

The Good Society in the Twenty-first Century

*Watana Patanapongse**

1. Introduction

A "good society" has generally been understood to mean a society in which human beings may enjoy a high standard of living - both physically and mentally - within a high quality environment. But standards of mental and physical life involve many factors, and certainly men cannot live happily in a community without consideration for its environment. To change present society in the direction of one that all might consider acceptable in the future, we have first to identify just what problems our present society is encountering. Our job is to solve these problems and take preventive measures against their recurrence. It is widely acknowledged that one problem facing humanity at the present time is that of the balance between quality of society and quality of environment. It is certainly a fact that at times people have developed their society only at the cost of destroying their environment. Some academicians have indeed expressed the view that, in order to develop, it is necessary to disregard the environment.

In analysing what is meant by the good society, we may look to past societies for examples of social successes and social failures. Hopefully we may build on the successes and avoid repetition of the failures.

When we come to contemporary societies, it is by now accepted that one society cannot live alone. It is interdependent with many others - a situation of mutual interaction among societies throughout the world which has come to be termed

* Research Center, National Institute of Development Administration

"globalization". Thus, in analysing the concept of the good society, we must give attention to the whole world system, regarding our prospective society as one subsystem of a "good society" on a worldwide scale. Our approach to the good society must also be holistic. We must take a bird's eye view of our society before giving closer attention to the aspects that most interest us.

Anthropologists, firstly, will prefer to look at the social structure - where "structure" defines relations between individual and individual, individual and group, group and group, group and organization, and many others. A good society would imply "good" relationships at all those levels. We must look at how these relationships work within the various sub-systems - family, religious, legal, educational and economic - of the social structure as a whole.

Our objectives are:

- (1) To overview the literature on the topic of the good society,
- (2) To conceptualize this body of discourse for analysis and synthesis,
- (3) To search for and propose a new conceptualization of the idea of the good society, for further verification and refinement,
- (4) To search for and propose a new model for a good society for the coming 21'st century.

2. The Concept of Societal Development and the Good Society

At the present time, the word "development" is commonly used in a sense that seems to assume that the change referred to is desirable and progressive. It reflects a concept of social development that expresses the hope that the outcome of development will be favourable. In fact all development, especially societal development, has consequences both positive and negative, effects that are desirable and undesirable, and is always accompanied by many problems.

This is nowhere better exemplified than in the case of Thailand. Phongpaichit and Baker (1996) attribute the economic boom, more especially after 1985, to Thailand's ability to take advantage of the drive by Japanese manufacturers to invest in Asia, triggered by the rising value of the yen. The influx of foreign investment stimulated local firms to invest even more in manufacture for export. But these same authors

point out that this economic boom has been accompanied by rising social inequity, urban pollution and environmental devastation which fall most heavily on those least able to defend themselves. Moreover the development of social and legal controls that could limit these abuses has lagged in the rush for industrialization. If development continues to be dominated by concern for short term business gains, they ask - for how long will development be sustainable?

Samudavanija (1995) suggests that the cooperation between the private corporate sector and the state can create an alliance that threatens democratic values, as it comes into conflict with the poorer, but still majority, agricultural sector over the utilization of natural resources. Industrialization before democratic development could create the illusion of rapid overall economic growth, while leading to greater underdevelopment of a rural sector that lacks effective political participation.

In Thailand, economic development commenced when the workforce was still overwhelmingly agrarian. It was based on agricultural diversification that took place at the expense of forest reserves. When the exhaustion of this natural resource coincided with the shift to export-oriented development, industry came into conflict with the agricultural and rural sector. While hinting at a period of intense conflict between these opposing interests, Samudavanija sees the turbulence in economic, social and political life as a sign of dynamism. Thailand is capable of organizing for a better future.

Developmental academics have seen the defects in the conventional concept of societal development, and are seeking for a better definition and approach. Concepts of development have come to change over time. At an earlier stage societal development may be understood to mean economic growth - later it may be found that economic growth is not what a society is looking for. New definitions for the kind of development that is desirable are sought. It is a characteristic of real development that it cannot be expressed in a packaged formula - the question does not easily find a satisfactory answer. Development is only a normative concept, relating to various variables in society. Thus, in defining societal development, the objectives, the activities and the indicators of development will be set by more fundamental values.

Ross and Thadaniti (1995) point out that economic growth, industrialization and modernization cannot be regarded as ends in themselves - they are of value

only as possible means to a better quality of life. They again draw attention to the widespread damage to ecosystems, pollution and - especially in the case of Bangkok - urban problems consequent on unplanned development, that have accompanied industrialization. They endorse a set of principles for sustainable development based on recommendations of the Second World Conservation Strategy Project:

1. Respect and care for the community of life: development must be so managed that it does not threaten the survival of other species or eliminate their habitats.
2. Improve the quality of human life: development is intended to enable people to realize their potential, build self confidence and lead lives of dignity and fulfilment.
3. Conserve the Earth's vitality and diversity: action to protect the ecological systems upon which humans and other species depend.
4. Minimize the depletion of non-renewable resources: by recycling and switching to renewable alternatives where possible.
5. Keep within the Earth's carrying capacity: that is, within the limits of use that the environment can withstand without dangerous deterioration.
6. Change personal attitudes and practices: towards values that support sustainable development.
7. Enable communities to care for their own environments: resisting environmentally damaging development designed to benefit vested interests and proposed under the name of economic growth.
8. Provide a national framework for integrating development and conservation: which requires planning based on accurate and comprehensive information.
9. Create a global alliance: international cooperation to assist developing countries to develop sustainably.

Further, to clearly understand the concept of development, it is necessary to study it under two headings: development as objective and development as process.

When societal development is discussed, four types of definition can be discerned:

Firstly, and most broadly: the two words "societal" and "development" would cover any kind of development taking place within a society, including economic, political, or administrative development.

Secondly, there is a definition that pays close attention to certain selected aspects of development - that is, of society. This definition is equivalent to one

set up at the conclusion of a meeting of ECAFE, the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (now ESCAP, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) in 1970. The conclusions of the meeting can be summarized by saying that social development is here regarded as one more aspect of a view that it is the human being which is the goal of development. It is not just a by-product of economic development - it is a prerequisite and arbiter of development. Thus, societal development must involve change in other aspects than the economic. There must be changes in social structure, social institutions and other social factors promoting development as a whole (U.N. ESCAP, 1970: 4-5).

Thirdly, development may be classified into various categories, according to various matters of public concern, as do Thailand's National Economic and Social Development Plans in including for instance education, public health and social security under wider societal development.

Fourthly, and more narrowly, social and social security benefits, for example in community development and public and social welfare, are considered the matter of societal development.

Our fundamental concept of societal development appropriate to the present purpose, of development in society from top to bottom, will be one that pays attention to its human aspect, will be "human-oriented". It will consider those features that human beings have in common. The human being is an economic animal, active both as producer and consumer; a social animal, that sets up a system of interaction between individuals characterized by the prevailing culture and environment; and a political animal, maintaining a structure of power and comparative advantage. Life in a human society requires integrating these many activities. The development of the individual human being must be considered in terms of these relationships. There is not only one aspect to development.

Development must moreover be aimed at human beings themselves. Improved relationships among individuals in society, harmony with the environment, and individual social culture must be considered as parallel parts of development. This is how social development should be conducted.

In conclusion, societal development is aimed at human beings. It is integrated development of every aspect of human life, interdependent and interpenetrating,

incorporating interactions at the levels of individual, group and social system.

When the "good society" is under discussion, most academics tend to resort to an economic model to explain why some societies have developed while others remain underdeveloped. For example, Ayal (1963: 35), who studied Thai society under an economic model, tried to discern why Thailand remained comparatively underdeveloped while having many economic advantages as compared with other Asian countries, especially Japan. He remarked that "to really understand the causes and process of economic development one should have interdisciplinary cooperation."

Ayal, like other social scientists, likes to compare and contrast Thailand with Japan, giving his reasons that: Thailand and Japan opened their countries to Western culture at the same time, and the way in which they came into contact with Western culture was the same, in that both countries were able to maintain their autonomy. Both oriental countries maintained their traditional culture better than did Western Christian countries. Thailand and Japan both claim a homogeneous culture, making for a fuller awareness of national identity. Both have had strong central governments. Both recognized that survival of the country depended on adoption of Western technology. In addition to this, Ayal pointed out that the economic situations of Thailand and Japan were similar, in that each had a principle commodity that could earn income by export abroad - Japan had silk, Thailand had rice.

Ayal believed that the reason for the differentiation in economic development between Thailand and Japan lay in their respective value systems. He pointed out that the Thai value system is based on Hinayana Buddhism, Thailand's established religion. Most values held in Thailand are to be found in Buddhist teachings. It is a system centered on personal values - in contrast to that of Japan, which can be said to be centered on political values. The Thai stress on personal values arises from the Buddhist teaching that every person has his or her own karma to work out. Thus Thais prefer self-reliance, and do not like to depend on others, even on the community as a whole. At the same time they avoid direct protest against authority. It is a value system that most would term individualistic. Thais tend not to relate themselves to society. Personal status is more often determined by work performance than by birth. Success is seen as a means of winning over other members of society, rather than of benefitting society as a whole. Ayal maintained that it

was the importance that Thais gave to the individual that blockaded the economic development of the country.

Speaking of Japan, Ayal stated that the Japanese do not give much attention to the metaphysical or doctrinal aspects of religion, but rather bend religion to political purposes. Thus, political issues have become central to the Japanese value system. It is to this that he attributes the Japanese economic system's greater effectiveness as compared with that of Thailand. Ayal's description of economic development, we may add in passing, hardly differs from that of Benedict in her book "Patterns of Culture" (Benedict, 1943).

Riggs (1961) used an evolutionary model, what he termed the "Prismatic Model" to describe societal development. He maintained that there are three main societal types: (1) Agrarian or Fused societies, (2) Prismatic or Transitional societies and (3) Industrial or Refracted societies. In his terms Thai society is a prismatic or transitional society.

Riggs further maintained that transitional societies show four characteristics: (1) Communities are characterized by "polycommunalism". In agrarian or fused societies, there is one "great" and many lesser communities, with scarcely any opportunity for contact between one and the other. It is the traditions of the great community that we know from its literature, art, philosophy and social history. In contrast, we know hardly anything of the more numerous lesser communities. On these grounds, Riggs urged that anthropologists investigate and reveal to the world the culture of these lesser communities.

In industrial or refracted society, the means of mass communication mobilize every individual. This movement and interaction of cultures creates a "national community". In prismatic or transitional societies some of these means of mass communication have begun to take effect, but are not yet widely dispersed. Individuals slowly begin to mobilize themselves upward.

(2) Class structure or stratification is "kaleidoscopic". According to Riggs, numerous private values, social behaviours of individuals, are in process of admixture. People in rural areas are still limited in their culture, while the affluent in urban areas are taking on new social values.

(3) In prismatic society organization is "cliqueish." The means of setting up organizations are not formalized. Many organizations are restricted to related individuals, rather than seeking workers with proven ability.

(4) Values show "polynormalism". Thus Thai society, as a prismatic society, shows many facets, some approximating to one type of society, some to another; some to agricultural - Riggs' "agrarian" - society, some to industrial society.

In terms of Riggs' evolutionary description we could contrast the Thai prismatic or transitional society with the Japanese industrial or refracted society. However, to identify the industrial or refracted society with the "good" society would seem premature!

Jacobs used a historical model to compare and contrast Thai with Japanese society. In his book "Modernization without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study" (1971), he endeavours to show that any country or society can achieve "modernization" without real economic development. For example - Thailand! It was the patrimonial governmental system under which the country once was that retarded development, though Thailand modernized. In contrast, in a country under a feudalistic system like that of Japan, society experienced both economic development and modernization. Why did Thai society not develop, though it had many experiences in common with that of Japan, especially at the time of contact with Western culture? Jacobs said that the significant reasons lay in different patterns of society and different history. Though in the 19th century the overt characteristics of the two countries were more or less the same, in history before the 19th century they differed greatly. Differing pasts led to futures that diverged one from the other. In summary, Thailand's modernization without development was a consequence of its "paternalism", Japan's modernization with development of its "feudalism".

Of all models the most popular remains the "loosely-structured model" promoted by Embree (1950). Embree summarized the differences between Thai, and Japanese or Vietnamese, society by characterizing the Thai social system as "loosely-structured", having many significant behavioural differences from the "closely-structured" social systems of Japan or Vietnam. He describes a "loosely-structured social system" as one that allows its members to make differing decisions in the same situation. It is not customary for such a society to coerce its members. The culture of such a society sanctions considerable variation in the behaviour of its individual members.

This differs from the closely-structured Japanese social system under which an individual's behaviour must strictly conform to the social pattern. In a society of this latter kind, it is difficult for an individual to behave in a manner than conflicts with the rules of society. Roles and status of individuals are clearly laid down and all must abide by them strictly.

Embree's view is that the loosely-structured society is closely related to the personality trait of "individualism". Thus it can be seen that Thais lack consistency and sustained attention, and do not like to work with others. Compared with the Japanese, they are unsystematic and undisciplined; compared with Americans, they lack the executive self-control and sensitiveness to time of an industrial society.

Be this as it may, Siengthai and Vadhanasindhu (1991) point out that it is this love of freedom and tolerance that has made Thai society flexible and capable of adapting to change, and thus provided a basis for national stability. Nor has it prevented the Thai economy from becoming one of the strongest, most rapidly growing and diverse in the developing world.

3. A Conceptual Foundation for the Good Society in the Twenty-first Century

When we look back on those past societies that were the creation of our ancestors, we shall recognise that those past societies were regarded by these same ancestors as "good". This would be so as far back as we can trace history, to the first societies that developed, some 40,000 to 100,000 years ago with the evolutionary emergence of the species *Homo sapiens sapiens*, to which modern humans belong. We may imagine these first societies as technologically primitive and, for the most part, materially poor communities in which there was equality of access to the means of production and items of consumption - "pre-class" and "pre-state" societies (Russell, 1992: 47).

We may classify societies according to their type of economic system: communal, state, slave, feudal, capitalist, socialist or whatever - and in each case we shall find, from its own members' point of view, it is the good society. Many times we shall see the members of differing societies trying to propagate their own model,

to the detriment of other, opposing societies. Such, for instance, is the fight between "capitalists" and "socialists".

The same is so if we classify societies according to their stage of technological development, following the evolution, step by step, from hunting and gathering, to pastoral, to horticultural, to agricultural, to industrial society.

Looking at the economic structures of contemporary societies, we see a world system that includes capitalist and socialist countries, highly stratified as to income from the richest to the poorest. The capitalist system grew steadily from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, by which time it was to be found in most parts of the globe. In the early twentieth century, socialist revolutions withdrew certain countries from the capitalist orbit. But, in 1989 and 1990, a number of these socialist countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, began, significantly, to reinstate capitalism.

Up to the events of 1989, postwar world societies were conventionally divided into three overall types: First World capitalist countries, with high levels of technological development and high standards of living; Second World socialist countries, with intermediate levels of technological development and standards of living; and Third World capitalist and socialist countries, having low levels both of technological development and standard of living. The events of 1989 have ushered in a period in which this picture, especially of the "Second World", has undergone radical changes.

Capitalist societies have been described as essentially market societies in which a dominant economic class maintains its position of eminence by virtue of its ownership of the central means of production, comprising industry, finance and commerce. Socialist societies are considered to be planned societies in which the state owns the central means of production. A major difference between these two types of society lies in their respective attitudes towards social equality and inequality. Socialist development claims as its prime goal to, in the short term, reduce the range of social inequality, and to effectively abolish it in the long run. Capitalist ideologists have, on the other hand, often maintained that social inequality is beneficial to society as a whole, in that it motivates individuals to work hard in order to escape from poverty and achieve wealth.

It is evident that in the contemporary world actual societies lie on a continuum between the capitalist and socialist extremes. Societies lying around the centre of

this continuum are described as having "mixed economies" - in most cases however the balance of economic control tipping either in the direction of state or private ownership.

The internal close divisions of capitalist countries are reflected internationally in the sharp differences in average standards of living among these countries. There are good reasons to conclude that to some extent the upper economic classes do enjoy their higher incomes and greater wealth at the expense of the lower classes; and that likewise the high standards of living of the First World are enjoyed at the expense of lowered standards of living in the Third World. First World countries are able to extract profits and loan interest payments from capitalist Third World countries. Moreover, their greater economic strength ensures that, in their international trade with Third World countries, they will receive the greater share of profits.

The political ideologies underlying the various national organizations, movements and state policies of the twentieth century are conventionally ranged on a spectrum from "right" to "left". Right wing ideologies have been traditionally identified as having pro-capitalist orientation and serving upper class interests. Left wing ideologies have appealed to working class and lower class interests and have generally promoted socialist type reforms and changes. The five most prominent ideological types, from right to left in this traditional classification, have been given the names Fascism, Conservatism, Liberalism, Socialism and Communism.

In the "New World Order" towards which the world community is tending, "right wing" and "left wing" ideologies do not any longer play such an active role. The world community does pay much attention to economic problems. Each country strives for development, channeling development through some form of - for instance "five year" - national economic and social development plans. Such plans have in fact for long been implemented by developed countries; and over the past three or four decades have been adopted by developing countries, especially those of the so-called democratic alliance. Thus Thailand has maintained its Five-year National Economic and Social Development Plans since January 1, 1961.

Each country hopes for successful development on the basis of such plans.

4. Significant Contemporary Global Problems and the Search for an Alternative Approach

Many present day problems could be cited as significant on a global scale. There are economic, political, social, scientific, technological and environmental problems: problems of imbalance of trade and trade wars, of poverty, terrorism and crime, of narcotics, of human rights, ignorance, population control, pollution by toxic waste, the greenhouse effect and others. They lead to conflict, to depreciation of human happiness and peace. Every country in the world has to realize and help to solve these problems in order to raise the quality of life and restore peace in the world.

To solve in common these problems is to search for the good society. In aiming to develop society one must consider not only the positive, but also the negative, outputs, outcomes and impacts. It is the case that many efforts at societal development have more negative than positive impact - though the initial output seems to be favourable, the long term outcome or impact is found to be undesirable. Societal development theorists and practitioners must have a vision in mind. Before laying down policy and plans, the long term outcome and impact of any project must be considered.

For instance, a project to modernize and urbanize the community may be aimed at ameliorizing the daily life of people. However, if in actuality, the project destroys the environment and traditional way of life of the community, its members may experience more negative than positive consequences from the project.

Theorists and practitioners alike must look closely at the outcome of their development efforts, since the question will frequently be raised: How do we know that the society has developed in the intended direction? The question raised is that of social indicators (Wilcox et. al., 1972). The significance of such social indicators is that their observed values should be a guide to social development agencies who must make developmental plans and decisions.

The weak point of work on social indicators is that the structure and relationships between such indicators has not been determined. This problem would have been overcome if we had equations to express precisely the various relationships within society - however this suggestion has so far not materialised. Such equations could be constructed if the structure of relationships between social indicators under the

model could be determined. We may compare the use of a system of linear economic equations to express social development on a polynomial model having seven indicators: (1) environment, (2) living space, (3) health, (4) education, (5) culture, (6) political development and (7) economic status. We must consider further the variables involved and the internal structural relationships among social indicators. If we can determine this internal structure, we will be able to use the overall structure as a measure of the quality of life, and thus guide our future efforts in accordance with the philosophies of life of members of each society.

It may be observed that to use social indicators to study developmental outputs is to make a public administrative decision, of interest to administrators who are politically oriented. The method outlined could be described as a "human needs" approach (Ross, 1973).

The structure set up here (Kamnuansilp, 1979: 65-87) will begin by adapting the method and ideas on social indicators of Land (1974). Firstly, we will describe the various social indicator variables between two submodels, one group termed (1) endogeneous and the other (2) exogeneous variables. The endogeneous variables will again be divided into two subsections. One expresses the results of development that accord with the needs of people or their life aspirations, by whatever process these are achieved. The second expresses the consequences of the first. This can be illustrated by a real life situation in social development: people want automobiles, but must accept the side effect of atmospheric pollution.

The exogeneous variables are also divisible into two sub-sections. Both are concerned with the degree of control possessed by average members of society. The first comprises variables expressing national policy - beyond reason or, the non-politician might say, without reason! The second are variables that cannot be determined, or concerned with handling of social policy.

Having determined the model, we must delimit it in time and space. We must work within a specified period. In practice this might be one year, or the five years of a National Economic and Social Development Plan. Specification of the time is very important, since it is related directly to the theory behind social development, though the process will take place continuously and will change and adapt itself to fit social conditions. Endogenous variables must be controlled within

the same period; though in practice we may regard their study, measurement and analysis as incidental.

Having laid the foundations of our model, we may decide that, in constructing a measurement system for social development, we should look at the micro level: that is, at the measurement of quality of life. The decided structure will follow a linear model; though, in practice, when we come to assess parameters, we may think in terms of a nonlinear model.

On the basis of this structure, we assume V_{ex} to be the vector of exogenous variables and V_{en} to be the vector of endogenous variables respectively, together comprising all indicators of quality of life. We further assume the relationship between V_{en} and V_{ex} to be expressed by the equation:

$$AV_{en} = BV_{ex} + res \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

where

- A, B are the values of the coefficients of the vectors
- res is the residual of the vectors and has correlation with AV_{ex} of 0 (zero).

The residual value here means the excess over the variables within the system.

In constructing equation (1), we can find the value of V_{en} from:

$$V_{en} = OV_{ex} + \Sigma \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

where

$$O = A^{-1} \cdot B^{-1} \cdot res$$

It is assumed that Σ also has correlation 0 (zero) with V_{ex} .

If we make a national level survey using criteria of life quality, under the human needs approach, we might conclude that both vectors, of endogenous and exogenous variables alike, are randomly distributed. This is a consequence of the fact that our question addresses only one point, whereas the answer - the vector - depends on what the answerer thinks, is satisfied with or wants as a whole. Mathematically, when we have a structure expressed for instance by Equation (1), we may regard Equation (2) as expressing a subsystem of this structure.

When we have determined the main system of life quality variables, the next step will be to determine the structure of relationships of each such variable. These

relationships will be considered to take the form of vectors, as in the main system. The equations of sub-relationships among life quality indicators can be written with vectors Y, Z as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} Y &= P \text{ (every endogenous variable measurement) } + W \\ Z &= Q \text{ (every exogenous variable measurement) } + X \end{aligned}$$

where

W, X are the errors in measurement of each variable, which can be compared with the value of the residual in the main structure, assuming a mutual relationship ($r = 0$), but no relationship with Y and Z.

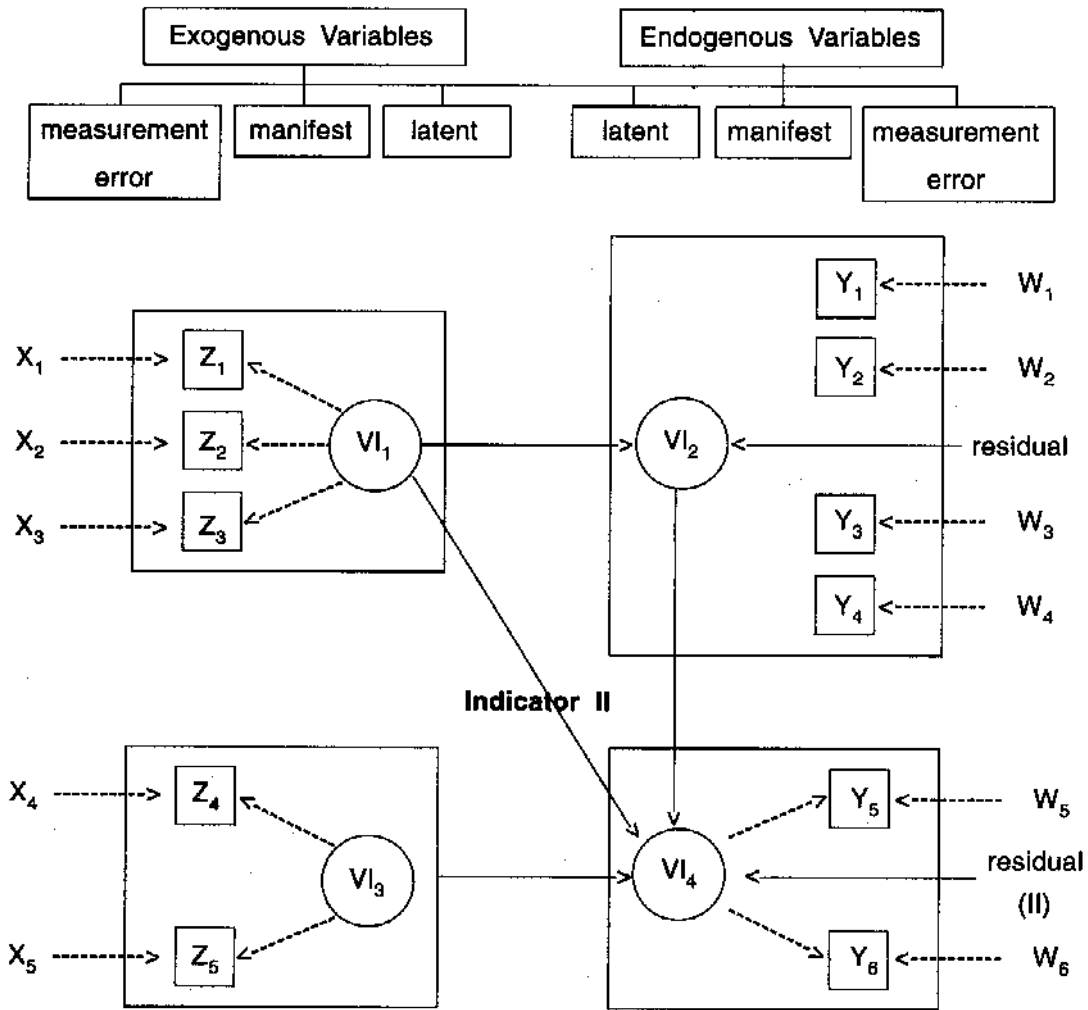
P, Q have the form of coefficient matrices, as in the main structure.

In the human needs approach, we aim to understand the thinking and outlook of human beings - a difficult task to wholly achieve. We will have only certain significant variables - but there are some which we cannot disregard. Thus there will certainly be some variables over in the structural relationships of these variables obtained from the measurements of quality of life, that is latent variables. Variables that can be measured and expressed are termed manifest variables.

In practice we assume that there are more manifest than latent variables. The theory is that we must seek for as many manifest variables as possible. These measurable variables must have minimum relationship with others, that is they should be mutually exclusive and independent, and at the same time should be closely related to the measurement of life quality.

Mathematically, we could determine the structure of variables that cannot be expressed or understood, but this is of little value. We try to determine as many variables in the vector as possible. The resulting structure can be illustrated by the following diagram:

Indicator I



Path Diagram Illustrating Part of the Model.

The diagram above shows only some of the measured indicators of overall quality of life, in order to make clear the relationships between variables within each indicator as well as the relationships of each indicator.

This model for measuring the output of development in terms of life quality variables is only one of many possible models. How well the data can be fitted to the model depends on the ability of the research worker. In order to make the test more exact we may make the following elaboration:

(1) The objective is to construct a measurement of life quality. We divide life quality variables into two sets: endogenous and exogenous. Each of these is in turn divided into two subsets: those which can, and those which cannot, be measured or conceptualized.

(2) Each variable will have its own relationship and structure for measurement. Each defines a subsystem of the overall measurement system.

To test the model, in practice we begin by looking for data to put into the overall structure, by measuring as many as possible of the subsystem variables. We will then determine or estimate the values of the relationships and structure, and redetermine the values of relationships in the main structure.

The above concept of social development can be considered at either of two levels: (1) at the macro level, we observe the relationships between demographic, economic and social variables, while (2) at the micro level, the model aims to measure the outputs of development as these effect individuals. The model takes as its starting point the construction of social indicators. We go on to fashion it into an instrument for the measurement of quality of life. The model is based on an effort to gain access to the outlook and needs of human beings, on the grounds that successful development is development that enhances the quality of human life - that is, the quality of life as perceived by the average person, rather than as any government may determine or expect it to be. What a government offers may well not meet the actual needs of members of society.

5. In Search of a Model for a Good Society Appropriate to the Coming Twenty-first Century

In terms of the social structure model, it holds that we cannot attain the desired society unless we change at least certain sub-systems within our social system, or even change the overall system. If we change only certain sub-systems it will be because we want to maintain those we consider good, while modifying only those we consider inferior. If we change the overall system it will be because we do not want to maintain one we consider wholly inferior. We may imagine that, if we change the overall system, then the new system must be superior.

In terms of the problem solving model, it is implied that we should take the following steps in order to reach the desired good society:

(1) We must identify just what are the problems facing our society - the more subtle, unacknowledged problems, as well as those more immediately apparent.

(2) Having defined our problems, we must go more deeply, to identify their root causes.

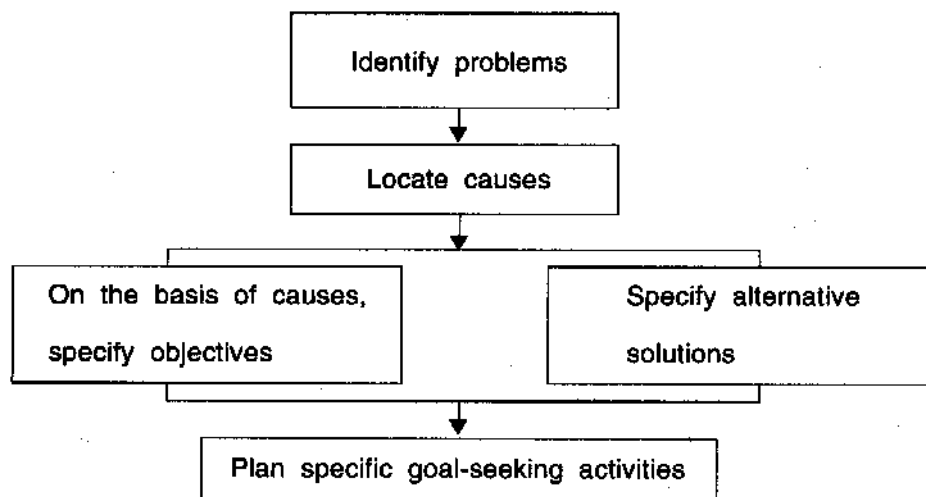
(3) The problem and its cause defines an objective - the solution of the problem. In each case there may be more than one alternative solution. We must find these alternatives.

(4) In general, the solution of a social problem defines a long-term objective or goal, for the attainment of which we must devise an effective long-term strategy,

(5) To be effective, our long-term strategy must be capable of being broken down into more immediately attainable, short-term, tactical objectives - it must be made operational.

(6) For each of these tactical objectives we can plan specifically - we can allot means, personnel and finance, we can decide upon a realistic time schedule. In the endeavour we will seek the cooperation of every concerned person from every walk of life in our society.

The scheme we have outlined may be summarized in the following diagramme:



We must keep in mind, when starting from the problem-solving scheme outlined above, that there will be at least three strata to our model of the good society for the twenty-first century.

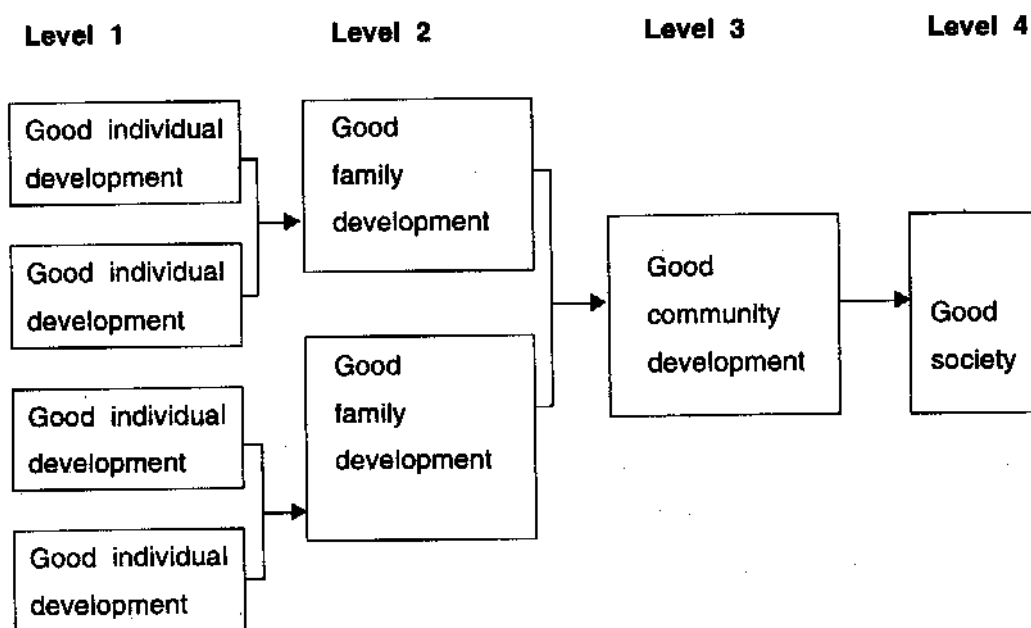
1. An individual level,
2. A family level,
3. A community level.

At the individual level, we must educate members of society to know how to set out their own life development plans - in the belief that, if individuals can develop their own lives well, this in itself will lead on to the good society.

At the family level, we must likewise educate whoever we regard as family heads or representatives, to be able to set out their own family and community development plans. The belief is again that well developed individual families will be the basis for the good society.

At the community level, there must be a systematic plan to develop the community towards the good society hoped for by all.

Our model can be illustrated in a diagramme as follows:

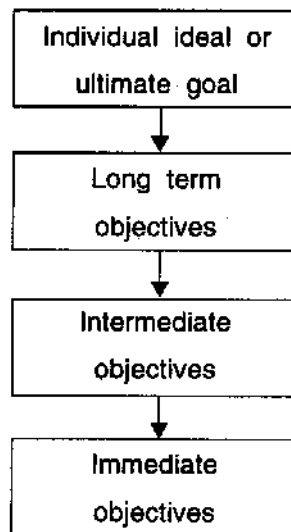


As shown in the above diagramme, the society is the overall system, the community a subsystem of the society, the family a subsystem of the community, and the individual a subsystem of the family. We can further logically explain the intent of the diagramme as: if there are good individual members, there will be a good family, if there is a community of good families, there will be a good society.

In other words, if the question is raised: how can one develop a good society, the answer lies in the community; a good community, in the family; a good family, in the sound development of the individual - the family member.

How can this be put into practice? To implement these ideas, we must plan at these three levels of individuals and organization.

Firstly: the individual plan: Each family member needs to have his or her own plans, image of the ideal or ultimate goal, immediate, intermediate and long term objectives:



It is believed that the individual who has a carefully crafted self development plan and who implements it will be sought after as an example to be followed by other members of that individual's society.

Secondly: the family plan: As with the individual, each family in a good community will plan to implement its own family ideal and goal, its immediate, intermediate and long term objectives.

Thirdly: the community plan: Likewise, in a good society, each community will have its own pattern of plans, ideals, and immediate and remote goals. The belief is again that the well developed community will become a model to be followed by other communities within the society.

Nowadays, many developing countries have their "national economic and social development plans". Thailand, for instance, is now well into its Seventh (1992-1996). We assert that the reason this development is not successful, at least over the short term, is that the developing authorities have not given attention to the family and individual levels. These authorities' concept of development has been that of community, village, district and provincial development. Emphasis has been on the larger unit - less on the family and individual. But Buddhism has a maxim that, if one desires to develop society one must first develop the individual, and this means the development of that individual's mind.

6. Summary and Recommendations

We must bear in mind that the society - and the individuals, families and communities that constitute that society - which we hope to see develop towards the goal of a universally accepted good society, are changing. In order to proceed, we must have adequate information about the society we are developing. Without valid and convincing information we cannot begin to solve any problem.

It is certainly hoped that our society in the 21st century will be an improvement on that of past times. We can hope this at least on the grounds that more advanced technology can provide us with the information we need to achieve such a goal more quickly and confidently.

The problem facing agents of change in nearly every country is a lack of qualified and skilled social project planners, implementors and evaluators. It is for this reason that, comparatively, the social sector lags behind the technological and economic sectors. We can observe that, in any country, the authorities concerned with development pay more attention to the economic and physical, than to the social, infrastructure. The output is in consequence physical: roads, oil wells, reservoirs and fine buildings - while the majority of the population still lack, for instance, education and health care.

It follows that we must urge these same authorities to pay more attention to the social and cultural sectors. How can we claim to have achieved a good society if, while we can point to splendid roads, buildings and other outward manifestations of prosperity, so many members of our society are lacking in such basic aspects of the quality of life as education and health.

Bibliography

- Ayal, Eliezer B. 1963. "Value Systems and Economic Development in Japan and Thailand", *Journal of Social Issues*, 19, (1), pp. 35-51.
- Barzun, J. et al. 1970. *The Modern Researcher*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.
- Bellah, R.N. et al. 1992. *The Good Society*. New York: Knopf.
- Benedict, Ruth. 1934. *Patterns of Culture*. New York.
- Bronowski, J. 1978. *The Common Sense of Science*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Capra, Fritjof. 1982. *The Turning Point*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Chaisson, E. 1987. *The Life Era: The Role of Change in the Natural Universe*. Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Embree, John F. 1950. "Thailand - a Loosely Structured Social System," *American Anthropologist* 52, pp. 181-193.
- Etzioni, Amitai. 1968. *The Active Society: A Theory of Societal and Practical Processes*. New York: The Free Press.
- Freire, Paulo. 1985. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. (Trans. B. Ramos). New York: Continuum.
- Goldstein, M. and Goldstein, I.F. 1978. *How We Know: An Introduction to the Methods of Scientific Research*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Guba, E. (ed.) 1990. *The Paradigm Dialog*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Holton, G. 1978. *The Scientific Imagination: Case Studies*. Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press.

- Jacobs, Norman. 1971. *Modernization without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study*. New York: Praeger.
- Kamnuansilp, Phirasith. 1979. "Social Development in Demographic Aspect: Theories and Measurement Method" in NIDA Social Policy Team, *Readings in Social Development*. Bangkok: Graduate School of Social Development, National Institute of Development Administration, Monograph No. 5. (in Thai).
- Kaplan, A. 1964. *The Conduct of Inquiry*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Kuhn, T.S. 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Land, K.G. 1974. "Social Indicators Models: An Overview". In K.G. Land and Spilerman (eds.), *Social Indicators Models*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation.
- Lazslo, E. 1987. *Evolution: The Grand Synthesis*. Boston: The New Science Library.
- Murphy, John W. 1989. *Postmodern Social Analysis and Criticism*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Parsons, Talcott. 1954. *Essays in Sociological Theory*. New York: The Macmillan Co.
- Pongpaichit, P. and Baker, C. 1996. *Thailand's Boom!* Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Polanyi, Michael. 1962. *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Reason, P. and Rowan, J. 1981. *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook for New Paradigm Research*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Reynolds, P.D. 1979. *Ethical Dilemma and Social Science Research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Riggs, Fred W. 1961. "A Model for Study of Thai Society", *Thai Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. I., No. 4, April.
- Ross, H. and Thadaniti, S. 1995. "The environmental costs of industrialization". In M. Krongkeaw (Ed.), *Thailand's Industrialization and Its Consequences* (pp. 267-288). New York: St. Martin's Press.

- Ross, J.P. 1973. *Welfare Theory and Social Policy: A Study of Policy Science: "Commentationes Scientiarum Societatis"*, 4, Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennicae.
- Russell, James W. 1992. *Introduction to Macrosociology*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Samudavanija, C.-A. 1995. "Economic development and democracy". In M. Krongkeaw (Ed.), *Thailand's Industrialization and its Consequences*, (pp. 235-250). New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Schmid, M. and Wuketits, F. 1987. *Evolutionary Theory in Social Science*. Norwell, MA: Reidel.
- Siengthai, S. and Vadhanasindhu, P. 1991. "Management in a Buddhist society - Thailand". In J. M. Putti, *Management: Asian Context*, (pp. 222-236). Singapore: McGraw-Hill.
- Schwartz, Joseph. 1992. *The Creative Moment: How Science Made Itself Alien to Modern Culture*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Toffler, A. *Power Shift: Knowledge, Wealth and Violence at the Edge of the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Bantam.
- U.N. Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific. 1970. *Report of the Working Party on Social Development*. Bangkok: U.N. Publication.
- Weber, Max. 1947. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations*. New York: The Free Press.
- Wilcox, L.D., R.M. Brooks, G.M. Beals, and Klonglan. 1972. *Social Indicators and Social Monitoring: An Annotated Bibliography*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.