VICTOR C. UCHENDU

SOCIOECONOMIC AND CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF RURAL CHANGE IN EAST AND WEST AFRICA*

Cultural anthropologists are inclined to demonstrate the role of culture in determining the course of human conduct. What is usually overlooked is the fact, demonstrated in everyday experience, of man's self-consciousness, which enables him, individually and collectively, to reverse himself and to attempt to reform his ways in accordance with rational requirements.

—David Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology* (2)

INTRODUCTION

All social institutions, and the ideas that link them together to the core of a culture, change over time. Man, as a culture bearer, is the critical agent of this change. Man is not just a passive culture bearer; he is, through the choices he makes or is allowed to make in society, an active culture builder. Culture change involves, among other things, choice-making in society. This choice-making is not a mechanical operation of selecting between given alternatives. It involves value judgments which often raise the problem of accommodating a radically different trait within an existing culture complex. Although the fact of change is a constant, the rate of change varies between cultures; and within any given culture the variation in rates of change over time can be dramatic.

One generalization must be made: the most important change which occurs at the threshold of modernization or economic development in any culture is "attitudinal"—a change in attitude which induces individuals to demand improvement in their existing way of life, to work harder, to invest, to want change

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because they find it pays them to experiment and to innovate. The cultivation, achievement, and sustenance of this orientation to change is crucial for the whole question of economic development. It is crucial because this "change-oriented attitude" generates the "self-spreading effect" without which the cumulative impact of innovations becomes difficult to sustain.

In this paper we shall examine the combination of factors—socioeconomic and cultural—which brings about change orientation in African farm populations as an economy approaches a threshold of development. To do this, we must examine the bases of traditional African societies and economics, the orientation of African cultures, and the historical paths to socioeconomic transition.

Introduction to the Problem of Rural Change in Africa

Although African nations are among the youngest in the world, African cultures are also among the oldest. The problem of ancient cultures seeking a reasonable accommodation in a mid-twentieth-century world remains one of the unresolved problems of African development. Up to the end of World War II, the chief concern of the colonial governments which controlled the destiny of Africa was the maintenance of law and order and the development of export trade, based primarily on agricultural produce, which helped to pay for colonial administration. Planned economic development, illustrated in British Africa by the Ten-Year Development Plan, was a post–World War II phenomenon. Even under this "night watchman" philosophy of government some achievements were registered. Education was encouraged; public health facilities, water supplies, roads, and railways were developed. The approach of independence, however, brought with it a more radical outlook on African problems. The feeling developed, not only among African leaders but also among friends of Africa abroad, that the new sovereign status is inconsistent with the existing poverty, disease, and ignorance in Africa. This feeling created a dual commitment: a commitment to build new nations and a commitment to modernize national economies.

Herein lies the paradox of African development efforts. The goal of development has been widely accepted in the last two decades, a period in which the world has been unusually prosperous. Industrial production in advanced countries has been growing faster than ever, about 5 to 6 per cent per annum; and world trade is growing even faster, about 6 to 7 per cent (*16*). Although GNP in African countries increased at some 4 to 6 per cent between 1945 and 1960 (*13*, p. 17), the rate of growth has since declined. The low rate of growth in African economies is related to a number of factors, among which could be listed: Constraint in the traditional societies, poor infrastructure, low-level technology, a late start, misallocation of capital, and, in the post-1960 period, worsening terms of trade. Nevertheless, Africa has registered some significant achievements in exports. It contributes about 70 per cent of the world's cocoa; and 25 per cent of the world's total exportable coffee now comes from Africa. But African economies are still quite vulnerable. According to one estimate, 27 African countries, accounting for about 70 per cent of Africa's population, derive more than two-thirds of their total export earnings from three major commodities, and 15 of these countries depend on only one commodity for more than 50 per cent of their export earnings (*11*, p. 243). Although this pattern of export performance calls for diversification, it also demonstrates how deeply rooted African economies are in agriculture. A strong incentive support is needed in the agricultural sector, where most Africans are employed now and, in the foreseeable future, will continue to make their living.

Accepting the policy statements of African political leaders as evidence of their commitment to increasing rural development, the rate of actual development will depend on two essential factors: the existing economic potentialities in each African country and the involvement of the rural-based population with the development efforts. Opinions about the potentialities for development in African economies vary markedly. To some, Africa is a vast continent with untapped resources, awaiting only the injection of the right amount of capital, research inputs, and modern technologies for its takeoff. Others paint a grim picture. To them, Africa poses many insurmountable obstacles to rapid economic development; its poor soils, unfavorable climate, its long isolation from the world cultural centers, its century-long period of external political control, and, not the least, its tradition-bound societies dominated by kinship obligations and outmoded social structures make rapid development impossible. Whatever is the right opinion—and the truth lies somewhere in between the extremes—it is no longer doubted that rural change is possible in Africa, and there is evidence that rural change, though it may be spotty and uneven, is occurring (*9*; *17*).

The lingering questions remain: What are the appropriate strategies for achieving this change, and what rate of change can be accommodated by societies and cultures at different levels of transitions to market economies? To answer these questions, we must examine the cultural backgrounds of African societies.

Contrasting Features of East and West African Cultures

Social anthropologists who know Africa find it difficult to make many valid generalizations about traditional African societies and cultures. One important observation which has implications for any program of rural development in Africa is the fact of cultural diversities among the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa. Because of these cultural variations, one should be careful in describing as the "African culture" the traditions and ways of life of one African community or ethnic group. Without severe limitations and clearly specified items or traits of comparison, the term "African culture" as pertaining to a way of life uniformly shared by peoples of Africa becomes meaningless. Certain models of developing societies—which are intended to include African societies—are so far from social realities in Africa that neither those who have studied African societies and cultures nor those who bear these cultures are able to identify their respective societies (*20*). There are many cultural traits which may be said to be distinctively African—traits shared by Eastern and Western African peoples—although they are neither limited to Africa nor universal throughout the continent (*14*, p. 52). Those characteristics which I consider relevant to the organization of rural change, or which might frustrate certain innovations if their implications are not understood, will be outlined.

The classification of African cultures is usually approached through one of five models: the culture area; the kinship; the polity; the linguistic; and the cultural focus.

The culture area model provides a map which delineates cultural similarities and differences on an Africa-wide continental basis. This approach, which is at an intermediate level of generality, relates characteristics of a particular culture to the culture areas into which the entire continent is divided. Although this model provides us with "the spatial dimension" of African cultures, only very limited inferences and correlations can be made from it.

Kinship provides a second model. In kinship studies, distinctions are made between segmentary and non-segmentary lineage systems and between patrilineal and matrilineal systems. With varying emphasis, both social systems are represented in East and West African societies.

In the consideration of African traditions of government, a third model—the polity—is used. Distinctions are made between centrally organized polities and acephalous political systems. The role of the economy in sustaining specialized political institutions and elite groups is stressed. The major linguistic groupings (a fourth model) which have been isolated on the basis of historical and structural relatedness obscure the considerable differences that exist among the languages of different ethnic groups within one language family. A fifth model is based on the concept of "cultural focus," which refers to "a people's principal focal interest" in life. It provides a principle which might give more insight into some of the motivations of African societies, but as a classificatory device it has serious limitations, having succeeded only in distinguishing between ancestor-based societies, mainly in West Africa, and cattle-complex societies, mainly in East Africa.

These five models have their uses; but as theoretical tools in the hands of a student of economic development, their limitations are obvious. We cannot say on the basis of any of these models what will be the likely response of a given society to a given set of innovations, or, put in another way, what set of innovations or programs of directed change will succeed in one area and not in another.

Much more relevant to problems of rural change are such factors as demography, the ecological setting of a given society—especially the distinction between the jural control of resources and accessibility to and use of resources, the residential pattern, and the nature of farming systems. The whole attitude of a people to life and to the future—their World View or dominant ethos—as shaped by these and other features of their environment stands out as a factor of preeminent importance.

One major contrast between East and West African societies lies in the size of their respective ethnic groups. With the exception of the Baganda, Kikuyu, Luo, and the Sukuma, ethnic units with more than one million people are found only in West Africa. Despite this fact, both regions share a common feature of wide differences in population size among the ethnic units. The demographic features of African ethnic groups must be stressed because they make nonsense of the model of small, isolated, peasant societies which is often presented in development literature. West African societies are not only large, but many of them have a tradition of urban and infra-urban settlements, especially village-oriented settlements, which, in striking contrast, are absent or of comparatively recent development in most parts of East Africa. The demographic and settlement patterns in West Africa tend to strengthen corporate community life through the perpetuation of a strong lineage system with common rights in land. They also tend to make land tenure reforms much more difficult, especially in areas of high population pressure. However, where the economic environment permits rural investment, especially in tree crop farming, population pressure tends to bring land into the market much faster than would otherwise be the case.

Probably variations in ecology are no less marked than the diversity in African cultures and the demographic patterns of African societies. The ethnography of African ecology is much broader and probably much more relevant in comprehending problems of African agriculture than what we can learn from the geographer's map. In a farming system characterized by abundant land relative to manpower and where technology remains primitive, jural control over the best land resources gives definite economic advantages. But jural control does not necessarily imply restricted use of resources. Before the impact of cash cropping, many African societies in marginal environments used land resources which they did not or could not jurally control. So the "right of ownership" and "privilege of use" were distinct. Given this flexibility, the concept of a "closed economic system," which does not take into account an expandable ecosystem, does violence to social reality in Africa. To illustrate this point, the development of the migrant labor system in mines and wage work centers of both East and West Africa is but a modern counterpart of this traditional expandable ecosystem. The Tiv system of land tenure, which involves a predatory expansion into land resources which they neither hold nor control, could also be cited. The symbiotic relationship between the cattle Fulani and the Middle-belt farmer in Nigeria, in which grazing rights are bartered for the fertilization of fields, is another example of adjustment in a marginal environment. So also is the agricultural system of the Kusasi, in northeastern Ghana, in which the Kusasi farmer allows the Busanga woman to grow groundnuts on an already exhausted field, a symbiotic arrangement that enriches the Kusasi soil with nitrogen and gives the Busanga woman an opportunity to grow some groundnuts on rent-free land. The Kusasi system is much more than a technically efficient farming practice. It is another illustration of the flexibility in the use of land resources among African peoples.

Ecological potential influences population density and the distribution of population over much of Africa. Areas of high ecological potential are highly correlated with dense population. This is to be expected given the primitive nature of technology and the high value which African political systems place on the control of people rather than the control of resources. In East Africa there is good evidence to show that the Kenya highlands were much more densely populated before the rinderpest epidemic of the late nineteenth century. In West Africa, and especially in Nigeria, the major population axes which center around Kano, Yorubaland, Igboland, and Ashanti owe much to relatively high ecological potential.[1]

Although the ecological factor influences the choice of residence, the actual residential pattern develops as a result of a combination of factors, including the need for defense, the strength of kinship bonds, a people's ideas about the best way to live in peace with their neighbors, and the effectiveness of the social sanc-

[1] For another interpretation of the population distribution, see M. K. Bennett (*4*, pp. 209–10).

tions which make members of a lineal group loyal to their corporate unit. Generally, nucleated village settlements are more characteristic of West than East Africa. Although this pattern of settlement makes the provision and administration of social services easier, it also creates problems of rural change. Nucleated villages set the pattern of land use and generally result in overfarming in the village areas and underutilization of land resources outside the residential boundaries. On the other hand, the Kusasi of northeastern Ghana, who live in dispersed homesteads, demonstrate that this pattern of land use is not restricted to nucleated settlements. Ethnographically a Kusasi farm falls into three distinct fields: the "compound field," which is intensively and yearly cropped; the "intermediate field," which receives some attention; and the "bush field," which receives the least attention. Experience in Kusasi country shows that innovations which help to reduce subsistence risk (manuring, seedbed preparation, early sowing) have been much more readily incorporated in the compound field than in any other field. The limiting factor seems to be labor.

One of the problems of land use in nucleated settlements is the creation of differential population pressures on land (*6*, p. 48), though the exercise of local sovereignty over land may have similar effects (*22*, pp. 94–96). But experience in Ghana shows that new economic opportunities in a society with flexible land tenure rules can effect a rationalization in land use. The cocoa industry in Ghana is creating not only its own social organization but is modifying the residential pattern and thereby tends to optimize land use in those areas where the soil is suitable to cocoa growing. There is what amounts to a hierarchy of settlement pattern, in demographic terms, in the cocoa-growing areas. The small "cocoa villages" in the bush interact with the "roadside villages," which are, in turn, satellites of bigger traditional towns. The effect of this is to bring much of the available good cocoa land under cultivation, an effort that has resulted in more crop specialization in the last three decades.

African farming systems have been greatly modified in recent decades by a combination of factors: population pressure, cash cropping, changing technology, and, in a few areas, a new attitude to farming and direct intervention by government. The traditional land rotation system is no longer possible in areas of high population density, but this farming system still leaves its imprint in fragmented holdings where individual interests are maintained, and in resistance to consolidation where it promises little immediate economic or social return. In both East and West Africa, a growing number of small and big farmers, employing hired labor and using improved implements, are producing for the market and buying their foodstuffs—a radical change from the system of subsistence farming. Throughout Africa the abundance of land relative to labor dictated a pattern of farming systems which economizes labor: land rotation; the system of multiple cropping; the broadcast sowing of seeds, especially in the savanna areas; and the relatively little attention paid to "bush fields," where subsistence needs can be guaranteed by the "compound fields."

Important for the comprehension of the problems of rural change is the social organization of the farming system. The number of independent economic units in a farming system varies. Because of the impact of cash crops, the average size of individual farms has increased, while the satellite interests shared in any economic unit are declining. But all over Africa the traditional rights of the men and women who cooperate in farming are defined. Unless technical change provides separate incentives for these sex-linked rights, the willing cooperation of women in a few major critical farm operations like sowing could be jeopardized. The cultural pitfall of confusing the *formal* power of an African husband with his *real* power could be damaging. The responsibility of the African wife for feeding the children in her cooking unit, the fact of co-wife rivalry, and the fact that African women own property in their own right indicate that there are primary and secondary interests tied up in an economic farming unit. In very few cases do programs to introduce technical change recognize this fact.

Summary

In both East and West Africa the pattern of indigenous economic institutions varies markedly. But in both regions acquisitive values and status distinctions based on wealth are common. The symbols of wealth may be cattle in one society, plural wives in others, but all over Africa the control over people is an ideal cultural goal—a goal that gives an orientation to African traditional economies.

The orientation of African traditional agriculture is not necessarily toward growth; it is a prestige-oriented economy—an economy where surplus produce is converted as soon as practicable into items that confer prestige: plural wives, cattle, power, and—most important—the command over people. The picture of African agriculture today is one of change—change from a prestige economy to a market economy. Before we trace the factors which are making for this change, let us examine the underlying factors which prevented the traditional economy from achieving rapid growth.

THE PRIMACY OF POLITY: AN INTEGRATING HYPOTHESIS

I have asserted that African societies are acquisitive cultures. Why has this acquisitiveness not created or led to a growth-oriented economy? Here scholarly opinions vary. Schultz would argue that the major constraint is "a technological gap" (*19*), a persuasive argument which does not explain why some African farmers, despite their economic rationality (*12*), prefer to maximize their short-term social or prestige-oriented goals rather than make long-term investment commitments. The "target-oriented behavior" hypothesis is no longer persuasive because we now know that this is not a culture-bound phenomenon; that wants and aspirations are never static but tend to grow with achievement and decline with failure and are heavily influenced by the performances of one's social or reference groups.

Despite the bewildering variety in African cultures, political arrangements, farming systems, and traditional economies, it appears to me that a common theme which runs through traditional African societies is what may be called the "primacy of polity" (*21*). Without any intention to enthrone a theory of "political determinism" as a normative ideal for African economic development, I want to argue that this "polity primacy" is ethnographically real and that, while it has made for social development, it has also helped to inhibit economic growth.

Ethnographic support for the "polity primacy" in African traditional societies is not lacking, but its implications for rural change have seldom been examined. Faller's observation may be cited (7, pp. 126–27).

> In traditional Africa goods and services, both as symbols and as facilities, circulate primarily in terms of political relations, for it is the polity that dominates stratification. Traditional African societies have characteristically exhibited patterns of rural differentiation in which political specialization has been more prominent than economic .... In the new African nations, as in the old, political structures seem likely to continue to dominate economic ones.

The operative theme is the subordination of economic goals to political goals. In many African polities, whether centralized or uncentralized, the relatively static economies were manipulated and often exploited by the more dynamic political systems. The primary goal of the polity was to gain control over people—over new subjects. Individuals increased their relative power for political competition by having many wives and a large herd of cattle, or followers, as well as children. The manipulation of social relations—all of which involved a high turnover of goods and services—for a net gain in political support, was the ideal of African society.

Viewing the same problem from a different perspective, Colson provides an economic interpretation to "polity primacy," arguing, in effect, that the "control over people" and the "building up of claims against a large number of people" constitute the best form of investment in many traditional African societies. She writes (5, pp. 70–73).

> Over much of Africa life is conditioned by certain attitudes towards property and persons which are characteristics of a non-industrial, stable society, in which opportunities and power depend on status within social groups rather than on the control of investment: where, indeed, the safest form of investment, and often the only one, is still to be found in the building up of claims against persons .... Men were primarily concerned with associating themselves with those who had some diffuse obligation to assist and protect them, and the maintenance of these social ties was a matter which took precedence over other interests. The ambitious counted their wealth in terms of followers and used such wealth as came their way to increase the number of followers and to bind these more firmly to them.... Wealth is often interpreted not in terms of obvious ownership of resources or a higher standard of living but in terms of the number of people against whom one has a claim.

Polity primacy in most parts of traditional Africa did not mean political authoritarianism or overcentralization of political institutions. In fact, the noncentralized polities greatly outnumber the centralized polities. The argument in modern Africa that polity primacy is necessary for economic development may be right, but such primacy is certainly not a sufficient condition; otherwise traditional African economies would have achieved a takeoff long before the advent of Europeans in Africa. Furthermore, the increasing tendency to equate polity primacy with "centralized dictatorship" courts economic disaster, for it robs the villagers—the prime movers of rural change—of the opportunity to make those economic decisions that generate self-spreading change. There is good evidence in both traditional and modern Africa to suggest that higher degrees of economic performance are associated with greater political competitiveness, whether the unit of competition is a village, an ethnic segment, or, as in most modern states (which are multicultural), regional segments.

PATHS TO SOCIOECONOMIC TRANSITION

African economies have never been known to be static. But the rate of change registered by these economies in the last fifty years is probably without precedent. In this respect we are justified in asserting that the orientation of African societies is gradually changing from its traditional emphasis. Economic well-being is accepted as a goal. But I do not share—just because I do not see much evidence for—some of the oversimplification of the theory of "revolution of expectations" operating at the village level. The general rise in expectations cannot be denied, but it appears to me that the expectations of the village-based African cultivator are modest, realistic, and reasonable. Because his aspirations are reasonable, the African cultivator is not yet prepared to sacrifice everything in his traditional culture in order to achieve the appurtenances of modern life, which for him are not at present compelling. He is quite prepared to work hard for those goals which he sees as his "felt needs." This is how economic growth begins—through the satisfaction of felt needs.

The Kisii, Sukuma, Teso, Kusasi, or Tonga cultivator wants his own piece of land, a plough and a weeder as implements, a better price for his produce, good education for his children, an accessible water supply for his cattle and his domestic needs, and possibly a tin roof for his house. The more affluent Ashanti, Krobo, or Yoruba cocoa farmer wants capital to extend his farm operations, a higher producer price to meet the cost of rising wages; when he accumulates enough wealth he may build a country house, buy a used automobile, or arrange a lavish funeral ceremony considered long overdue.

The important change is that the priorities of many African farmers are changing—and they are changing in a direction favorable to economic growth and rural transformation, especially in those societies where the acceptance of change has resulted in greater economic security and where government economic policies are consistent enough to command the farmer's confidence as well as provide adequate incentives.

However economists may define economic development, for those who are sociologically oriented it may be defined as the increased differentiation and specialization of socioeconomic structure and institutions, which are brought about by the willing participation of individuals making economic decisions that reflect their felt needs. The aim of rural development is the achievement of rural welfare, and this can only be brought about by increasing the effectiveness, capacity, and efficiency of the performance of the economic system.

Cash Crops

Africa's greatest economic achievement of the last sixty years came through the introduction of new cash crops and the exploitation of indigenous forest products. It is true that new food crop introductions played an important role, but their importance, especially during the early period of colonial contact, lies in maintaining "political peace" rather than in the creation of economic specialization, on which economic growth depends. The disparity in rural wealth between

East and West Africa, especially up to the 1950's, is related to the head start which West Africa had in producing cash crops for the world market. The agrarian revolution in East Africa in the last 15 years is often attributed to changes in land tenure arrangements, but I wonder whether these changes would be necessary or would even be accepted had it not been for the profitable opportunities which multiple high-value cash cropping offered to the farmer who accepted institutional reforms. It is important to recognize what the small farmer can do, notwithstanding rigid cultural constraints, if government economic policy shows confidence in him. I am thinking about the Ghanaian cocoa farmers, who established Africa's largest single agricultural industry (four and one-half million acres of cocoa with an output estimated in 1967 at 400,000 tons) within the first three or four decades of this century without any government credit facilities or bank loans. We can appreciate this achievement the more when we realize that it involved purchase of land in many cases, costly litigations over land rights, and the creation of new immigrant communities. The experience in Ghana is not an isolated one. It can be taken as a valid generalization that throughout Africa profitable crops have not been rejected because of any rigidities in social structure. The limiting factors seem to be ecological, technical, and lack of the necessary incentives.

Government Action—Infrastructure

Government action, especially in the building of infrastructure—roads, railways, ports, and research centers—has been most helpful to rural change. A strong correlation exists in Africa between the development of infrastructure and rural welfare. For one thing, roads break social isolation and create opportunities for trade. In these days of development planning and "planned targets" we must remind ourselves that before 1946 most parts of colonial Africa, certainly British Africa, did not have any *Plan,* and yet the foundation of rural development was laid. If conditions are favorable for the expansion of economic activities—if the farmer is persuaded to plant more cash crops, work harder, and achieve greater marketable output from his farm enterprises—the economy will grow rapidly whether there is a Plan or not. I am not suggesting that developmental planning is not necessary. I am suggesting that we should pay more attention to the farmer than to the production of an elegant Plan.

The Immigrant Population

Government action is not enough. The communication link between government action and the village farmer is critical. In the colonial period, the trader, whether alien or local, acted as an economic broker between government programs and the farmer. In the absence of extension workers the trader fulfilled this role, penetrating the village, encouraging the growing of cotton, oil palm, coffee, and even cocoa, and buying and bulking the produce—often at a price very advantageous to him, but certainly profitable to the grower as well. In these days of political turmoil, it is easier to dramatize the exploitative role of the trader and immigrant than to give credit to his positive economic contributions to rural change.

The immigrants have come from different cultural backgrounds and initially possessed varying degrees of technical skill, capital, and education. The Syrians and Lebanese in West Africa, the Indians and British in East and Central Africa, and much more recently the Krobos in the states of Akim-Abuakwa (Ghana), the Igbo in northern Nigeria, and the Sukuma in Bazinza country (Tanzania) have made substantial contributions to the local economy of their adopted homes. The racial diversity of these immigrants shows that *race* is not a factor in their economic success. These immigrants have one thing in common: experience gained in their home country taught them a different attitude toward work, saving, and business responsibility. Generally they work harder than the local community; they save and invest more, have more business contacts, and know how to please and keep their customers. They have shown more willingness to bear some of the risks of innovation, and, with special reference to Kenya immigrants, they made possible the rapid diffusion of exotic cattle among African farmers in the highlands through making available for sale beasts that are adapted to the local conditions. In this way they reduced the risk of innovation for the small farmer.

There is good evidence that the local communities are changing their traditional attitudes in reaction against what they consider to be economic exploitation by the settler community among them. The stimulus to economic participation and competition in rural Africa generated by immigrant populations emphasizes the need for training and apprenticeship. The District Farm Institutes in East and Central Africa, especially in those districts where adequate research has come up with something profitable to offer to the farmer, seem to be paying off.

Economic development in Africa has also benefited from external capital—investments in mines and a few plantations. External investment in agriculture is comparatively small, and in countries of West Africa quite recent. Economists who are better qualified to assess the economic impact of these investments on rural population frighten us with such terms as "enclave economies," "dual economies," and "growth without development"—suggesting that all is not well in the rural sector.

The relevant issues for a sociologist are questions regarding rural participation, either directly as wage earners or as out-growers to a plantation system; the kind of skills which workers acquire as laborers on the plantation and whether or not such skills will be functional or dysfunctional in their local communities on retirement; and the stimulus to local production and direct services (e.g., the sale of food, etc.) which the presence of a plantation generates. There is evidence that a goodly number of plantation workers are able to acquire some capital to set up an independent economic activity, whether in trading or in farming. It is equally true that the largest small-scale farm investments have occurred in countries which are not usually thought of as "enclave economies."

A much more important contribution of the plantation system to the rural economy is the creation of a new awareness that farming could be a profitable business. A good number of the progressive farmers in a sample of a recently completed field study (*8*) attributed the decision to become farmers to their work experience in the estates or on European farms. This is especially true of Kisii in Kenya and Mazabuka in Zambia, where a new generation of farmers (small in number but a radical departure from tradition) is springing up. No matter how strong the stimulus created by migrant experience, this tends to have no impact unless the home base offers some opportunity to use the skills and capital so accumulated. The skills and capital accumulated by Kusasi migrants in the cocoa areas of southern Ghana have not changed the economy of their home base, because both the environment and government programs have little to offer and opportunity to use the skills does not exist. For estates and plantations to stimulate rural change they must offer more than wage opportunities. Rural change is best served if plantations stimulate local output, while the opportunities in the home base make the investment of skills and capital profitable to the small farmer. Experience in a recent oil palm rehabilitation program in eastern Nigeria shows that much investment capital comes from urban-based workers (*18*). The flight of capital from rural to urban centers is the traditional bane of classical peasant society. A capital inflow to the rural society stimulates economic growth, even though it may be advantageous for the net flow to be in the reverse direction because of the heavy capital requirements for infrastructure and industrial expansion.

Economic growth is also fostered by increasing specialization of functions. Population growth, especially the growth of towns, makes new demands on the rural community. Urban population density is a major determinant of internal demand for local food staples which must come from the rural sector. The production of food staples for the growing urban centers is becoming an economic proposition for farmers who have easy access to the urban market. The export capacity of the rural sector should no longer be measured entirely on the basis of traditional cash crops, because it pays many African farmers to grow and sell food crops rather than cotton or cocoa. In the Geita District of Tanzania the farmers who made the highest incomes in 1966 derived it mostly from sales of cassava to the Shinyanga area rather than from the sale of cotton. In the eastern region of Ghana, where a combination of swollen shoot disease and blackpod infestation has reduced cocoa yields and income considerably, the Krobo in Begoro District have turned more attention to food crop production, which is now much more profitable than cocoa.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND CULTURAL VALUES AS RELATED TO RURAL CHANGE

If the structure of a society were entirely flexible change would be much more rapid, but whether this change would be cumulative is a debatable question. We need some element of tradition and stability to make for cumulative change. Every society is protected against "change without cumulative impact" through its cultural values, whether they are class values (subcultures), interest group values (clubs, associations), or values focal to the society. Cultural values, therefore, do not reject all innovations but certain incompatible innovations. Since the total ramifications of any one innovation are never known in advance, the acceptance of an innovation involves changes in values over time.

Given the above background, I would argue on a very broad sociological level that the structure of society does not in itself inhibit or promote economic change but does have an important bearing on the form of organization compatible with economic growth or rural change in a given society. It is not necessary to turn a matrilineal society into a patrilineal one or to create nuclear families from extended families before economic growth can take place. On the other hand, the process of economic growth does reorient the structure of society as the existing structure becomes dysfunctional in a new economic setting and as new economic institutions and structures begin to inspire confidence in their ability to play substitute functional roles. Nobody would argue that the Yoruba cocoa farmer (who is patrilineal) is more responsive to economic incentive than the Ashanti cocoa farmer (who comes from a matrilineal society) solely on the ground of their differing social structure.

A major problem in traditional social structures lies, not in their inflexibility, but in the fact that what flexibility they have is not oriented toward economic growth. Because of what I referred to earlier as "polity primacy" the units of competition in African societies, whether lineages, clans, or wards, are much more adapted to political action and schism than to collective action that serves the needs of development. It is much easier to mobilize a lineage group in a litigation case than to get all the members to participate in an economic venture requiring the pooling of resources. But this is more a problem of value orientation than a defect in structural arrangement. Where the opportunity exists, these structures have become oriented to economic growth. The migrant cocoa farmers in southern Ghana provide a classic example of this reorientation where kinship and nonkinship groups have cooperated in the purchase of large tracts of land under a contractual company arrangement (*10*). If we accept the view that economic development is a socioeconomic process involving cultural adjustments (*3*), we should also accept the view that social structure must expand in scale and complexity as economic growth gets under way. This view of socioeconomic development takes us away from static concepts to a more dynamic concept which demands making use of existing social arrangements, where adaptable, and the creation of new institutional arrangements which are lacking but required at certain levels of the developmental process. In my view, an integrated social structure can become the basis for rural change if the innovations are directed toward the expansion of its scale so that new functions can be performed as various parts of the social structure come to be oriented toward economic growth. In short, existing institutions can serve the goals of rural development by acquiring "new contents."

A consideration of African value systems brings us directly into confrontation with such variables as kinship, religion, leadership roles, and the problems of political power. The problem of power may be examined first. Socioeconomic change creates new power centers, but not without a struggle. In the Western model of development, a new capitalist class based on trade, commerce, and industry challenged and displaced the former landed aristocracy. The philosophical basis for this challenge and the dominant explanation for the victory are provided by the Protestant ethic. In Africa where a landed aristocracy virtually does not exist (Buganda created one by an error arising from colonial misinterpretation) and where a capitalist class has not really emerged, the struggle for social realignment of power takes a different twist. The genuine roadblock to development lies in the control which the existing power structures exercise over their subjects rather than over resources. A central African proverb makes the point: "The chief rules over people and not over land."

In those African societies where the authority structures permit individuals to make their own economic decisions, rural change appears much easier than in others where most decisions must be made at the top. Authority structures in Africa do not resist innovation, as such, but seem opposed to changes that effect the restructuring of existing social relations. This is illustrated in most parts of Africa by local attitudes toward "strangers" from land-deficit areas gaining rights to land in land-surplus areas. The coexistence of land-surplus economies with land-deficit economies in many African states is related to this problem of power as reflected in pockets of local sovereignty in land throughout Africa (22). There is a great need, especially in societies in which rigid authoritarianism creates an extreme dependency orientation on the part of the individual, for concentrating on supplying felt needs and incentives so as to make these individuals more self-reliant in economic decision-making.

African religious values are not entirely incompatible with rural change. If African religions do not stress the values of the Protestant ethic, they also do not explicitly forbid them. African religion lacks the rigidity of Islam and has shown itself to be highly syncretic. It has no problem in accommodating other deities whether African or Western. Unlike Buddhism, its emphasis on other-worldly virtues is limited, and, unlike Hinduism, the stress on asceticism is almost negative except in a few rituals of "power quest" for priestly or political aspirants. The typical African religion is highly practical and pragmatic in orientation. Africans want their ancestors to bring in more wealth and more children in return for annual or periodic sacrifices. They want protection for the family, the lineage, or the tribe. They want a place among the ancestral hierarchy for the good if they die of ripe age. They stress continuity and reciprocity between the living, the dead, and the unborn.

There are two major defects in African religious practices (and these are by no means universal throughout Africa) which are detrimental to rural development. First is the emphasis on conspicuous giving. African rites for the dead tend to consume time and resources, even more so as the lineage principle becomes important in social organization. It is true that these rituals articulate social relations and maintain the solidarity of the social group, but they tend to be impoverishing and in times past have led to enslavement of children. It could be argued, too, that the importance attached to mortuary rites is a great stimulus to hard work and to saving. But as science and technology solve the social and economic problems of child mortality, crop failure, drought, and increased productivity, a new emphasis is needed.

Another defect in ancestor-based religion is the lack of physical mobility which respect for ancestors' graveyards induces. This is especially true of land-deficit economies, based mainly on settled agriculture. Residential mobility is much more common in East and Central Africa than in West Africa. Even in West Africa this behavior pattern is changing, especially where economic opportunities have created a new kind of security leading to increasing secularization. Although the facts are not fully available, the failure of the Gonja settlement scheme in Ghana is related partly to the fear which the Tallensi and Frafra had over threatened vengeance from their ancestors.

Man has considerable capacity to rationalize. Contrary to Weber's views on the subject, religious systems are seldom in themselves an impediment to economic growth. Whenever the opportunity is ripe, a religious philosophy can and has been reinterpreted to justify departure from existing behavior.

The level of economic anxiety in African societies can be underestimated just as the inhibiting roles of witchcraft and "fear of the wealthy complex" can be overemphasized. The endemic mistrust which is attributed to Africans is no less mythical than the view that Banfield's atomized village (*1*) is a model of traditional societies.

The Gusii of Kenya provide an example of African societies where rapid rural change has been achieved by a people whose culture emphasizes ancestor worship, authoritarianism, interpersonal hostility, pervasive witchcraft attribution, and jealousy of the wealthy. As their ethnographer tells us, the Gusii fear of the wealthy "does not inspire the wealthy to share with others less fortunate [but] on the contrary, they use their wealth to dominate their inferiors through loans and threats of expensive litigation" (*15*). Within a period of two decades the Gusii society has risen from a poor background of subsistence economy to a prosperous community where multiple high-value cash cropping, exotic cattle, and good extension work based upon effective, adaptive research findings have combined to bring about cumulative rural change.

IMPACT OF CHANGE ON RURAL COMMUNITIES

A factor of major importance which has conditioned the attitudes of many African societies to rural change in the last fifty years is economic opportunity. The ecological potential and the varying degrees of authority structures which characterize African societies have also affected the rates of change where this economic opportunity exists. Opportunities for cash cropping, which are limited by ecological factors and the concentration of the industrial and commercial activities in a few centers, have combined to create in modern Africa two societies and three economies. There is the small society that is relatively well off, based primarily on wages and salaries and living mainly in urban centers. There is also the larger society of the poor, deriving their meager money income from cash cropping and petty trading, often supplemented with migrant labor activities.

Because of the ecological limitations on cash crop extension, there tend to be three economies: First is the small but growing industrial and commercial sector, sometimes a purely enclave economy dominated by estates or mining activities. The second is a monetized agricultural sector, dominated by smallholder operators, who grow cocoa, oil palm, cotton, tea, coffee, maize, groundnut, or pyrethrum for export. Third is the purely or predominantly subsistence economy where ecology is a major barrier to cash cropping and in which cash income is derived from the export of labor to the first two economies. If this implies a degree of economic interpenetration, the disparity in rural welfare which it manifests must also be appreciated.

The problem of rural change in Africa must take the two societies and three economies into consideration because each poses a different problem for change agents. It is not the social organization or cultural ethos which has created this pattern in many African countries. Three factors stand out: economic opportunity, ecology, and technical limitations. Social organization and cultural factors are both helpful in accounting for differential rates of change. They do not explain why certain economic activities are ecologically or technically linked. African societies which have had the opportunity to change and the incentives to alter their way of life have tended to respond in ways favorable to rural change and development.

Experience in Kisii and Mazabuka vindicates this assertion. For about three decades the primary emphasis in agricultural extension work in Kisii was to get the farmers to adopt soil conservation measures—narrow-based terraces, live wash stops, and bunding along trash lines. Later on, enclosures became another subject for campaign. As long as the conservation measures were treated as ends in themselves rather than as means to achieve more farm income, little response came from the Gusii farmers. But Gusii attitudes to farm innovations changed dramatically in the 1950's when various high-value cash crops were introduced[2]—pyrethrum in 1952, tea in 1957, exotic cattle and synthetic maize in 1963, and hybrid maize the following year. The development of tea production in Kisii Highland expanded access roads, and income from pyrethrum and tea made investment in exotic cattle possible. But investment in exotic cattle implied a much more radical change in attitude than was necessary for tea or pyrethrum. Local cattle, which are traditionally valued for their number, were increasingly replaced by the exotic cattle that yielded more milk and more income but demanded a higher standard of enclosure, pasture maintenance, planned rotation of grazing, regular spraying against ticks, and the purchase of feed concentrates.

A few indicators of the rapid diffusion of farm innovations may be given. In 1966 every farmer in the "pyrethrum zone" grew a patch or two of pyrethrum. The number of tea growers jumped from 90 in 1957 to 3,386 in 1966, while the acreage under tea rose from 16 to 2,390.7 over the same period. The diffusion of exotic cattle was even more rapid—from 89 exotic cattle in 1963 to over 8,000 in 1966. The ability of the small farmer to invest in profitable farm enterprises is better appreciated when it is realized that an exotic cow costs about £40 to £50 and that the Gusii were able to pay for this investment without any government loans. The Gusii experience illustrates the cumulative character of the innovation process, which implies that a successful innovation tends to stimulate the acceptance of subsequent innovations.

Kisii is not the only area where the cumulative character of successful innovations has been demonstrated. The Mazabuka experience is also relevant. It was in 1914 that the first Tonga farmer acquired the ox plough. Others followed, almost spontaneously, as the strong demand for maize in the Copperbelt towns made maize farming a profitable venture for the small farmer. Although yield remained low, the increasing acreage under maize made possible by the expanding plough culture meant that maize output rose, especially among African farmers along the railway. The economic incentives provided by the African Improved Farming Scheme initiated in 1946–47 led to the adoption of recom-

[2] Our study makes a distinction between Kisii Highland (6,000 feet and above), an ecologically higher potential zone where most of the changes have occurred in the last 15 years, and Kisii Lowland (under 6,000 feet). The contrast in receptivity to farm innovations between the two ecological zones indicates that in this particular study "economic opportunity" is a decisive factor in accounting for the differential response to change. Inhabited by one people, the Gusii, the contrasts between the two zones in farm layout, the degree of enclosures, the farm enterprises and the level of farm management, farm cash income, the use of purchased inputs, and the general attitude to change are dramatic.

mended farm practices—soil conservation, fertilizers, green manuring, crop rotation, and the reduction of cattle to the carrying capacity of the land. An impressive range of ox-drawn equipment—carts, cultivators, weeders, harrows, and planters—and other domestic labor-saving devices such as shellers and grinders have been adopted. The acreage under crops has increased, early planting is being achieved, and yields are rising. But more impressive is the change in attitude toward farming. A growing number of salaried workers are resigning their jobs to take up farming as a business. With the aid of government loans, these medium-size farmers are acquiring tractors and are working very large maize farms. They show that traditional Africa is capable of change given the right incentives.

SUMMARY

A major cultural barrier to rural change in traditional Africa stems from the orientation of the society—its great emphasis on the control of people rather than of resources. This orientation has dictated the pattern of investment, which is mainly in fostering good social relations within the small world of the family and the lineage which one could dominate. It has also given African economies a predominantly prestige orientation. The prestige orientation of some African economies is changing. The experiences in Kisii and Mazabuka indicate that this change tends to be rapid in those areas where the traditional agriculture has been given the opportunity to change. The failure of government programs, especially extension, cooperative institutions, and credit, gives the unfortunate impression that traditional African agriculture is incapable of change. This view can no longer be supported.

Rural change is promoted by economic opportunities—the growing of cash crops, the building of infrastructure, organization, participation in wage labor, and increasing investment in the local community by local people as economic opportunities open up. These factors tend to challenge the traditional power structure and have led, in a few areas, to the creation of new institutions and the modification of incompatible institutional arrangements, especially the content of land tenure.

Rural change implies the increasing direct participation of local groups and individuals in economic decision-making. An effective leadership is needed, but more important is the generation of confidence in the local community that a proposed change will not make them worse off but better off than they were before. This confidence, when justified by successful, profitable innovations, tends to create those attitudes that make for "self-spreading" development.

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