

in itself demands an explanation. For example, it is assumed that the Yoruba-speaking man, in acting politically, does so from this perception of himself as a "Yoruba", but it is left unexplained why he should do so. Why should not such an individual have acted from perceiving himself as an "Ekiti" for instance? However, the crucial weakness of such explanations lies in the fact that if "tribalism" is taken as behaviour which proceeds from the sense of a unique identity, of belonging to a uniquely differentiated collectivity, it will be recognized that such behaviour is to be expected only during periods of uncertainty, that is periods when normally expected reactions by individuals become unpredictable (within the limits of any behaviour being predictable). To offer an explanation which reduces everything else to "tribalism" is therefore to subsume all action under uncertainty and this is plainly not the case.

Other mono-causal explanations of the collapse of civilian rule in Nigeria can be similarly criticized. The search for an explanation in terms such as "corruption" or the effects of "colonialism" simply leaves unexplained as much as it explains. Like "tribalism" they are exaggerated over-simplifications.

An explanation which cannot be dismissed so simply is that which places its focus on the "Marxist" notion of contradictions.²⁶ Instability and collapse are then said to derive from certain "basic" contradictions inherent in the society. The "contradiction" between centralism and regionalism; that between the exercise of "economic" and "political" power; between parties wanting to consolidate their hold on a specific region and wanting to solicit support from other regions; and between leadership strata—these and others are regarded as "basic". It is not exactly obvious why some of the "items" listed should be regarded as "contradictions". Why, for example, should the question of the delimitation of party boundaries—reference may be made to the AG—be taken as a "contradiction" and not as a case of determining which party strategy would be best calculated to obtain optimum return? Moreover, a number of what are regarded as "contradictions" have existed in the society since colonial times. Hence to refer to them in explanation is to leave unexplained why the system collapsed *when* it did. In other words, why 1966 and not 1964 or 1965? Why a specific time? A Marxist might regard the last question as an irrelevance. For him, what is important is the existence of "contradictions" which must of necessity, at some time or the other, lead to an implosion of revolutionary violence. But even Marxists make a distinction between "antagonistic" and "non-antagonistic" contradictions and see in the former the primary, that is causal, forces of change.²⁷ Until the "principal antagonistic contradictions" have therefore been spelled out, it must be concluded that the schema of an explanation expressed in terms of "contradictions" has barely been outlined.

This is not to suggest that all such explanations are worthless. It is simply that where they are not misleading, they are inadequate.

26 R. L. Sklar, "Contradictions in the Nigerian Political System", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 3 (1965).

27 Mao-Tse-Tung, "On Contradictions", *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Peking, 1965).

Culture Change Theory and the Study of African Political Change: Some Problems of Relevance and Research Design

JAMES R. SCARRITT*

INTRODUCTION

The time has come, I believe, when it would be fruitful to attempt further systematic generalization in the study of African politics. Students of this subject certainly want to explain, with the maximum possible precision, the kinds of political changes which have taken place since independence, and this implies comparison between African countries. How have major political institutions changed their structure and functions? In what sense are they becoming more African? Where do new political and legal forms come from? What has been done to foster national unity? To what extent do African countries implement various aspects of socialist economic policies? In questioning the possibility of arriving at valid generalizations concerning these and similar questions, one might easily point to the extensive gaps which undeniably exist in our basic factual knowledge of African politics. How can valid generalizations be developed from an inadequate data base, it may be asked. In response, I would point to the mutually facilitating relationship which exists between theory building and data gathering, and to the rapid expansion of available data in the last few years. When research recently completed or presently in process is taken into account, the available data become sufficient to allow for at least a preliminary testing of some propositions. If these are shown to have some validity, the theory of which they are a part can then serve as a guide in gathering further data. New data will, in turn, almost certainly lead to modification in theory. Without some theoretical guidance, however, it is difficult to know when our data are "complete".

In examining political change in Zambia in the immediate post-independence period, I have found it useful to employ propositions from culture change theory integrated into a common conceptual framework.¹ Space limitations do not allow a full discussion of the intellectual origins of this approach here.² What is important for present purposes is to point out that the concept of culture used here is broader than that employed in the "political culture"

*James Scarritt is an Associate Professor at the University of Colorado. At the time of writing, he was Visiting Senior Lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Makerere University.

1 This application will be found in my *Values and Power in Emerging Zambia* (forthcoming).

2 The intellectual bases of the approach are discussed in my *Political Development and Culture Change Theory: A Propositional Synthesis with Application to Africa* (Beverly Hills and London), Sage Professional Papers in Comparative Politics, III, No. 01-029 (1972), pp. 5-14.

literature, although there are suggestions in the latter for a culture change approach to political development. In order to include all of the extant propositions, theories of culture change must employ a definition of culture which includes not only all levels of social structure but also non-social values, norms, and modes of behaviour (religion, art, etc.) and the technology of products (artifacts). Culture change theory, in terms of this definition, is a general theory of change, which, I believe can usefully be applied in the study of substantive phenomena of political change.

Most empirical culture change studies have dealt with non-political aspects of culture, and their relevance to political change is far from obvious.³ In order to apply propositions from culture change theory to political change in post-independence Africa it will be necessary to present briefly the outlines of a conceptual scheme relating political change to the broader pattern of culture change, and to specify the antecedents and starting points of post-independence political change. Culture change theory, because of the broad definition of culture it employs, deals with changes in all aspects of society (or any social system) as well as with changes in non-social aspects of culture. We need not be concerned with the latter here, but we do need to put political change in the broader context of societal change.

The conceptual scheme I will employ pictures the political system as one component of society.⁴ The primary function of the political system is to make binding decisions or policies for the whole society which will result in the attainment of goals desired by at least some of its members. This takes place within the guidelines of the values (general statements of legitimate ends) and norms (more specific and means-related statements) generally shared by members of the society, or at least held by members of powerful and influential groups within the society. This value-normative system is culture in the narrower sense, and that segment relevant to the political system is political culture as that term is used in the literature. Other major components of society, in addition to polity and culture, are the economy and the stratification system. The latter separates the members of society into differentiated and often conflicting groups, while the former provides the material basis for the formation and maintenance of these groups. Outside of the society, the major component of the political system's environment consists of other political systems with which it interacts.

Many policies must be made binding on all members of society, but are desired only by some. The political system must allocate rewards and costs relating to policy implementation, and must attempt to resolve the conflicts generated in the process. If allocative conflict is minimized a society or political system is said to be highly integrated. To some extent integration is based on shared values and complimentary norms congruent with these values,

3 G. Lowell Field, *Comparative Political Development: The Precedent of the West* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 219, states that "... politics ... will not be much elucidated by concepts designed to deal with family, primary group, or tribal behaviour". Field is very much in the American political science tradition in this respect.

4 This conceptual scheme is explicated more fully in *Values and Power in Emerging Zambia*, Chapter 1.

but it also involves cooperative relationships among groups and complimentary role behaviours congruent with the prevailing norms. Values and norms can only be maintained if role players in groups behave in accordance with them.

Interactions within the political system, between it and other components of the society, and among societies involve the employment of power and influence. Power is the ability to affect the behaviour of others by employing the threat of negative sanctions, and political power is the ability to so affect behaviour with respect to the attainment of collective goals through the making of binding decisions. Influence is "persuasion without power" employing positive sanctions or rewards rather than negative sanctions. The political élite consists of those who possess significantly more power than ordinary individuals, and the very concept of élite implies that some concentration of power exists in the hands of a relatively small number of individuals. The degree to which an élite exists in a given society is an empirical question.

Empirical culture change studies have most frequently dealt with changes introduced into "traditional" societies by the impact of "modern" societies in the context of either colonial rule or technical assistance projects. The existence of a pre-colonial past does have some impact on contemporary African political change, but this pre-colonial past is several historical stages removed from the post-independence period. As the process of change is continuous, the notion of a pre-colonial past or any other "pre-existing" system state is merely a theoretical idealization which indicates an arbitrary starting point for analysing a segment of this process. The current segment or stage of African political change began with the inherited political structures of colonial rule, and consists of the intentional or unintentional invention and borrowing (diffusion) of new structures of all types. I have deliberately phrased propositions taken from the culture change literature sufficiently generally to cover this difference in the empirical situation to which they are to be applied.

After presenting an inventory of culture change propositions which seem useful in explaining political innovation in post-independence Africa, I will discuss the relationship of this theoretical approach to the others found in the literature on political development and African politics, and will attempt to demonstrate the relevance of the culture change approach to both African political reality and African political aspirations. Finally, I will offer some tentative suggestions for testing my propositions against that political reality.

CULTURE CHANGE PROPOSITIONS

Numerous authors have devised categories into which the socio-cultural change process can be divided. With slight modifications to fit them into the conceptual framework explicated in the previous section, these authors' categories can be summarized in terms of: (1) state of the "pre-existing" system; (2) sources and types of change; (3) point of impact of change on the system; (4) control or facilitation of change; and (5) functional and structural

consequences of change.⁵ The definition of each category can be ascertained from an examination of the propositions contained in it.

Within each category the following propositions, borrowed, frequently in a modified form, from a wide range of culture change studies, seem most relevant to political change.⁶ Each of these propositions should be considered to include an implicit assumption of *ceteris paribus*. All other things are not equal, of course, and many of the significant variations are covered by the other propositions in the list. Thus parenthetical references relating various propositions to one another will be introduced frequently. An example will be given for each major proposition to clarify the proposition's meaning and demonstrate its applicability to African politics.

I. State of the "Pre-Existing" System

1. The stronger the values and norms of innovativeness in a social or political system, or a sub-system thereof, the more likely it is that change will take place.

- (a) Innovative values and norms are least likely to be found in the family, religion, and other cultural institutions, and are most likely to be found in political and economic institutions.
- (b) Except as indicated [in (a)], innovation and voluntary acceptance of diffusion are especially likely in areas strongly emphasized by the values and norms of the system, while resistance to involuntary diffusion is especially great in these areas.

Example: Innovative values and norms seem to have been very strong among African political élites in the years prior to and immediately following independence, but they have grown weaker in recent years. Politics was strongly emphasized in former years, but is less so now.

2. The more completely integrated a social or political system, the less likely it is that change will take place within it.

- (a) Those sub-systems which are least well-integrated internally and/or with the remainder of the system are most susceptible to change.
- (b) Extremely low levels of system integration may hinder all purposive action and thus retard change.
- (c) A well-differentiated set of alternative or variant values and norms facilitates change by providing a positive model in terms of which new elements can be judged.
- (d) But ethnic, class, regional, and other cleavages within a social system, as well as feelings of ethnocentrism towards outsiders, act as barriers which inhibit the spread of change. They may also act as barriers inhibiting the spread of resistance to change.

Example: African societies tend to be poorly integrated and are

⁵ For a listing of the authors from whose work these categories were derived see *Political Development and Culture Change Theory*, p. 14.

⁶ This list of propositions is also presented in *ibid.*, pp. 15-23 with footnotes on the sources of each proposition.

experiencing rapid political change, but such change often has little effect in many areas, especially among the rural masses.

3. Although the number of proposals for innovation tends to increase with the dispersion of power, the more crucial variable of the acceptance of proposals tends to increase with the concentration of power, up to quite high levels of concentration.

- (a) But concentrated power may facilitate minor changes which will tend to act as "safety valves", preventing major change or system breakdown.
- (b) The pace of change is likely to be uneven because pressures for change must build up to the point where concentrated power can be overcome, and at that point change is rapid and extensive.

Example: More political innovation has taken place in the post-independence period in African political systems in which power is concentrated than in those in which power is dispersed.

4. A system or sub-system which is changing is more likely to undergo further change, up to a threshold of tolerance for change, at which point recent changes will tend to have a dampening effect on future change.

Example: Periods of rapid change in African politics are often followed by periods of little or no change (except perhaps that which is necessary to dismantle previous changes).

5. The better a social or political system is adapted to its environment, the less the likelihood of change.

II. Sources and Types of Change

1. Important sources of change are both external to the society and internal to it.

- (a) Other societies are the most important external source of political change.
- (b) Disagreements concerning values, norms and role performances, and conflicts among groups stemming from these disagreements, are the principal internal sources of political change (see I, 2, d).

Note: This proposition constitutes an assumption on which subsequent propositions are based and, as such, it will not be tested.

2. Roles and group structures, which are more specific and more likely to have a material embodiment, are more easily communicable within a society or political system and between systems than are values and norms.

- (a) But ideas or values relatively unconnected to any structural framework are more easily transmitted—especially between systems—than ideational elements which do have such connections, or than the structures themselves.
- (b) A structural complex borrowed from one social or political system and introduced into another is likely to be partially accepted, i.e., some of the more specific and material elements will probably be adopted, and the remainder of the complex rejected (see IV, 2, b).

- (c) Thus less complex elements or more complex ones which are easily divisible into simpler parts are more easily transmitted from one social or political system to another (see IV, 2, c).

Example: African countries have borrowed general political values such as equality and participation and political roles such as presidents and bureaucrats more completely than they have borrowed intermediary structures linking these values and roles.

3. Except in conditions of extreme systemic breakdown, a social or political system is more likely to accept new elements which are compatible with pre-existing elements than those which are not compatible.

- (a) Compatibility may stem from either similarity or complementariness, depending on whether the new element is to replace or to function alongside those elements with which it is being judged compatible.
- (b) Partial incompatibility may be ignored, especially if it is not immediately perceived, because of the appeal of novelty or utility (see III, 2).
- (c) Compatibility with a pre-existing element which is now unfavourably evaluated may retard the adoption of a new element, but this requires a strong negative evaluation of the pre-existing element.

Example: As several commentators have noted, the presidential role in the post-independence period is in many ways compatible with that of the colonial governors.

III. Point of Impact of Change on the Social or Political System

1. Given the important sources of change (see II, 1), and the types of elements which are most easily communicable (see II, 2), both externally and internally induced change are likely to impinge first on political and economic institutions and on roles and group structures.

- (a) Changes which impinge first on these institutions and structures are more easily accepted than changes which impinge directly and immediately on values and norms and institutions which function primarily to maintain them.
- (b) The mobilization of groups for the exercise of power and influence is the most significant development at the early stages of successful change. Such mobilization is more likely to take place or take place more extensively when:
- (i) it is sanctioned by variant values and norms,
 - (ii) the values and norms of members of the group being mobilized differ substantially from those held and enforced by the dominant élite,
 - (iii) mobilization is perceived as leading to a significant increase in the power and influence of the group concerned,
 - (iv) those being mobilized are in direct competition for scarce resources with the dominant élite.
- (c) Slight increases in the level of mobilization of groups often lead to significant change.

Example: At the time of independence, political change in African countries, stemming in major part from the mobilization of the nationalist movements, had been far more extensive than changes in the value maintaining institutions.

2. Perceived utility (as defined by the values and norms of potential acceptors) sufficient to overcome the effort of adjustment (primarily a function of the degree of perceived incompatibility) tends to be the most important factor in decisions to accept change.

- (a) Utility-compatibility balance calculations are usually very imperfect because any new element is likely to have advantages, disadvantages, and uncertain consequences, and some elements in a functionally inter-related complex will have different utility and compatibility ratings than other elements.
- (b) A new element may be adopted or rejected, not on the basis of its own utility or compatibility, but rather on the basis of the utility and compatibility of functionally related elements.
- (c) Individuals vary in the utility they derive from the roles they play, and individuals with low or, more significantly, declining utility are more likely to accept change which offers the possibility of increasing or restoring satisfaction.

Example: Immediately after independence mass political participation seemed to have high utility for African political élites in bringing about the changes they desired; it was also highly compatible as the continuation of the established norms of the nationalist movements. More recently the utility of mass participation for political élites has declined because of the strains participation places on political institutions.

3. Change is more likely to take place if innovators who are able to communicate effectively and to exert pressure for change are present in a social or political system.

- (a) Individuals who are not well-integrated into a social or political system—i.e., who tend not to share many of the dominant values and norms and who tend not to participate effectively in institutionalized roles and groups—are the ones most likely to introduce new elements into the system; and such individuals, with the possible exception of intellectuals, are unlikely to be members of a society's élite.
- (b) Once a new element is introduced, however, the prestige, power, and influence of élite members (if there is an élite) are crucial in getting it accepted. Perhaps by this time, however, some of those who introduced the element will have assumed élite status.
- (c) For major changes to take place, advocates need a good knowledge of the dynamics of their society and an ability to predict the consequences of their actions, although such knowledge and ability can never be perfect. This assumes that conscious rather than unconscious innovation is usually involved in political change.
- (d) Forceful presentation by advocates, utilizing a combination of methods, including both organized generation and employment of power and the

invocation of dominant or alternative values, increases the likelihood that change will take place (see III, 1, b).

- (e) The more advocates cooperate with one another, preferably in organized groups (see d above), the greater the likelihood that change will take place.
- (f) The longer and the more intense the contact between advocates and potential adaptors, the more likely it is that effective communication will be established and that change will take place.
- (g) As a consequence of the preceding propositions, the types of new elements introduced, or introduced first, depend significantly on the types of innovators present in the system.

Example: Whereas in the nationalist period African political leaders presented the goal of independence very effectively to the masses, and developed the organizational means to attain it, they are, in the post-independence period, often much less effective in their presentation of the goals of further political and economic development and in their development of the organizational means to attain these goals.

4. Anticipation of change makes it more likely, unless the anticipated change has a definite negative evaluation (see I, 4).

5. Imitation of other cultures or other groups in the same culture is often seen as degrading; thus it is usually easiest for people to imitate when they are not conscious of doing so.

IV. Control or Facilitation of Change

1. Changes in roles and group structures must be accompanied by changes in norms and values unless the new roles and group structures are compatible with existing norms and values. In the same way, changes in the political and economic institutions must be followed by changes in the value maintaining institutions unless changes in the former are compatible with the existing state of the latter.

Example: African political leaders sometimes fail to institutionalize new roles and organizational structures because they are not compatible with the values and norms of many powerful and influential individuals.

2. Except in conditions of extreme systemic breakdown, any new element which comes into a social or political system, either by internal invention or by diffusion from external sources, is likely to be reinterpreted or modified in such a way that it will be more compatible with the existing structure of the system.

- (a) If there is a close fit between new elements and variant values or norms in the existing system, the former may be reinterpreted in terms of these variant values and norms, which will then probably become dominant. This is the most propitious condition for fundamental system change.

- (b) Reinterpretation of a new complex of elements will be more extensive in terms of the values and norms it involves than in terms of roles and group structures, except for the possible borrowing of "free floating" ideas and values from other systems (see II, 2, a).
- (c) Reinterpretation will be more extensive for more complex elements (see II, 2, c).
- (d) Reinterpretation will be more extensive the greater the total differences between the borrowing and lending systems.

Example: Legislative structures and procedures in post-independence Africa have been reinterpreted to be more compatible with the limited inter-party competitiveness which prevails in African politics.

3. The mobilization of groups to exercise power and influence in support of change is likely to result in counter-mobilization to resist change.

- (a) This defensive organization of power by the existing élite will be more likely to take place and to be more intense when:
 - (i) élite values and norms sanction aggressiveness,
 - (ii) élite values and norms differ substantially from those of the group mobilizing for change,
 - (iii) the élite's supply of power and influence is sufficiently small to be threatened by the change oriented mobilization, but not so small that counter-mobilization appears to have little chance of success; and this supply is decreasing,
 - (iv) the élite is in direct competition for scarce resources with those mobilizing for change, and the society's supply of these resources is decreasing (see III, 1, b).

- (b) Vacillation between accommodation to and repression of change on the part of the existing élite will tend to maximize the conflict associated with change by allowing groups to mobilize in support of variant norms and values and then using power against these groups. This policy will in many cases result in more rapid and extensive change than a constant policy of either accommodation or repression.

4. When values are not widely shared because of ongoing change, well-established norms tend to provide the major control of behaviour. Such control is often very effective in the short-run.

Example: In periods of political instability in post-independence Africa, bureaucratic norms are effective in maintaining the political system in spite of the absence of shared values.

5. Resistance to new elements introduced by invention is likely to come soon after their initial adoption, while elements introduced by diffusion are more likely to be given a longer trial.

6. Resistance is likely to be greater when existing elements must be removed or replaced than when new elements can be added without such replacement. Thus new elements may be added without the removal of very similar existing elements.

V. *Functional and Structural Consequences of Change*

1. Increased conflict, manifested in terms of dissension on values and norms, competition between groups, ambivalence of individuals concerning their roles, and lack of fit between these structural components is likely to be the short run consequence of change.

- (a) The extent of conflict depends on mobilization and counter-mobilization (see III, 1, b and IV, 3, a).
- (b) The more rapid the change, the greater the conflict is likely to be.
- (c) Acceptance of change is likely to be opportunistic and vacillating during the period in which further change and conflict are taking place, especially when the change and conflict are extensive. This reflects the fact that old values often lose their effectiveness as controls on behaviour more quickly than new values and norms gain widespread acceptance.

Example: The level of political conflict in African states generally increases, sometimes sharply, in the years immediately following independence.

2. Eventually, however, new values and norms will come to control behaviour, and thus change will proceed in a recognizable direction, or the old values will reassume control, and thus change will be frustrated.

- (a) Control of power, influence, and money gives those exercising it a degree of control over life conditions, and thus can be used to change them. Changed life conditions will lead even those who were not originally dissatisfied to change their values, norms and role perceptions in the direction of those held by the new élite. On the other hand, if those mobilizing power and influence in defence of the old dominant values are able to prevent significant changes in life conditions, those not immediately involved in the struggle for power will probably retain their commitment to the old values, and change will probably be frustrated.

- (b) A dramatic act of power exercising can sharply accelerate or retard the process of value change.

Example: Because political changes have not substantially altered the life conditions of the great majority of the population of most African societies, the continuing commitment of many such people to old values continues to frustrate fundamental social change.

3. The direction, extent, and rapidity of consequent change will be influenced by the reaction of various sub-systems of a social or political system and its environment to the introduction of new elements, although this influence is limited by the extent of functional independence of sub-systems. This continuing interaction within a system and with its environment can be analysed in terms of the propositions presented previously, taking the state of the system at any given point in time as the "pre-existing system".

4. The extent of change will probably be the minimum necessary to integrate the new elements into the system and adapt the system to its environ-

ment because this amount of change will have the highest utility for those who exercise power and influence.

- (a) New sources of change, however, will probably have a virtually continuous impact, and thus, full integration or adaptation will never be achieved.
- (b) A system may be making compensating adjustments to a "new" element even after that element is no longer a part of that system.
- (c) Change is likely to have consequences unforeseen by those who deliberately foster it.

Example: Although political change continues to take place in Africa, numerous observers have commented that its primary results to date have been, in many countries, those which favour existing élites.

5. Once a significant degree of change has taken place the groups which have been mobilized to bring about that change tend to demobilize and to break up into factions.

6. Unless the level of political development is high, changes in normative expectations and role perceptions held by rising élites and those most thoroughly exposed to change are likely to be more extensive and rapid than changes in the capacity of the social or political system to meet these expectations (see II, 2, a).

THE RELATION OF CULTURE CHANGE THEORY TO OTHER THEORIES, AFRICAN POLITICAL REALITY AND AFRICAN POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS

It is by now apparent that my approach is a part of the American "systems-functional" tradition in political science, although I believe that it differs from some other specific versions of that tradition in significant ways. It is, therefore, appropriate to examine how the culture change approach stands up against the criticisms frequently made of the general theoretical school to which it belongs.

One of the most frequently deplored characteristics of American empirical political theory is its abstractness,⁷ and the propositions presented here are indeed at a high level of abstraction. Hopefully the examples which I have given to illustrate major propositions indicate that these abstract propositions can be connected to concrete reality, but final proof of this will come only when the attempt is made to test the propositions systematically. It is often not so much the level of abstraction itself that bothers critics of the "systems-functional" school, but rather what is left out in the abstraction, and the culture change theory presented here can now be examined in this regard.

A common criticism concerns the abstraction of political systems from their international environment; the often significant power of foreigners and foreign governments, particularly in the economy, in African and other third world

⁷ This criticism is made in Jonathan S. Barker, "Political Science and the Real World of Socialist Development", *Taamuli: A Political Science Forum*, 1, No. 2 (March, 1971), p. 4.

countries seems to be ignored.⁸ Culture change theory as developed in this paper does employ the national society as the focal system and places international influences in the environment. This does not in any way minimize the empirical importance of these influences, although it does require an examination of their points of impact on the society and political system, and the ways in which that impact spreads through the system. But this general conceptualization of the impact of external influences is also employed by writers of the "development of underdevelopment" school when they specify which classes or groups in Third World societies establish mutually beneficial relations with foreign capitalists.⁹

Several propositions on my list refer specifically to the international environment. Proposition I, 5 suggests that adaptation to this environment reduces the likelihood of change, and Proposition II, 1, a posits other societies as a crucial source of change when such adaptation does not exist. A number of other propositions specifically mention change from this source as well as from sources within the society. Finally, Propositions V, 3 and V, 4 point to the international environment as one continuing influence on the process of change, which facilitates, hinders, or alters the direction of change. Because of the emphasis this culture change theory gives to inter-societal influences it is at least partly a "diffusionist" approach, but it does not contain the implication that diffusion from societies with more developed economies to those with less developed economies always results in greater development of the latter, an implication most difficult to sustain in the African case.¹⁰

Employing national societies as focal systems does not mean that they are assumed to be territorially monolithic; rather they are viewed as composed of the interactions among a number of subsystems, among the most important of which, in African societies, are territorially inclusive local communities.¹¹ Probably the most significant intra-system diffusion in African politics is that which takes place among these communities and between them and national institutions. This interaction and diffusion is implied in all of my propositions. For example, IV, 1 discusses the relationship between changes in values, norms, groups, and roles, and it must always be ascertained whether the relevant changes in all of these are occurring at the national or local level, as there are, in Africa, markedly different types and rates of change occurring at these two levels. Propositions I, 2 dealing with integration, I, 3 dealing with the distribution of power, II, 1, b dealing with internal sources of change, III, 3, c dealing with innovators' knowledge of interactions within their society, and V, 3 and V, 4 dealing with continuing sub-system interaction and

8 Ibid., pp. 4-5; Susanne J. Bodenheimer, "The Ideology of Developmentalism: The American Paradigm-Surrogate for Latin American Studies", *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, II (1969), pp. 196-200; and Andre Gunder Frank, *Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution: Essays on the Development of Underdevelopment and the Immediate Enemy* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1969), pp. 3-16.

9 Bodenheimer, op. cit., p. 190; Frank, op. cit., pp. 3-16, 371-409.

10 Bodenheimer op. cit., pp. 182-87, and Frank, op. cit., pp. 48-66, attribute this implication to American "diffusionist" theories.

11 Barker, op. cit., p. 5, deplors "abstraction from subnational political economies".

adjustment all refer specifically to the role of territorially inclusive sub-national systems.

Another point frequently made against the "systems-functional" school is its abstraction of political systems from their economic environment.¹² This criticism is closely related to the criticism that international influences are ignored, because the economic environment has a strong international component. My culture change theory does conceive of the political system as the focal subsystem within the national society, and places the economy in the social environment. In addition to the usual disclaimer that this in no way minimizes the importance of economic influences, it should be pointed out that this framework assigns to the economy the critical role of providing the necessary material basis for politics and other forms of social activity. Analysts of the "development of underdevelopment" school often do not separate economic and political development.¹³ I argue that one can more adequately portray reality by making this separation, while at the same time not ignoring economic influences on politics. While there is no doubt that the structure of African economies, especially the role of economic élites, places significant limitations on African political development, the Tanzanian and other cases clearly demonstrate that political initiative can effect economic change without any prior alteration in the structure of the economy.

Economic influences are specifically dealt with in several propositions. Proposition I, 5 suggests that the better a political system is adapted to its economic environment, the less likely it is to change, although this is modified by the claim made in Propositions I, 1, a and II, 2 that economic/material elements of society are themselves constantly changing. Propositions III, 1, b (iv) and IV, 3, a (iv) relate collectivity mobilization to economic factors. "Utility" as conceived in Proposition III, 2 rests firmly on the material base of society, but also involves the interpretation given to material interests by the various values and norms held by different members of society, and the same is true of "life conditions" mentioned in Proposition V, 2, a. Finally, economic factors are shown in Propositions V, 3 and V, 4 to have a continuing influence on the process of change, which may be to facilitate, hinder or alter the direction of change.

The main point of disagreement between culture change theory and a materialist interpretation giving primacy to economic factors is that the former views social and political action as significantly influenced by norms and values, which often tend to change in response to changes in the material environment, and in roles based directly on that environment (IV, 1), but which do exercise an independent influence because they frequently change at different rates and in somewhat different directions than change in material elements.¹⁴ Thus one needs to study changes in the African material environ-

12 Ibid., p. 5.

13 This is true of Barker, Bodenheimer and Frank.

14 A revisionist interpretation of historical materialism which comes fairly close to the position taken here is A. Schaff, "The Marxist Theory of Social Development", in S. N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Readings in Social Evolution and Development* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1970), pp. 71-94.

ment, roles, and groups, and the very real facilitation or control of such changes by non-congruent changes in values and norms in order to gain a full understanding of African political reality.

Even more clearly than with regard to the criticisms previously discussed, culture change theory as presented here cannot be included among those systems theories which, according to critics, ignore power and its distribution. The significance of power is clearly stated in my discussion of the conceptual framework on which the theory is based. The distribution of power is dealt with explicitly in Propositions, I, 3, III, 3 and V, 2, and is an important continuing influence under Propositions V, 3 and V, 4, while changes in the distribution of power are covered by Propositions III, 1, b and IV, 3 on mobilization and counter-mobilization. It should be clear that these latter concepts are not limited to the organized interest groups of liberal pluralism because they allow for the unmobilized groups so commonly found in Africa.¹⁵

Although the concept "élite" is employed frequently in my culture change theory, the theory cannot be labelled "élitist" in the normative sense since the degree to which an élite is actually present varies from society to society, and the propositions are not couched in terms of advising élites about how best to attain their goals through manipulation of the general population.¹⁶

Because American foreign policy favours political stability and orderly change in Third World countries, to the extent that it favours change at all, American empirical political theory is said to be biased in favour of this type of change, while African and Third World reality contains much more sudden and violent change.¹⁷ In the culture change theory presented here, however, gradual and sudden, orderly and violent change are equally possible. Given a state of a social or political system in which there is a high potential for change, the theory indicates that mobilization and élite vacillation are the crucial variables for precipitating rapid change, and that the relationship between mobilization and counter-mobilization is crucial for predicting violence (Propositions III, 1, b, IV, 3, b and V, 1, a and b). Propositions III, 1, b and IV, 3, a, suggest the conditions for relatively rapid and extensive mobilization and counter-mobilization. This theory does assume that long periods of sustained rapid and extensive change are rare, and that, particularly when there has been extensive violence, a period of consolidation tends to follow rapid, far reaching changes (I, 4). Two propositions (II, 3 and IV, 2) are specifically qualified to indicate that they may not apply in the conditions of near breakdown in social and political systems which may accompany rapid and violent change, although they do apply in the periods of consolidation which follow. The other propositions, I believe, apply no matter how rapid, extensive or violent the change.

The key to this theory's treatment of extensive change is to be found in

15 Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 7, and Bodenheimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-82, as well as a number of writers on American politics, link American empirical political theory and pluralism.

16 Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 6, attributes an élitist-manipulative bias to American empirical political theory.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 7; Bodenheimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-78.

Proposition V, 4. This suggests what might be labelled an "inertia" factor limiting the extent of change. As is the case with inertia in physics, socio-political "inertia" can be overcome by sufficiently powerful change-engendering forces. It should now be clear that a number of my other propositions indicate what those forces might be. If they are sufficiently strong, the minimum change necessary to re-establish the levels of political integration and adaptation desired by élites or the populace at large will be a very great amount of change indeed, and will be attained only after a period of intense conflict.

What has been argued in this section, up to this point, is that my culture change theory is not biased against certain crucial aspects of African political reality in the ways in which American "systems functional" theories are often said to be biased. A related but separate question is the relevance of such a highly abstract theory to African political aspirations. There is obviously a need for political actors in Africa and elsewhere to think in very specific terms when they consider the range of options available to them and make choices from among these options. Their immediate needs are for theories with strong programmatic policy implications. But these immediate needs are by no means exhaustive. If meaningful change is to be effected, policies based on a full understanding of the whole range of long run systemic influences will be necessary.¹⁸ I have argued that culture change theory is able to provide such an understanding.

In addition, culture change theory as presented here can empirically incorporate, by positing the existence of or the search for a set of shared values, a concept of the genuine public interest which Africans aspire to have their governments serve. This is not to suggest that even widely shared values always reflect the true public interest, but merely to claim that they may do so. Furthermore propositions such as III, 2 and V, 2-4 help to explain the conditions under which shared values are more likely to reflect a genuine public interest rather than a coincidental consensus among narrower interests.¹⁹ Being empirical, culture change theory does not propound a specific normative content for the public interest, but it can help those who do so by specifying at least some of the conditions for the successful implementation of their conception. It should not be assumed that the absence of a language of moral concern in the theory indicates its irrelevance to moral questions. It can be argued that contributing to a greater understanding which can serve to facilitate better choices in the future is more morally relevant than simply declaring one's commitment to a cause.

18 This perspective is strongly endorsed by Marxists in contrasting their scientific socialism with utopian socialism which is not based on such an understanding.

19 The general issue of dealing with substantive goals is raised by Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 6. The specific point that empirical theory should specify the conditions favouring the emergence of a genuine public interest is made in Christian Bay, "Politics and Pseudopolitics: A Critical Evaluation of Some Behavioural Literature", *American Political Science Review*, LIX (March, 1965), pp. 39-51.

TESTING THE PROPOSITIONS: THE UTILIZATION OF AFRICAN POLITICAL DATA

The empirical validity of the propositions presented here would be most adequately tested through an intensive comparative study of the entire universe of societal political systems. I have limited my research design to African political systems, at least at this stage, for three reasons. The first is an intrinsic interest in this subject; it was, after all, this interest which led me to culture change theory in the first place. The second reason is the enormity of the task of gathering the necessary data, even for the more restricted African universe. In fact, for my initial project, I intend to narrow the universe even further to those African states ruled by Great Britain during the colonial period, as represented by the seven countries on which adequate material appears to exist—Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Thirdly, it is my belief that an intensive study of a relatively small number of similar political systems can serve as a more valuable first step in advancing our knowledge at this stage than a more broadly comparative study relying on the more limited kinds of data which can presently be gathered on a completely systematic basis. A thorough search for data on a few countries should be extremely useful in formulating analytical categories and indicators which could later be employed in a broader study.

Ultimately, testing these propositions in the African context will require both the analysis of existing materials and the conduct of further empirical research.

Some of the existing materials which, if properly analysed, will be of great value include a wide variety of government documents—budgets, annual reports of departments and ministries, legislative debates, sessional papers, statutes, major policy pronouncements, etc.; a limited number of public opinion studies; political party and interest group manifestoes, and speeches and writings of political leaders. Probably by far the most valuable source of data, however, will be studies which have been or are being conducted by scholars (and scholarly journalists) of élite and mass (generally limited to local communities) political values and norms, of the functioning of political (including governmental) organizations (or groups), and of the behaviour of political role-players. It is these studies which have increased in number so rapidly in the last few years, and are continuing to increase at a sufficient rate to justify further theoretical work at this time.

In order to utilize these materials to test culture change propositions, even in a preliminary way, it will be necessary to devise a set of categories into which the relevant data contained in the materials can be coded, and indicators for placing material in these categories. While every attempt will be made to attain the most sophisticated level of measurement possible, it must be realized that reliance on existing data which take a variety of forms may place significant limitations on such sophistication. At this point many problems of operationalization remain unsolved and I can only suggest tentative data categories which might be employed in testing selected propositions. One aim of the present paper is to solicit suggestions in this regard.

Proposition I, 1, dealing with innovative values and norms, for example, can be tested in the context of both national ideologies and specific political organizations. For the former context, major policy statements could be coded in terms of the frequency and intensity of their references to innovation as a general value or norm. Any available survey data on political values could be similarly coded. For the latter context, organizational documents such as annual reports could be coded, while studies of organizational behaviour often examine the existence of innovative norms, at least implicitly. The findings of these studies would need to be made more fully comparable through coding, and studies which are still in progress might add this dimension if they do not already include it. The most likely feasible result of these analyses would be a three (or perhaps five) point high, medium, low-scale of innovativeness as a value or norm in political systems or components thereof.

The testing of Proposition II, 2, which suggests that some types of innovations are more easily accepted from either internal or external sources than are other types, requires the isolation and counting of innovations. Such innovations can be in roles, group structures, norms, or values. After criteria for the identification of an innovation at each of these levels are established, documentary materials and academic studies could be analysed to count innovations (and, if possible, unsuccessful attempts at innovation) of various types and from various sources. The identification of external sources of some innovations may be contained in the existing data on these innovations, or it may have to be imputed from extensive similarities between structures in different countries, plus knowledge of contact between the countries and prior existence of the structure in one country.

Compatibility (Proposition II, 3) could be measured by comparing innovations, once they are identified as suggested above, with prior structures identified in a parallel manner, although we would look for complementarity as well as similarity (ii, 3, b), and any data on élite perceptions of compatibility which can be found in academic studies would be most useful. This is another focus which may be implicit in many studies and needs only to be brought to the surface.

Studies of group mobilization (Proposition III, 1, b)—including studies of political parties, trade unions, anomic movements, etc.—are extremely popular among students of African politics. These studies, and documents issued by the groups themselves, could be analysed in terms of the variables which I believe are related to mobilization—perceptions of: (1) conflict with the dominant values; (2) increased power to be gained through mobilization, and (3) direct competition for scarce resources with the dominant élite. A three point high, medium, low scale might represent an attainable degree of precision in measuring these variables.

Declarations of the perceived utility of political innovations being adopted (Proposition III, 2) are sometimes contained in policy statements which are issued to announce their adoption, and academic studies often deal with this question, if only implicitly. Both the explicitness of the perception and the reasons for the perceived utility are of interest in testing this proposition. It

would hopefully be possible to conclude from the available data whether a definite and explicit perception of utility, a vague or implicit perception, or no perception existed at the time most innovations were made, and to classify the bases of perceived utility as implementing values, implementing norms, furthering collectivity interests, furthering role interests, or some combination of these. This is another point on which research in progress might focus more explicitly.

Once the utility of an innovation is perceived by someone, its adoption depends on the role of its advocates in the society and political system. Proposition III, 3, d, suggests that a combination of power and the invocation of values will be the most successful strategy for getting innovations accepted. To test this proposition it would be necessary to identify advocates and to observe whether they successfully mobilize power and invoke values in support of those innovations which have utility for them. The relevant data will come almost entirely from academic studies, and a realistic goal might be to classify advocates on a three point scale on each of these dimensions.

Proposition IV, 2, which suggests that innovations, whether originating from internal or external sources, will, in the course of their adoption, be reinterpreted to increase their compatibility with existing structures, must be tested by observing various aspects of compatibility (as suggested above) at different stages in an innovation's adoption. Documentary material issued serially, such as annual reports, might be useful here, but once again primary reliance would have to be placed on academic studies.

Proposition V, 2, a, which deals with phenomena often entitled penetration, is both an important and a difficult one to test, as it deals with the systemic impact of innovation. A number of academic studies are now focusing more explicitly on this phenomenon, however, and their findings can be classified in terms of the greater or lesser success of various innovations in altering the values, norms, and life conditions of substantial segments of the population.

After discussing several alternative research strategies with a number of African and non-African scholars (primarily but not exclusively political scientists) residing in the seven countries to be covered by the project, I have tentatively decided to proceed in the following manner. The first stage will be to survey as fully as possible the existing materials, of the types listed above, on each country, and to classify information contained therein in terms of my culture change propositions. This first stage will be accomplished by research assistants working under my close supervision, or that of one of several scholars who have agreed to participate in this work. This effort should produce a more complete knowledge of gaps in the existing data and of the problems which will be encountered in attempting to operationalize the propositions.

When the first stage is completed one or more conferences will be held,²⁰ if adequate funding can be arranged, to evaluate the results obtained up to that point and to plan further research. African scholars who have expressed interest

²⁰ A preliminary conference will consist of one or two panels at the African Studies Association (USA) meeting in Syracuse, New York, October 31-November 3, 1973.

in the project prior to that time will play a predominant role in this conference, hopefully evaluating the work already accomplished and making proposals for further research in terms of the significant questions which they think need to be asked and the research priorities which they think are relevant to attaining African aspirations. More specifically the conference will be asked to evaluate: (1) the propositions themselves, suggesting additions, deletions and changes; (2) possible strategies for operationalizing the propositions; (3) the comprehensiveness of bibliographies used in the first stage of the project; (4) the adequacy of the interpretations made in the first stage analysis; and (5) a number of proposals for further research which will be presented at that time.

In the third stage the project will, once again contingent upon adequate funding, support research as determined by the conference and aid in the publication of such research. Even prior to this, the project will also support a limited number of students pursuing post-graduate studies, and these students will play a prominent role in the conference itself.

Any comments which readers of this article may have regarding the propositions, ways of operationalizing and testing them, on-going or recent research relevant to such testing, or ways in which participation in the project could be made more rewarding to potential cooperating scholars, will be most welcome. Expressions of interest in participating in the project will be even more welcome.