

MOTIVATION FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE IN JAPAN

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A discussion of motivation toward social and economic change within a nation should begin with two questions. First, *who* is trying to effect changes? A popular view held by Japanese social scientists is that Japan's industrialization and associated changes resulted in part from the deliberate effort of only a small minority; that the majority of the Japanese people were passive victims of changes in the technostucture of their society, who deliberately altered their lives as little as possible.

The second question is: What constitutes *change*, particularly *motivated* change? We must not restrict ourselves to a discussion of the innovations and motives for innovation of an elite group of social planners; the *acceptance* of these innovations by the larger society also constitutes "motivated" change in that the acquisition by an individual of any new commodity (wealth, knowledge, prestige, skill, or political power) is a change that requires effort, and hence motivation. At the level of society, change is the collective effect of such individually motivated behavior (both innovation and acceptance of innovation) on major social and economic institutions.

Psychologically-oriented students of society disagree on how to identify and measure the motives behind such social and economic changes. For example, highways and automobiles begin to replace other transportation systems because of new demands for the movement of goods, new engineering skills, new patterns of population distribution and movement, new attitudes toward material ownership, and so on, reflecting a complex motivational picture. Even the motivation behind a handful of farmers collectively protesting against land rents is complex. This paper will review literature on psychological explanations of social change, and discuss precognitive drives (achievement, affiliation, and power) and cognitive (value) orientations.

Research on Japanese personality during the 1940's and early 1950's was concerned with explaining the development of "pathological" trends in Japanese society, and with assessing possibilities for the restoration of sane politics and economics. Quite naturally, the result was a clinically depress-

ing picture of a people who were rigid and compulsive (Gorer 1943; LaBarre 1945; Moloney 1954), narcissistic and auto-erotic (Haring 1948), and shame-oriented (Benedict 1946). As Kerlinger (1953) pointed out, little or no empirical data on child-rearing practices or adult personality existed to support these evaluations, and subsequent research showed some of their weaknesses. Considerable data collected later in Japan on patterns of motivation and their development (Caudill 1962; DeVos 1960, 1967; Lanham 1956; Norbeck and Norbeck 1956; Vogel 1963; Caudill and Plath 1966; Hayashi and Yamauchi 1964; Murakami 1959; Marui 1958; Kiefer 1968; Caudill and Weinstein 1969) can be divided into three areas for discussion: a) need achievement, b) affiliative needs, and c) rigidity and "authoritarianism."

Need Achievement

Many authors have identified a generalized disposition to achieve, and related this disposition to individual entrepreneurship and to social development. McClelland (1961) and Atkinson (1958) are foremost proponents of the idea that such a generalized motive can be measured by analyzing expressive behavior, and that it is a crucial factor in social change. Other writers have noted, however, that on the individual level the association between Atkinson and McClelland's *need achievement* and such things as economic success or preference for innovative work is suspiciously weak (Lipset and Bendix 1960; Kahl 1965; Scanzoni 1967). They point out that need achievement might be expressed in the wasteful acquisition of prestige, in sexual conquest, and in many other types of behavior other than "rational" economic pursuits. Need Achievement is a behavioristic or stimulus-response construct; it requires the observation of units of behavior much too minute to be systematically observable at the level of large social groups or major historical events such as the mechanization of the Osaka spinning industry. McClelland's study, *The Achieving Society*, is less an attempt to explain any specific instance of technological change than an attempt to validate Need Achievement at a national level, and the author allows himself the license of classifying postwar Japan as a negative case which supports his theory (i.e., Japan is low on rate of economic development, and low on achievement motivation).

Close examination of differences in achievement motivation between Japan and other nations, and between social classes across nations, has revealed unique aspects of Japanese motivation for change. DeVos (1960) found that the need to achieve as expressed in Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) stories often involved a sense of guilt regarding the individual's relationship with his parents. He hypothesized that high expectations for children resulted in ambivalence toward parents, and a feeling of having hurt the parents when goals were not met.

Hayashi and Yamaushi (1964) report that Japanese children high in achievement motivation have few demands made on them for independence before age seven, and after that age such demands increase. The opposite sequence was found in families with children low in need achievement. This appears to support DeVos's idea (1960, 1965) that achievement and affiliative needs, far from being mutually exclusive, are mutually supporting in the Japanese personality.

Pelzel (1954), Olson (1964), and DeVos (1967) have investigated the relationship between social class and achievement motivation and found that lower-class Japanese entrepreneurs show remarkably high motivation for independence and economic success. The petty entrepreneur has played a large role in Japan's modernization. DeVos attributes the high morale of these artisans to the fact that "two features of Japanese urbanization—first, the pattern of economic paternalism, and second, the capacity to maintain some continuity in the family network—meant that the change to city life could be made without a great deal of psychological insecurity or anomic disorientation." The same point is made by Pelzel (1954) and Vogel (1967), but controverted by Maruyama (1965), who sees widespread isolation and anomia accompanying modernization during the early decades of this century. Kiefer (1968) compared TAT responses (collected by DeVos) of a small sample of lower-class families in a Tokyo slum with responses of a sample of white-collar subjects roughly matched with the first sample for age and sex. Achievement themes were slightly more numerous in the lower-class sample—a striking contrast to most U.S. data on class differences. To my knowledge, a systematic cross-class analysis of child-rearing patterns related to achievement motivation has yet to be made in Japan.

Affiliative Needs

Many writers have commented on the fact that Japan's transition to industrial democracy was not accompanied by a change to Western-style individualism (see esp. Matsumoto 1960). We have already noted the connection, contrary to the McClelland-Atkinson model of achievement motivation, between high need achievement and high affiliative tendencies in Japan expressed in the need to "amaeru" (Doi 1967) and in a sensitivity to the social environment (interpreted by Ruth Benedict [1946] as "shame orientation").

Rigidity and Need for Power

Because of the existence in Japanese life of profound respect for ritual and tradition, a taste for austerity and order, and a need to dominate and be dominated, writers from Gorer (1943) to Lifton (1964) have seen a tendency toward rigidity, compulsiveness, and/or "authoritarianism" in Japanese

character. Some students of social change, notably Hagen (1962), say that rigidity and power-orientation are inimical to innovative behavior and characterize static societies. In Hagen's view, the transition to economic growth during the Meiji Era was possible in Japan because the samurai class had been deprived of status and had "dropped-out" of the authoritarian cultural pattern.

The essential dynamic by which innovative personalities develop in authoritarian cultures, according to Hagen, is as follows: In families which have suffered status deprivation over an extended period, the males of one generation, while accepting the broad values of their society, become increasingly punitive toward their wives and children and less active in the socialization of their heirs. Succeeding generations, drawing their own conclusions from the bad example of their "retreatist" forebears and raised permissively by mothers who sympathize with their plight and see little point in passing on the authoritarian ideal of their social class, develop a self-esteem based on a feeling of their worth as individuals (rather than as bearers of tradition) and a view of the environment as prickly but manageable—the main requisites for innovative personality. Heckhausen arrived independently at similar conclusions after a thorough survey of the research on achievement motivation. He found that warmth and moderate achievement motivation on the part of the mother and a non-interfering stance on the part of the father characterize the parents of children with high need achievement (1967: 155-158).

Averaging the projective test scores of large groups obscures the range and distribution of personality types within them; even so, the "average" Japanese Rorschach does show the lack of spontaneity and low tolerance for ambiguity often observed in stable societies (Norbeck and DeVos 1961). The relationship between these motivational tendencies and social change can only be understood through the analysis of Japanese social structure and values. Pelzel (1954) and Bellah (1957) show that economic achievement and political power are united through Japan's system of patron-client relationships, the former often being translated into the latter. Under such a patron-client system, the payoff for achieving behavior is characteristically delayed, but often greater; moreover, as DeVos (1965) points out, the delay of gratification is continually rewarded by social approval.

Cognitive Orientation: Particularism

Determining the relationship between values and motives, and identifying the major uses of the concept of *values* in the literature on Japan's modernization, are beyond the scope of this report. I will discuss values that shed some light on the unique character of Japanese motivation for social and economic change.

Kluckhohn defines a *value* as "a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive

of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action" (1951: 395). According to this definition, a value is neither the end state toward which action strives, nor the whole of the motive to act. "Values define the limits of permissible cost of an expressional gratification or an instrumental achievement by invoking the consequences of such action for other parts of the (social) system, and for the system as a whole" (*ibid.*, p. 394). This means that behavior cannot be explained on the basis of the personal and social needs relevant to any situation without reference to how the actors *evaluate* those needs. As DeVos (1965) has shown, studies of social change which ignore the cognitive (value) determinants of behavior are likely to bog down in culture-bound assumptions about Human Needs. Neither can a specific value or "cognitive set" be used to explain behavior independently of the specific personal and social needs involved, and when insight into such needs is lacking (as is usually the case in sociological and anthropological explanation) values are merely invoked post hoc to explain what cannot be explained any other way.¹

The previously discussed studies on motivation err in ignoring cognitive (value) determinants of behavior. Students of Japan have paid little attention to specific personal and social needs, which are relevant because of the "particularistic" or "situational" character of Japanese morality. Many authors have noted the tendency of the Japanese to evaluate acts more in terms of their appropriateness to the situation than on abstract moral principles. Benedict (1946), for instance, hypothesized that this reflected an emphasis on shame as opposed to guilt in Japanese character structure. Bellah (1957) saw particularism arising from the high value given to collective versus personal goals; anxiety which arises from the tension between individual and group needs is allayed when the rules governing social relationships are detailed, explicit, and enforced by heavy sanctions. This particularism enables the Japanese to change easily from one set of moral principles to another. Westerners are confused when fanatically militant Japanese accept semicolonial status with relative equanimity, or when a prominent Japanese Marxist suddenly becomes a prominent capitalist with little sense of irony or regret (Olson 1964b). Bennett and McKnight (1956) show how innovators with opposing value systems were responsible for similar changes in the early modernization of Japan. Maruyama describes the "discrepancy between the theory and practice of institutions" in Japan, but erroneously attributes this discrepancy to the importation of "modern institutions and ideas from abroad as 'ready-made articles'" (1965: 491). An abundance of such discrepancies can be found in pre-Meiji history (e.g., Smith 1967).

DeVos (1964) notes a tendency toward a diffuseness of ego boundaries and a consequent narcissistic cathexis of group relationships and social roles. These facets of Japanese character, which are founded in a physically

and emotionally close relationship between mother and child, result in the relative importance of personal relationships and existentially defined role behaviors over adherence to abstract ideas as sources of self-esteem.

This relative freedom from commitment to disembodied values has three consequences for social change. First, conversion to new value systems is easier. Second, old values can be reinterpreted to serve new needs. Third, during periods of rapid change it is likely that many discrepant ideologies will be tested and their adherents will compete for power; the existence of particularistic values will make cooperation between ideological antagonists easier and social change relatively peaceful.

This is not to say that ideals have played a minor role in the modernization of Japan. Values such as industry and frugality, social service, and even "individualism" are often identified with and in turn reinforce particularistically constituted social groups, providing a psychological framework for social change. There has been no dearth of intellectuals committed to new ideals, many suffering profound personal alienation and political persecution as a result of their commitment. While it is difficult to assess the impact of such intellectuals on social change, one does get the feeling that their ideas have often become mere rationalizations in the hands of particularistically oriented followers. In another paper (Kiefer 1969), I have discussed in this vein the use of Marxism by Japanese college students.

Values and the Self

Values emphasizing self-sacrifice, hard work, and competence have contributed to social and economic change in Japan at least since Tokugawa times (e.g., Benedict 1946; Pelzel 1954; Bellah 1957; Vogel 1963; Plath 1964; DeVos 1965). In the individual personality these values involve tendencies to a) delay gratification, b) view the environment as difficult but manageable, and c) regard the self as ultimately perfectible. These traits are expressed in an orientation toward the future (Caudill and Scarr 1962) and an avid interest in personal success (*seiko*) (Dore 1967), and are evident in the careers of such popular heroes as Ninomiya Kinjiro and Miyazawa Kenji. These traits are often accompanied by optimism in the face of great odds. Except in the research on achievement motivation cited above, little attention has been paid to the development of these tendencies, or their distribution in the Japanese population. Although overt values of self-sacrifice and hard work are less evident today (e.g., Plath 1964; Inouye 1964), the psychological tendencies behind these values may continue to be expressed in other values and behaviors.

Social Change and Personality Change

Most Japanese students of personality appear less concerned with the relationship of motivation to social change than with the effects of social change on personality. The loss of the rural "little community" tends to be

equated with the loss of a personality type that values self-sacrifice, hard work, and especially cooperativeness (Inouye 1964; Fujioka 1964; Sakuta 1959; Maruyama 1965). My own work (Kiefer 1968) revealed that many Japanese intellectuals took this position in explaining the breakdown of traditional forms of cooperation in large urban apartment complexes (*danchi*). Evidence of the pressure which social change exerts on personality is found in DeVos and Wagatsuma (1959) and Kiefer (1968). DeVos and Wagatsuma showed disagreement between attitudes toward the family expressed overtly, and feelings expressed covertly, in TAT responses, indicating a psychological lag. I found *danchi* women using traditional aspects of the wife's role to justify major adaptations to new patterns of time use and community organization.

These changes in personality contribute to and are a result of increasing secularization, democratization, individuation, and rationalization. Other sources of social and economic change in Japan are changes in community and family structure, mass media consumption, standard of living, education, and work. All of these changes require adaptive personality changes, and in turn personality changes effect social and economic change.

Overview and Suggestions

Because of unique features of Japanese social structure and values, studies of Japan have a great deal to contribute to our concepts of motivation and values. It is now generally recognized, for example, that particularistic values may advance—rather than impede—economic development by giving a kind of flywheel effect to the morale of the individual caught in the jerky current of commercial growth. It is difficult to characterize the eclectic literature on the psychology of social change, except to say that there has been little long-range or large-scale research specifically designed to measure both personal motivation and cognitive orientations relevant to economic and social change. Possible research designs for exploring these relationships are suggested below:

- a) Biographies of a variety of socioeconomic “types” would be useful in generating hypotheses relating lifestyle, particularly motivation, and milieu.
- b) In vivo studies of rapid social processes, such as the spread of fads or political and religious movements, using motivational survey techniques, would yield valuable data on the stability of values.
- c) Longitudinal research on families, organizations, and communities would clarify the effects of both developmental and historical change on motives and values.
- d) More studies of groups who deviate widely from motivational

and value norms would clarify the effects of normative tendencies.

- e) Further research on motivation for change, in which such variables as sibling rank, occupation, socioeconomic status, and certain child-rearing and value variables are considered in surveys using stratified sampling techniques, will be needed as hypotheses develop out of other research.

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NOTES

1. This last clause paraphrases part of a personal communication from Harry Scarr, for which I thank him.

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