Social Change and Modernization in African Societies South of the Sahara
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I

Social change in Africa has been studied from a variety of points of view by different social science disciplines—anthropology, sociology, political science, and economics. The first impetus has come from anthropologists, and they have quite naturally focused at first on the processes of change and disorganization of the various traditional social and cultural patterns and organizations and then on the possible recrystallization of some such traditional elements within the more modern and differentiated societies. Thus, studies of different aspects of detribalization, of the changing status of chiefs or of women, or of the undermining of the older traditional frameworks were made side by side with studies of the development of urban voluntary organizations in which many traditional elements and orientations tended to subsist, or with studies of the new religious cults and movements in which too the confrontation of old and new often served as the main focus of research.

These studies have gradually come close to some of the first major concerns of sociologists who became interested in these areas and who focused first on the study of various aspects of urbanization, with its major and varied social problems such as delinquency or family disorganization, or incipient forms of industrialization, and secondly on the emergence of various modern-time types of organizati-

tions—schools, trade unions—or of new "educated", professional and semi-professional elites.  

Lastly, political scientists have come in, studying first the various forms of nationalistic movements that developed in most African countries and later on—after the establishment of independence—the various new forms of political organization—especially the basic political institutions on the one hand, and political parties and other types of political organizations on the other.  

The original emphasis of most of these studies—with perhaps the partial exception of the political ones—was the study of social change and disorganization, of the emergence of new types of social organization which were drifting, as it were, into new directions—but directions which were not readily discernible, and whose new overall contours were not fully perceived. At most, there could be found in most of these studies an implicit assumption that these changes are going into some direction not dissimilar from that of other modern, industrial societies, even if such developments in African societies were weak and intermittent, and even if disorganization and the establishment of colonial frameworks were more easily to be found than the development of more stable social forms. Some such assumptions could also be discerned in many of the first studies dealing with political movements and parties.

But with the establishment of new states and political structures, there took place a very important shift in this whole area of research. It has created the possibility, even the necessity, of studying these various phenomena together, in their mutual interrelationship, in what was often called their "global" or "total" setting.

The very establishment of these new political frameworks pointed out to the importance of new integration problems, to the emergence and crystallization of new overall, integrative frameworks which tended, as it were, to bring together the various processes of change into some common focus. It was the development of these new societal centers which gave a new meaning to the various processes of change which were studied by the diverse social science disciplines and which were now necessarily brought together into some sort of common framework. The emergence of these centers has necessarily changed the perception and analysis of the processes of change: they had to be evaluated from the point of view of structural recrystalizations.


which could be interwoven into the new center and upon which the new center was greatly dependent.

These new centers had very specific characteristic. They were conceived in their ideological and institutional forms as an attempt at modernity, at the establishment of a new modern order, of new modern societies, which were to take their proper place among other modern societies.

Hence the study of the varied processes of change became, in a way, part of the broader study of modernization, and the basic problem which confronts them today is to find out the specific problem and fashion of modernization as they appear in African societies.

II

The first natural step towards such an analysis would be to find out to what extent African societies do develop in the direction of modern societies, to what extent they develop the major social features and problems of modernity.¹

The broad socio-demographic and structural corollaries of modernization as they develop in the major institutional spheres have by now been well studied in the literature. Perhaps the best overall summary of the socio-demographic indices of modernization has been coined by Karl Deutsch² in the term of "social mobilization." He has defined it as the "process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded and broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behaviour" and has indicated that some of its main indices are exposure to aspects of modern life through demonstrations of machinery, buildings, consumers' goods, etc., response to mass media, change of residence, urbanization, change from agricultural occupations, literacy, growth of per capita income.

Similarly, the major structural characteristics of modernization have been identified as the development of a high extent of differentiation, of free resources which are not committed to any fixed, ascriptive (kinship, territorial, etc.) groups, the development of specialized and diversified types of social organization, the development of wide non-traditional "national," or even supra-national group identifications,

¹. For a further exposition of these points of view see: S. N. Eisenstadt, "Modernisation, Growth and Diversity", The Carnegie Faculty Seminar on Political and Administrative Development, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1963; S. N. Eisenstadt, "Modernisation and the Conditions of Sustained Growth", World Politics, XVI, No. 4. July 1964, pp. 576-595, where further bibliographical references are given.
and the concomitant development in all major institutional spheres
of specialized roles and of special wider regulative and allocative
mechanism and organizations such as market mechanisms in economic
life, voting and party activities in politics and of diverse bureaucratic
organizations and mechanisms in most institutional spheres.

But beyond these varied socio-demographic or structural characte-
ristics of modernity or modernization there looms a somewhat larger,
in a way more crucial, problem. Modernization implies not only the
development of the various aspects of growing structural differen-
tiation, but also the development of a social system which not only
generates continuous change, but also, unlike many other types of
social systems, is capable as well of absorbing changes beyond its own
initial institutional premises.

Hence, the central problem of modernization can be seen as the
ability of any system to adapt itself to these changing demands, to
absorb them in terms of policy-making and to ensure its own con-
tinuity in the face of continuous new demands and new forms of political
organization.

In other words, modernization creates in its wake problems of
sustained social, economic and political growth as its central problem.
The ability to deal with continuous changes of political demands is the
crucial test of such sustained growth, of development or modernization.

Research on development and modernization has been guided by
assumptions—often implicit—about the conditions of such sustained
growth. These assumptions are now being undermined and the exa-
mination of the African case may be of special interest or importance
for their critical evaluation.

The first such assumption was that of the primacy of the economic
sphere in development and modernization, of the central importance
of the economic solvent for the development of viable modern societies
and political régimes.

Second was the assumption of the relative assurance of the con-
tinuity of modernization, of "sustained growth", of continuous develop-
ment in any institutional sphere—be it economics, politics or social
organization—after the initial "take-off."

The third basic assumption was that of the very close interrela-
tedness of almost all the major aspects of "development," or of mo-
dernization, in all these major institutional spheres of any society.

It may, of course, be claimed that the first assumption—that of
the primacy of the economic sphere in development—was discarded
relatively early in the game, when some at least of the economists
discovered that the conditions of development and effective function-
ing of a modern economic system could not be understood in economic
terms alone, and when the analysis of the non-economic preconditions
of economic development became one of the major problems of research in this field. However, the very concern with the preconditions of economic growth tended to reinforce the implicit assumption that once such initial economic take-off is attained development and modernization are more or less assured also in other spheres. Thus, interestingly enough, while the literature about the preconditions of economic growth is, and continues to be, very abundant, that on the political or social consequences of economic growth is only beginning now to emerge.

The second assumption, about the assurance of continuous development, or modernization, once the initial "take-off" stages have been attained, can be found with different degrees of explicitness in many economic and political analyses—whether in Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* or in the first analyses on the development of political institutions in the so-called New Nations. Most of these first analyses were oriented towards the elucidation of the conditions under which parliamentary-constitutional régimes can successfully operate in non-Western societies. While it was usually fully acknowledged that such conditions may not be ripe in many of these nations, it still was often implicitly assumed that if such political institutions can be implanted in these countries in the first stages of their independence their continuity and working can perhaps be assured. It was only later that, for instance, Emerson, one of the first students of nationalism and politics in Asia, wrote about the "Erosion of Democracy" in Asian countries\(^1\) and even this remained for relatively long time an isolated attempt. Hence until lately we find but few systematic analyses of the crises and breakdowns of political modernization or economic development after the initial "take-off."

The third assumption, that of the interconnectedness of the various institutional aspects of modernization, predicted that the process of modernization in the different institutional spheres—be they economic, political or in the field of social organization—are closely interrelated, so that they tend necessarily to go together and to coalesce in relatively similar patterns. It unwittingly brought over a relative neglect of the study of the structural and organizational variety attendant on modernization. Although almost everybody who dealt with these problems did stress that the concrete social and political forms which will develop in the New States will somehow differ from the Western ones, yet the assumption of the close interrelationship between the various institutional aspects of modernization was conducive to the neglect of systematic studies of these structural varieties and to a

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continuous implicit "Western-centricity" of many of these studies—and to the search for conditions under which institutions of the western type can successfully develop and function in the developing societies or New Nations.

Many analyses of processes of modernization which took off from some of the preceding assumptions often lead to or were based on the—usually implicit—assumption that the conditions for sustained growth can be found in the continuous extension of these various socio-demographic and/or structural indices.

Thus, for instance, one possible and very often propounded view has been that the more a society exhibits or develops the basic characteristics of structural specialization and the higher it is on various indices of social mobilization, the more modern it would be, i.e., by implication, the better it would be able to sustain continuous growth and absorb continuous changes.

According to this view, the traditionalism or modernity of a society could be measured by the extent of development of social mobilization within it and by the extent to which its basic principles of allocation and organization were particularistic, diffuse and ascriptive as against universalistic, achievement and specificity oriented. Thus, for instance, according to one of such studies, traditional society tends to be a familistic one while the modern one tends to divest the family unit from most of its functions, and the family itself develops more into the direction of the small nuclear family.

Needless to say, such an approach has a very great extent of plausibility. However, it is not fully borne out by the available evidence. Many researches—analyzed elsewhere—indicate that the picture is not so simple or clear-cut. In many cases, we find that the extension of the socio-demographic or structural indices of modernization may give rise to what may be called "breakdowns" of modernization. In general, it can perhaps be said that certain levels of "social mobilization" and of structural differentiation constitute a necessary condition of the modernization, but that the continuous development of these processes does not constitute a sufficient condition of the continuity of modernization in the sense of the creation of an institutional framework capable of continuous absorption of change.

III

Of special interest here are the implications of the non-tenability of the third basic assumption, namely the assurance of continuity of growth after the "take-off."\(^1\)

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In both the economic and the political spheres it has become quite obvious that there does not exist any assurance about such continuity. The case of Argentina in the economic sphere, of Burma or Indonesia in the political sphere, are among the most pertinent examples of the possibility of breakdowns after some initial—or even sometimes relatively advanced—stages of modernization.

A great part of the contemporary history in general and of the contemporary international relations in particular is, in a way, the history of breakdowns or of stagnation of political régimes or economic systems which had seemingly “taken-off” into modernity—and yet could not continue to fly at all or to attain higher altitudes.

But the more paradoxical—and more significant—outcome of these processes was that such breakdowns or stagnations did not necessarily lead up to the total collapse of these new régimes or to their return to some traditional social and political form.

These régimes, which evince different degrees of development or modernization in the economic, political or social sphere, and different types of stagnation, tend to coalesce together into some new forms of viable ongoing social and political systems.

Such new polities and societies certainly differ in many ways from the “older” (Western) modern ones nor do they necessarily develop into the direction of these “older” societies, and yet they by no means remain any longer simply traditional societies.

Moreover however stagnating or unstable these régimes are, they evince some capability of reorganization and continuity, and they develop various internal and external policies which aim at assuring for themselves the conditions of such continuity.

The conditions which gave rise to such régimes varied and should constitute foci of research. But one such general condition should perhaps be indicated here—namely the contemporary international setting.

This setting, and especially the situation of “cold-war” on the one hand, and the growing drawing together of almost all régimes of the world into one common international setting, on the other hand, are of no small importance in contributing to the possibility of crystallization of such tendencies in relatively stagnating régimes.

The competition between the great powers for influence in the major areas of the world on the one hand, and the ideological legitimation for any “independent” régimes on the other hand, may easily provide some very crucial resources both for the development of some initial modernization and for the stabilization of relatively regressive régimes.
The preceding analysis poses two basic problems before the student of processes of modernization in Africa south of the Sahara. One is the identification of the specific structural characteristics of the processes of modernization as they develop in African society, as distinct from those of other modern societies, and of the conditions which explain their development.

The other major problem is the identification of those forces which—within these structural frameworks—facilitate or impede the development of this ability for sustained growth, of the continuous absorption of changes and new problems.

From this point of view it is very significant that within most African states the emphasis on change, progress, and economic development is one of the main tenets of their political and ideological orientations. But at the same time, their institutional capacity to absorb changes may be small compared to their aspirations for change although it necessarily greatly varies among the different new states according to various conditions.

The ability of the élites of the new states to implement the manifold changes as they would like to is often limited and very often they are barely able to maintain their own continuity and stability. It is this contradiction which constitutes perhaps the major problem or focus of investigation in the study of modernization in African societies.

In order to be able to analyze this problem, we first have to go back to the analysis of some of the most important features of modernization as they have developed under the colonial régimes in Africa south of the Sahara.¹

Perhaps the major characteristic of the process of modernization in colonial societies is that it has been unbalanced, especially in the relations of the processes of change and transition between the “central” and the local level. Most changes introduced either directly or indirectly by the colonial powers (or by the “traditional” authorities of the independent societies which cooperated with the European powers) have been focused on the central institutions of the society. The most obvious changes were in the broad frameworks of political and economic institutions. In the political field, the introduction of unitary systems of administration, the unification or regularization of taxation, the establishment of modern court procedures, and, at later

stages, the introduction of limited types of representation, have greatly changed overall political structures and orientations. These changes have introduced certain universalistic criteria and orientations toward general rules and modern procedures. Even where various forms of indirect rule were practiced some change necessarily took place in political organization, though this change was much slower than in cases of direct rule.

Similarly, many changes have been effected in the economy, notably the change to a market economy, and in the educational field by endeavoring to provide new types of modern education for selected local élites.

At the same time, however, the colonial powers saw it as part of their task to effect these changes only within the limits set by institutions existing at the local level, i.e., the level of the village, community, or tribal unit. Here the colonial powers attempted to contain most changes within the limits of traditional groups and/or to limit, as much as possible, the extent of any change. Although many changes did develop within the local communities, as the literature on detribalization of the family indicates, the rulers tried, so far as possible, to contain these changes within traditional system; and most of their administrative efforts on the local level were aimed at strengthening the existing organizations and relations, at maintaining peace and order, and at reorganizing the systems of taxation. Thus, while the administration attempted to introduce innovations—particularly new taxes and improved methods of revenue administration—it tried to accomplish this within a relatively unchanging social setting, with the implicit goal of limiting changes to technical matters. Thus there tended to develop here a basic contradiction: on the one hand, attempts were made to establish broad, modern, administrative, political, and economic settings while, on the other hand, these changes were to be limited and based on relatively unchanged sub-groups and on traditional attitudes and loyalties.

This situation created a process of disequilibrium or of unbalanced change, continuously spiralled by the very processes of colonization and its international setting. In all colonial societies it gave rise to some Westernized groups and élites which usually became the spearheads of nationalistic movements, and it did also greatly influence some of the basic characteristics and orientations of these movements.

The modernizing orientations of these movements were focused mostly on the political and much less on the cultural sphere in the sense of reformation of the basic internal value-orientations of these groups. Consequently the relations between the rising nationalistic élites and the wider strata of their societies were usually concentrated in the political sphere and to a much smaller degree in the economic
and cultural spheres. In most of the non-political spheres there tended to develop—albeit with great differences between different countries—relatively fewer active modernizing groups in the economic and cultural spheres.

Even more problematic was sometimes the extent to which the major social groups or strata in these societies were able to develop from within themselves active orientations and resources for modernization and were able to become integrated into wider frameworks. While all of them did undergo processes of social disorganization in various spheres of social life—especially in the economic and social ones—, the extent to which they were able to develop new autonomous orientations towards modern frameworks and goals, and to create the resources for the implementation of such goals was not very great—although, of course, it differed greatly from place to place.

V

These problems became more acute with the attainment of independence, when the leaders of the nationalistic groups became ruling élites, officially bent on overall modernization of their countries and faced with the double problem of establishing new political centers, frameworks, institutions and consensus and of keeping themselves in power.

It is within the framework of these new political centers that the potential discrepancy between the great emphasis on change and the frequent inability of the institutional framework to implement such change tended to develop. This potential discrepancy can perhaps be best understood through an analysis of the basic structural characteristics of modernization as they tend to develop in contemporary African societies.

Several such characteristics can be discerned. Let us start first with some of the characteristics of the new emerging modern centers.

First comes the development, within the political sphere, of a tendency towards a strong emphasis on the executive on the one hand and toward single or dominant parties, which encompass most types of political aspirations on the other. The strong emphasis on the executive can be easily discerned in most of the constitutions of the new African states which invest the head of State or of Government with very far-reaching constitutional and institutional powers.1

The tendency towards a dominant or single party system has by now

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become so widespread in African societies as not to need any special further comment. It is however important to stress that it is connected with (or to some extent explained by) the differential sequence of modernization in the different institutional spheres which will be analyzed later on. Closely related with it is the great importance of the governmental and political sector in the modern sectors of economy. While the concrete contours of this sector do greatly differ as between various African countries, yet some common features can be discerned. Government corporations, centrally controlled large-scale cooperatives and various enterprises run directly by the government or the party can be found in varied degrees as very important—if not the most important—parts of the African (as distinct from the foreign) modern economic sectors.

The tendency to maintain single or dominant party systems is also closely connected with the development within the modern sectors of African societies of relatively large-scale, highly bureaucratic organization and with the attempts to subsume many "smaller groups like trade unions or various types of voluntary associations, within the framework of unified political party units."1

As against these characteristics of the center there stand out some of the structural characteristics of the broader groups. The first such characteristic is the relatively low level of "social mobilization" as measured either by socio-demographic indices or by the extent and scope of social differentiation. The predominance of "primary occupations" in general, of farming in particular, the continuing persistence, even if in changed forms, of various traditional frameworks, all of them attend to this fact, the exact extent of which has, however, yet to be more fully explored.2

A second important aspect of the process of modernization of the broader social groups in Africa is the relative sequence of modernization in different institutional spheres—the relatively quick development of the political aspirations of the wider social groups and their overall political modernization before a concomitant extent of economic, professional and often even educational development. The high level of political modernization gave usually rise, in its turn, to a quicker development of educational facilities and aspiration—especially of the more generalized and "humanistic" ones—which often outstripped the economic facilities. Closely related to these characteristics is the tendency to profusion of relatively small scale often ephemeral types of social grouping which are to no small degree

connected with the processes of change and with the breakdown of various traditional units.

A third basic characteristic of the modernization of the broader social strata in African societies is the continuous persistence, transformation and structural recrystallization of various traditional forms and frameworks.

Tribal associations or groups within the framework of the more broader political parties, trade unions or various voluntary associations are one important indication of this trend. The continuous recrystallization of traditional symbols, relations and groupings within the more religious frameworks—be they various autochtonous or Islamic and Christian religious organizations—constitutes another such indication.

VI

The synchronization of these different characteristics, of the special temporal sequence of modernization in different spheres, of the relatively low united level of differentiation coupled together with the tendency to large-scale and monolithic organizations point out the great importance of the processes and structures which bring together the traditional and more modern sectors.

Of special importance here are some characteristics of the new emerging system of social stratification, especially as it bears on processes of transition from more traditional to modern sectors. It has already been pointed out above that the range or scope of the modern sector is relatively small although it is continually expanding. But this very expansion displays certain specific characteristics.

First, it is, on the whole, more heavily concentrated in the administrative and political than in the business or purely economic areas. This is closely connected with the predominance of the government on the economy on which we have already commented above. Second, the characteristics of mobility to the modern sector and especially to its more predominant or upper positions are of interest here. Usually two channels of mobility—often overlapping—seem to be of special importance. One is the education, the other is the political party.¹

Although there is as yet but little adequate evidence, some of the available data seem to indicate that the importance of the educational channel is continuously on the rise and that the more it becomes an important avenue of mobility, the greater becomes the pressure on educational facilities on the one hand and the smaller the return on

investment in education on the other—especially insofar as the modern occupational sector does not expand to the same degree as the educational system and the access to it.

There are also but few adequate data on the differential access to educational facilities but the existing data seem to indicate that while there develops here, as in most other modern countries, a tendency for sons of well-to-do (urban and educated) people to have greater chances of educational advancement yet, on the whole, there is a relatively large extent of openness and accessibility of the educational positions to sons of other (i.e. especially farming) groups.¹

Thus there tends to develop here a combination of the relatively restricted scope and nature or type of the upper positions in the modern sector (here of special interest is the relatively smaller importance of economic or professional positions) as against the relatively broader base from which the recruitment to these positions takes place.

The process of crystallization of new frameworks or mechanisms which could serve as bridges between the new centers and the broader periphery has also been evident in the search for new symbols of common cultural identity.

Several dimensions of this search stand out. One is that of “traditional-modernity” and the search for those elements of the specific historical heritage which may best contribute to the crystallization of new, more flexible, specifically African symbols of modernity.

A second dimension is focused on the possible crystallization of a meaningful personal and collective identity transcending any given particularistic collectivity. Perhaps the quest for “African Personality” is the best illustration—if not necessarily solution—of this search.

Third and last, there is the possible incorporation and interpretation of several different historical, religious and ideological traditions—the specific historical heritage of these societies, the broad religious orientations brought by Christianity, Islam and resistance to them and the new, modern national, international and social ideologies. It is around these varied dimensions and confrontations that the attempts to forge out new symbols of collective identity are being centered.²

The preceding analysis indicates that the process of modernization will, in African societies, necessarily develop structural forms which are in many respects different from those of other modern or modernizing societies.

But beyond this, it poses also the problem of the extent to which there will develop, within these societies, conditions for sustained growth and modernization. This problem is of crucial importance in African societies; and their very process of modernization may intensify some of its aspects.

On the one hand, the crystallization of the various structural characteristics of modernization analyzed above points out some potential weaknesses of the new emerging centers. Among them the most important are the possibilities of the crystallization of close oligarchic elites oriented mainly towards self-aggrandizement and the maintenance of their own position of power and prestige and the erosion of commitments to collective and developmental goals.

On the other hand, these elites face already now the problems of development and absorption, within the new central institutional settings, of new social forces which were not initially fully represented by them or which are being created by the very impetus of modernization.

The most important of these forces are, first, the possible persistence or opposition of older (even if transformed) tribal or traditional forces. Second, within the urban sector there exist the possibilities of the development of a discontented, usually small middle class of workers and Trade Union leaders, as well as of soldiers, veterans and the possibility of alienation among younger elements who become discontent with what, for them, is already an Establishment.

It is out of these varied elements that new orientations of protest and different structural possibilities, breakdowns, stagnation, or transformation, tend to develop. They create, through their demands, potential splits within the elite and strains on the working of the central institutions—and pose the question or the problem of the conditions under which the new centers with their specific structural characteristics will be able to facilitate continuous and sustained growth and development. Truly enough time and experience have been too short to enable any conclusive analysis, but, taking into account the experience of other areas, we may perhaps attempt to point out some of the problem areas which should be analyzed from this point of view.

Perhaps the most crucial problem here is the extent of compatibility or affinity between the modernizing elites and the major social strata. Of great importance here is, first, the general level of develop-
ment, of “internal modernization” of the different strata which take part in the process of modernization, and the general level of resources which are generated by them in this process.

Second is the interrelationship among different élite groups and especially the extent of harmony or dissociation between the more technical, professional and administrative élite on the one hand and the more generalized, “solidarity-making” political and cultural élites on the other.

Comparative research on modernization has indicated that, insofar as there exists some affinity of this kind, even if it is a rather passive one, between the modernizing élite or élites and the major groups and strata, and among the major modernizing élites, then the process of political modernization is relatively smooth. Similarly, the stronger and more cohesive internally are the major strata, and the more they are able to participate in the process of modernization in various institutional spheres, the greater becomes the extent of resources which they are able to put at the disposal of various modern institutions and organizations, as well as their ability to regulate through some autonomous mechanism some of the problems attendant on the growing differentiation and modernization so as to articulate realistic political demands and influence the formulation of major political goals and policies by the élites.

In more general terms it can be stated that relatively continuous progress and institutionalization of modernization in general and of political modernization in particular tends to be greater insofar as the modernizing élites are relatively strong and cohesive, and can mobilize adequate support from different strata without giving rise, by this very process, to new cleavages within the society and undermining the cohesion of its major strata.1

VIII

On the basis of the preceding analysis it might perhaps be possible to indicate some of the aspects of the African scene which may be of crucial importance from the point of view of the development of conditions facilitating sustained growth.

In this attempt we must go beyond the description of the structural characteristics of modernization as they develop in African societies and look for those forces which may impede or facilitate the development of that type of interrelation between the modernizing élites and the broader strata which is so crucial for the process of sustained growth.

1 S. N. Eisenstadt, “Modernisation and Conditions of Sustained Growth”, World Politics, loc. cit.
It is as yet very difficult to delineate and analyze these forces on the African scene, but it might be worthwhile to indicate some areas which should, I think, constitute fields of research concerning these problems. It is, of course, very important to analyze at first the various possible sources of economic resources and activities which may help to provide the necessary frameworks for economic and socio-political development. As this problem would probably be taken up by the economists, I will not dwell on it here. Instead I would like to emphasize the importance of identifying those aspects within the internal structure of African societies which may serve as important starting points for recrystallization in the direction of new, flexible modern frameworks, and the extent to which they may bring about the cohesiveness of the elite, its dedication to collective goals of development and modernization as well as the maintenance of affinity and solidarity among the various élites and between them and the broader strata on the other.

Four broad areas seem to be of very great importance from this point of view and may constitute the focal points of fruitful research. The first is the examination of possible points of recrystallization within the traditional “tribal” frameworks. In this context it is necessary to recognize the assumption that all traditional or tribal frameworks are necessarily the most important determinants of the degree of adjustment or adaptation to modern conditions. The important characteristics seem to be the degree of solidarity of the family and of the community, of flexibility of élites and of systems of stratification, and probably other factors, which are not always directly related, in a one-to-one way, to the basic structural “typological” characteristics of traditional societies. They seem to exist both in the more and the less “traditional” societies, and to be more closely related to the cultural differentiation and interrelations between different sub-groups which exist within the common framework of these different types than to their overall structural characteristics.

The processes of religious and ideological transformation which have been taking place are a second important area for such potential recrystallization. These processes of religious reorganization and recrystallization contain on the one hand important possibilities of development of orientation to wider, more flexible and differentiated activities and goals, while on the other hand they may also contribute for the crystallization of some more flexible and cohesive symbols of collective identity.¹

¹ Georges Balandier, Sociologie actuelle de l’Afrique Noire, Paris, 1963 (2e éd.).
Third, the process of political transformation itself, with the strong drive to the center which it implies, embodies similar possibilities of transformation, although it may at the same time—just like the other spheres mentioned above—contain many possibilities of rigidity and breakdowns.

A fourth area, the development of which is crucial for sustained growth, is that of education. We have already seen above that education provides one of the most important channels of transition from the traditional to the modern sectors in African societies; it is henceforth but natural that its structure and organization can greatly affect the whole process of modernization.

Two aspects of the developing educational systems seem to be of greatest importance from this point of view. The first is the extent of heterogeneity and variety of the educational system, the lack of rigid adherence to a narrow "academic" or legalistic schooling system, the development of varied educational programs, and the resultant facilitation of creation of a more flexible and dynamic status order. The other important aspect is the nature of the interrelation between educational expansion and the general direction and tempo of economic and social development and modernization.

Educational systems and educational planners are faced here with two basic and, to some extent, contradictory possibilities. One is the development of a relatively "conservative," stagnative educational system, geared mostly to the needs and self-image of a relatively small, restricted élite and loosing most of its dynamic innovative and change-oriented potentialities. The other is that of a rigid, undifferentiated expansion of the educational system outstripping the realistic possibilities of absorption of the new educated cadres in the developing economy, thus creating situations of intensive cleavages, conflicts and potential breakdowns.1

The extent to which the developing educational systems of African societies will be able to overcome this dilemma may be of crucial importance for their process of modernization; and the investigation of the conditions facilitating such developments certainly constitutes one of the major areas of research in this field.

But it is not only the developments within each of these spheres which are important as indications of possible recrystallization.

Of no lesser importance is the extent to which the processes in these four areas coalesce together at the center and create within it either a flexible or a "frozen" and "rigid" status and political and ideological or value system.

The extent of the flexibility of the political and status system, of the mutual openness of various élites and social groups, the extent of interchangeability of different élite tasks (e.g., economic, political, cultural), the extent to which the original "traditional" élites are ready to accept new sub-groups, and the extent of common solidarity between the different and especially the various modern élites and groups in a society are crucial for the development of institutional frameworks capable of growth. Insofar as such flexibility tends to develop, it may greatly facilitate the creation of an institutional framework capable of absorbing continuous changes because it facilitates the development of new élites willing to learn new modern roles in the economic organizational and political spheres.

Such new élites (or the members of the old élite who have learned new tasks and patterns of behavior) can often acquire an established place in the structure of the communities, and find some sort of modus vivendi with the older élites. The new criteria of status (i.e., of economic achievement and specialization, of participation in a political party or youth movement) may then overlap with many of the older "traditional" ones and with each other without creating closed groups constituted according to only one type of criterion, and in this way enable relatively continuous development of varied organizations within a relatively common structure.

Such flexibility of the status system may enable the development of some new status criteria and groups without great disruption of the cohesion of the older groups.

In such cases not only have the new groups access to existing social positions but new types of centers of wealth, power and prestige and of criteria of access to them can develop, and the relative position of different groups with regard to all of them may change continuously.

Both such status flexibility and the opposite tendencies to ascriptive freezing of structural arrangements can be found in all spheres of social organizations—in political parties, in labour organizations, in different areas and channels of mobility—and are not necessarily tied to any specific structural form or level of development.

The development of such status flexibility or rigidity is closely
related to what may be called value and ideological transformation of the society. The major problem here is the extent to which, out of the varied searches for new religious and ideological contents and symbols, there may indeed develop what may be called a value and ideological transformation.

In this context, it is very important to distinguish on the one hand between those modernized—nationalistic, political or social—élites which while creating new symbols and political frameworks are not able to effect within their respective societies any structural transformation which would facilitate continuous growth, and on the other hand those élites which are relatively more successful in this sphere.

Although it is as yet too early to indicate the exact types of value and ideological orientation which facilitate such transformation, still some of their characteristics—as derived from comparative research—can perhaps be tentatively indicated.

The élites which are to some extent successful in effecting such transformation aim, in the ideological and value spheres, at the development of a new, more flexible set of symbols and collective identity which without negating the traditions can incorporate them into these new symbolic frameworks. They aim at the transformation of the internal values of wider social groups and strata and at the development, among these groups, of new, more flexible orientations. They tend to develop simultaneous orientations to collective ideological transformation and to concrete tasks and problems in different institutional spheres in terms of wider changes and not only in terms of providing various immediate benefits to different social groups—although they hope that ultimately the new political system will also bring marked improvements in the standard of living of the broader groups and strata of the population.

It is therefore very important to attempt to analyze the developments in this field in African societies not only from the point of view of the manifest content of the different new ideologies, and religious movements, but also from the point of view of the development of these broader orientations and of the possibilities for value and ideological transformations that they may imply.

All these formulations are necessarily very preliminary ones—but they attempt to indicate some of the areas and processes, the investigation of which seem to be of great importance for the understanding of problems of modernization in African societies. The investigations of the exact ways in which these various processes develop within the new structural frameworks emerging in African societies are still very much before us but might perhaps constitute one of the major foci of research in this area.