SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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Contents

Summary

Social scientific research has developed in tandem with sociocultural changes and histories of humans. Different disciplines such as economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, cognitive sciences, political science, and law have deployed particular theoretical perspectives, methodology and scientific vocabulary in analyzing the sociocultural dimensions of human development. The examination of the history of *Homo sapiens* that began some 100 000 years ago will show that humans use culture to adjust to environmental changes. Humans are symbol-producing creatures. They utilize many sociopolitical categories such as race, nation, and ethnicity. Different human groups have deployed these categories of race, gender, and ethnicity for achieving sociopolitical objectives.

In social sciences, human and social development has traditionally measured in terms of both quantity and quality. The characteristics of social structures strongly influence the way individuals develop their human potentiality. An institution is an enduring set of cultural ideas and social relationship that is organized in order to accomplish collective goals. The relationship between the social and cultural development indicators and the conventional economic development indicators will be discussed. Some argue that economic factors such as income and occupational profile have a direct influence on how people behave in social and cultural spheres. Others argue that social and cultural

variables directly affect economic development. And others argue that the current indicators do not adequately capture the processes of complex human activities. One growing field of social scientific studies is consumption. Scholars are studying consumption not simply as the act of satisfying utilitarian needs, but as the most common form of expressive activity related to identities and cultural expressions. Unlike the neoclassical model of the individual rational choice, sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists examine consumption as a domain in which individuals and groups reflect on social structure, cultural values, and individual identities. Other categories such as gender, race, class, and nationality directly impact consumption patterns. Much investment must be made in order to ensure equitable access to resources for all, and to encourage the development of social institutions that are particularly suitable for human resources development.

1. Introduction

Sustainability refers to societal changes that help make resources needed for a healthy quality of life accessible to all without degrading the environment. In 1987 the Brundtland Commission of the United Nation produced a report entitled *Our Common Future* in which it stated that sustainability is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This concept of sustainability has been further developed within the UN system by using the term "sustainable human development" because of the realization that sustainability involves improving human life and developing human resources in terms of biological, social, economic, cultural, political, material, and ecological conditions.

Sustainable development should not mean sustained underdevelopment. In our collective efforts for environmental protection, we also need to make sure that all people have access to such important resources as education, health services, food, housing, clean water, employment, and the fair distribution of income. All people possess the fundamental rights for opportunities to realize human aspiration without compromising the needs of future generations. The human being is the central subject of and agent for sustainable development.

It is generally assumed that improving the quality of human life is a major goal of the sciences. However, owing to the diversity of values, ideologies, norms, and historical circumstances, people create different meanings of the desirable quality of life. Individuals interpret this world subjectively. One person's definition of the quality of human life may not be the same as another person's definition. Human thinking cannot be divorced from its socio-historical and cultural systems. Within social sciences, there is a multiplicity of opinions and views on human conditions and development. Therefore it is difficult to present one unified theory or paradigm on the social and cultural development of human resources. Instead of creating an artificial synthesis of diverse perspectives, we have decided to explore major issues related to the present theme and to examine human aspiration and sustainability from manifold viewpoints.

First we will examine a range of perspectives offered by different academic disciplines. We will briefly illustrate the important research scope of such disciplines as economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, cognitive sciences, political science, and law.

Social scientists have deployed particular contextual prerogatives and reasoning in analyzing sociocultural dimensions of human development. We will clarify some of their basic presuppositions and meta-logic, as well as disciplinary orientations and methodological vistas. Their fundamental assumptions about society, people, and culture have affected the outcomes of social research and the state of their accumulated knowledge.

Secondly, we will give a precis of the *Homo sapiens* development that began some 100 000 years ago. We will pay special attention to the last century of collective human development, being mindful of categories such as the nation-state, race, and culture, as well as the current social transformation called "globalization."

Section 4 will focus on the individual as the most vital agent and resource for sustainable development. Psychological research findings on individual motivation, decision-making and the so-called "groupthink" will be examined in some detail.

One of the most consequential meta-concepts in neoclassical economics is the notion of the individual's rational choice. The rational choice theory defines individual propensity for optimization. This construct, as well as the notion of preference and taste, will be re-examined. We will see the overwhelming influence of this perspective on human production, consumption, and macroeconomic development. Our debate on individual rational choice will be followed by a general introduction to the currently available economic indicators and sociocultural indicators for measurement and analysis.

This paper asserts that the nineteenth century concept of social evolutionism continues to influence the way we measure and analyze societies comparatively.

Finally we will investigate in some detail the issue of global consumption, because overconsumption by some people and underconsumption by others pose one of the greatest threats to the environmental sustainability. Refuting the neoclassical theory of individual rational choice and explicating the black box of economic preference, some anthropologists and sociologists point to the dynamic relationship between taste and culture in economic decision-making such as consumption.

The set of articles in this theme collectively examines key development issues such as socio-psychological dimensions of human resource development, social ecology, space and urbanization, ethnicity, gender, health, equity, religion, labor market, family, consumption, and human and social development indicators. In examining these issues, we also need to be fully cognizant of the relationship between social sciences' meta-logic and the basic vistas they employ for research endeavor. The subject of social sciences is humans. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz once noted that humans are cultural beings who spin their own webs of meanings. Humans constantly invent new meanings and new signs while they try to make sense of their own sustainability and to create the image of the future.

2. Different Disciplinary Approaches to Social and Cultural Development of Human Resources

Humans collectively have invented languages, religions, arts, music, logic, and ways of reasoning and communicating. Different human societies have created diverse worldviews, rhetoric, formulae, and models to make sense of daily living, and to pass their heritage on to the young. They have also sought answers to some fundamental questions concerning the environment, life, death, and the universe. Among many ways of exploring existential realities, humans have invented and developed what we call the scientific way of thinking.

Together with industrialization in the Western countries, sciences have advanced rapidly. As modernization has created many new social problems, various scientific disciplines have been founded and developed. Social sciences have relatively short histories as most of them began in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but really took off only in the twentieth century. Social scientific research on society and people has been conducted and advanced in the context of specific historical circumstances and conditions,. Consequently social scientific disciplines have accumulated specific themes of study, vocabularies, models, methodology, and application procedures.

It is important for us to understand what questions social scientists have asked, what research strategies they have deployed, and what reasoning tools they have used, as we explore the topic of the social and cultural development of human resources. The sets of social scientific questions have both deepened and conditioned their approaches to the problems at hand. In the following section, we will describe how economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, cognitive science, political science, and law have examined human problems.

2.1. Economics

Economists usually inspect the way in which individuals, groups, business enterprises, and governments attempt to achieve efficiently any economic objective they select. They are usually concerned with human needs and motivation, perception of scarcity, the balance between supply and demand, and the macro-level state of an economy. The mode of thinking in economic terms can be traced to Aristotle and Plato in ancient Greece who wrote about problems of wealth, property, and trade. Hinduism and Taoism, for example, denounce materialism. During the Middle Ages in Europe, the Roman Catholic canon regarded commerce as inferior to agriculture. Likewise the Chinese Confucian doctrine and the Islamic codes place primary production such as farming as morally superior to commercial activities.

In Europe, classical economics began with Adam Smith, and culminated in the synthesis of John Stuart Mill. All classical economists believed in private property, free markets, and, the principle of competition. Adam Smith was quite suspicious of governmental intervention, and ardently supported the “invisible hand” which reconciled public benefit with individual pursuit of private gain.

Marxist economists sharply refuted the fundamental premise of classical economics. Marx argued that every social system of the past had been a device by which the rich and powerful few controlled the mode of production. Because of the exclusive ownership of the mode of production, these few could live well and accumulate wealth by exploiting the powerless many. However, each system was racked by moral flaws and internal inconsistency. The more productive the system became, the more difficult it would be to make it function due to the internal deficiencies. Eventually the system destroys itself, either by disintegration or by revolution.

Marx used the classical labor theory to analyze the inner workings of capitalism, and to reveal the inequities and exploitation born out of the system. Marx believed that capitalism was certain to falter because its tendency to concentrate income and wealth in ever fewer hands created more and more severe crises of excess output and rising unemployment. Marx considered that the masses of the poor would ultimately rebel against the capitalists by the proletarian social revolution. Marx and Engels believed that capitalism would be eventually replaced by communism, run by and for the people. We will examine Marxism's influence on social development theory further in our discussion on sociology. Marxist theories explained market mechanism from the perspectives of material conditions and labor relations.

In contrast to Marxist theories, William Stanley Jevons, Léon Walras, and Karl Menger and other neoclassical economic theorists attempted to explain market mechanism by the intensity of consumer preference. For example, they argued that income disparities between the rich and the poor were due to corresponding differences between human talent, intelligence, energy, and ambition. Neoclassicists believed that individuals succeed or fail because of their personal attributes, not because some individuals have special advantages to achieve their goals. In many capitalist societies, neoclassical economics continues to explain price and income determination in supply–demand terms.

Another significant school of thought is Keynesian macroeconomics. John Maynard Keynes in Britain based his theory upon his assumption about prices, and rejected the view of Adam Smith and classical economists that, left alone, a market system generally functions well. He used concepts such as "aggregate demand"—the total spending of consumers, business investors, and governmental bodies that influence the nature of economy. Keynes considered the economy as being inherently unstable and approved governmental interventions as macroeconomic policies. Keynesian economists believe that during economic recessions, the government should use deficit spending to bring about economic recovery. The deficit spending theory was applied to the United States to create Roosevelt's new deal policy to help the economy recover from the Great Depression. Keynesian economics started contemporary macroeconomics. Today macroeconomists tend to utilize mathematical and statistical models and simulations to explain and forecast the behavior of an entire economy. They also utilize various system approaches and flow analyses to economic problems.

Together with the rise of macro economic theories and methodology, various economic indicators have been deployed to measure the state of economies both domestic and abroad and/or the whole world. In today's world, there is a wide range of governmental

and nongovernmental interventions on economic activities, ranging from tax, credit, contract, trade, and subsidy policies, price and wage fixings, and the state monopoly to quotas and tariffs and state economic planning.

In recent years various economic problems with global consequences have stimulated serious debate about the proper roles of private enterprise and governmental entities. Economists' opinions diverge as to how much and what types of interventions are needed; how much regulations and governmental interventions should be placed on global businesses; and how much local initiatives versus the multilateral or international interventions should be considered. Those who promote the free market initiative emphasize the free enterprise's ability to improve trade and commerce, technological development, crop yields, and industrial productivity. Those who argue for some intervention point to increasing inequity, diminishing resources, unchecked environmental damage, excessive military spending, and the reluctance of the rich to share their wealth and expertise with the less fortunate. As we have entered the twenty-first century, the world's economy has become far more volatile with wide swings in stock prices, business accounts, trade and investments, all of which have global consequences.

2.2. Psychology

Like economists, psychologists are also concerned with the scientific study of human behavior and the mind through systematic and objective methods of observation and experimentation. Many psychologists focus their studies on the linkage between the individual mind and social behavior. Some psychologists conduct detailed biological studies of the brain, while others analyze specific behavioral patterns. Others investigate how humans process information, and interpret phenomena. As scientists they observe and study behavioral manifestations, and investigate both conscious and unconscious mental states that are inferred from observable behavior. The topics of psychological investigations cover an enormous range of phenomena: learning and memory, sensation and perception, motivation and emotion, thinking and language, personality and social behavior, intelligence, infancy and child development, mental illness, and much more.

Modern psychology finds its origin in the older disciplines of philosophy and physiology as well as biology and medical sciences. Charles Darwin's influence is particularly evident in modern psychology. Darwin in 1859 published *On the Origin of Species*, and introduced the evolutionary process of natural selection. Darwin's theory of evolution invited comparisons between humans and other animals, and had an important influence on the development of many scientific disciplines over the last century.

One can arguably select the three most prominent pioneers of modern psychology as Wilhelm Wundt, William James, and Sigmund Freud.

Wilhelm Wundt laid the European foundation for psychological research and experimentation in the late nineteenth century. William James, who in 1890 published *On Principles of Psychology*, can be considered as the father of American psychology. James discussed the stream of consciousness, the link between mind and body,

emotions, the construct of self, the formation of habits, individuality, and defined the field for psychological analyses. Sigmund Freud was an Austrian neurologist whose theories revolutionized psychology.

Two main schools of thought dominated psychological thinking during the discipline's formative years: They were structuralism and functionalism. Structuralism was first presented by Edward Bradford Titchener, who attempted to identify the basic elements of consciousness in much the same way that physicists break down the basic particles of matter, using the investigative method of introspection. After his death in 1920s, structuralism lost its popularity, but its influence is evident in today's cognitive psychology and social psychology, which will be discussed shortly.

Functionalism in psychology found its main advocate in William James, who was influenced by Darwin's evolutionary theory and the concept of the survival of the fittest. James analyzed the stream of thought, attempted to characterize the concept of the self, and theorized on emotion. According to James, every thought in one's mind is modified by every previous thought; thus states of mind are in constant flux, and human perception is always relative and contextualized.

James was interested in the functions of the adaptive human mind, rather than its structure. Psychological functionalism was further developed by James Rowland Angell, John Dewy, Harvey A. Carr, and others. The school of functional psychologists developed longitudinal research techniques that utilize interviewing, testing, and observing techniques over a long period of time to obtain detailed empirical data on how individual reacts to different circumstances over time. In contrast to Wundt and James, who studied the consciousness of the human mind, Sigmund Freud developed clinical studies of the human unconsciousness. Freud believed that people are motivated largely by unconscious forces, including strong sexual and aggressive drives. He metaphorically compared the human mind to an iceberg: The conscious part of the mind is like a small tip of an iceberg, while the vast portion beneath the surface comprises the unconscious. The unconscious plays an important role in a person's thoughts and behaviors and it is vital for a person's healthy growth. Freudian psychoanalysis utilizes free association techniques in which the client is encouraged to talk about anything that came to mind. Dreams are also considered as disguised expressions of deep human impulses such as sexual drive.

Alfred Adler criticized Freudian theories of sexual trauma and of dreams as sexual wish fulfillment. He believed that people are primarily motivated to overcome inherent feelings of inferiority. Consequently Adlerian psychotherapy encourages clients to overcome their feelings of insecurity and to redirect their energy towards developing self-confidence and self-enhancement that eventually lead them to be able to engage in meaningful social contribution and cooperation.

Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung theorized that all humans inherit a collective unconscious that contains universal symbols and memories from their ancestral past. All humans share a pool of unconscious experiences throughout history that manifest themselves in mythology, religion, fairy tales, alchemical texts, and other forms of creative expression. The concept of archetypes is perhaps the most influential part of Jungian

theory. According to Jung, archetypes are typical modes of expression arising from this collective layer of human history. The archetypes are fundamental psychic patterns common to all humans into which personal experiences are organized. His "collective unconscious" theory finds followers among contemporary students of cultural semiotics, phenomenology, and linguistics.

Karen Horney also questioned Freudian theory of the sexual drive (libido) theory, the primacy of infantile sexuality, and the repetition compulsion. Instead she argues that the individual needs the family and the cultural context through which values, attitudes, and behaviors become organized. She theorized that humans have a basic need for love and security, and that they become anxious when isolated and alone. She emphasized the significance of the socialization process. Parental influences and other social institutions' influences contribute substantially to how a child's personality evolves. She stated that the most important aspect of this process concerns how cultural values become integrated in the course of childhood development. While a child in a healthy environment for socialization learns to appreciate his or her constructiveness, talents, and limitations, a child placed in a hostile environment becomes alienated from his or her real self. Negative behavioral consequences may include depression, phobic or obsessive–compulsive behavior, paranoia, acute anxiety, and an incapacity for genuine spontaneity. Horneyan therapy includes complex interactive and introspective dialogue sessions with the client to increase self-awareness and to encourage self-actualization.

Many psychologists have also developed methodological tools to uncover the human unconsciousness. Most notable are projective tests such as the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) or the Rorschach Inkblot Test. The TAT consists of drawings of people in ambiguous situations that are used to encourage thematically oriented story telling from the client. The Rorschach test with ink blots is used to stimulate the client's free association.

Today, most psychologists agree on the existence of unconscious mental processes that profoundly affect human emotion, cognition, behavioral outcomes, and memory-making.

We do not always know the reasons why we get angry or sad; why we think as we do; or why we remember certain things and forget others. Some psychologists strive to find verifiable and observable methodology to explicate the behavioral outcomes of the human mind.

Edward Lee Thorndike proposed behaviorism in human psychology, which was based on the idea of the law of effect. He theorized that people repeat behaviors that are followed by positive outcome, while they abandon behaviors that produce a negative or no outcome. Because of the law of effect, positive reinforcements can be used to produce behavioral changes, Thorndike argued. Behaviorism is influential in developing theories of learning, and sparked later research on mental schemes, fears, and preferences. For example, Ivan Pavlov discovered a basic form of learning called classical conditioning in which an organism comes to associate one stimulus with another. In light of Darwinian evolution, psychologists began to use animals in empirical research. For example, James Watson considered that the behavioral

principles would generalize across all species, and advocated animal laboratory research, based on direct observation and quantitative data collection, in order to understand the cause and effect of psychology and behavior.

B. F. Skinner further developed human behaviorism, conceptualizing many behavioral reinforcement techniques. Skinnerian theories are applied to a variety of behavioral intervention programs at schools, workplaces, and medical facilities. Skinner invented the first teaching machine, which allowed students to learn at their own pace by solving a series of problems and receiving immediate feedback.

While many psychologists study behavioral manifestations, and consequences of the functions of the brain and nervous system, others are interested in the inner workings of the brain from a biological and medical perspective. When it comes to the development of human resources, psychologists pay particular attention to human socialization, cognitive and emotional development, learning, and schooling. At the same time, they examine genetic or physiological predispositions at birth to develop certain traits or abilities. Therefore, the issue of nature versus nurture is a consequential subject of continuing discussion and research among psychologists.

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Biographical Sketch

Tomoko Hamada is Margaret Hamilton Professor of Anthropology at the College of William and Mary, which is the second oldest university in the United States. She completed her BA in American studies at Vassar College, her MA in sociology at Keio University, and her Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. She has taught at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, was Director of Asian Studies at the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, and since 1988 has been a member of the faculty at William and Mary. Her publications include *American Enterprise in Japan*, *Cross-cultural management and Organizational Culture* and *Anthropological Perspectives on Organizational Culture*. She is the editor of *Studies in Third World Societies*, and is the author of numerous articles and edited volumes, the primary focus of which is the culture of complex organizations.