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A "SCALE" APPROACH TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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When one looks into the literature on community development one finds a plethora of definitions. For example, Biddle and Biddle list seventeen different definitions, some of which seem to contradict others. Community development is also frequently treated as virtually synonymous with such terms as modernization, urbanization, industrialization, etc.. As to theories of development, each social science discipline has tended to go its own way with the result that there is no over-all theory, only partial theories. Anthropologists tend to stress anthropological variables (Goodenough); economists stress mostly economic variables (Rostow); political scientists stress primarily political variables (Apter); sociologists stress sociological variables (Loomis); and psychologists focus on psychological variables (McClelland).

With all this seeming variety there does seem to be a common theme running through most of the current definitions of community development even though expressed in widely differing terminologies. This theme is that the term community development implies a change in the community, region or society toward betterment of the lives of the inhabitants of the community, region or society. This change for the better is sometimes seen as a process and sometimes as a goal or end achievement. Also, the context in which most definitions are used focus on planned development or change, though they do not deny the possibility of unplanned development. What is needed is a definition of development that avoids as many of these limitations as much as possible. The following definition, I suggest, does this: Community development is that process whereby a community, region or society increases its scale.

DEFINITION OF SCALE

The concept of scale has been in economies so long it is almost like the weather. Everybody talks about it but few do anything about it. Economists usually limit its use to single organizations when they refer to economies and diseconomies of scale. The concept of scale used here follows the usage of two South African anthropologists, Godfrey and Monica Wilson. In studying the changes occurring in the tribal societies of Central Africa as a result of the impact of Western Civilization, the Wilsons developed an operational theory of social change utilizing the concept of scale which they define as follows: "By the scale of a society we mean the number of people in relation and the intensity of those relations. . . . In comparing the scale of societies therefore, we compare the relative size of groups with relations of similar intensity" (The Wilsons, p. 25). This is a refinement of the concept of scale used by Hobhouse under whom both the Wilsons studied. Hobhouse, in turn, apparently based his usage of scale on the economic concept. Sorokin also developed similar views but did not use the term scale.

As the number of people in a community or society increase and the intensity of interactions with each other increases their scale increases. As scale increases the rate of change or development increases. In other words, two communities having the same population size are equal in scale. However, if the intensity of interaction in one community is greater than the intensity in the other community, the com-

munity having the greater intensity of interaction is the larger in scale. The Wilsons assume that the intensity of relations, i.e., the total degree of dependence, is the same in all societies, but that it may be more or less spread out (The Wilsons, p. 40).

The difficulty with the above conception is that the term intensity is extremely difficult to define and measure satisfactorily. The Wilsons get around this problem by developing and utilizing a number of behavioral indexes for measuring intensity. These are: (i) Economic cooperation both within and without the group. (ii) Communication of fact in speech and writing both within and without the group. (iii) Emotional, i.e., artistic expression, communicated within and without the group. (iv) The value set on contemporary cooperation and continuity within and without the group. (v) The relative degree of unity and continuity asserted within and without the group. (vi) The degree in which a sense of unity and continuity is expressed within the group. (vii) The degree of social pressure exerted on and by outsiders.

From these seven behavioral indexes the Wilsons go on to develop eight correlates of scale by which increases and decreases in scale can be measured empirically. From analysis of their discussion of the social changes occurring in Central Africa and from conversations with Mrs. Wilson, I have identified eight more. These sixteen correlates fall into four broad categories of human behavior as follows: I. Those relating to the ecological level or to control over the material environment. II. Those relating to the sociological level or to autonomy among people. III. Those relating to the cultural level or to variety

of ideas, symbols, values, etc.. IV. Those relating to the psychological level or to autonomy of self. (See Figure 1).

CORRELATES OF SCALE

The four sectors or levels of Figure 1 are arranged so that the more concrete correlates are at the bottom of the diagram, the more abstract ones are at the top; the ones pertaining to the individual are at the left, and the ones pertaining to groups are at the right of the diagram. The number identifying each sector is in the order of increasing difficulty of measurement. Those correlates designated by the same capital letter relate to the sector in which they are placed as well as to the other sectors as follows; A's relate to sector I, B's relate to sector II, C's relate to sector III, and D's relate to sector IV.

Explanation of each of the sectors and correlates follows:

I. Ecological Level (Control over the Material Environment) As communities or societies increase in scale they increase their control over the material environment. Measures of this control are:

A. Energy Development. Throughout history as communities have discovered or developed new forms of energy they have been able to improve their level of living whether it has been the domestication of large animals, discovery of windpower, steampower, electricity or nuclear energy. Thus they are able to do more with less human power and

III. Cultural Level (Variety of Ideas,
Symbols, Values, etc.)

- A. Communication of Facts
- B. Identification with others,
both past, present, and future
- C. Intellectual Variety
- D. Artistic Variety

IV. Psychological Level
(Autonomy of Self)

- A. Technical Skills
- B. Interpersonal Competence
(Empathy)
- C. Symbolizing Ability
(Intelligence)
- D. Self-awareness (Self-
concept, Self-identity)

II. Sociological Level
(Autonomy Among People)

- A. Economic Cooperation
(Trade)
- B. Social Mobility
- C. Impersonality
- D. Social Pressure
(Influence)

I. Ecological Level (Control over the
Material Environment)

- A. Energy Development
- B. Occupational Specialization
- C. Technological Development
- D. Scientific Methodology (Non-
Magicality)

Figure 1. Expanded Correlates of Scale

also increase their probabilities of survival and growth. One of the first applications of new forms of energy is usually toward the transportation system which is partially effective in increasing scale.

B. Occupational Specialization. The larger the number of occupational specializations in a community or available to it the greater are the chances that problems encountered will be solved thus enhancing the probability of increase in scale and of survival.

C. Technological Development. The development or discovery of new techniques enables a community or society to increase its scale and thus increase its survival probabilities.

D. Scientific Methodology (Non-Magicity). As a community or society utilizes scientific methodology rather than magical techniques its control over its material environment increases and the use of magic tends to decline.

II. Sociological Level (Autonomy Among People). The correlates relating to this sector have to do with interpersonal interactions of the population of a community or society. As the following correlates increase, scale increases and individuals and groups have more choices available thus autonomy increases and scale increases:

A. Economic Cooperation (Trade). Economic cooperation enables a community or society to utilize resources not available

locally thus increasing scale. Along with trade goes communication of ideas, values, etc..

- B. Social Mobility. Increase in social mobility increases scale and increases freedom of choice. A community or society that limits mobility of its members limits its scale since the talents of those so limited are less available to the entire society.
- C. Impersonality. As the ability of the members of a society to operate in impersonal situations, i.e., in terms of roles, increases the scale of the society increases thus increasing autonomy of individuals. Individuals able to operate only in personal situations are limited in scale and this in turn limits the scale of the community or society.
- D. Social Pressure (Influence). As the extent of social pressure or influence people exert on each other increases the scale of the community or society. Social pressure makes organizations possible for otherwise concerted action would not exist.

III. Cultural Level (Variety of Ideas, Symbols, Values, Concepts, etc.). The key to the correlates of this sector is variety. The greater the variety available in a community or society, the greater the possibility that use will be made of them and hence the greater the scale.

- A. Communication of Facts. The greater the communication of

facts, i.e., reliable information, the larger the scale of the community since more people have available more information on which to base decisions and acts.

B. Identification With Others, both past, present and future.

The wider the range of identification with others as being essentially like oneself in one or more essential characteristics the more communication and interaction is facilitated and hence the larger the scale of the society or community.

C. Intellectual Variety. The greater the number of different

views, frames-of-reference, weltanschauungs in existence in a community or society the greater the choice in the development of a relevant world-view and hence the larger the scale.

D. Artistic Variety. The greater the variety of artistic expression in a society the wider the range of choices in the outward expression of inward emotions and feelings and the larger the scale.

IV. Psychological Level (Autonomy of Self). The correlates in this sector refer to those areas of individual behavior and understanding which lead to increase in scale as they increase.

A. Technical Skills. The more technical skills individuals possess the larger their scale and the more resources the community has available.

- B. Interpersonal Competence (Empathy). The key characteristic of interpersonal competence or empathy is the ability to see and understand situations from the other person's point of view.
- C. Symbolizing Ability (Intelligence). This correlate refers to the ability to create symbolic abstractions as well as use them.
- D. Self-Awareness (Self-concept, Self-identity). Awareness of one's self as to who one is and what one's relation to others are is the key to the development of a self-actualizing or autonomous personality.

The set of sixteen correlates of scale briefly described above constitute an integrated system of concepts relating to all areas of human behavior. (Because of space limitations illustrative examples of each correlate have been omitted.) Each correlate is so defined as to be positively correlated with each other and with the scale of the individual, community or society. As the value of one correlate increases or decreases the values of the other correlates tend to vary accordingly, not in a mechanical fashion but in an interdependent one.

In any real life community or society the values or the correlates will not be even at any one time. Some elements of the community or society will be larger in scale than others. This condition of unevenness of scale results in disequilibrium, opposition, strain and conflict (The Wilsons, pp. 132-135). Differences of scale will exist

among different communities. Discrepancies of scale may also occur in which one might find a large scale individual in a small scale community and vice-versa.

Within a given society the increase in scale of one community may cause a decrease in scale of other communities as a result of changes in technology, economic conditions, decisions of authorities, or other events. In the same way increases in scale of the larger society as a consequence of changes in one or more of the correlates of scale may result in a decrease in scale or even elimination of one or more local communities. For example, the dieselization of the railroads after World War II, which increased the scale of the United States, resulted in the decrease in scale of certain railroad and coal-mining towns (Cottrell).

USE OF THE CORRELATES IN GUIDING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The concept of scale presented here does not provide a "how-to-do it" manual for the community developer or change agent. It does not provide a community with information about what to do in any direct sense. It does provide a kind of paradigm for evaluating the probable consequences, many of which are latent rather than manifest, of whatever may be proposed whether the proposal be made by the developer, authorities, or the citizens themselves. Most current attempts at development tend to focus on the introduction of some new technology on the assumption that other desirable changes will in time ensue. The concept of scale enables developers to know more about where to

look for those consequences and whether the results are likely to be positive or negative as far as development is concerned.

It opens the way for other than technological changes to be considered in a more balanced fashion. Use of this paradigm will help to prevent social blindspots from handicapping planned projects. It also makes it possible to have a more adequate basis for making decisions about trade offs since no community ever has enough capital and resources to do everything it wants to do at any one time. It also enables a community to make a better estimate of the cost it may have to pay for certain developments.

This concept of scale enables developers to think in different levels of abstraction, avoid over simplification and to avoid two-valued thinking. It helps in looking at a development program in holistic terms rather than only in analytical modes of thought. It is a continual reminder that "everything is connected to everything else."

Since community development has from its beginning stressed mass education of citizens as a major part of the development process and many practitioners of community development still do, the concept of scale as presented here fits well into this approach. It forms a workable framework for the development of educational curricula and programs. It is not very difficult to communicate the basic idea of scale to the members of the community which then results in an additional impetus to the developmental process once a program has begun.

All in all it provides a set of checks and balances which help to avoid the hazards of a community "putting all its eggs in one basket" so to speak.

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