

DAVID C. MCCLELLAND, *The Achieving Society*, Princeton, D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1961, xv+512 p.

The "Achieving Society" referred to in the title of this book is a society which is achieving a high rate of economic growth. The book represents the results produced by a psychologist—the author is Professor of Psychology in the Department of Social Relations at Harvard University—in an approach to a subject which should properly be dealt with by an economist, namely, the question of the causes which result in a society having a high rate of economic growth at one time, and falling into a state of economic decline at another. Consequently, it is natural that the author's interest should be directed towards the "internal," psychic factors in economic development rather than towards the physical and "external" factors. In this sense, this book will attract the interest of those economists who would give leading emphasis to "the human factor" in their studies of economic development. The book is also of interest as a challenge to social determinism of various kinds. Further, the author, who hitherto has been mainly interested in human motivation, has, in carrying out these studies as a modern psychologist, made efforts to delimit rigorously the objects of his psychological studies, and has attempted to gain understanding of them quantitatively on the basis of the methodology of experimental psychology. That is to say, McClelland's technique is none other than that of the "behavioral sciences." What, then, are the results of this highly modern approach to a new field? This is a question which cannot fail to excite the interest of the reader in this book at a time when excessive specialization is overtaking the sciences and an increasing number of problems require an interdisciplinary approach.

The author's starting-point in this book is the "achievement motive." This concept was established in a study written by a number of students of this subject, including the author (D. C. McClelland, J. W. Atkinson, R. A. Clark, and E. L. Lowell, *The Achievement Motive*, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), and in this work the author abbreviates the term "the need for achievement" to the sign "*n* Achievement." This is a species of desire to do well, and it possesses the following characteristics. The "high" level of *n* Achievement will lead on a person to work, or study, harder, even without such special rewards as time off from work or a money prize. Further, "we might legitimately expect that people with strong achievement motives would seek out situations in which they could get achievement satisfaction. They ought to be the kind of people who set achievement standards for themselves, rather than relying on extrinsic incentives provided by the situation, and they should try harder and more successfully to reach the standards they set for themselves" (pp. 45-46). What would be the result if a large number of people with high *n* Achievement were to appear in a specific society? It is the very question as this which has prompted the author to undertake the studies presented in this book. On reading Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* the author thought that the Protestants whose

behaviour was described in that work must certainly have been the possessors of high level of n Achievement. If this were in fact so, then may not high n Achievement have been a factor in the economic development of western Europe? May it not also be that, whenever the level of the average n Achievement in a specific society is high, an advance will take place in the economic development of that society, regardless of time or place? That is to say, McClelland formulated a general hypothesis into which the material presented by Max Weber could be fitted as particular cases. The main body of the work under review is concerned with the process of verifying this "key hypothesis."

The principal framework for this verification is constructed as follows:

1) Studies of preliterate cultures. In these studies folk-tales are used in estimating levels of n Achievement, while the percentage of the adult males engaged in "full-time" entrepreneurial activity—as specially defined for the purpose of these cases—is taken as an index of economic development. These studies indicate that economic development is more advanced in cultures with high n Achievement than in those with lower n Achievement (pp. 63–70).

2) Studies of modern nations. This is of course the most important part of the author's studies, and is concerned with all the countries of the world (as far as data are available) at two periods—around 1925 and around 1950. In this instance, children's stories in primary school books are used for the estimation of n Achievement, and the amount of electricity produced per head of population is taken as an index of economic growth. A comparison of the data for the two periods shows that high n Achievement preceded high economic growth, and it is finally confirmed that n Achievement is a causative factor (pp. 70–106).

3) Historical studies, that is, studies of Ancient Greece, Spain in the late Middle Ages, England from Tudor times to the Industrial Revolution, and the United States of America from the Industrial Revolution to the present day. In these cases literary material is used for the estimation of n Achievement, while for indices of economic growth and decline the author relies on studies by previous scholars of such matters as the extension of spheres of foreign trade and coal import figures at London. This part of the author's studies indicates that the maximum n Achievement level preceded the maximum economic level (pp. 107–158).

However, why is it that a high level of n Achievement leads to a high rate of economic growth, and does not necessarily bring about developments in other fields, such as the military or artistic fields of development? In answer to this question the author finds the link between the two social phenomena of a high level of n Achievement and a high rate of economic growth in the entrepreneur (p. 205), and in regard to this matter he employs two approaches. The first of these is an attempt to determine whether people with high n Achievement behave in an entrepreneurial way, and the other is to determine whether actual entrepreneurs, particularly the more successful ones, have higher n Achievement than do other people of roughly

the same status. However, what is meant by "behave in an entrepreneurial way" in this context? As decisive characteristics of the entrepreneur the author cites the taking of risks and the carrying out of innovation, and a human being who merely follows behind the established order is not considered to be an entrepreneur. We can perceive that McClelland is making a distinction between the "entrepreneur type" and the "bureaucrat type" (pp. 227-228). Hereupon the author, with the help of psychological tests which show that boys with high n Achievement tend to perform better and to work harder under conditions of moderate risk, shows that the boys with high n Achievement behave like entrepreneurs. Again, it is confirmed that actual business executives in the United States of America, Italy, Turkey, and Portugal, with the exception of those of Turkey, are all possessors of high n Achievement.

In this way the verification of the key hypothesis is divided up into a number of sections, and a great deal of work has been put into finding correlations in the detailed data coming under each section. But it is probable that the various methods used in so doing will require re-examination in technical detail. In spite of the care exercised by the author, there are some cases in which we are not fully persuaded of the legitimacy of the material used in estimating levels of n Achievement and as indices of economic growth in a particular society in the ways described above. It may be that the data used were the best available at the present day. However, they are not such as will provide full assurance in the elucidation of the difficult questions with which the author seeks to grapple. For example, when dealing with the rates of economic growth among modern nations around the year 1950 the author devotes attention to war damage, but at the same time he considers that the levels of n Achievement in certain specific countries in 1925 predict total rates of economic growth which include the item of war damage (pp. 93-97). However, this logic cannot be applied to all countries, at least in equal degree. Nevertheless, we must agree that it would have been impossible to produce such a book as this without disregarding technical difficulties of this kind to a certain extent.

However, the fundamental problem in relation to this book may be thought to lie rather in the basic framework within which the verification of the key hypothesis is carried out. To express the matter simply, it is a matter for doubt whether the entrepreneurship (high n Achievement) on the one hand and economic growth on the other, the two things which the author sets in antithesis and attempts to find correlations between, are in fact capable of being compared meaningfully as truly belonging to the same dimension. As we have noted, the author makes the distinction between the "entrepreneur type" and the "bureaucrat type," and carries forward his argument on the presupposition of the importance of the former in economic development. However, we must note that the distinction between these two types was begotten of the demands of the theory to be employed in examining economic development, namely, the necessity of abstracting the factors governing inher-

ent and intrinsic economic development. However, when we view economic development as a whole we find that it includes not only what Schumpeter has called "genuine" development, but also "mere growth." In practice, when McClelland speaks of rates of economic growth in specific societies, what he is using is the data of actual economic growth, represented in the two heterogeneous complexes which we have mentioned above. Again, in connection with levels of n Achievement, the author expects that n Achievement should result in a corresponding appearance of persons of the entrepreneur type who will be the undertakers of "genuine" development. Consequently, on these premises, a high level of n Achievement can correspond only to development in the "genuine" sense, and it is impossible to expect it to correspond to actual economic growth, which includes "mere growth." Consequently, logical doubts can be entertained in regard to the author's comparisons of increases and decreases in rates of economic growth and levels of n Achievement, no matter what results he seeks to abstract from them.

Most people will feel it difficult to deny that certain kinds of psychological factors are relevant to economic development. McClelland's contribution has been to make the problem clearer by focussing it on n Achievement. However, economic development is a many-sided process of social change. When we isolate a single factor out of this process we must be very careful in deciding how to place its function in relation to the whole. Further, policies and proposals tied up to such abstracted factors will develop effectiveness only when they are supported by a consciousness of this fact. For these reasons the number of suggestions made by the author at the end of the book for the economic development of the underdeveloped areas—for example, that boys with high n Achievement should be introduced into the business world, and further, that since the family has a decisive influence in nurturing n Achievement it is desirable that changes should be made in child-rearing practices—might well lead in directions other than that of economic development in the societies concerned, if the mechanisms for their dissemination were not as simple as the author believes.

The reviewer feels great interest for the key hypothesis employed in this book, and accordingly looks forward to seeing it fully verified, while he also recognizes that some of the data presented by the author are extremely significant. However, for the reasons given above, the reviewer does not feel that the author has firmly carried through his original intentions in this book. The reviewer feels that in order to study the internal factors in economic development, centred on entrepreneurship, it would be better to use the traditional framework of economic thinking, and, in the process of supplementing it with studies in related fields, to determine the psychological factors— n Achievement or any other psychological factor—and that only by following such a procedure will it be possible to undertake quantitative analysis. It is desirable that the methods of the behavioural sciences should be caused to advance parallel to, and under the influence of a full consideration of, the methodologies of the individual sciences. (*Ichirō Ishii*)