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National Development and Human Resources: ManPower and Education

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NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES

MANPOWER AND EDUCATION: Country Studies in Economic Development. By Frederick Harbison and Charles A. Myers. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1965. 343 pp.

This sobering volume is the companion to a book by the same two men entitled *Education, Manpower and Economic Growth* which, though published earlier, drew liberally from the eleven essays—written by eleven different experts—which make up the work under review.

The earlier book was analytic. It took apart and examined the elements of human resource development. The present one is concrete. It is a series of studies of particular nations or regions in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Communist China. Even a well informed reader will be impressed with how different are the problems of development from region to region and from country to country.

The premise from which the editors work is this: "The economic development of nations is ultimately the result of human effort." It is not as banal as it sounds. Put differently, the presence of rich natural resources does not guarantee to a nation a high level of living nor does their absence frustrate it. Switzerland is but one-seventh the size of the Philippines; Great Britain is smaller, Japan only one-fourth bigger. Despite the narrow bases of their natural resources, these nations have grown enviably rich. They can all be comfortably fitted within the boundaries of the wretched, backward, comparatively well endowed and lightly populated island of New Guinea. The difference accounting for the poverty of the one and the prosperity of the others lies in the quality of their people.

Students of economic development today make much of the truth that human resources are a genuine form of capital—the end result of income thriftily set aside and ploughed back into the bettering of the human person himself. Superiority is an acquired characteristic. Harbison and Meyers are not intent upon proving this. They accept it. Their aim is rather to uncover the ways of forming human capital, to point out the means whereby the end can be gained.

These case studies, focused on human resource development, do little to generate in the reader a mood of exhilaration or optimism. Vast masses of men are bogged down in backwardness. Filipinos, though, can take some measured encouragement from the reflection that hope is brighter and obstacles less insuperable here than in many of the places studied. The editors, in their previous work, grouped seventy-five countries under four headings: Underdeveloped,

partially developed, semi-advanced and advanced. In their judgment the Philippines belongs in the semi-advanced class. The case studies do much to put flesh and features on these gaunt divisions.

Formal schooling is only one of the ways by which men and women are educated to become more productive, not only technically and economically but also in the unbounded scope of their human potential: artistic, scientific, religious and moral. The incentives at work are also important—the rewards which allure a society's better talents into doing what is needed for economic development. Social and cultural values also count. For example, the following paragraph has been written about Argentina:

Historically there has been a gap between the Argentine professional and Argentine industry. The professional was generally a person from a well-to-do family who had graduated from the university, a highly respected attainment. The top managers of industry were generally not university graduates, but businessmen running their own firms. Within this cultural milieu, persons in industry were considered to be in a lower social class, and the professional considered it beneath his status to work in industry as an employee of persons who were not his social and cultural equal.

Since a highly developed industrial society requires a full range of occupations from the highest to the lowest in prestige, strong feelings about the social indignity of being a laboring man impede progress.

The book affords the reader stimulating comparisons and contrasts between what goes on in the Philippines and in the countries studied: whether young people educated abroad tend to return to work at home; whether the system of higher education is large and varied enough to leave room for institutions of excellence—Harvards and Yales; whether there exists a class of unemployed, discontented intellectuals; whether lawyers be in short supply, as in Puerto Rico; to what degree people and all else are concentrated in one big city; what economic opportunities are open to women; how cordial is the reception of foreign investors.

The topic of this book is of prime importance today.

MICHAEL MCPHELIN

ON THE GREAT LANDHOLDINGS OF MEXICO

**THE SANCHEZ NAVARROS: A Socio-Economic Study of a Coahuil-
lan Latifundio 1846-1853.** By Charles H. Harris III. Chicago:
Loyola University Press, 1964. vii, 127 pp.

From the papers of the Sánchez Navarro family, now in the archives of the University of Texas, Charles H. Harris III has made a documented study of the last years of the great landholding or latifundio of that family in the northern part of Mexico, in what is now