

INTEGRATED SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL PROBLEMS AND POLICY *

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In any examination of the literature on national and sub-national development planning, even the casual observer will be struck by the fact that the substance of the literature is focused primarily on the problem of economic development, while social development is treated as a decidedly minor issue. Treatment of the latter problem rarely progresses beyond the stage of pious utterances on the importance of this aspect of development before it degenerates into a discussion of *ad hoc*, unrelated and fragmented programmes held together by a vague and nebulous notion that they possess something in common because they are somehow "social" in nature.¹ A study of the content of national and regional (i.e., sub-national) development plans as generally formulated will make this fact even clearer.

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¹ Even the most recent literature is no exception. A recent report on social development planning in the region covered by the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East states in discussing social development objectives and policies:

"Among policy-makers and planners in countries of the ECAFE region, there is a wide consensus that all development efforts have the common and ultimate aim of enhancing conditions of human welfare, such as high levels of living, equitable distribution of income and wealth, and equal opportunity to participate in social, economic and political activities and practically all the resulting development plans specify the enlargement of welfare and justice, for the population as a whole, as their basic purpose.

"Beyond such general statements, the objectives of development plans are defined in more precise and specific terms so as to provide a concrete basis for the formulation and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes of action and thereby to ensure attainment of the objectives within a given time."

"Organizational and financial aspects of social development and planning in the ECAFE region" (E/CN.11/L.228), p. 9. A close reading of the document will, however, make evident the fact that the lofty aims expressed above are not being matched by meaningful actions and tangible results. The gap between pious hopes and concrete achievements remains as wide as ever. The situation is not any better in the field of regional development. In a very recent survey of regional development policies, the issue of social development is confined largely to the encouragement of regional cultural activity and the preservation of regional social and cultural resources and amenities. See Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *The Regional Factor in Economic Development* (Paris, 1970)

Today, if a plan is considered worthy of the name, it is usually proclaimed to be an economic and social development plan. In most cases, however, the social element is taken care of by the simple expediency of arbitrarily designating certain areas of activity as social sectors. Among the areas favoured for such treatment are education, public health, community facilities and something called "social welfare". This exercise is clearly a light-hearted game in semantics, as all the sectors mentioned can equally well be grouped under "investment in human resources," which has at least as much claim to be economic as social in nature and substance.

If social development is to become a viable and dynamic force for regional and national development, a great deal more than this semantic expediency will be needed. In the context of the developing country, there is a planning instrument which appears to have a considerable potential to contribute to the effort of adding tangible substance to social development programmes and planning. This instrument is comprehensive regional planning.² Before discussing the relationship between this type of planning and socio-economic development, however, it is necessary to make a brief digression concerning the problem of typology, in order to set a manageable limit to subsequent discussion.

In the study of national economic development, it has now become increasingly accepted that it is not very meaningful to attempt to deal with the developing country as a generic type. Differences in resource endowments, economic structures, socio-cultural and political environments, and levels of development, among other factors, tend to result in critical differences in both basic problems and possible solutions. The formulation of an adequate typology³ of developing countries is thus an urgent and necessary task in the study of socio-economic development at the national level. This consideration holds true, and indeed with even greater force, as concerns regional development. For in the latter case, one must take into account not only international but significant interregional differences. It appears, however, that this necessity for typological

² The term "comprehensive planning" is used here to denote the type of planning that is "complete and well integrated" both functionally and hierarchically. Functionally, it should consist of integrated macro-and micro-planning, as well as appropriate physical planning. In terms of hierarchy, it should encompass all relevant levels of planning, e.g., national, regional and local, in a well-articulated and unified system. For discussion of a similar, but more limited, concept, see Albert Waterston, *Development Planning: Lessons of Experience* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), chap. 4. In the regional context, see Phuichitr Uathavikul, "Regional planning and development: The case of Thailand", *The Third International Symposium on Regional Development* (Tokyo, Japan: Centre for Area Development Research 1970) pp. 144-170; and P. Uathavikul "Regional planning and development: Thailand", *Ekistics*(Athens), Vol. XXX, No. 180 (1970), pp. 416-423.

³ For a recent discussion of the problem, see Lloyd G. Reynolds, "The content of development economics", *American Economic Review* (Washington D.C.), Vol. LIX, No. 2 (1969), pp. 401-408.

development is not as widely recognized in the field of regional development planning as it should be. The lack of awareness of this problem has led to serious difficulties at both the conceptual and the policy levels.⁴

In this article, the discussion is limited to only one type of developing country, namely, those of Southeast Asia. No attempt is made here, however, to develop a rigorous typology of the countries of South-east Asia. As a rough working hypothesis, it may be said that these countries⁵ share certain basic characteristics which are significant for this analysis of regional socio-economic development.

- (a) An overwhelming preponderance of the rural sector;
- (b) A wide discrepancy between rural and urban *per capita* output and income;
- (c) The existence of a few large urban centres with other urban areas being relatively small and undeveloped;
- (d) A relative neglect of the rural sector by both the Government and the private sector;
- (e) A more or less serious threat to national integrity posed by regional separatism and minority problems.

RURAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

Taking into consideration only the type of country found in South-east Asia, it immediately becomes apparent that rural development is vital to the success of attempts at regional and national development. Although the share of agriculture in the national output of these countries has declined over the past decade, in some cases quite substantially, it is still the preponderant sector. In terms of employment, the preponderance is even more marked as the agricultural sector employs by far the largest proportion of the economically active population. It is also true that most of the population still lives in rural areas. Hence, when one speaks of regional development in this type of country, one is actually speaking about the livelihood and welfare of the rural people

⁴ Space does not permit a detailed discussion of these problems and difficulties. At the conceptual level, there is the prevalent confusion about the question of problem definition, which is basic to the whole field of study and operation. There is a tendency to follow unthinkingly the example of developed countries, with the result that many technicians and decision-makers in developing countries still hold the view that regional development planning is a luxury which can be afforded only by the rich. A related problem is the tendency of planners to borrow concepts, models and methodology and to apply them indiscriminately to various types of countries with sharply different problems.

Confusion at the conceptual level leads inevitably to a lack of focus and cohesion in policy design and implementation. Regional development plans and programmes tend to consist of nothing more than a collection of unrelated projects, the design and selection of which are more a matter of ignorance and passing fads and fancies than of rational planning.

⁵ The special case of Singapore, which is a city State, obviously must be excluded from this rough typology.

who constitute 80–90 per cent of the total population. From this point of view, there can be little doubt that regional socio-economic development is one of the most critical problem areas of national development.

Yet, rural development has, to date, been tackled largely on a superficial and *ad hoc* basis. Indeed, it may not be too harsh a judgement to say that the bankruptcy of the traditional approach to the problem is self-evident. Although a bewildering diversity of concepts, programmes, and projects⁶ currently exists, they scarcely add up to a unified and consistent attack upon the problem. This situation is not at all surprising when one considers the fact that the various components of rural development plans and programmes are often ill-conceived, fragmented and almost totally unrelated. Failures are usually attributed to lack of funds and lack of trained personnel to act as effective “agents of change”. While accepting that these limitations are legitimate and serious it should be recognized that the marked lack of success of rural development efforts is due to some other more fundamental factors. As a background for the subsequent discussion of social and economic development in the context of South-east Asia, these factors are briefly examined below.

Lack of an adequate over-all conceptual framework

There exists neither a well-defined consensus on the objectives of rural development nor a developed body of knowledge and methodology. Without adequate guidelines and instruments, it is not surprising that very scarce resources are often squandered because they are too widely spread in the hope that some of the allocations may achieve the desired results. All kinds of programmes and projects are touted and pursued with varying degrees of enthusiasm, with little concern for their relationship both with other rural programmes and with over-all regional and national objectives and policies.⁷ It is true that not enough resources are being made available for rural development, but what is more significant is the fact that what little that is made available is not being used efficiently.

⁶ In diversity, such efforts vary from such more or less sensible concepts as felt needs, self-help and strategic intervention to something called “rural human resources development,” from such programmes as community development, occupational promotion, agri-business, accelerated rural development, package programmes, land settlement, rural welfare programmes and rural nutrition programmes to land reform, promotion of activities for women, children and youth, mobile development and provision of clean water supply to villages. The list seems endless; and while it may stand as an eloquent testament to the ingenuity of rural development workers, it does not augur well for a unified approach to the problem.

⁷ Foreign technical experts are no less guilty in this respect than their local counterparts. Anxious to leave something behind after the termination of their brief tours of duty, they are extremely capable in selling their “pet” projects to unsuspecting politicians and gullible bureaucrats.

Inappropriate attitude underlying rural development activities

If there is one element that is common to the great variety of policies and proliferation of programmes, it is that they are mostly palliative in nature. Programmes are too often conceived and executed as a kind of "conscience money" distribution, which may, indeed, salve the conscience of the privileged class and add to its sense of virtue, but the largesse is not likely to be of much use to rural dwellers. Such an attitude not only leads to incoherent, *ad hoc* and wasteful activities, but may result in a false sense of accomplishment and a dangerous misconception that the problem is being adequately handled.

Misplaced activist approach

Politicians are prone to be misled by their own rhetoric and technicians by their complacency. Sensing the urgency of the problem, policy-makers are apt to plunge headlong into "action oriented" programmes.⁸ In this effort, they are aided and abetted by many technicians who tend to view the matter in a simplistic fashion. National planners are probably the most culpable of all. Having succeeded in drawing up a more or less sophisticated national plan, they do not see any reason why they should not go ahead and draw up any number of regional and local plans with little or no prior study of the areas involved. In-depth area studies are frowned upon as an academic luxury which cannot be afforded by practical planners and development workers. Thus, the lack of well-defined development objectives and methodology mentioned above is compounded by a lack of knowledge and understanding of the areas to be planned and developed. It is difficult to see how such a combination of ignorance and obtuseness can lead to successful rural and regional development.

Administrative and organizational inertia

Traditional administration is concerned mainly with the preservation of law and order and the collection of governmental revenues, and is thus based largely on coercion and direct control. In development administration, it is usually recognized that successful development will have to depend upon inducement rather than coercion. Given bureaucratic inertia, however, it is not surprising to find that the development function has been grafted on to an existing administrative and organizational structure with little or no significant changes in the system. The marked

⁸ Political considerations, of course, provide an irresistible impetus to this tendency. As election time draws near, money and other resources are made available for all kinds of local projects, supposedly in accordance with the "felt needs" of the people. There have been cases in recent years where the spending spree became a veritable frenzy, with dire results for the national economy.

preference among bureaucrats for direct control⁹ has led to an excessive demand on administrative capacity, greatly overloading a rigid system which is, furthermore, not designed for the task of development. And when a rigid and inappropriate system is overloaded, it tends to degenerate rapidly with resultant extensive malfunctions. The problems of administrative and organizational constraints in economic and social development are too well known to need elaboration here.

Lack of real leadership commitment

Political campaign statements, part platforms, speeches by political leaders and top-level decision-makers, and even official statements of government policy do not constitute a reliable guide to the nature and extent of leadership commitment to an issue. The only real test comes in the actual process of resource allocation when money, manpower, technical "know-how" and other necessary resources are made available for certain activities. The extent of leadership commitment backed by adequate resource allocation and vigorous implementation is a crucial factor in the success of development efforts at both the national and regional levels.¹⁰ Without the commitment of top-level leadership, a development plan, however well conceived and formulated, is not likely to lead to significant results in terms of real and tangible benefits. It is to be doubted if this kind of commitment has to date existed in any of the countries coming within the scope of this paper.

There are, of course, other problems which tend to limit the success of attempts at rural development, but the five factors mentioned above are of basic importance. They are further discussed below as constraints that must be taken into account in considering the question of a realistic approach to regional development in the type of country found in South-east Asia. Turning now to the problem of urban development in the regional context, the first point is that a

⁹ This tendency is well recognized. Swerdlow, for instance, identified five categories of involvement in an administrative continuum, ranging from those requiring the most to those requiring the least bureaucratic involvement, mentioning the predilection for the former: "Characteristically, when the government of an underdeveloped country decides it must do something about an economic problem, first, thoughts are apparently given to activities involving operations and direct control rather than to activities requiring less administrative capacity." Irving Swerdlow, "Economics as part of development administration", in I. Swerdlow, ed., *Development Administration: Concepts and Problems* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1963), p. 111.

¹⁰ In a recent study of development potentials in 74 developing countries, it was found that four factors are of major significance: improvement in financial institutions; degree of modernization of outlook; extent of leadership commitment to economic development; and improvement in agricultural productivity. Although the strictly "empiricist" approach used in the study and the quantification of some indices may be open to debate, there can be little doubt that the results provide some very useful and interesting empirical information for the study of socio-economic and political development. See Irma Adelman and Cynthia Taft Morris, "An econometric model of socio-economic and political change in underdeveloped countries," *American Economic Review* (Washington, D.C.), Vol. LVIII, NO. 5, Part 1 (1968), pp. 1184-1218.

clear distinction should be made between the problems of the primate city and those of lesser urban areas. Basically, the former problems relate to agglomeration diseconomies¹¹ common to large cities throughout the world: congestion; overcrowding; high costs; urban blight and decay; environmental deterioration; inadequate urban services and amenities; and their attending social, political, health and welfare problems. In most of the developing countries, such problems are particularly difficult and intractable because of the lack of resources necessary for their alleviation; but they should be regarded as a special problem area because they do not directly affect the bulk of the population. In terms of over-all development, the problems of smaller urban areas are probably much more important in the long run. The crucial problem in this case is the relationship between urban centres and their rural hinterland. Specifically, it involves the question of achieving a "proper" balance and impetus in the growth of the urban and rural sectors so that they can act as mutual inducement and support in a self-reinforcing and sustained process of growth and development. This question is, however, inseparably linked with that of rural development in the regional context; and these questions are therefore dealt with together.

DUAL APPROACH TO REGIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It is commonly recognized that fragmentation of regional development efforts and lack of co-ordination often result in waste and inefficiency owing to overlapping or conflicting aims and actions. What is not always realized is that the problem goes much deeper than a mere lack of efficiency. The fragmented efforts fail because they do not add up to form the twin pillars of a meaningful development plan, namely, the formation of capabilities and the provision of opportunities. Without a "proper" combination of these two fundamental elements forming a sound foundation, no attempt at development is likely to amount to much in terms of tangible and lasting benefits.

Concept of "backwardness"

Because of the importance of the rural sector in the type of developing country under consideration, the problem is examined first in terms of rural development. In this context, the concept of "backwardness" is re-examined as a useful point of departure. In an early paper, a well-known economist argued forcefully for a sharp distinction between the concepts of "undeveloped resources" and "backward people."¹² The distinction is fundamental, but in recent

¹¹ Agglomeration diseconomies are extra costs incurred through over-concentration. For a discussion of agglomeration economics and diseconomies, and related concepts, see such classic works on location theory as Edgar M. Hoover, *Location and Economic Activity* (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1948); and Walter Isard *Location and Space Economy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1956). A more recent treatment may be found in Hugh O. Nourse, *Regional Economics: A Study in the Economic Structure, Stability, and Growth of Regions* (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1968).

¹² Hla Myint, "An interpretation of economic backwardness" *Oxford Economic Papers*, New Series, Vol. VI, No. 2 (1954), pp. 132-163.

years it seems to have largely been ignored by development economists. The failure to make this distinction is particularly unfortunate in the context of social development. People in poor countries tend to resent being regarded as "backward," and hence the term has been replaced by the euphemism "underdeveloped human resources." This semantic nicety may be more pleasing, but it tends to lead to a dangerous confusion in both concept and practice. As Myint rightly pointed out, the concept of underdevelopment in itself implies its own potential solution. A country is poor because its resources are not fully utilized, *ergo*, all one has to do is to see to it that they become fully used. The key to full utilization is, of course, investment; and as "backward" people are but another form of underdeveloped resources, investment is also the solution.¹³ From this point of view, social development is in no way significantly different from economic development. Hence, all the planner needs to do is to designate certain fields as social sectors and make the appropriate investment decisions, and the problem of social development is solved to the satisfaction of everybody except the "underdeveloped" people themselves.

At the risk of being unfashionable, one really has to insist on a Marshallian distinction between man and his environment. Labour is certainly a basic factor of production without which economic output cannot be produced; but human beings cannot, in the context of development, be dealt with in the same way as natural and other resources. "Backwardness" is a relative term, and Myint defined backward people as those who, compared with some other groups of people, were "in some fashion or other unsuccessful in the economic struggle to earn a livelihood."¹⁴ Thus, the problems being considered here concern two questions: in what sense backward people are unsuccessful in their economic struggle; and why they are unsuccessful. These questions deserve examination at some length because they can serve as a useful basis for coming to grips with the twin problems of meaningful development planning mentioned above, namely, the development of capabilities and the provision of opportunities.

Economic success and traditional values

Success in economic activity is a complex concept as it involves questions concerning both objective and achievement. A group of people may appear to be not very competitive in the struggle to earn a livelihood simply because their aims in life are different. It may be that they

¹³ The current popular panacea appears to be something called "investment in human capital," a contradiction in terms which renders the concept of capital all but meaningless. The wide acceptance of this approach among "social development planners" is particularly ironic in view of the fact that the role of investment and capital in economic development remains a contested issue among development economists. For a useful summary of opposing views, see Gerald M. Meier, *Leading Issues in Development Economics*, 2nd ed. (London, Oxford University Press, 1970), chap. III.

¹⁴ Myint, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

traditionally value leisure and an easy tempo of life so highly that they are willing to forgo the additional consumption which would be made possible by working more or harder.¹⁵ While accepting the validity of this line of argument, it should be recognized that the real question in this connexion is how significant the difference is. With the current progress in transportation and communications, and the so-called "international demonstration effects," it is difficult to hold that the differences in aims are, or will continue to be, highly significant. Whatever else he may be, man is an economic animal who will respond to the "right" kind of economic stimuli. This is not to imply that the "materialistic" way of life is intrinsically desirable or superior to the "spiritual" way of life.¹⁶ What is socially desirable depends upon the collective judgement of the members of a particular society, and there is no question of imposing crass materialism on an unwilling people. The fact is that poor people throughout the world are insistently demanding a higher level of economic well-being, and the crux of the problem is to increase their command over goods and services to the level where they are in a position to make conscious and intelligent choices about a desirable way of life.¹⁷ It has been found necessary to include this discussion here because some social development practitioners seem to be prone to a highly ambivalent attitude. They tend to speak glibly about necessary "social transformation" while, at the same time, refusing to face the logical consequences. In playing the role of a change agent, they may, for instance, encourage rural people to respond to the stimuli of price changes (in connexion, say, with crop diversification programmes); but they are also likely to lament the passing of such traditional values as generosity, charity and communal spirit and to condemn the advent of a mercenary attitude. Like everything else, economic development is not costless; and one of the dearest prices that must be paid may well be the passing-away of traditional values and attitudes, accompanied by the rising of social tensions and

¹⁵ This is a complex problem involving such questions as attitudes, beliefs and values which, in the last analysis, may be subsumed under the problem of different world views. For a discussion of the "moral" and "technological" world views, see Robert Redfield, *The Primitive World and Its Transformation* (Ithaca N.Y. Cornell University Press, 1953).

¹⁶ There is nothing particularly noble or spiritualistic in a life of poverty and diseases. It should be mentioned that those who are loudest in extolling the virtues of the "traditional simple way of life" are mostly so-called "intellectuals" whose positions make it possible for them to live a life largely insulated from the rigours of everyday living in a poor country. With newly won independence after the Second World War, many Asian leaders were prone to adopt a superior attitude, denigrating the materialism of the West. The sobering fact of mass poverty has shown that such an attitude is not tenable and that self-delusion is not conducive to rational action.

¹⁷ Widening the scope of choice may, indeed, be regarded as synonymous with development. There is a world of difference between the young people in the United States of America, who are trying to break the bond of material possessions, and the people of a developing country who are living with the bare minimum of material things. Rightly or wrongly, the former persons are making a conscious choice, while the latter are living close to subsistence out of sheer necessity. For a cogent argument on choice and economic development, see W. Arthur Lewis, "Is economic growth desirable?" *The Theory of Economic Growth*. (Homewood, Illinois, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1955), appendix, pp. 426-435.

conflicts. No useful purpose will be served by pretending that such is not the case. A more positive and fruitful approach is for social planners to try to minimize the social costs inevitable in the transformation process.

Opportunity and education

Given the objective of improving one's economic well-being, the question then concerns the way in which "backward" people are unsuccessful. It is not simply a matter of income, nor even of differing economic roles as suggested by Myint, for these are only symptoms. Fundamentally, it is again a question of choice. Compared with certain other, more successful groups of people, a backward people are backward because the choices open to them are limited. In the normal case, the limitation is set by a combination of a lack of opportunities and a lack of ability to exploit them. First to be considered is the problem of capability. A group of people may be unable to benefit fully from available opportunities for many and varied reasons; but, basically, the two most important factors are their training and their institutions. The former factor sets the limit to their ability to deal with the environment, both physical and cultural; while the latter places constraints on their social behaviour. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that education has been singled out as a crucial factor in both social and economic development. Having reached a consensus on this point does not, however, mean that a solution has been found. The fruitfulness of education as a factor for development depends primarily upon its content and upon the way in which knowledge is disseminated; and it is by no means clear that education as practised in most developing countries has had much positive impact on development. One leading economist and social thinker has even stressed that education may indeed be anti-developmental:

"In many countries, education is not directed upon counteracting economic and social inequality or even making the masses prepared to use what chances they may have for participating in development. Instead, it is often used as a means for upholding upper-class monopoly of education and their inherited claim of not having to soil their hands. It becomes then, in effect, antidevelopmental."¹⁸

Education in many developing countries is thus still "primitive," in the sense used by Margaret Mead many years ago.¹⁹

¹⁸ Gunnar Myrdal, "Agricultural development and planning in underdeveloped countries outside the Socialist sphere", *Economic Planning* (Montreal), Vol. VI, No. 3-4 (May-August 1970) p.6

¹⁹ "Primitive education was a process by which continuity was maintained between parents and children.....Modern education includes a heavy emphasis upon the function of education to create discontinuities—to turn the child of the peasant into a clerk, the farmer into a lawyer....." Margaret Mead, "our educational emphases in primitive perspective," *American Journal of Sociology* (Chicago), Vol. XLVIII (May 1943), as quoted in Redfield, op. cit., p. 121

A discussion of the shortcomings of educational systems in the developing countries and their ramifications is beyond the scope of this article, but it should be pointed out that if education is to serve as a dynamic force for social – and economic – development, it must be redirected to emphasize change and the widening of choice. It is not merely a matter of literacy, of investing in more schools and more teachers, or of imitating innovations and experiments carried out in more technically advanced countries. A viable educational system for development purposes should foster the discontinuities necessary for development while maintaining enough continuity to minimize the social costs of change. This is, obviously, not an easy prescription to fulfil nor a problem that can be generalized; every developing country should design and implement a system best suited to its needs within the limits imposed by its resource constraints.

Problems in social planning

Institutional change is another concept that has become an all but empty and meaningless cliché in the field of social development. If social development planning is to become a meaningful activity, the social planner must be able to identify the institutional changes required for a particular purpose or objective, and then design a programme of action which would accomplish the desired changes at a minimum social cost. Given the state of the art, this is, indeed, a tall order; but efforts in this direction must be made if one is serious about initiating and guiding the process of social development. A fundamental re-examination of the problem is urgently needed, and the social planner should not allow himself to be dazzled or intimidated by the economic planner. Specifically, he should guard himself against two fallacies which appear to be prevalent. In the first place, he should face up to the fact that social change is an extremely costly process in terms of social harmony. Traditional values are bound to suffer, and there may be generated highly disruptive social tensions and conflicts. In general, it is fair to say that social planners are well aware of the problem; but, in practice, they tend to gloss over it, apparently thinking that they will not receive budgetary allocations if they are too fussy. This attitude is self-defeating in the long run. It is not the job of a social planner to ignore the costs of social change; it is his job to help policy-makers to minimize them. The second pitfall to guard against is the tendency to regard people as just another form of resources whose underdevelopment can be corrected through investment. Here again, the problem is not one of lack of awareness. For years, sociologists have been telling the economists that development is not merely a matter of economics, but when it comes down to practice, they tend tamely to follow the lead of the economic planner. Allocations of investment funds and manpower are made, some sectors are designated social sectors, and the plan is done. Indeed, the only role of the social planner in this process seems to be limited to one of complaining that his pet programmes and projects are not getting a fair share of the funds.

The problems and difficulties discussed above are caused primarily by one thing, namely a faulty approach to the problem. In the theory of social change it may be useful to adopt a broad over-all view dealing with the totality of society as a single system. To follow this approach in practical social planning is to doom the whole effort to a dismal failure even before it begins, because

it would require a degree of knowledge about the social system and the way in which it changes that is far beyond what is currently attainable. It should be fairly obvious that current knowledge does not permit the social planner to draw up an implementable plan for the total social system. It is therefore not meaningful for him to insist that economics is only a part of the sum total of social activities, and hence economic planning is but a part of social planning. Conceptually, this view may be correct; but, given the state of the art, it is operationally meaningless. When faced with the challenge to produce a concrete and feasible plan for guiding and controlling social change, the social planner is inevitably placed at a disadvantage; and a great deal of the usual confusion and backpeddling can be traced directly to this tendency of claiming more than what one can deliver. It would be far more fruitful to begin from the opposite end of the spectrum by adopting the more modest position that the main job of social planning is to help "backward" people to become more successful in their "economic struggle to earn a livelihood". Social planners may find this limited approach difficult to accept because it would involve the acceptance of economic planning as a starting-point, which might, in turn, involve a complete re-orientation to the problem on their part. The point of departure is the fact that the overwhelming majority of people in poor countries do want a higher level of economic welfare. They all want to have command over more and better material goods and other services. In so far as they are constrained in their quest for higher levels of economic welfare by socio-cultural factors, it is the function of social planning to remove or reduce these constraints.

If this more limited approach is accepted, there would appear to be a number of alternative strategies which can be useful for attaining the primary objective of reducing and eventually eliminating economic backwardness. Two alternatives that appear to be both feasible and worthwhile are briefly examined below. The first is what might be termed a "neutral" strategy in that it attempts to avoid all value judgement. The basic objective of social planning is limited to the minimization of the social changes necessary for the successful implementation of a set of economic objectives. The aim is to establish just enough social discontinuity for the desired pattern and degree of economic development, while preserving as much continuity as possible so as to minimize the social tensions and conflicts inevitable in the process of development. Under this strategy, the major tasks of the planner are twofold: determination of the socio-cultural impacts of alternative economic policies, programmes and projects; and selection of those alternatives which would lead to the desired goals and targets with the least social change. To accomplish these ends, the planner will have to trace not only the direct, but the indirect secondary and tertiary effects of possible economic measures to ensure that relevant factors shall be adequately taken into consideration in the planning process. If this type of planning were properly carried out, it would inevitably lead to modifications of the economic plan, the sum total of which might be quite sub-

stantial.²⁰ Hence, this strategy may lead to useful and significant results even though it may appear to be highly negative at first sight.

A more value-oriented strategy would be for the social planner to attempt to go one step further. In addition to finding the alternatives requiring the least social change, he may attempt to foster certain changes deemed desirable in themselves. This approach may be more appealing to the social reformer, but it should be recognized that it is one fraught with some very real dangers. It would, for instance, be very easy for the planner to end by attempting to impose his own value system on society without having the slightest conscious intention to do so.²¹ If the planner keeps this possible pitfall constantly in mind, however, he should be able to avoid most of the undesirable consequences. Conceptually, the problem is a difficult and complex one; but it may not be too serious in practice so long as the planner remembers to eschew personal ideological commitments and moral prejudices. There will, however, always be the problem of appropriate values and the weights to be attached to them in making actual decisions. The only solution appears to be for the social planner to try to keep his sense of perspective by constantly improving his own social awareness.

Under the second type of strategy, the major functions of social planning would fall into the following broad areas of related activities:

(a) Determination, as far as is possible with currently available technical knowledge, of the social costs and benefits of economic programmes and projects, so that the social dimension would be fully taken into account in the planning process;

(b) Finding ways and means of minimizing socially undesirable impacts while enhancing desirable ones;

²⁰ A simple example may help to illustrate this point. Suppose that a given amount of resources may be used for three alternative projects, say, forestry development, land reform and irrigation. On economic grounds alone, suppose that the land reform project would yield the greatest benefits, followed by the irrigation and, the forestry projects. Meanwhile, however, a team of social planners have traced through the direct and indirect social impacts of the three alternatives and have found that the land reform project would involve drastic and extensive social problems, while forestry development would entail the least social costs. These findings may lead to a change in project selection or in modifications of the projects, or both.

A trade-off between economic and social benefits/ costs is inevitable in this process. The resulting solution will depend primarily upon the relative weights given to the two factors, which, in the last analysis, are a matter of judgement. For this reason, development planning is, at the current state of knowledge, an art rather than a science.

²¹ A good example of this danger can be seen from the history of urban planning in some developed countries of the West. In perspective, it is apparent that the movement was essentially an attempt by small groups of reformers to impose their middle-class value system on society. Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of slum clearance or urban renewal, where the everyday life of the urban poor is made to conform to the middle-class standard of values.

(c) Recommending changes in the proposed development plans, programmes and projects to increase both their feasibility and desirability.

The functions listed above are, obviously, not at all easy to carry out; but with the more limited objective, they should become operationally meaningful and feasible. Other approaches are, of course, possible, depending largely upon the degree of value judgement involved; but strategies discussed above should serve as an example of what may be done under an economically the two oriented type of social planning.

Regionalization of urban and rural development strategies

As previously stated, backwardness is a relative concept. In terms of rural development, rural people are backward both when compared with the urban population of their own country and when compared with the people of more technically advanced countries. The discussion here is confined to the first problem and ignores entirely the question of international comparison. Compared with the urban population, rural people tend to be severely handicapped both by their lack of education and technical training and by the institutional framework under which they operate. It should be mentioned, however, that many of the problems identified as problems of capability are actually those of opportunity. A farmer may resist the introduction of a new crop, a new method of production or the use of pesticides not because of ignorance, sloth or wilful stubbornness but because he lacks the security to experiment. With no savings to cushion a possible failure, the risks involved may simply be too great. The farmer may indeed be behaving very rationally in that he has made a shrewd calculation that the way to maximize his expected return is to stick to the known and "safe" activity. The question of opportunity is, in fact, inseparably linked to that of ability; and they have been separated here only for the sake of convenience in presentation. In order to induce rural people to make full use of their potential capabilities or to develop new ones, there must be real and tangible opportunities for them to benefit from their efforts. There is, for instance, not much point in telling farmers that there is a great long-term demand for a new cash crop in the world market if no marketing channel has been set up or no credit is available for the production of the new commodity. It does not make much sense either if the farmers cannot move their produce or have to pay exorbitant transport costs because of inadequate transportation facilities. Too often, agricultural diversification programmes fail not because farmers are incapable, but because extension workers have completely neglected the marketing side of the problem.

The problem of opportunity runs right through the whole spectrum of economic activity and is not confined to the agricultural sector alone. To produce educated people, technicians and skilled workers without a parallel provision of employment opportunities to absorb them is a so-

cial disservice which can only aggravate the socio-political problems of a developing country.²² In terms of non-agricultural development in rural areas, not much will be accomplished without the provision of adequate opportunities for profitable investment.²³ Capital and entrepreneurship will flow to the sector where the returns are highest. Hence, the availability of profitable investment opportunities is prerequisite to widening the choice of employment for people in rural areas.

The foregoing discussion should make it clear why a fragmented approach to rural socio-economic development is bound to end in failure. Opportunities and capabilities tend to reinforce each other in a cumulative process necessary for sustained development. In this process, the interrelationship between urban and rural areas is also of great importance for the development of poor countries. Historically, the role of the city as a nucleus for the generation and dissemination of new ideas and innovations is well recognized. In the current context, urban centres have assumed an additional role as transmitter of a novel way of life encompassing new technology, ideas and attitudes often imported from the developed countries. As such, they can act as a powerful stimulus to change in the rural hinterland. This remark does not imply a crude policy version of the growth-pole concept where urban centres have to be developed in a planned pattern of imbalanced geographical development as a pre-condition of rural development. As has been pointed out, Perroux's original formulation of the *pole de croissance* concept does not necessarily imply geographical polarization of growth.²⁴ Indeed, it may be used to explain empirical evidences that development in the more technically advanced countries is becoming less polarized. It is, however not very meaningful to discuss in the abstract the relative merits of opposing policy prescriptions for accelerating the growth of developing countries through setting up geographical imbalance and polarization, or through diversifying the structure of production and exchange leading to a more uniform pattern of development. The level of development, the existence of profitable investment opportunities in urban and rural areas, and the availability of entrepreneurship are factors which have to enter into a rational design of strategy. The point to stress in this connexion is that urban-rural development policies must be regionalized in the sense that strategies and policies must be drawn up to suit the requirements of particular subnational regions. This is particularly true of relatively large countries with diversified regions. It may, for instance, be appropriate to adopt a policy of structural diversification in a rapidly growing, region while employing a strategy

²² It may be argued that education is an end in itself, which is true if one uses the term in the broad and humanistic sense of training people to think independently and to develop their minds to the fullest possible extent. If, however, it is limited to professional training, educating people without providing for their employment will only lead to frustration and socio-political violence. In this connexion, it should be stated that apart from the consideration that help their people can work harder, improvement in public health is also largely an end in itself.

²³ The importance of profitable investment opportunities in accelerating economic growth and development has long been recognized. For a useful examination of the problem, see Ragnar Nurkse, "Patterns of trade and development", in G. Haberler and R. M. Stern, eds., *Equilibrium and Growth in the World Economy* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1962), chap. XI.

²⁴ See J.R. Lasuen, "On growth poles", *Urban Studies* (Edinburgh), Vol. VI, No. 2(1969), pp. 137-161.

of deliberately establishing urban growth points in a stagnant or lagging region. Neglect of regionalized policies in this respect remains one of the most serious weaknesses of development planning in many of the developing countries.

COMPREHENSIVE REGIONAL PLANNING
AS A TOOL FOR SUBNATIONAL AND NATIONAL
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Given the problems as briefly discussed above, the next question is what comprehensive planning can contribute to social and economic development. Since the question involves the distinct, but related, problems of development at the national and subnational levels, it would be convenient to examine separately the four major potential contributions of this type of planning.

Allocation in space

A major weakness of most development plans lies in the fact that resource allocations are made almost exclusively according to use only. Sectoral allocations of investment funds and other resources are usually carried out with little or no consideration of their location. The question of location is thus left largely to a fortuitous process of selection based, at best, on project analysis; and, at worst, on political exigencies or irrational criteria. Optimization of returns requires that resources be distributed both over the possible range of activities and over geographical areas so that the combined yields will be greatest. Geographical distribution is no less important than sectoral distribution, because of regional comparative advantage. And it is immediately apparent that a fortuitous selection process has little likelihood of achieving an optimum or even "satisfactory" pattern of location. Hence, at the national level, regional planning can help in the formulation of explicit interregional location strategies; while at the subnational level, it can serve as the main instrument for intraregional location policies.

In terms of economic development, an appropriate pattern of interregional and intraregional location will help to increase the efficiency of resource utilization. In terms of social development, comprehensive regional planning can serve as a valuable allocative instrument because it encompasses the important policy problem of equity consideration.²⁵ Through the use of this instrument, it is therefore possible to include social equity as an integral part of economic development planning.

²⁵ For a brief discussion of the problem of economic efficiency, regional equity, and political expediency in the context of regional planning, see P. Uathavikul, "Regional planning and development: The case of Thailand", pp. 158-199.

*Logical linkage between national
and local development problems,
strategies and programmes*

Comprehensive regional planning is not merely the regionalization of a national plan, nor is it concerned exclusively with the development of a particular region; and it certainly is not a mere collection of local plans. As a unified system of hierarchical planning, it seeks to relate in some logical fashion national policies and local needs, requirements and opportunities; integrated system of functional planning, it helps to reconcile the conflicting objectives, requirements and constraint of macro- and micro-planning and of physical planning. Thus, the diverse concepts of rural development, such as felt needs and strategic intervention, and the numerous fragmented rural and urban development programmes can be fitted together as a related and meaningful system. The unifying theme in such a system is the formation of capabilities and opportunities as discussed above.

*Provision for significant regional
and local differences in economic structure
and socio-cultural environment*

While the question of taking into consideration significant regional and local differences in economic structure and socio-cultural environment is closely related to the factor discussed above, it is dealt with separately because of its importance. It is generally recognized that national planning in developing countries tends to fail with respect to improvement of the levels of living of large segments of the population. Although available empirical evidence is too sparse and unreliable for a firm conclusion, it is fairly clear that in many developing countries development has benefited the higher income groups in urban areas while rural people and the lower income classes have gained but little. The problem is often compounded by the tendency of the Government and the private sector to cater for the less urgent needs of urban dwellers at the expense of the rural population, whose legitimate, serious and urgent needs often go unheeded. The problems caused by such neglect are not only social and economic in character; they may easily become an explosive political issue endangering the stability and security of the country itself.

The neglect of rural needs and problems of remote areas is frequently not the result of wilful negligence. In many cases, it may simply be the result of ignorance. Predicated on the need for in-depth and intensive study of the plan areas, comprehensive regional planning can do a great deal to reduce this ignorance. If area development studies are properly carried out, they should provide adequate information on the related questions on what has been happening in the plan area and why things happened the way they did. Knowing the "what" and the "why" of a problem, the planner will be in a much better position to answer the normative question of how things ought to be.

It was stated earlier that, under an economically oriented type of social planning, it is necessary to trace through the direct and indirect social impacts of economic policies, programmes

and projects. The impacts will vary according to conditions in subnational areas, and it is thus necessary to modify planned actions to fit those conditions so as to maximize the benefits while avoiding unnecessary social frictions and problems. It is difficult to see how this can be accomplished without comprehensive subnational planning.

Guidance and supervision of implementation

It is now generally accepted that implementation is an essential component of the planning process.²⁶ A major problem tending to limit the success of development planning in many developing countries is the lack of adequate guidance and supervision of the smaller projects, especially those located in remote areas. And it is these smaller projects which tend to have the most immediate and direct impact on the life of the common people. Without adequate supervision, these projects tend to be poorly implemented and may, in many cases, be counter-productive in the sense that the results are opposite to those intended. Comprehensive regional planning involves more direct guidance and closer control of programmes and projects at both the regional and local levels. In this way, it can be expected that the scarce resources available for area development will be used more efficiently and consistently with national development policies.

Having discussed the problems of socio-economic development and regional planning in general terms, it is time to consider those problems with reference to their policy implication for the type of developing country found in South-east Asia. Beginning with the question of adding more substance to social planning and making social development programmes more meaningful, the first point is that one can no longer be satisfied with the expediency of simply designating certain sectors as social sectors. Given a set of socio-economic development objectives, social development planning should begin by identifying changes which are necessary for the attainment of the objectives. This does not necessarily involve drastic innovations. With some minimum modification or realignment of emphasis, traditional institutions may be made to serve as useful vehicles for development. Having made the identification, it is then the function of the social planner to design a programme of action that would lead to the desired ends at a minimum of social costs. Meaningful social development programmes should, therefore, involve far more than investment decisions and projects that are unrelated and palliative in nature. In education, for instance, it is not simply a matter of investing in more school buildings or the training of more teachers. The content of education must be carefully designed and tailored to suit the needs and requirements of a developing society. Improvement of public health should not be limited to the construction of more hospitals and clinics, and the training of more medical doctors and nurses. It should also

²⁶ See, for example; John W. Dyckman, "Planning and decision theory", *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* (Washington, D.C.), Vol XXVII, No. 4 (November 1961), pp. 335-345; and Thomas A. Reiner, "Sub-national and national planning: decision criteria", *Papers of the Regional Science Association*, Vol. XIV (Philadelphia, 1965), pp 107-136. In an unpublished paper, the author of the present article has identified six essential components in a circular process of planning: goal-setting; generation of alternatives; choice; implementation; evaluation; feedback; re-evaluation. The term "planning" is used throughout this article to represent this process.

include a heavy emphasis on effective and meaningful dissemination of information on diseases, hygiene and nutritional habits. Social welfare programmes should not be conceived and carried out as charity, but as part and parcel of social development with emphasis on rehabilitation and self-reliance. One could go on at great length in this vein, but the few examples cited should help to indicate that the first requirement is a reexamination of the whole field of social development planning. Social planning is not economic planning in another guise; nor is it an exercise in *ad hoc* charity. It should be a systematic process for achieving the changes necessary for development purposes at a minimum of social cost.

In order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to improve both the conceptual framework and the methodology of social development planning. It is fair to say that the current state of the art is characterized more by ignorance and wishful thinking than by tested and tried knowledge. A great deal will have to be done in terms of both conceptual and empirical research, with a heavy emphasis on in-depth area development research. The "have plan, will travel" type of approach must be suppressed or at least rendered harmless. It should be mentioned that comprehensive regional planning can prove to be very useful in this respect because of its built-in framework for intensive area study.

Although administrative and organizational reform is a long-term and extremely difficult process, it is a problem area which will have to be tackled if subnational development is to become viable. In the type of country found in South-east Asia, the problem is made more complex and difficult by regional separatism and minority problems. A way must be found to allow regional and local people to have adequate decision-making power in development matters without endangering the integrity and security of the country. Currently, at least, it would appear that this is to be achieved through some form of carefully controlled, but none the less real, delegation of power through extensive administrative decentralization. The foregoing discussion on administrative reform is predicated on the assumption that there is, or will be, a real leadership commitment to regional socio-economic development. As has been pointed out, this commitment is by no means an accomplished fact. It should be stressed, however, that without a high degree of leadership commitment backed by vigorous action, the whole discussion on an integrated system of social and economic development is virtually meaningless. Efforts at national development are not likely to succeed in achieving a desirable pattern and sustained process of growth because the problems of economic efficiency and social equity will remain largely unsolved. Planners and other social scientists have, therefore, a duty to educate both the political leader and the general public about the close interrelationship between national and subnational development and the major planning problems involved.

As concerns strategy, it should be clear from the earlier discussion that strategies for an integrated social and economic development should be based on the twin concepts of capabilities

and opportunities.²⁷ Given the preponderance of the rural sector, the main emphasis of development efforts will have to be directed towards rural development; but the problem of urban development must also receive a fair share of attention. The serious and urgent problems of the primate city will require a co-ordinated attack at both the metropolitan and the national levels. Without going into details, it should be stated that there are at least three major needs: provision of adequate urban services and amenities; more efficient utilization of very scarce resources through better planning and co-ordination of activities; and a national programme for the development of regional and other urban centres to relieve the pressure of rural-urban migration. With respect to the question of the interrelationship between rural and urban development it has already been pointed out that relative emphasis on geographical polarization or structural diversification will depend primarily upon the kinds of region involved. A rational plan must include appropriate policies and strategies for regions of rapid growth and stagnant or lagging regions.

A major difficulty in achieving co-ordinated rural and urban development in both the social and economic fields is, obviously, the problem of resource constraints. Even the technically advanced countries are not notably successful in this respect; but in their case, it is probably more a matter of will and the lack of adequate knowledge and methodology rather than a lack of resources. Developing countries share these shortcomings to the full and are further constrained by the unavailability of necessary resources. The problems are thus much more difficult. If one views the problem in a more positive manner, however, the very lack of resources should be regarded as a powerful argument for better planning. A great deal can be done without additional capital and manpower if the Government is genuinely willing to try to improve the efficiency of its use of available resources by ensuring that resource use shall be highly consistent with well-conceived and carefully planned development goals and objectives. Fragmented, overlapping or unco-ordinated programmes and projects should be abolished so that the resources thus freed can be used to implement a consistent and well-designed plan.

Both the conceptual framework and the methodology of integrated social and economic development planning are still at the initial stage. They have not progressed much beyond the stage of pious hopes and utterances. Two ideas that have been advanced in this article as useful means for achieving an integration between the two fields of planning are a reorientation in the basic approach of social planning and the use of regional planning as a tool. An economically oriented type of social planning may not be very appealing to social planners, but it has the virtue of being operationally feasible and significant. With comprehensive subnational planning as a major instrument, this approach should prove useful in making social development planning a viable and fruitful addition to the effort of raising the economic and social well-being of people in both the developed and the developing countries.

²⁷ To cite but one well-known example, the Vicos experiment in Peru has shown how eagerly and successfully a "backward" peasant community will respond to a well-planned and well-administered programme to establish both real opportunities and the capability to exploit them. For a comprehensive list of publications on the project, see Henry F. Dobyns and Mario C. Vazquez, *The Cornell Peru Project: Bibliography and Personnel* (Ithaca N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1964). The Vicos project was, of course a special experiment for which substantial resources, including a large number of highly trained personnel, were made available as inputs. It is not argued that the project can serve as a model for general application. The success of the experiment should, however, be regarded as a strong indication that the approach is, basically, a sound and valid one.