained influence, I have argued, it also became deeply entangled

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[173] Ibid., p. 284. For links between urban beautification, slum clearance and sterilisation see also Patrick Clibbens, 'The destiny of this city is to be the spiritual workshop of the nation': clearing cities and making citizens during the Indian Emergency, 1975-1977', *Contemporary South Asia,* 22:1, 2014, pp. 51-66.
[174] Arvind Rajagopal, 'Communicationism: Cold War Humanism', *Critical Enquiry,* 46:2, 2020, p. 377.
[175] Ibid., p. 377.

with coercive approaches to population control. The rise of coercion took place independently of the rise of family planning communication. In contexts such as the vasectomy camp, however, these seemingly distinct agendas would soon become inexorably intertwined. Framing incentives as just another means of mobilizing interpersonal channels, communications scientists would serve to legitimize practices that forcibly imposed sterilization upon the poor. Here, the idea of voluntarism, one of the most basic assumptions underlying the communications-based approach, was ultimately betrayed.

## Conclusion

During the two decades that followed Indian independence, a broad transnational network of actors – comprising social scientists, government officials, foundation officers and industrialists – undertook to psychologize Indian development. Loosely aligned, and at times internally divided, this network of actors was nevertheless united by a shared conviction that social and economic progress could be accelerated through applied forms of social psychological expertise. From the late 1940s, psychological frames of thinking would come to occupy a prominent place within development thought and practice. In doing so, they would be applied to a wide range of contemporary concerns.

Why did a process of psychologized development unfold in post-1947 India? In tracing the history of five distinct psychologizing projects, this thesis has suggested a number of reasons. Firstly, and most fundamentally, the enterprise of psychologized development must be seen as an extension of a more foundational set of convictions embraced by India's post-colonial leaders; namely, those surrounding the concept of 'development' itself. The belief that society could and indeed should 'develop' was, of course, by no means a natural or given one. Rather, it was an assumption bearing the deep imprint of Western post-Enlightenment thought. During the course of the twentieth century, ideas about development had come to occupy a central place within Indian nationalist discourse, in part as a basis through which to critique colonial rule. As these ideas carried over the post-1947 watershed, they brought with them not just a continued longing for development, but also a belief that development was something post-colonial leaders were duty-bound to deliver. As a central feature of post-colonial discourse, the belief in the imperative of 'progress' formed the key intellectual justification for each of the programmes and initiatives studied within this thesis. In this sense, it provided the essential backdrop against which psychologized development would occur.

Secondly, psychologized development must also be linked to a Nehruvian proclivity for scientific expertise. Indian post-colonial leaders did more than just embrace development; they also embraced a particular understanding of the ways in which this process might be achieved. Society, according to this understanding, was an entity amenable to adjustment through scientific intervention 'from above'. The route to development, by extension, ran *through* technocratic expertise. A Nehruvian affinity for the scientific would manifest most clearly in the enterprise of development 'planning', wedded as it was to the empiricist models

of statisticians and economists. The inclination of contemporaries to adopt psychological frames of thinking thus held links to a broader prevailing tendency to approach complex social problems through scientific knowledge. That development became a question for psychological experts was, then, an outcome deeply in tune with the intellectual assumptions of the age.

Both a desire for development and a faith in the scientific formed key enablers of psychologized development. It has been a central argument of this thesis, however, that this process had other causes too. Across the spheres of social tension, community development, entrepreneurship, management and population control, I have demonstrated, the move to turn a psychological lens on society was one shaped significantly by American social science. American social science was not, of course, the sole source of psychological forms of knowledge. Nevertheless, by the middle decades of the twentieth century, American social scientists had emerged as leading exponents for the application of psychologized approaches to real-world problems, a move that encompassed not just psychology, but also a broader range of American social science disciplines, from sociology, to anthropology, to economics and communications science. The rise of psychologized thinking reflected developments within mid-century American society, including the widespread mobilization of psychology during the Second World War. With the onset of new post-war concerns about the state of 'underdeveloped' regions, many would seek to sell these forms of knowledge as a novel brand of development expertise. India, a nation of key symbolic importance in the context of the global Cold War, would become a key site in which these processes would unfold.

There was at least one more reason why development would be psychologized in post-independence India; namely, the presence of an existing system of psychological training and research. At the time of independence, India was a nation with an established network of university social science departments, including a number of centres for psychological teaching and research. An established base of social science education, rare among decolonizing nations, reflected distinct features of India's colonial experience. What it provided, from the perspective of the post-1947 period, was an existing body of Indian intellectuals capable of formulating and applying psychological ideas. Indian social scientists, we have seen, would play a key role in promulgating ideas and practices of psychologized development. In doing so, some would forward their own distinct take on what the goals of that process should be.

A history of psychologized development has offered new perspectives on the history of development in post-independence India. Moving beyond well-worn narratives about the rise of economic planning and 'concrete modernities', this thesis has traced the trials and travails of a network of actors who approached development through a lens different to that typically associated with the Nehruvian era. At the same time, a history of psychologized development has suggested new ways to think about the transnational connections and influences that impacted upon India during this period. Underpinned by tensions between a US search for allies against communism and Nehruvian India's dual commitment to socialism and non-alignment, it has often been assumed, the decades following Indian independence witnessed not so much a period of collaboration between Indian and American actors, but rather a gradual process of 'estrangement' on both sides. The flows of knowledge and expertise traced in this thesis have borne witness to a different story. Notwithstanding frictions and tensions pervading the diplomatic arena, forms of scientific and intellectual exchange between Indian and American actors represented an important feature of the 1950s and 60s. Here, a history of psychologized development has spoken to a broader emerging literature on the entanglements between Indians and Americans during the early post-independence decades, one that forces us, in turn, to re-think the position of India within the political and intellectual climate of the early Cold War.

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Psychologizing social scientists, both Indian and American, believed firmly that their forms of knowledge provided tools for transforming society. In many cases, they also received backing from institutions and programmes that shared this view. In spite of these convictions and these privileged positions, this thesis has shown, psychologizing projects routinely failed to meet expectations. In some cases, their consequences were disastrous. The cases explored here have offered few straightforward reasons as to why psychologized development 'failed'. Across each of the five cases, both the nature of this failure and the causes underlying it varied considerably. Nonetheless, the thesis has drawn attention to at least some recurrent problems running through attempts to pursue development through psychological expertise, upon which it is worth reflecting. Firstly, psychologizing approaches suffered from a consistent tendency to reduce human behaviour down to narrow social psychological variables, thereby ignoring alternative understandings of what led people to act in certain ways. In framing social tension as a product of the 'irrational' displacement of 'frustration' onto others, we have seen, tensions researchers gave short shrift to the role of actual lived

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experiences in the formation of tensed attitudes. By framing fertility as a variable manipulable through the social psychological dynamics of 'communication', meanwhile, communication scientists downplayed the role of broader socio-economic and cultural factors in shaping reproductive choices.

A second challenge facing psychologized development concerned the unintended consequences of group-based approaches to social change. For many psychologizing social scientists, local group-leader dynamics represented a key vector for development. The crux of this, I have demonstrated, was a belief in the power of existing social relations to accelerate processes of behavioural change. Group-leader logic would seep into various fields of development praxis, from Community Development to population control. But there was also a problem here. By emphasizing the potential of groups, leaders, and 'interpersonal channels' to catalyse change, social scientists oversimplified the actual composition of social relations within the units they targeted. In many parts of India, especially rural areas, those approached as leaders of cohesive social groups were, in fact, often members of deeply divided, hierarchical social structures. Here, working with leaders – whether in the form of 'natural village leaders' or 'family planning leaders' – did little to catalyse bottom-up patterns of social change. Ultimately, it made for programmes that worked directly against the interests of the lower social orders.

A third challenge facing psychologized development, I have suggested, was its inability to compete with alternative forms of development expertise. In chapter three especially, we saw how psychologizing approaches, while finding their own pockets of influence, soon found themselves eclipsed by the preference, held by both Nehruvian and Rostovian policymakers, for more crudely economistic understandings of development. From one perspective, psychologizers depended on economic approaches as intellectual foil for their own behaviourist claims. At the same time, the trumping of psychologistic by economistic development, demonstrated so clearly in the case of McClelland's motivational enterprise, marked out clear limits to the power of the psychological approach.

Such were the problems faced by psychologized development. In psychologism's failure, however, there may also be broader lessons. The consistent failure of psychologizing projects to deliver on expectations may well have something to say about the wider challenges faced by attempts to produce development through technical expertise. Certainly, the notion that failure may be a more pervasive feature of expert-led approaches has found expression within

a broader body of literature on development, a literature that spans both colonial and post-colonial approaches.[1] Though not delivering on their own terms, this literature has suggested, scientific development projects have also served an implicit purpose: by enabling governments to map, survey, and intervene in populations, development initiatives have provided wide-ranging opportunities for the consolidation and extension of state power. It is in part for this reason that the lure of development, despite its perpetual shortcomings, has proved so enduring.

Though providing few clear-cut cases of such expansion, the cases explored in this thesis have nevertheless provided some telling examples of the ways in which expert-led regimes have served to bolster state power. In the context of Community Development, group-based theories helped ultimately to justify programmes that turned local leaders into channels for the top-down imposition of state-backed development initiatives. Under population control, communication theory provided intellectual justification for government programmes that forced sterilization on the people. Significantly, this thesis has also revealed the ways in which psychologizing enterprises served as a vector for more insidious forms of power. By framing social problems in terms of individual and collective psychology, psychologizing provided reason for states, together with other social actors, to reach out and infiltrate peoples' innermost worlds. Techniques such as projective testing and laboratory training, meanwhile, provided a serviceable set of tools through which this infiltration could occur. In this sense, psychologized development had done more than assist the expansion of bureaucratic machineries, it had also helped to foster new forms of elite intervention in society, at the centre of which sat attempts to penetrate the individual mind.

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This thesis has studied the enterprise of psychologized development across the first two decades of Indian independence, linking it, in turn, to new forms of cross-border connection fostered by the early Cold War. But what was to become of psychologized development? There are, it seems, a number of ways in which to answer this question. On the one hand, the period from the early 1970s onwards witnessed a gradual decline of this enterprise, at least in the form it had taken during the 1950s and 1960s. As a result of numerous controversies, including those surrounding the role of American consultants in the population programme;

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[1] The most influential account being *James Scott, Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

tensions in Indo-US relations surrounding the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War; and the aftermath of a 1967 CIA-related scandal, the privileged position once enjoyed by American institutions in India would wane considerably during the course of the 1970s. In the case of the Ford Foundation, damaged relations with the Government of India would lead to significant changes in the nature of the Foundation's activities. While remaining active in India, Ford now began to conduct itself with a decidedly lower profile. Its focus, remarked one observer, shifted from a concern with 'American know-how' to 'a new emphasis on Indian institutions and indigenous research'.[2] Ford, we have seen, had been a key player in the drive to apply American social scientific knowledge in India. With these changes, that practice would gradually subside.

The enterprise of psychologized development did not disappear altogether. The application of psychological knowledge to development had, after all, never been wholly dependent on the presence of Americans. As American influences waned, Indian social scientists would continue to promote the application of psychological approaches to contemporary social problems, from economic development, to education, to political and civil unrest. Here, moreover, psychologizing enterprises would also be able to draw upon the resources of a burgeoning Indian academic establishment, now grown considerably in size and scope compared to that of the immediate post-independence decades.

As psychologized development continued, it would also become the site of a deeper process of change. Freed from the pattern of drawing on American models, Indian social scientists would now begin to question the extent to which the theories and forms of knowledge promoted by American social science really did have merit in the Indian context. For post-independence psychologizers, the belief that there existed a common set of rules underpinning all human nature had merged easily with the idea that those same rules could be comprehended through one, universal body of psychological science. Now, as Indian social scientists questioned these universalist assumptions, the corollary was a call for new forms of psychological knowledge more suited to Indian social, cultural and psychological realities. Beginning in the 1980s, the move to develop an 'Indian' psychological agenda was one advocated by a broad network of figures involved in psychological teaching and research.

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[2] Kathleen D. McCarthy, 'From Government to Grass-Roots Reform: The Ford Foundation's Population Programmes in South Asia, 1959-1981', *Voluntas*, 6:3, 1995, p. 301.

Significantly, however, some of its leading thinkers were those who had been at the forefront of psychologized development during earlier decades.

Durganand Sinha, the former advocate of motivational approaches to development, was one such figure. A process of 'indigenization', Sinha would now argue, was necessary in order to free Indian psychology from its historic reliance on Western concepts. Such a process, he suggested, could take one of two routes. The first was 'exogenous', involving the gradual adaptation of 'alien' frameworks to account for Indian cultural nuances and psychosocial realities. The second was 'endogenous' involving the turn to 'Indian' concepts and traditions, including ancient religious texts such as the Vedas and Upanishads, for novel insights into human behaviour. Another key proponent of this 'Indian' agenda was Jai B. P. Sinha, the architect of the Ranchi 'cube construction' experiment with which this thesis began.

In time, then, Indian social scientists would break from the intellectual frameworks that had accompanied psychologized development during the post-independence decades. While remaining committed to the application of psychology to social problems, they would now make the claim that a meaningful contribution of psychological knowledge hinged, ultimately, on the production of distinctly 'Indian' forms of knowledge. The move to create an Indian form of psychological knowledge was nativist in its assumptions. In challenging the applicability of Western models of social science, it suggested that there existed a distinctly 'Indian' culture that could be accessed and scrutinized for scientific purposes. The move signalled a departure from the approaches of the post-independence years. In both its intellectual content and its leading figures, it was also the product of what had gone before.

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