

# Editorial Foreword

*Varieties of Modernization.* The idea of modernization now has its own history, one closely tied to a generation of development in the social sciences. For economists it has meant systematic attention to the role of infrastructures, entrepreneurs, and social institutions in explaining the effects of new capital, technology, and markets on economic development. For political scientists, also, the concept of modernization has called for a broadening of horizons beyond the comparison of parties and constitutions to more emphasis upon the place of political conflict within society and culture—a broadening associated with fruitful work on center and periphery, communication, the organizing role of ideologies, the variety of links between elites and populace. Economic and political activities were to be analyzed in terms of particular institutions or recurrent patterns of behaviour firmly rooted in a specific culture and then to be compared to the institutions and customary behavior of other cultures. The comparison in turn would be more than merely taxonomic because focused on a process of development assumed to be in some sense applicable everywhere. From the perspective of single disciplines, social scientists would strive to see society whole; to do so they would work more closely with each other (an aspiration reflected in the vogue for things interdisciplinary and the founding of area centers); they would, like good historians, emphasize process; and by comparing cases, they would build the generalizations and models of a truly interdisciplinary and universal social science. Anthropologists, social psychologists, theorists of communication, and even historians would contribute to the common effort. As they did so, of course, the concepts associated with modernization grew broader, more varied, and more elastic. The optimism and enthusiasm essential to so grand an effort was deeply rooted in its time, in the work of Continental scholars who carried their culture and personal commitment to the expansive environment of American universities and in the postwar opportunity to study, maybe even to shape, economic growth and political development around the world.

All these initial strengths need to be recalled because the weaknesses they carried with them now tend to be blindingly apparent. In the effort to encompass all of society many used modernization to give dignity to descriptive accounts otherwise loose and suspect. The reach for models and the attention to process led to easy talk of 'modernization theory' when little more than social change was meant, pretensions to theory that have offered critics equally easy targets for attack. The optimism of the 1950s

now seems tinged, or maybe poisoned, with American imperialism, Western ethnocentrism, liberal and capitalist assumptions. Theories of dependency, underdevelopment, world markets, and 'artificial' elites are now the fashionable forms for studying modernization.

*CSSH* has had an active part in the exploration of modernization and in the continuing dialogue it has evoked: from the careful statements of Shils (2:2–3) and Bendix (9:2), to the reservations about concepts of a modernizing generation expressed by Lifton (6:2) or about assumptions as to the modernizing impact of cities expressed by Qadeer (16:3), on to the criticisms of the Schneiders (14:3) and the systematic, powerful attack of Tipps (15:2). Yet few issues of *CSSH* have appeared without some references to modernization, without some use of the framework it provides. The literature remains indispensable, the aspiration it contains irresistible.

This issue, then, can be read as a kind of sampler of some contemporary uses of theories of modernization. Generally somewhat cautious and restrained, they range from Dennis Smith's application of current attention to world markets and world power to George Modelski's renewal of an older search for a universal chronology. They also include more specific applications, like Joyce Appleby's study of the ideology of economic development in Britain and the United States or Kjell Eliassen and Mogens Pedersen's meticulous study of the professionalization of political representatives in two Scandinavian countries. The view that all advanced industrial societies eventually become more and more alike can be taken as the ultimate teleological test of the concept of modernization, and it has been subject to serious critique in this quarterly by Weinberg (11:1) and Skinner and Mishra (18:1). Fortunately, propositions do not have to be true to stimulate significant analysis; witness the careful Marxian abstractions used to dissect the concept of convergence in this issue, the first article to make its appearance in these pages anonymously. The likelihood that significant changes in one aspect of society affect the other aspects and that many of those changes have similar direction even in different societies continues to stimulate good comparison even if the confident tone 'modernization' once evoked is largely gone.