ELUSIVE DEVELOPMENT: THE QUEST FOR A UNIFIED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS AND PLANNING
HISTORY AND PROSPECTS

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1. Setting of the "unified approach" project

In February 1971 a team organized jointly by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the Economic Commission for Latin America, and the Social Development Division of the UN Headquarters Secretariat met in Geneva to plan an exploration in search of a "unified approach to development analysis and planning". Resolutions approved the previous year by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and General Assembly specified the kind of social-justice-oriented development to be sought. A grant from the Government of the Netherlands, later supplemented by grants from Canada and Sweden made possible the bringing together of the team, with a perspective of some eighteen months for the exploration.

It is hardly surprising that the team did not produce a "unified approach" meeting the specifications of the resolutions during its life span or that subsequent efforts by UNEISD staff have not been able to synthesize such an approach from the materials it left behind. As the decade of the 1970's nears its end the shortcomings of current development processes and policies are even more conspicuous than at its beginning, and the range of contradictory attributes demanding "unification" has widened: the reconciliation of technocratic rationality with popular participation, of continually expanding production with protection of the human environment and resource endowment, of continually diversifying human wants with priority to the satisfaction of basic human needs poses questions that may be somewhat clearer than before, but that are far as ever from plausible answers. The unified approach project has been one among many attempts to grapple
with this recalcitrant reality. In some respects, it has been left behind by other explorations commanding larger resources and starting from more radical challenges to the conventional wisdom of development.

Nevertheless, the unified approach project helped to incubate ideas and slogans that continue to evolve and ramify in sometimes unexpected ways in the international organizations and in different regional and national settings. It may be useful to take a critical look at its history, not as a source of developmental prescriptions but as a source of insights into the ways in which the quest for such prescriptions has been and is being pursued in the international organizations; the ideological preconceptions and bureaucratic rituals shaping this pursuit; the disciplinary and theoretical positions that converge and seek compromises (or ignore each other) in a team such as that undertaking the project; and the interactions, if any, between initiatives of this kind and the evolution of public policy and public opinion.

The quest for means of bringing the human future into closer correspondence with professed values has been prone to substitute terminological innovation for conceptual innovation, to reinvent "practical" solutions that have long been current, and to evade definitions that would reveal lack of consensus on the present nature of human societies and on the nature of the Good Society that is sought. These traits derive from the constraints under which the quest is conducted, particularly within the international organizations, and from the role of development research as an employment-providing industry that encourages its practitioners to attempt a judicious mixture of innovativeness with conformity. The traits are too intimately related to the very processes of conflictive change and masked pursuit of perceived group interests that shape "development" in the real world to be controlled simply through exposure; in any case, an underground literature of jokes and verses circulating among development practitioners continually does this. However, a historical-critical approach to
the unified approach may contribute some useful correctives, particularly because the team undertaking the project struggled against the different forms of evasion and explicitly recognized them.

The publication by the United Nations in 1952 of the Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation is a convenient starting point for a sketch of the pre-history of the unified approach. It goes without saying that such a sketch ignores many parallel or overlapping initiatives within and without the United Nations family of organizations. The United Nations resolutions calling for the preparation of this Report assumed that the "world social situation" was a definable reality that could be studied and reported on like the "world economic situation", already the subject of annual UN reports. However, the resolutions left implicit the content and boundaries of the "social situation".

The small Secretariat team charged with preparation of the Report could not start from a unifying concept of its subject; it confronted scanty and unreliable information for most of the world relating to an unmanageably wide range of questions that might be considered "social". It confronted political pitfalls deriving from the Cold War and the incipient processes of decolonization. It also confronted bureaucratic pitfalls deriving from the compartmentalization of "social" activities between agencies and units within agencies that the UN system had already achieved. It sought a manageable modest interpretation of its terms of reference: the Report would focus on "existing social conditions", dealing only incidentally with "programmes to improve..."

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1/ Resolutions on social questions have usually originated in the Social Commission (later renamed Commission for Social Development), an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council, and have then been confirmed, with or without modifications, in resolutions of ECOSOC and finally of the UN General Assembly.

"those conditions"
those conditions". The "social conditions" with which it would deal were to be practically synonymous with "standards of living"; it would assess these as far as possible through quantitative indicators. The subject matter was to be broken down into "social sectors" (or "components" of the standard of living), in practice delimited by the jurisdictional boundaries of the United Nations agencies dealing with these sectors and generally contributing chapters on them. In order to compensate to some extent for the resulting compartmentalization by sectors and worldwide generalizations by sectors, in which the "social" unavoidably became divorced from reference to specific societies, the Report contained chapters on three of the world regions then labelled "under-developed": Latin America, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia.

The Preliminary Report was well enough received to originate a series, in which successive efforts to go beyond the self-imposed limitations of the Preliminary Report can be traced. These efforts had a good deal to do with the way in which the "unified approach" was eventually conceived and pursued.

"Programmes to improve conditions" were tackled separately in two International Surveys of Programmes of Social Development (1955 and 1959), then (from 1961) incorporated in successive Reports on the "social situation". Reporting on programmes largely on the basis of government reports, suggesting evaluations and comparisons without incurring protests, required the steering of a careful course, but proved less conflictive than the Secretariat team had feared at first.

The term "social development" gradually pushed aside "social situation" with its static connotations, but did not receive a more precise definition. "Social development" became current as a counterpart to
counterpart to "economic development", and its users identified it mainly with measurable improvement in standards or levels of living (the former term now referring to norms, the latter to realities). Its use conveyed a supposition that objective criteria for allocations of financial and human resources to "social development" could be achieved and that "social development" called for "social planning". However, the objective of unifying the concept of standards or levels of living and measuring changes through a composite statistical indicator comparable to the national income or gross national product was considered and rejected as impracticable. The treatment of the social in successive reports remained predominantly sectoral, even in the regional chapters and in explorations of a few broad "problem areas" in particular urbanization and the introduction of social change at the local level.

From the beginning, the reports encroached on "economic" topics, particularly in relation to criteria for the size of allocations to social programmes and the supposed tension between capital accumulation and immediate raising of levels of living. Soon the reports began to discuss the social impact of economic phenomena and vice versa; the social justifications of economic policies and vice versa; and to affirm that "the separation between the 'social' and the 'economic' is often an artifact of academic analysis and government departmentalization". In their treatment of these questions, the reports reproduced, with occasional criticisms, certain stereotypes concerning development economists and planners that were already current among UN social specialists: the economists were powerful but narrow-minded figures who could insure adequate attention to the "social" once the right arguments were found to convince them of its importance.


/Although successive
Although successive reports became bolder in interpretation and notes of radical criticism of policies and the power structures behind policies began to appear in them as the range of the permissible in the UN family broadened, throughout the 1950's and 1960's certain traits persisted:

Conclusions maintained a tone of qualified optimism. The "social situation" was continually improving according to the statistical indicators, although the improvement was unevenly distributed and "much remains to be done". (Practically the only relevant indicators offering a certain degree of international availability and comparability referred to school enrolment, mortality rates, life expectancy, and per capita incomes.) Governments were continually introducing new and improved social programmes. Practically all governments, by different paths, were advancing toward similar social goals, differentially hampered by misinformation, scanty resources, and the shortcomings of the human agents of their purposes. The interests of "developed" and "underdeveloped" countries in a world future of rising levels of living were basically harmonious; aid by the former to the latter was an important reality, however poorly planned and inadequate in extent. The social policies of all countries offered "lessons" deserving study by their neighbours, although the flow of applicable lessons, and of experts to teach the lessons, might be predominantly from the developed to the underdeveloped. The picture was of a predominantly rational and benevolent although highly imperfect world order. During the 1960's insistence on the imperfections became more vigorous and doubts concerning the rationality and benevolence more visible.

During the same years, development economists and United Nations dependencies dominated by economists were beginning to deal with the "social" on their own terms, through formulations of "social aspects
of economic development' or 'social obstacles to economic development', and occasionally to call on sociologists to incorporate the missing ingredients into economic development plans and models. 3/

The proponents of 'social development', as represented by the compilers of the Reports on the World Social Situation, gave rather grudging approval to these efforts and entered into a dialogue hampered by the stereotyped mental picture each side had of the other, and by a mutual tendency to disregard factors not readily assimilable to their conceptions of 'social' or 'economic' rationality.

The social spokesmen tried to envisage development as a complex process of societal change and modernization, in which the 'economic' and the 'social' were separable only artificially and for purposes of analysis, but their distrust of global theories and models (or their institutional inhibition from choosing any one theory of societal change), together with the kinds of information available to them and the intellectual habits generated by the sectoral organization of the reports, continually crowded them back to a narrower vision of social development made up of progress in separate components of levels of living, measurable through a number of inescapably heterogeneous statistical indicators, and promotable through equally heterogeneous social programmes.

3/ The Economic Commission for Latin America was probably the first economically-oriented United Nations body to try to incorporate (from the early '50's) a theoretical sociological approach into its thinking on 'economic development', in terms of 'social aspects' and 'obstacles'. This approach, under the intellectual leadership of José Medina Echavarria, soon escaped from its ancillary role and led to a quite different kind of development dialogue. See, in particular, José Medina Echavarria, Consideraciones sociológicas sobre el desarrollo económico (CEPAL, Santiago de Chile, 1963) and Filosofía, educación y desarrollo (Textos del ILPES, México, Siglo XXI, 1973).
social programmes. They could not accept investment for the maximization of production as the core of development, nor rates of increase in the Gross National Product as an aggregate indicator of development. Criticisms of the irrelevance of the GNP to human welfare became a recurrent symbol of social rejection of economic dominance of the theme of development.

Discussions in the UN, of course, stimulated and were stimulated by similar discussions within national societies of many types, where justifications for higher priority to the "economic" or the "social" had more practical importance, and national representatives in the UN bodies were attracted by the idea of objective guidelines for allocations and better mutual support between economic and social programmes. During the 1950's various United Nations resolutions called for "balanced economic and social development" and asked the Secretariat for reports pointing the way to such development. The contemporary debate among economists over "balanced" vs. "unbalanced" growth strategies contributed to the popularity of the term, although the conceptions of what was to be "balanced" had little in common. The resolutions conveyed a vision of "social" and "economic" "fields" as distinct realities deserving equal shares of fertilizer. Some of the resolutions embroidered the imagery of "fields" by urging that action in the two "fields" should "go hand in hand".

The interest in "balance" had a more concrete motivation: the growth of international technical assistance to "under-developed" countries was beginning to confront the international agencies with a competition for allocations to social and economic programmes comparable to that experienced by the national administrations and the UN policy-making bodies had neither generally accepted criteria nor allocative powers for controlling the competition. Thus,
one of the resolutions called for: "... studies of actual government experience in integrating social programmes with each other and with economic programmes and in deciding upon size and priority of allocations in general development plans." 4/

The Secretariat team responsible for the Reports on the World Social Situation, after some years of speaking of "balance" as a desideratum, began to tackle the question systematically around 1957, and presented its conclusions in the 1961 Report, which began by stating: "From a governmental point of view, the question of balanced social and economic development is to an important extent a question of the pattern of public expenditure. There is no over-all conception or theory of balanced development applicable to the expenditure policy of the economically underdeveloped countries at the present time; there are only fragments of a theory and 'common sense'."

The treatment of the question in the 1961 Report maintained the cautiously empirical tone of the above quotation, summarizing a wide range of possible interactions between the "social" and the "economic" and of theories concerning such interactions, concluding that "while it is theoretically not possible to state what levels of development in the various social components should go with given levels of economic development, it is quite possible to state what social levels do go with given economic levels", and that studies of "actual patterns of development can assist the practical process of decision-making... by providing evidence of social levels that can demonstrably be achieved at given levels of economic development and by proving evidence of imbalances." (p. 39).

Certain features of the "balanced social and economic development" studies deserve emphasis as part of the pre-history of the "unified approach":

(i) The supposition, explicitly rejected but continually creeping back in the discussion, of "balance" or "integration" between "fields" with boundaries, each divided into smaller fields, with allocations to fertilize the different fields and sub-fields susceptible to norms, if only norms based on empirically observable general practice. The likelihood that public allocations to and statistical indicators of education, health, etc. will have quite different relations to human welfare within specific social and political settings is recognized, but this recognition does not prevent a kind of reification of the "fields".

(ii) The reliance on "country case studies" as the main technique, aside from analysis of national statistics, for the assembling of information. The commissioning of country case studies has been almost a reflex response of UN social units to requests for research into problems large and small. The countries are always selected so as to "represent" different geographical regions, political systems, and levels of development. In practice, the selection has depended also on the obtaining of government assent to the study and on the availability of a local individual or institution qualified to undertake it. The "balanced development" studies differed from most in the number carried out and in the efforts of the research team to derive general conclusions from them. Between 1957 and 1964, thirteen such studies were completed and issued as background documents. The commissioning of one or two studies per major region has been more typical; the execution has usually been under pressure of a deadline for a report to some policy-making body; and the utility of the exercise, except as a means of demonstrating action in response to
resolutions, has never been seriously evaluated.

(iii). The supposition that the countries being studied are seeking a balance between their social and economic programmes through something identifiable as "planning", whether the planning is formal and institutionalized or not. This supposition is more evident in the common title of the series of country case studies than in the overall discussion in the 1961 Report, in which planning is barely mentioned. In fact, during the period in question economic development planning was gaining in prestige if not in application in the "developing" countries. The proponents of social policies, impressed by the self-assurance and the apparent power of economic planners, were reaching the conclusion that the construction of an equally potent doctrine of "social planning" and the integration of social with economic planning into "comprehensive planning", would bring them more adequate allocations enhanced prestige, and greater efficiency in relation to social goals. From the 1950's on, this supposition underlies reports and resolutions emanating from all the sectors of social action, demanding that their concerns should be integrated into planning "at the highest level".

Thus far the discussion has focussed on one line of intellectual work within the United Nations Secretariat that started from the modest objectives of the Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation, accepted the compartmentalization of activities in the United Nations family and in national governments and the impracticability of arriving at a coherent theory of development acceptable to the representatives of the different political systems in the United Nations, but nevertheless had to respond to increasingly insistent demands for practical and universally applicable solutions to the manifest deficiencies of the "social situation".

/During the
During the 1960's two other approaches proceeded, if not hand in hand, in juxtaposition with the attempts to bring the multifarious activities relating to human welfare under a roof of "social development" and measure their results. The most influential, of course, was that of formulation of norms for economic development, symbolized by the first Development Decade and watched over by a United Nations Committee for Development Planning composed of eminent economists. At the international level, interest centred on goals for investment, financial and technical flows from "developed" to "developing" countries, terms of trade, and, as the expected result, rates of increase in the gross national product. The second and more visionary approach was that of formulation of normative declarations on social and economic rights, which, undeterred by the obvious chasm between governmental votes for such rights and governmental capacity to implement them, reached its culmination in the Declaration on Social Progress and Development approved by the General Assembly in 1969 as Resolution 2542 (XXIV).

In 1969 the first Development Decade was drawing to a close amid disillusionment of several kinds: over the tacit refusal of the "developed" countries to act on its recommendations and over the consequences for human welfare of the kinds of economic growth and modernization that were taking place in the rest of the world. Overall rates of economic growth were not too far from the proclaimed goals, and neither were the gains in certain "social" indicators, but optimistic interpretations of the statistics were decreasingly plausible, although the range of future disbenefits and dangers was only beginning to be visible. If what was happening was "development" it was not an unmixed blessing, and suspicions that it might never become such a blessing were becoming stronger, even among a good many development economists.
The immediate reaction was to prepare for a second Development Decade, and the proponents of social development and human rights saw the opportunity to gain more adequate representation for their concerns in its "Strategy". Studies and meetings of various kinds began to revolve around this objective; the hope of enlightening the supposedly powerful economists became stronger.

One manifestation, deriving directly from the pursuit of "balanced development", was the convening of a Meeting of Experts on Social Policy and Planning in Stockholm in September 1969. More than half of the ten experts, selected by the usual criteria of geographical and political distribution, were economists who had already, in various ways, tried to incorporate non-economic factors into their thinking.

One finds in their report, as in all reports of meetings of this kind, echoes of different voices with different preoccupations, theoretical backgrounds and terminologies. The report pays its respects to the whole range of sectoral social questions by now traditional in the United Nations, in terms differing little from the Reports on the World Social Situation. Whether the experts had anything new to say or not, they could not leave themselves open to the accusation of neglecting the importance of education, health, etc. The more central propositions of the report, however, constitute an interesting demonstration of the ways in which the problem of rethinking development was generally conceived at the time, and shaped the terms of reference of the unified approach project.

"The purpose of the meeting was to clarify further the role of social factors in development with a view to ensuring their adequate inclusion in development plans and programmes." This image

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of development as a jigsaw puzzle with "factors" constituting the pieces, and the proposition that "the economic approach to development analysis and planning had to be integrated with a social approach that was different in nature and would be more relevant to the problems of developing countries in the coming decade", were juxtaposed to less simple formulas: "it is most necessary to view the development process as a complex whole, comprising economic elements sensu stricto, but also other social, as well as political and administrative elements. Any design for a development strategy, national or international, must cover all the above-mentioned fields if it is to be meaningful, internally consistent and capable of effective implementation. Governmental and United Nations compartmentalization should give way to a "more unified treatment", in which "the idea of a single social system in which development occurs" should be "taken seriously as its starting point".

Misleading dividing lines between economic and social phenomena, and between economic and social development, have been "due in part to the rather narrow approach to the development process characteristic of past thinking in economics, which relied heavily on simplistic econometric models with highly aggregated variables", and in part to governmental and UN bureaucratic compartmentalization. An "over-emphasis on economic growth rates of production has been based on the apparent ease of quantification in the concept of the national income or gross national product of developing countries". "The dominance of economists among the social scientists and the earlier development and easier quantification of their concepts, has meant that certain non-market aspects --those unappropriately labelled 'social'-- have been neglected in approaches to development." The experts recommended that those aspects should be dealt with as "neglected areas" rather than as "social factors", but did not follow this recommendation in the remainder of their report, probably because
of their terms of reference and their convening by the UN Social Development Division.

The report endorsed one version of the "dualist" label around which a great deal of ideological polemics and semantic confusion had focussed during the 1960's: "... a meaningful approach to development planning must take account of the dualist structure of many developing societies — dualist in terms of the difference between modern and traditional sectors, differences within those sectors and differences between those participating in development and those left behind or on the margin. ... The fact that development either leaves behind, or in some ways even creates, large areas of poverty, stagnation, marginality and actual exclusion from social and economic progress is too obvious and too urgent to be overlooked."

The report came down to earth by singling out one broad problem area as central to an acceptable development strategy: "The major problem for the Second Development Decade is likely to be unemployment and underemployment. ... In the absence of vigorously enforced employment policies, the grim prospect of the Second Development Decade is one of rising unemployment, accompanied by increasing concentration of the worst aspects of poverty in the cities, and growing gaps in the level of welfare among social groups and regions in individual countries, as well as growing gaps among countries. All this can take place with rates of increase in national income in most developing countries as high as or higher than the rates achieved by the technically advanced countries during their periods of industrialization."

The report juxtaposes the technocratic vision of development engineered from the top and the participationist vision of development emerging from popular initiative, but shows more affinity with the former: In the past, the analysis of social development processes and...
policies has focussed on "social development objectives" and on "social obstacles to development". The processes and policies should be viewed also "in terms of engineered social change. ... policies could and should be devised so as to activate wider social strata to increase their participation in the development process". A major prerequisite for development is "peaceful radical social change, as rapidly as possible". "Peaceful domestic movements committed to rapid change should be permitted to flourish and, whenever possible, should be supported if they would help to promote a sense of participation and social engagement." However, for the social planner, it would be of importance "to obtain knowledge and guidance as to whether ... radical changes in attitudes can be more easily made than a succession of small changes".

Finally, "to achieve effective development planning, all planners should think in terms of all goals".

The above quotations, together with other formulations in the Report, suggest certain papered-over differences between "experts" as to the nature of the "social", but they also indicate a kind of compromise consensus on certain key suppositions that had already come under question during the 1960's. In miniature, they point to a number of conceptual problems that were to plague the later quest for a unified approach:

1. The Report assumes that a common process identifiable as "development" is under way in the so-called "developing" countries. This process is, almost by definition, good and necessary, although its present shortcomings, from the standpoint of human welfare, may be more easily demonstrable than its goodness. These shortcomings can be attributed in large part to deficiencies in government policies and these in turn to the dominance of economic planners.
with over-narrow conceptions and inappropriate tools. While the report voices many of the criticisms of current processes of economic growth and dependent modernization that were to become more insistent during the 1970's, it treats these as remediable defects. It does not entertain the possibility that the defects are inseparable from the functioning of the current international order, or that this order is basically incompatible with enhancement of human welfare over the long term. Still less does it entertain the possibility that "development" is an inspirational myth, originally justifying the attempted reproduction throughout the world of certain patterns for the organization of production characteristic of the recent past of parts of Europe and North America, then overlaid with additional attributes to reinforce its supposed desirability and inevitability.

(ii) The report (probably in part because of the terms of reference of the meeting) places unlimited confidence in the potential capacity of planners to take everything into account in an integrated fashion and reveal to policy makers the one best way to do whatever they want to do. It assumes that development can be largely what planners and policy makers make of it, and that if sufficiently enlightened as to the importance of "social" or neglected factors they can make of it something much better than heretofore. There is no trace of the various old and new disciplinary and theoretical positions that were questioning human capacity to plan comprehensively so as to reach predetermined ends, and were (sometimes) finding reasons for moderate optimism in the market, in the "hiding hand" stimulating would-be change agents by concealing difficulties from them, in the interplay of democratic political institutions, or in the acceptance and informed manipulation of "limited rationality" in bureaucratic organizations.

(iii) The report does not entertain the possibility that the international organizations and governments to which it addresses
itself, deriving from the power structures responsible for the iniquities to which it points, might be neither able nor willing to undertake radical changes; that, indeed, they might look on their own requests for such reports as a harmless ritual testifying to their good intentions. The report refers to the inadequacies of governments only in terms of Gunnar Myrdal's concept of the "soft state" with "insufficient power or will to carry out a number of desirable policies", and implicitly supposes that a "hard state" could have such power and will. Governments advised by the right kind of planners are supposed to promote rapid and radical but peaceful social change and are entitled to permit or support social movements according to their informed judgement of the movement's peacefulness and its potential helpfulness in promoting "a sense of participation and wider social engagement".

"Participation in the development process" of "wider social strata" is to be achieved through policies of "engineered social change". From the vantage point of the end of the 1970's this faith is the rational benevolence of hard states engineering peaceful radical social change so as to enable the "wider strata" to participate in a development process, whose adaptability to meeting their needs instead of excluding or exploiting them is taken for granted, seems the most ingenuous aspect of the report. In the context of the end of the 1960's, however, it constituted a cautious recognition, tailored to the intended public of the report, of the revolutionary criticism of existing social structures that were then arising on all sides.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council and General Assembly approved the report of the experts in 1970 and decanted it into instructions to the Secretariat for further work. 6/ These resolutions affirmed

resolutions affirmed "the need for a unified approach to development analysis and planning which would fully integrate the economic and social components in the formulation of policies and programmes at the national and international levels". They laid down specifications, deriving from the report of the experts, for the kind of "unified approach" wanted. It must "include components" designed:

(a) To leave no section of the population outside the scope of change and development,
(b) To effect structural change which favours national development and to activate all sectors of the population to participate in the development process,
(c) To aim at social equity, including the achievement of an equitable distribution of income and wealth in the nation,
(d) To give high priority to the development of the human potentials, including vocational technical training and the provision of employment opportunities and meeting the needs of children."

The above components are to be "borne in mind in development analysis and planning processes, as well as in their implications, according to the particular developmental needs of each country". The Secretary-General is to submit a report on the unified approach at the "earliest possible date." The General Assembly resolution, more specifically, requests him to "evolve methods and techniques for the application of a unified approach to development, to be put at the disposal of Governments at their request".

During the same year, under the influence of the spirit of the times rather than the experts' report, the General Assembly approved an "International Development Strategy" for the Second Development Decade, the 1970's. The Strategy was prepared mainly by the UN Committee for Development Planning, a permanent advisory body whose...
preliminary work had been criticized in the report of the social policy experts as insufficiently human-welfare-oriented. The text of the Strategy contains a series of conventional social sectoral recommendations, mainly in rather vague terms of "more and better", in contrast to relatively precise economic recommendations, but it also contained a formulation of the "unified approach" somewhat more vigorous than that of the resolutions deriving from the social policy experts' report:

"... qualitative and structural changes in the society must go hand in hand with rapid economic growth, and existing disparities --regional, sectoral and social-- should be substantially reduced. These objectives are both determining factors and end-results of development; they should therefore be viewed as integrated parts of the same dynamic process, and would require a unified approach."

The "unified approach" had thus followed "balanced development" into the international repertoire of aspirations that might mean almost all things to almost all men.

2. Methodological and institutional constraints

Preceding pages have suggested certain methodological and institutional constraints in efforts by United Nations bodies to deal with the "social" or with "development";

(i) The problem to be studied was normally defined through a resolution deriving partly from past reports presented by the Secretariat, partly from the interests and points of view of the representatives of governments in the policy-making bodies. In practice, governments rarely tried to impose a coherent ideological formulation through their representatives; they were generally content to seek recognition of their own achievements, refute criticisms, and occasionally score off adversaries. In the case of the "social", more or less
marginal to the central preoccupations of the governments, the formulation of problems by the Secretariat, modified by personal interests and opinions of some representatives, usually prevailed, as long as it was clear that such formulations did not commit the governments or the United Nations to additional expenditures.

(ii) Definition of the problem normally preceded a request to the Secretary-General, as ultimately responsible for the work of the social units of the Secretariat, to produce a report containing "practical" recommendations within a fixed period, determined by the calendar of future meetings of the policy-making bodies and by the need to allow ample time for prior translation and distribution of documents. During the 1970's timetables were also increasingly influenced by provisions for periodic review and appraisal of progress within the Second Development Decade and by the international "years" focussed on broad social problems. The practical recommendations were to be addressed to governments, on the supposition that they would be willing and able to act on prescriptions couched in very general and qualified terms. The conventions of the exercises permitted considerable latitude in criticism of "some governments", "many governments", etc. as inefficient, corrupt, short-sighted, or compartmentalized, as long as these traits were treated as shortcomings remediable through good advice. Hypotheses that the problems addressed were not of a nature to be solved by the planning and actions of governments of whatever kind, or that typical existing governments would be unable to act on them because of the character and the objectives of the forces dominating these governments were ruled out a priori.

(iii) Research techniques, beyond the compilation and synthesis of available published information, followed a limited range of paths, usually specified in the governing resolution:

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(a) A questionnaire might be circulated to governments asking for their views on the problem and their methods of dealing with it. This technique had been used in earlier stages of social policy studies, and was resorted to again later in the quest for "practical applications" of the unified approach, but did not enter into the work deriving immediately from the 1970 resolutions. The use of questionnaire had the "practical" advantage of distancing the Secretariat from responsibility for producing solutions to the more controversial questions, but had the disadvantage of eliciting incorrigibly heterogeneous materials, generally from a small minority of member governments, that had somehow to be "taken into account" in reports.

(b) "Country case studies" might be prepared through national institutions, individual consultants, or members of the Secretariat. This technique offered a greater likelihood of obtaining fresh information and ideas in a relatively coherent form. However, the conventions demanded that the countries to be studied be selected for a maximum of geographical and political diversity, and within this constraint selection depended on too many extraneous factors to permit clear definition of what the "cases" were supposed to demonstrate. Budgetary limitations and short deadlines (since the case studies were generally supposed to contribute to reports due within less than two years) restricted the selection of executors and hampered the consultations and revisions needed for comparability and critical analysis. Typically, the reports made only slight use of the country case studies because they were completed after the deadline, because changes in the circumstances of the country left them quickly out of date, or because they presented an unassimilable mass of detail.

(c) The governing resolution usually envisaged consultations with and contributions from appropriate specialized agencies and other
units of the UN family having social responsibilities (ILO, FAO, UNESCO, UNICEF, etc.). The consultations might or might not be perfunctory, but overlapping jurisdictions and sensitivity to criticism of certain dogmas and programmes introduced additional inhibitions into the preparation of broad, ideally "unified" reports.

(d) At some stage in the response to requests for reports and recommendations, a "meeting of experts" was practically obligatory. The conventions demanded that the Secretariat select the experts, like the countries for case studies, for maximum diversity, within limits imposed by the Secretariat's contacts and information concerning their qualifications and availability. In relation to broad topics such as social policy, balanced development, or the unified approach, the term "expert" was stretched far beyond its usual sense. The participants in meetings might be "experts" in many relevant specializations, but hardly in a field yet to be explored and mapped. As time went on and meetings multiplied the repeated participation of planners and scholars undoubtedly contributed to a common understanding that has flowered in the formulations of "another development" during the 1970's. The role of "expert" supposed to evaluate and improve ideas presented by the Secretariat, however, was ambiguous. If the experts exercised it vigorously they exposed their own differences of background and viewpoint and complicated the Secretariat's task of producing a coherent "practical" report. The more deeply an expert was committed to a comprehensive theory or strategy of his own, the less fitted he would be to enter into an unavoidably eclectic exercise.

In their combination, the instructions and techniques here outlined seemed to rule out the selection or construction of a single theory of social change, an integrated strategy for social development or a genuinely "unified approach". The instructions and techniques,
insured that heterogeneous, incomplete, and erratically selected information would have to be taken into account; that representatives of different points of view and different terminologies would have to reach a least common denominator, or incorporate all proposals not definitely unacceptable to other participants nor self-evidently incompatible. The most likely outcome of the pursuit of a unified approach within these constraints would be a "technocratic utopia made by aggregation of objectives", according to a characterization that will be discussed later.

The Secretary General decided to centre the study of a "unified approach to development analysis and planning", once a grant from the Netherlands made it possible to undertake such a study outside the routine of periodic world social reports, in the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, an institution less bound by constraints and conventions than the Secretariat itself, but with a staff and work programme deriving historically from the concepts of level of living, social development and balanced development that had evolved in the Secretariat and accustomed to similar research methods, in particular the pursuit of information on broad topics through country case studies.

The core of the research team that first met in February 1971 and engaged in discussions of preliminary drafts and conceptual papers during the greater part of that year, was made up of the Director of UNRISD, who had taken a leading part in the evolution of UN social thinking since the Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation; the Chief of the Social Development Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America, where more politically-oriented and conflict-oriented lines of thinking had been pursued for some time; an economist with experience in the plan organization of France and in the study of development indicators.
development indicators; a specialist in the study of decision-making processes; and an economist who had written extensively on development and served as policy and planning consultant in different parts of the world. Other persons joined the team during the course of the year, contributed conceptual papers, or entered into discussions with the team; directors of national planning agencies, consultants on development planning, members of the United Nations Committee on Development Planning, specialists in regional planning, in econometric techniques, etc., expected to cover questions outside the competence of the core team but relevant to a "unified approach".

Even the core members of the team had other responsibilities in the Secretariat, in other UNRISD research projects, in academic institutions, and as national development planners and consultants. It was evident from the beginning that a team of this kind, with less than two years at its disposal, would not be able to reach a theoretical consensus nor produce a comprehensive set of prescriptions for unified development. The team entertained the more modest hope of reaching agreement on certain central concepts, of clarifying theoretical or disciplinary sources of divergence on others, and of producing two kinds of report: first, a "synthesis of central issues and unifying concepts for rethinking development, along with a few cautiously "practical" guidelines; second, a report covering in some detail all the aspects the team considered relevant and important, in chapters to be written by individual team members and consultants, reflecting their different points of view, but given a reasonable coherence through discussions with the team as a whole.

The deadline for the first report was October 1972; it was determined by the requirement of submitting a report to the next session of the Commission for Social Development. The deadline for the second
report was relatively elastic, but it was hoped that this would be published by the end of 1973. A tentative annotated outline for the second report went through several versions during the first half of 1971.

The chapter headings of the proposed final report and the selected papers indicate some but far from all of the "approaches to a unified approach" that emerged during the course of the project and of the later attempts to bring it to a coherent conclusion that will be discussed below. For the present, it is enough to note that budgetary limitations, deadlines, and other commitments of the team members made it impossible to continue beyond 1971 the dialogue that had begun. In later stages, a series of individuals struggled to impose order on a mounting accumulation of disparate materials.

The team devoted a good deal of attention during 1971 to plans and negotiations for a series of studies of national experience, and eight such studies were eventually completed by national institutions or consultants, although only one of them by the intended deadline of May 1972, so that they could be used only in a very limited way in preparation of the project's Preliminary Report. UNRISD eventually issued five of them in mimeographed texts. The specifications for the studies gave the executors considerable flexibility in pursuing aspects they considered nationally important, but sought a measure of uniformity by asking them to discuss the relevance to their national situations of certain preliminary hypotheses of the project: in particular, on the emergence of a "triple crisis" in development planning: in its basic philosophy or final goals, in its links with policy formation and decision-taking, and in the adequacy of its techniques, mostly of economic origin.
In spite of the small number of studies, the differences in their content and in the approaches of their executors deserves some attention as indicative of differences in the real world of national societies to which the quest for a unified approach addressed itself.

Two of the studies dealt with Asian countries (Philippines and Sri Lanka) having extensive and bureaucratized social programmes, formal planning mechanisms, and competitive party politics, with social service, consumption subsidy, job creation and public works accomplishments and promises critical to success in periodic elections. These studies were carried out collectively by institutions—a university School of Public Administration and a private economic research institute staffed largely by persons having previous experience in the national planning system. They documented in detail the functioning of programmes and the deficiencies of co-ordination and overall policy guidance. Under conditions of open political competition for limited electoral objectives and bureaucratic compartmentalization of social and economic activities, with diffuse dissatisfaction at the malfunctioning of the system but no immediate prospect of major changes in the distribution of power and the expectations of different interest-groups in the societies, these studies could make various practical suggestions for improvements in policy formation and execution, but offered no hope of a radically different "unified approach". Both texts indicated that the contradictions in the functioning of the societies were likely to become more pronounced in the future but that the deterioration probably would not overcome their basic stability for a long time. Meanwhile, planners had to try to understand political realities, adapt their proposals to such realities, and help to educate political leaders and public opinion.

/One study
One study dealt with another Asian country, Iran, that was undergoing rapid modernization under autocratic leadership, with resources at its command vastly larger than those of most "developing" countries, with formal planning machinery, but without open channels for the competition of interest groups and political movements. This study was carried out by a political scientist in contact with the plan organization. Its dominant note was intense frustration of two kinds: first, at the high social costs and inequity of the modernization process; second, at the limited and erratic use made by the leadership of the advice of technocrats and planners. Here a certain unification of policy was present at the top and bureaucratic, political, and financial constraints were less formidable, but the human welfare objectives of the unified approach did not have first priority, socially-oriented planning could not depend on a hearing, and transmission belts between the leadership and the society functioned poorly.

Two studies, carried out by individual economists, were of newly independent African countries, Kenya and Togo, with formal planning machinery inherited in part from the colonial past and in process of adaptation to new policy objectives, with political competition open but not intense. Here the note is one of cautious down-to-earth optimism: policy formation has been erratic and planning has not been very effective owing to poor information, faulty administrative machinery, and scanty resources. Gradual improvement in planning, adjusted to the capacities of the state, offers a good deal of hope as a means of making policy more coherent and more equitable. A radically different and ambitious unified approach, however, is hardly advisable and probably impracticable for its demands on information and scarce qualified human resources.
Two studies, carried out by individual political scientists, dealt with Latin American countries, Chile and Perú, that were then experiencing semi-revolutionary changes (since frustrated) within settings of considerable uncertainty concerning the real distribution of power and the capacity of the political regimes to transform the system of production and the distribution of incomes, wealth and consumption while simultaneously presiding over the emergence of new forms of political participation of the "marginalized" masses. These studies described the national planning mechanisms and the current social and economic programmes, but their attention lay elsewhere. Unlike the other studies mentioned above they could not treat the political and economic systems and the distribution of power as constant constraints on policy and planning, for better or worse. In Chile and Peru initiatives were under way, under the quite different auspices of a coalition mainly of Marxist-Socialist political parties and of a nationalist military government, to transform the systems and structures, against the opposition of other combinations of forces. Under these conditions, the problems of planners seeking to improve their methodologies and exert more influence over political leaders and sectoral bureaucracies receded into the background, although both regimes were favourably disposed toward planning. The questions in the foreground were the character, degree of coherence and relative strength of the forces supporting and opposing structural changes in the control of land, industry and mineral resources; their tactics and ability to mobilize major sectors of the population for or against these changes; their ability to carry out the changes with a minimum of efficiency under unavoidably conflictive circumstances; the possibilities for compromises or shifts in political alliances; the compatibility of the changes with open political processes and the observance of laws generally weighted against them; the alternatives

/for future
for future political regimes and forms of popular participation if the changes accomplished their immediate purpose; the finding of ways to enlist international support and neutralize the opposition of certain governments and transnational enterprises.

In these studies the differing institutional, valorative and theoretical preoccupations of the executing institutions and individuals seem to have coincided with real differences in the national situations confronted. If the project team had not dispersed by the time they were completed, their comparative examination could have provided a valuable corrective to the normative, universalistic and technocratic bias given the project by its terms of reference. They suggested that possibilities for human-welfare-oriented rationalization of policy were real but limited; for all their differences none of the studies could envisage short-term removal of the stumbling blocks to a unified approach; more likely, the problems would evolve through the interaction of political and economic factors into other problems, not necessarily less formidable. Would-be agents of human-welfare-oriented development had to seek opportunities within these processes, rather than devise ideal prescriptions.
3. Differing approaches to a unified approach

Two documents set forth the elements of consensus reached in the "unified approach" project while it retained a measure of interdisciplinary teamwork: (i) Report on a Unified Approach to Development Analysis and Planning; Preliminary Report of the Secretary-General, 25 October 1972; this report was prepared by one member of the team and amplified and revised on the basis of comments from other team members. (ii) Report of the Secretary-General on the Expert Group Meeting on a Unified Approach to Development Analysis and Planning held at Stockholm from 5 to 10 November, 1972. The majority of the team members participated in this meeting along with a small number of other economists, sociologists, planners, and representatives of UN agencies. Both documents were presented to a session of the Commission for Social Development in February 1973. Because of the Commission's deadline the Preliminary Report could not be further revised to take into account the comments made at this meeting.

Even in these two documents different voices can be detected, but in at least some respects they go beyond the "aggregation of objectives" in striving to formulate a realistic and flexible frame of reference for thinking about development objectives and strategies and the national societies that are expected to choose the objectives and apply the strategies.

A "unified approach", according to the Preliminary Report, "needs to make use of two complementary ways of looking at development: (i) Development as a perceived advance toward specified ends based on societal values; (ii) development as the system of interrelated societal changes that underlies and conditions the feasibility of the advance".

"The first sense assumes human capability of shaping the future for human ends. It also implies that the existing society has the right and the ability, through general consensus or through /agents claiming
agents claiming to represent the best interests of the society, to make choices and enforce sacrifices in the name of development. ... The second sense assumes that development is an intelligible phenomenon susceptible to diagnosis and to objective propositions concerning the interrelations of factors and the probable wider consequences of change in or action on key components of the 'system'.'"

"From the standpoint adopted here development is not a single uniform process or dimension of change and it cannot be assumed that 'development' means the transformation of the countries now labelled 'developing' into replicas of countries now labelled 'developed'. All national societies will be developing, or trying to, during the foreseeable future, and at the same time will be trying to cope with the contradictions and disbenefits that arise from their development processes. There is no reason to expect their efforts to lead to uniform futures, or to final resolution of their struggles in a blessed state of 'being developed'."

The Preliminary Report went on to assert that "realistic discussion of the possibilities of more rational and effective action by human agents requires recognition of the existence and unavoidability of different styles, that is, different combinations of ends and means applied to different real patterns of growth and change. It also requires the taking into account of two different kinds of limitations on styles of development - limitations in terms of internal coherence and feasibility, and limitations in terms of compatibility with human welfare and equity values."

The Preliminary Report distinguished between the "real style of development" ("what is actually happening in a given national society") and the "preferred style of development" ("what the national political leadership, the planning agency, or some other significant political actor wants or expects to happen"). It rejected the possibility of a "detailed universal set of specifications for development or particularized 'definition'", but proposed a "minimum criterion" for assessment of styles of development:

"the extent
"the extent to which a style of development enables a society to function over the long term for the wellbeing of all its members". Assessed by this criterion, certain styles might be viable but not acceptable, and others acceptable but not viable.

The criterion implies choices, explicit or implicit, with regard to: "(i) The extent and nature of national autonomy. (ii) The extent and nature of popular participation. (iii) The emphasis given to production in general, to specific lines and techniques of production, incentives, and forms of control over the means of production. (iv) The distribution of the fruits of development and mechanisms for redistribution. (v) The encouragement or discouragement of specific forms of individual or collective consumption of goods and services. (vi) The extent and nature of protection of the human environment. (vii) The extent and nature of protection of human relationships contributing to solidarity, security, self-realization, and freedom. These choices are complexly interdependent. If they are mutually contradictory beyond a certain point, the style will not be viable. If the choices are made in isolation from one another the probability is that they will be mutually contradictory to a dangerous degree."

After elaborating on the implications of these areas of choice, the Preliminary Report proceeded to sketch a typology of real national styles of development, then to propose certain strategic orientations for policy and certain approaches to developmental decision-making and diagnosis. At this point, the "aggregation of objectives", the compulsion to say something about the relation of all the conventional major social policy areas to the unified approach, and the predisposition toward comprehensive rationality in planning make their appearance, but are periodically offset by notes of skepticism and by the reintroduction of the theme of styles and choices within styles controllable only in small part by technocratic rationality.
The differing approaches that we shall now discuss emerged not only during the period of team activity but also later, in the successive attempts to synthesize the materials into a "unified" final report. One might conclude that each member of the team began and ended with his own "unified approach", more or less compatible with the positions summarized above and more or less modified by exposure to other positions, but retaining its premises deriving from the participant's ideology, discipline, and previous experience. Meanwhile, the international scene continually threw up additional major problems, approaches and slogans. The 1970's saw, instead of progress toward consensus on a "unified approach", a continual diversification of interpretations of development, continually more ambitious international declarations aspiring to reconcile them, and also a mounting criticism of "development", from several quite different viewpoints, as an outworn and misleading myth.

The following pages do not try to reproduce the positions of participants in the unified approach project. Rather, the intention is to use these positions as a springboard toward a discussion of the different approaches that have continually confronted one another and entered into compromises in the international debate. Some of these positions were more strongly and typically represented in the project than others, a few of them were formulated more explicitly than before during the course of the project; some are more ambitious and exclusive in their explanatory and operational claims than others. All of them are, in one way or another, interventionist; the only influential approach to development not represented was laissez faire or reliance on market forces.

(a) Development economics re-examined and broadened

This approach assumed the centrality and at the same time the insufficiency of economic development theories and tools for diagnosis and planning applied to market or mixed economies. Economics offered the closest approximation to a coherent view /of development,
of development, but it had not yet "taken into account" all the relevant factors. The approach also assumed the centrality of economists as advisers to governments. The "unified approach" must therefore be presented to economists in terms they could accept, incorporate into their methodologies, and communicate to political leaders having their own preoccupations and limitations of vision.

The approach had several main components:

(i) An interest in sociological and psychological diagnoses of "social obstacles to development" or "social preconditions for development". The supposition was that "traditional" values, attitudes toward work and saving, class or caste barriers to mobility, child-rearing practices, extended family ties, etc. stood in the way of a development process requiring accelerated capital accumulation and investment, continual technological innovation, formation of a disciplined and qualified labour force, and predictable responsiveness of the population to market incentives. This development process could progress faster and more smoothly once the social experts diagnosed the obstacles and prescribed how to remove them.

(ii) An interest in educational, health, social security and other social sectoral programmes for their claims on public resources and their contribution to economic development through the improvement of "human resources". Quantification of this impact and calculation of the ideal size of allocations to social programmes were considered key desiderata in a unified approach, although difficult and perhaps impossible to achieve.

(iii) A preoccupation with the measurable aspects of social justice and improved levels of living as the legitimate ends of development. The economists in question had already abandoned the expectation still current among many of their colleagues that these ends would eventually and more or less automatically derive from the maximization of investment and rates of increase
in the national product. The most obvious disbenefits of economic
growth in developing countries were increasing disparities in levels
of income and consumption; new patterns of impoverishment and
insecurity; and incapacity of the economies to offer productive
employment to a large part of the labour force. Therefore, the
approach affirmed employment policies, income redistribution policies,
and agrarian reform policies to be essential components of a
unified approach.

(iv) A preoccupation with the improvement of quantitative
methods for reconciling multiple objectives and guiding the
selection of development projects. The proponents of the approach
felt most at home with quantitative methods, and such methods
responded to the political as well as planning demands made on
them, but they could not help being aware of the fragile factual
basis of their calculations. Thus they hesitated between the
pursuit of continually more elaborate and data-demanding techniques
for the construction of composite development indicators, preferably
convertible into monetary terms, to replace the gross national
product; to quantify improvement in levels and distribution of
welfare; to calculate "returns" on social investments, etc., and
techniques, such as shadow-pricing, permitting an ordering and
rational choice between alternative allocations with a minimum
of data. In the last analysis, quantification might function,
and be necessary, more as a heuristic device or a means of
convincing the laity than as a reliable reflection of reality.

During the 1950's and 1960's variants on this approach
had continually been discussed in the international agencies and
elsewhere. In particular, it had inspired a series of inter-
governmental conferences on education and development, co-sponsored
by Unesco and the regional economic commissions, in which national
educational authorities and authorities for economic planning
and budget preparation were brought together with the aim of
convincing them mutually that education should be planned so to
qualify "human resources" for economic development and that education should receive a larger share of public expenditures.

It was an approach that came naturally to economists deriving mixed sentiments of achievement and frustration from their experiences as development planners and consultants. It was also congenial to most social sectoral specialists, in spite of their uneasiness at submitting to the predominance of economic justifications for social programmes. It gave them a means that they lacked of ordering coherently what they were doing and also a more sympathetic hearing from circles believed to have a decisive influence over the allocation of resources.

During the 1970's the approach has evolved new variants. It can be traced in the ILO studies on employment policy and in the Report to the Club of Rome entitled Reshaping the International Order (Jan Tinbergen, Co-ordinator, E.P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1976).

(b) Development planning rehabilitated and perfected.

This approach derived from the preoccupations of planning practitioners in a good many "developed" countries with market or mixed economies and in a much larger number of developing countries. During the 1950's and early 1960's the number of countries possessing planning agencies and preparing fixed-term plans had increased many fold. Even governments having no interest in such planning for themselves began to favour it for the "developing" countries, if only as a means toward more effective use of their "aid" to such countries: the support by the United States of ten-year economic and social development plans as a condition for aid under the Alliance for Progress is the most conspicuous example. The colonial powers had also left a heritage of "development plans" and some rudimentary planning machinery in many of the newly independent countries. Courses training "planners" to fill the posts opened in the new planning agencies /proliferated, and
proliferated, and a body of professional planners with a vested interest in the success of planning came into being. In the training of these planners economic theories and techniques predominated, but other kinds of planning with their own history, in particular physical planning associated with the disciplines of architecture and engineering, entered in. Educational and health planning began to develop as distinct specializations, and in the other sectors of social action planning techniques of their own began to figure at least as aspirations.

While the preoccupations of the planners coincided to a large extent with those of the development economists described above, they were more concerned with the legitimacy of their own function, their ties with politics, the nature and effectiveness of the transmission between planning and application. By 1970, experience had introduced a large measure of frustration and insecurity to mingle with the earlier claims for planning as a body of rational politically neutral techniques through which governments could make sounder decisions on objectives and marshal their resources more efficiently to achieve such objectives. The relevance of formal development plans was beginning to seem rather doubtful. The planners could not help seeing that their prescriptions were being followed only sporadically, and that the results of such partial planning deviated widely and unpredictably from their objectives and their projections. Moreover, in the setting of radical challenges to power structures at the end of the 1960's, a good many planners could no longer accept the role of technicians at the service of the state behind which they had sheltered themselves when planning first began to be institutionalized. Should they not serve the people rather than the state? But if so, how, since the state was their employer? Planning, according to an early hypothesis of the unified approach team, was in a "triple crisis", relating to
relating to its basic philosophy, its links to decision-making and action, and the adequacy of its tools.

One reaction was to propose broader and more ambitious roles for planning. This approach dominated Part III of the Preliminary Report, which posed the following conditions for effective planning.

(i) "... planning should be a continuous activity, that is, an effort at rationality applied to various phases of the one process comprising the preparation of decision-making, its implementation, the control over action taken and the eventual revision of the orientations taken." Planning should not "be confused with the periodical elaboration of a document called the 'Plan'".

(ii) "The second condition of effective planning is the diffusion of planning activities in the whole of society. First, planning activities should be extended to all central government departments instead of being confined to a 'Ministry of Planning' or 'Office of Planning'. Second, planning activities should be diffused to other administrative levels besides to central government." Third, the private sector should be drawn actively into planning, with "a reciprocal flow of techniques" between private enterprise and public sector planning.

(iii) Planning should be a "diversified but coherent activity" involving the co-ordinated utilization of financial planning, allocative planning, physical or spatial planning and institutional planning.

(iv) Planning should function as "part of the real decision-making process", and thus should be recognized as a political activity. The idea that planning is a neutral technical exercise is a myth, although it may be a useful myth for planners under some conditions. "Plans always express choices, models make assumptions about what are to be accepted as constants (constraints) in the socio-political environment, values intrude into the choice
of means as well as ends, techniques such as cost-benefit analysis rely on value judgements, and indicators, whether 'economic' or 'social', express ... some theory or interpretation of the functioning of a society." Ideally, there should be a "bringing-together or fusion of training and interests" of decision-maker, administrator and planner.

Effective planning supposes "the diffusion of an attitude or approach of rationality or efficiency at all levels of decision-making". It supposes a "strategic approach", in which key issues are selected for an "intensified planning effort", and an "innovative approach" "in the definition and organization of resources, the kinds of objectives and means chosen and their interrelations, in the manner of evaluation and execution of programmes and projects and in the general orientation of planning offices and administrators".

In fact, this approach seems to envisage a future social order in which planning becomes an activity and source of guidance as pervasive as religion in some other social orders with professional planners functioning as teachers and prophets, but with the laity as well continually learning and applying more comprehensive planning techniques and resolving their unavoidable conflicts of interests and values by integrating their plans.

The next two approaches to be discussed implicitly negate this vision of planning societies, although the vision itself might incorporate them as legitimate facets of the all-encompassing activity of planning.

(c) Pragmatic social and economic ameliorism

This approach gave priority to the identification of policies and measures that have worked, in the sense of demonstrably enhancing human welfare; to the consideration of how they might be made to work better; and to pragmatic criteria for /their combination
their combination into mutually supportive packages. It derived naturally from the "programmes of social development" side of the Reports on the World Social Situation, which, in principle, identified programmes that were working in the expectation that they would provide "lessons" for the governments of other countries confronting similar problems. (In practice, the information available to the compilers of the Reports had been too scanty and the political constraints too confining for them to state with any confidence whether programmes they described, mainly summarizing official documents, worked or not.) The same approach dominated United Nations technical assistance in social questions, in which "experts" set forth to apply methods learned in their home countries, on the supposition that they would be able to adapt such methods to the political and social setting of the country to be advised. (In practice, as often as not, the experts really set forth to advocate methods that they had never been able to apply in their home countries.)

The approach of pragmatic social and economic ameliorism had met with harsh and obvious criticisms over the years, but its proponents had plausible arguments on their side. After all, throughout the world human-welfare-oriented programmes of many kinds were continuing to appear and expand. By now they accounted for sizeable shares of public expenditures and the national product in most countries, irrespective of their structure and level of production, their political system, or their distribution of power. Presumably some of them worked better than others, and comparative study could throw light on the reasons and on ways of raising the general level of effectiveness. Presumably some rough criteria could be established for the distribution of resources. Arguments to the effect that such improvements could be no more than palliatives in the absence of a unified theory of development, or profound structural changes, or a transformation of values, or truly comprehensive planning,
or social revolution, might be excuses of intellectuals for not undertaking the painstaking and unglamorous but necessary activities that were within their reach. Great care should be taken not to encourage the impermissible conclusion that "nothing can be done".

It followed that the "unified approach" project, whatever else it might include, should aim at a set of practical down-to-earth recommendations that could be applied by the kinds of governments present in the real world. It should describe the more promising development activities and methods of integrating them that could be found. It should not formulate over-demanding preconditions and methodologies, and it should not pursue very far lines of thinking about human societies that might cast doubt on "development" as an objective or on the practicability of a unified approach to it.

As will be noted below, the approach of pragmatic ameliorism was one of the two that persisted in later demands made by United Nations policy-making bodies for pursuit of a unified approach.

(d) Capacitation of national societies.

This approach emphasized the building up of institutions for diagnosis and problem-solving, participatory mechanisms and educational programmes enabling societies to function better through the informed and cooperative action of their members. It did not figure in the initial research scheme of the project although a study of decision-making processes that entered into the scheme could have led to it.2/ It emerged in the later stages as an alternative to comprehensive planning and as a complement to pragmatic social ameliorism and was first given a name in a 1974 report prepared by UNRISD.8/

2/ See J.F. Collette

8/ Report on a Unified Approach to Development Analysis and Planning (E/CN.5/519, 5 December 1974). This report will be discussed later in the present chapter.
According to this report, "development planning first arose in connection with material production ... In the last few decades, planning has spread to more and more fields of development activity, including social fields, but in this process, objectives have become less amenable to direct measurement, causal relations have become more complex and obscure, and control of the future has taken on a different complexion". Moreover, "conventional planning tends to lead to an over-emphasis on capital investment in physical structures and equipment, especially in social fields, since these objectives are easier to handle under the methodology of planning (and are likely to be more in demand politically) than are various other kinds of activity that may be equally or more desirable for development and possibly also much cheaper".

Another kind of rational approach to development is therefore needed. "The doctor or the teacher does not make plans or blueprints of the future like the architect but is equally rational. Similarly at the societal level, it is desirable to think in terms of a 'capacitating' operation which does not try so much to define or control the future as to establish present conditions or capacities which will permit a given society to meet its problems in the future. The emphasis in such an approach is not on setting future output targets but on diagnosing current weaknesses and potentials, finding appropriate policies, and constantly monitoring the course of development." "An example of such a capacitation activity would be the undertaking of structural or institutional change, which conventional planning does not readily deal with through its technical methods."

The implications of a "capacitation approach" were not further pursued within the project, and in its bare bones it suggests a faith in the existence of some rational and benevolent entity qualified or qualifiable to direct the capacitating. However, it also suggests a conception of development policy-making as an educational experience, in which societal actors learn to cope by struggling with problems.
with problems under conditions of limited rationality, an approach applicable to local groups and organizations as well as to national societies, and this relates it to the positions of such economists as Albert O. Hirschman and such political scientists as Warren F. Ilchman, Norman Thomas Uphoff, Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedburg. This could have been one of the most promising paths for exploration by the project, if the project had been able to count on a longer time span to take advantage of dialectical reactions to the approaches initially presenting themselves.

(e) Informational enlightenment.

This approach derived from lines of research present in the Reports on the World Social Situation since the 1950’s and in UNRISD since its foundation. It envisaged a transformation of the conditions for public action through improved methods of obtaining, disseminating, interpreting, and integrating accurate and relevant information for diagnosis of problems and evaluation of progress. It was associated with chronic frustration among proponents of social development at their inability to match the elaborate quantifications and manipulations of economic data, their anxiety to escape from the domination of economic methodologies in use of the information they did command, and, in the case of UNRISD, a long-standing distrust of national aggregate indicators such as the GNP and of the adequacy of income distribution studies to throw light on levels of living. This point of view deserves the label of "approach" only to the extent to which its proponents supposed that the central reason why development was so little oriented to human welfare

was that governments were poorly informed, and this supposition was usually implicit or even unconscious. Part IV of the Preliminary Report in dealing with diagnosis, information and indicators, for the most part takes too cautious a line to justify such a label. It subordinates information to the propositions advanced earlier in the Report: "Ideally there should be a continual interplay between diagnosis, redefinition of preferred styles, and strategic orientations. ... In practice, the mutually stimulating relationship is less often found than a kind of vicious circle; the types of information sought and their uses in diagnosis are governed by borrowed, inadequate conceptions of style and strategy, while conceptions of style and strategy are cramped by the types of information used for diagnosis. ... If development is to be understood as an interdependent system of changes rather than the expression of a single quantity, then methods of measurement and quantitative analysis appropriate to this conception need to be built up".

At the same time, the treatment of information retained certain propositions common to the Reports on the World Social Situation that made the possibility of unified policy depend on the correct manipulation of information and the rejection of certain informational fallacies:

(i) Development had to be disaggregated for measurement before being "unified". "Diagnosis for unified development involves first an attempt to see if the different factors of development are properly covered in proper proportions -that some are not neglected causing a general drag on the system while others are so advanced that their output cannot be absorbed." ("Factors" are stated to include the conventional components -education, health, nutrition, housing, industry, conditions of work and employment, etc.- and subcomponents- higher education, secondary education, etc. -around which the Reports on the World Social Situation had been ordered.)
While it is impossible to specify simple quantitative requirements in one factor for growth in other factors, "through comparative international analysis, normal 'correspondences' among social and economic factors at a given level of development can be determined. ... Where a country shows marked abnormalities ... questions may be raised about its real styles of development". Since "development is not a unidimensional phenomenon", what is needed is not a single indicator but a "pattern or profile of indicators for each country".

(ii) "Systems for collecting and analyzing information should be designed as far as possible to facilitate understanding of relationships between different phenomena. This cannot be done through aggregates referring to the national population as a whole or to large groups. Interrelationships can be traced more readily at the local or operational level. ... one difficulty with most indicators is that they are used as national aggregates or averages and fail to reflect distribution. Another difficulty is that the indicators that seem to make sense at the national level may not make much sense when examined at the local level." "... to understand and diagnose the causal relationships between different developmental factors it is usually necessary to go to the level where the interactions actually take place rather than deal with abstractions at the national level."

Development thus becomes a multidimensional jigsaw puzzle, its large pieces divisible into small pieces fitting into each other vertically as well as horizontally. A unified approach must aim at techniques expressing the full complexity of their relationships, but they remain pieces with distinct contours, susceptible to meaningful quantitative description once sufficiently disaggregated and combinable by the well-informed governmental player into a coherent whole at the "national level".
(f) Institutionalized Marxist socialism and "far-reaching structural change".

This is the first in the series of approaches to be discussed that questioned the possibility of development responding to the minimum criterion of acceptability and viability within the framework of market or mixed economies. It did so, however, in a peculiarly ambiguous and stereotyped fashion that derived from the role of the socialist bloc in the United Nations and the ways in which policy-making bodies and the Secretariat simultaneously paid respects to and evaded its ideological position.

The representatives of the national societies identifying themselves as socialist, in which the state controlled the means of production and the sources of investment and exercised power in the name of the working class, asserted that these societies could offer lessons in a functioning "unified approach" to the rest of the world. The fruits of this unified approach were guaranteed full employment, a relatively even income distribution, and universalization of social security and access to the major social services. The preconditions for these achievements could be labelled "far-reaching structural changes", a formula covering many kinds of change, such as agrarian reform or popular participation in developmental decision-making, to which most governments had committed themselves through their votes in the United Nations. It had to be assumed that governments could carry out such structural changes if they wanted to, and that they had recognized the duty of doing so.

The question whether abolition of private ownership of the means of production was not the key structural change could be left unanswered. The traditional Marxist-Leninist hypothesis on the necessity of destruction of the bourgeois state and seizing of power by the proletariat as a precondition for such structural change remained in the shade.

Its terms of reference inhibited the unified approach project from deciding whether socialism, under whatever definition, was...
a necessary condition for a unified approach, and in any case most members of the team saw no need to do so; they considered their various approaches applicable to socialist as well as market or mixed systems, and they endorsed the "strategic orientations" described above, which coincided in many respects with the less controversial "far-reaching structural changes". Their affirmation of the legitimacy of different styles of development within a minimum criterion of acceptability and viability implicitly denied the necessity of socialist revolution without ruling it out as an option. In any case, the state remained in the centre of attention as executor of whatever structural changes were feasible within the style of development.

(g) Neo-Marxist, participationist, self-reliant socialism.

This approach, for which it is particularly hard to find an adequate label, entered the unified approach project at a late stage, introducing a combination of propositions deriving from dependency theory, Maoism and other new currents in Marxism, "conscientization" doctrines, etc., that had become current during the 1960's, mainly outside the inter-governmental framework of debate over development, and that during the 1970's entered into proposals for "another development". The approach accepted the areas of choice deriving from the "minimum criterion" set forth in the Preliminary Report, but it brushed aside the legitimacy of different styles of development. An attempt to reformulate the unified approach in these terms introduced a flavour of uncompromising and exclusive theoretical and valorative positions in place of the earnest endeavour to find something good in all positions which lingered even in the reception of the "far-reaching structural change" approach discussed above. It also transformed the framework of internationally-aided national development more or less accepted by the other approaches.

"Third world countries are faced with an alternative. Either they accept their dependence or they pursue the path of their own self-reliant
self-reliant autonomous development. In the first case, they are bound to increased polarization, inequality and mass poverty. They continue to accept the mobilization of their resources primarily in function of foreign requirements. The mobilization of the immense reservoir of dormant productive and creative potentialities of the mass of their people will remain unutilized or underutilized. ... It is proposed that the countries of the third world can only overcome their poverty and stagnation if and when they decide to pursue a new alternative and original road to development which qualitatively differs from that followed by the industrially advanced countries.10/

Since the dominant forces of the "industrially advanced" countries are responsible for the "under-development" of the rest of the world and require its exploitation, the latter cannot look to them for "aid", and still less take them as models for development. In fact, their style of development is morally indefensible and will become practically untenable once the Third World has taken another path; their real need for transformation is just as urgent and ineluctable as that of the Third World.

Market incentives cannot guide the transformation, nor can bureaucratic centrally-planned versions of socialism, in which objectives decided from above seek to speed up capital accumulation by depressing levels of popular consumption and wringing a surplus from the peasantry. The arousing of the creativity and active participation of the masses of the people is both a central end and a central means of a unified approach to development.

10/ Joost B. W. Kuitenbrouwer, Towards Self-reliant Integrated Urban-rural Development (The I.C.B.W. Regional Conference for Asia and Western Pacific, Hong Kong, September 1975). This approach to the unified approach is also presented in some detail in Kuitenbrouwer, Premises and Implications of a Unified Approach to Development Analysis and Planning (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 1975), a text originally prepared for the project after dispersal of the initial team.
The aim must be a "new man in a new society", with egalitarian values, frugal consumption aspirations, and cooperative social relationships very different from the present. Policies and mechanisms for production, distribution, and the provision of social services, in particular education, must be shaped so as to contribute to this central aim.

In the version that entered into the unified approach project this position, in spite of its radical challenge to more accommodative approaches, retained an ambiguity that was practically a condition for its entering at all. According to its premises, existing governments and the world system of states reflect relationships of domination and exploitation. For authentic development, the liberation of popular creativity must sweep away these relationships. Yet it suggests that "countries" represented by their governments can "choose" to do this and that the offering to them of detailed advice on how to do this is a legitimate activity. The nature of the catalytic force enabling the masses to change from objects of exploitation, cowed by repression and blinded by the lures of the consumer society, into creative participants in control of their own destiny remains obscure.

This ambiguity, however, which persists in later versions of "another development", did not stem simply from the effort to adapt a revolutionary position to the project's inescapable task of "advice to governments". It corresponded to an ambiguity in the self-perceived role of the state in Third World countries that was to become increasingly evident during the 1970's. Some national political leaderships and some groups within national public administrations and even planning agencies did identify themselves with a Neo-Marxist, participationist, self-reliant approach or parts of it. The countries in which such an approach exerted an appreciable influence within the state were generally outside the sphere of domination of any one central power; their domestic interest-groups identified with
marked-oriented economic growth were incipient or weak; and
the political leadership and the bureaucracy thus had an apparently
wide range of autonomy in choosing a style of development.
Under such conditions, however, their capacity to inspire a
predominantly rural population to become creative participants
could be expected to be minimal and voluntaristic mobilization
could easily slip into bureaucratic compulsion.

(h) Ecodevelopment.

This approach centred attention on the objectives of bringing
production, consumption and human settlement patterns into harmony
with the carrying capacity of the earth and of reconciling this with
an equitable distribution of resources among the world's peoples,
implicating a drastic lowering of the consumption levels of the
richer countries.

The initiation of the unified approach project coincided
with the posing by the Meadows Report to the Club of Rome of the
problem of "limits to growth" and with the rapid intensification
of international concern over the environmental disbenefits of
technological innovations in production and of artificially
stimulated consumption. The project initially tried to pay its
respects to these concerns without admitting them to a central
position. Thus, the consensus set forth in the Preliminary Report
included "protection of the human environment" among its areas
of policy choice, but discussed it rather perfunctorily
and mainly in terms of trade-offs. The Preliminary Report
included a qualified affirmation of the necessity and feasibility
of production increases; such affirmations were becoming obligatory
disclaimers, in texts that mentioned the disbenefits
of economic growth, of affinity with "zero growth" positions
that would congeal the advantages of the rich countries and the
poverty of the rest of the world:

"It is premature to go to the other extreme of advocacy
of zero growth rates. Levels of production in most of the world
are much
are much too low to be reconcilable with any acceptable style of societal development, and production objectives will unavoidably preoccupy many national societies for the foreseeable future. Acceptable and viable styles of development demand of these societies that they should direct their production much more systematically to basic human needs, and that they should seek productive techniques that minimize environmental degradation and waste of natural resources, and maximize creative involvement of their human potential. ... In the longer term, the poorer national societies should raise their per capita production by several fold. ... However, raising them by the multiple required to 'close the gap' with the present high-income societies is not necessarily relevant to the achievement of acceptable styles of development..."

In the later stages of the project theories of "ecodevelopment were considered more positively for introduction as a "missing ingredient". Such theories, identified in particular with the work of Ignacy Sachs at the Centre International de Recherche sur l'Environnement et le Développement in Paris, emphasized planning for the management of the natural and social resources of specific "eco-regions", seeking technologies, settlement patterns, systems of production and distribution adapted to each "eco-region" and substituting as far as possible the use and husbanding of local renewable resources for non-renewable resources. Such a localized approach to development, implying the building up of self-contained systems capable of renewing themselves and gradually enhancing the welfare of the local population, presented interesting possibilities for cross-fertilization with several of the other approaches described above - capacitation, informational enlightenment, participationist and self-reliant development - and also a challenge to the universalist bias of the project's terms of reference. Unfortunately, by the time ecodevelopment was presented...
was presented to the project as a distinct alternative the opportunity for team discussion had passed.11/

(i) Political and social structural analysis.

The preceding pages have indicated the author's preference for an approach different from any of the above: that of trying to identify and explain political and social factors that condition the character and limits of public intervention in societal change, the circumstances under which development policies approximating to the minimum criterion of acceptability and viability might emerge, and the identity of potential social agents for interventions furthering such "unified approaches". Such an approach rejects the eclectic supposition that national societies can pick and choose among "lessons" from abroad and put the fragments together as they please, as well as the supposition that there is only One Right Way to develop which national societies must find and adopt under penalty of catastrophe. It starts from the premise that each national society faces a certain limited range of choices, depending on its historically conditioned political, social, and economic structures, its productive capacity, its natural and human resources, its dominant values, and its place in the international order. These imply differing advantages, degrees of equity or inequity, costs and dangers. Certain choices are either permanently outside its reach or feasible only through a revolutionary transformation that cannot be deliberately willed by a regime shaped by existing values and power relationships.

The organizers of the "unified approach" project incorporated political and social structural analysis from the beginning as a

/corrective to
corrective to the normative, technical and institutional approaches whose integration they envisaged. The proponents of the latter approaches could not help being aware of the political and social stumbling blocks, which most of them had encountered directly, as development planners and consultants. However, they naturally wanted not a panoramic view of all the stumbling blocks in the way of their vision of the Good Society but ideas on how to remove them so that their preferred strategies could advance.

The approach of political and social structural analysis was open to the criticism that it led to the demoralizing conclusion that "nothing could be done". While the version that entered into the project affirmed that many things could and should be done by many kinds of social agents, it remained frankly skeptical about the unified approach conceived as a set of universally applicable prescriptions -whether prescriptions for the allocation of resources, for techniques of diagnosis and planning, or for transformation of societal structures and values. Human institutions, from the international order to the local group, were engaged in games so complex and for such varied prizes that attempts to make sense of them and influence them in the name of development called for an exceptional combination of audacity and humility. The unified approach project might contribute something along these lines if it remained iconoclastic, aware of the ritualistic side of the activity in which it was engaged, and the ambivalences in all human endeavours. It could not take for granted either that national societies were potentially perfectable, once their shortcomings were diagnosed correctly, nor that their irrationalities and inequities called for root-and-branch destruction and transformation.

The team phase of the project was too short for the tension between this approach and others to realize its creative potential, but the project inspired the remaining chapters of the present volume. /Several alternative
Several alternative criteria for classifying "approaches" bring out other tensions and ambiguities in the quest for unified development prescriptions. In terms of polar positions one can distinguish:

**Technocratic vs. participationist approaches.** The former supposes that properly qualified specialists can find the one correct or optimal solution to each problem, adding up to the optimal style of development. Development policy can be unified to the extent that such specialists can seek and apply the solutions without compromises to meet incompatible demands and resistances. Ideally, then, "participation" should mean indoctrination in the nature of the optimal solutions and corresponding behaviour. The latter supposes either that the optimal solution can emerge only from the creativity of the people, in control of its own destiny, or that there is no one optimal solution but that various satisfactory solutions can emerge from democratic political competition. Technocratic imposition, or reliance on policies that do not require popular understanding, is inherently sterile.

**Centrality of economic or sociological laws vs. human-welfare-oriented voluntarism.** The laws looked to by the former approach might be those of the market, or of the psychological conditions for planned modification of human behaviour, or of the socio-economic conditions for transition to socialism. The supposition is that unified development depends on correct understanding of the laws and some combination of submission to and manipulation of the preconditions they impose. The latter position denies either the bindingness of the laws or the possibility of their infallible interpretation. Social agents should therefore guide their efforts primarily by their values. The extent to which these values can be realized and human welfare enhanced will be revealed only in the course of struggle and innovation. While the former of these positions seems to have more affinity with the technocratic approach and the latter with the participationist, either can co-exist with a predominantly technocratic or participationist outlook.

/Reliance on
Reliance on theoretical or methodological frames of reference vs. pragmatic acceptance of whatever works. This contrast resembles the preceding, but with both polar positions more modest. The frame of reference does not pretend to explain the laws of development or societal change, but those of planning under specified conditions and with specified tools. The pragmatism applies itself to the amplification and adaptation of social and economic techniques that seem to have proved their usefulness, without aspiring to a voluntarist "big push" toward the Good Society.

Universalist vs. particularist approaches. The former position supposes that development must mean approximately the same thing for all national societies, whatever that meaning may be: all societies must become predominantly industrialized, urban and market-oriented; or all societies must become democratically egalitarian; or all societies must become collectivist and frugal in their life styles and use of resources. Universalism often combines with catastrophist all-or-nothing positions: unless mankind as a whole rapidly achieves certain objectives of productive capacity, technological restraint, social justice, disarmament, freedom, consumption austerity, or population limitation, mankind as a whole, or the "world", or "civilization" is doomed. The universalist approaches also sometimes carry the connotation that "development" should mean a transition from a static "bad" situation to a static "good" situation; once mankind as a whole has overcome poverty, injustice, violence and waste it had better remain in harmony or balance with its environment.

The variants of the particularist position suppose that national societies, or whatever forms of social organization replace them, will continue to develop along many different lines, some more "acceptable" for their values and some more "viable" for their internal coherence and efficiency than others. None of them is likely to reach a harmonious and static perfection, and some of them can be expected to degenerate or even perish, because
of their mistakes or because of an insuperable combination of disadvantages. There may or may not be an objectively definable optimal style of development for each society but, except in terms too general to be useful, there can be no universally optimal style. This inevitable diversity has its dangers, particularly of conflicts between national societies and exploitation of the weak by the strong, but also its advantages; the homogenization of mankind is neither possible nor desirable; the wider the range of styles of development, the greater the likelihood that a positive cross-fertilization will take place in the future. The particularist as well as the universalist position can, of course, combine with a technocratic or a participationist bias, with a belief in iron laws of development or in voluntarism.
4. The changing international market for propositions on development during and since the unified approach project.

The unified approach project, it has already been stated, was one manifestation, and a relatively modest one, of the divergence in interpretations of development and the multiplication of attributes of development that had gained momentum during the 1960's and that was to become more pronounced and complex at the beginning of the 1970's. "Development" must stand for something worth striving for, and the idea of increasing productive capacity, particularly industrial capacity, through capital accumulation, investment and technological innovation was still at the core of this something at the beginning of the 1970's. Experience was making it harder to believe, however, that growth in production by itself, whether guided by the market or by central planning, would bring about equitably distributed gains in human welfare, or that sufficient growth to permit accomplishment of this end was within the reach of the poorer countries without major changes in their internal policies and their place in the world system. Advocates of a very wide range of objectives and policies were arguing that their concerns constituted essential attributes of authentic development, and also that achievement of the other objectives of development required priority to their concerns. The "unified approach" project was expected to find out how to unify what was unifiable in these different positions from the standpoint of one of them: the composite of human welfare objectives and social sectoral programmes that had come to be labelled "social development." Before it could accomplish this, however, the range of positions to be unified had widened considerably.

Later chapters in this volume (in particular III and VII) will discuss the continuing aggregation of objectives for development and
prescriptions for development in the face of widening consciousness of crisis and disillusionment with all prescriptions. For the present, it will be enough to summarize certain features of the changing international market for propositions on development inside and outside the intergovernmental organizations.

Within the latter the main framework for debate was the Second Development Decade, to be governed by an International Development Strategy approved by the United Nations General Assembly in October 1970. The Strategy provided for procedures of periodic "review and appraisal" of progress by the various United Nations organs, and these generated a formidable volume of reports. As long as the Strategy seemed to have some potential relevance to government policies the proponents of different approaches and priorities presented their proposals as amplifications of points in the Strategy, or changes of emphasis, or means of implementing the Strategy. One justification for the initiation of the "unified approach" project had been the enrichment of the Strategy's social content.

The Strategy juxtaposed two main kinds of propositions, the former clinging to the expectations of the first Development Decade, the latter responding to the criticisms of its exclusive focus on economic growth:

1. On international economic relations and on the duty of the richer countries to aid the development of the rest of the world through allocation of a minimum percentage of their national income and through fairer trade policies. The Strategy presented propositions of this kind in considerable detail but in compromise formulations that emerged from bargaining between representatives of governments that wanted binding commitments and representatives of governments that wanted to ward off such commitments without a flat rejection. As the decade progressed the struggle for and against commitments was
repeated in forum after forum. By 1974, the compromises reached in the Strategy were obviously inoperative and the Third World governments turned their attention to a Declaration and "Programme of Action" toward a New International Economic Order, for which most of the First World governments, now constituting a small minority in the United Nations, disclaimed any concrete responsibility. The debates over international economic relations fall outside the scope of the present chapter, but it deserves emphasis that for the representatives of the majority of Third World governments these remained central and the hope of obtaining firm commitments remained alive; many of these representatives looked on the questions to be discussed below either as harmless expressions of good intentions or as dangerous distractions from their central demands. These representatives also continued to assume that development could mean for their countries what it had meant for the countries now industrialized, and that international interdependence through trade and financial flows could persist indefinitely, reformed but not transformed.

ii. On the content of development at the national level. The Strategy's criteria for a unified approach have already been quoted. The Strategy also listed social sectoral objectives in some detail, but mainly with rather vague goals in terms of improvement, contrasting with the concreteness of certain economic objectives. During the 1970's some regional United Nations organs, in particular the Economic Commission for Latin America, approved more elaborate and somewhat more radical formulas on the content of development through their appraisals of progress under the Strategy. Non-governmental institutions and meetings went farther toward the construction of utopias, without finding an alternative to the "aggregation of objectives." The most ambitious of these attempts was the proposal of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation for "another development", published in 1975.
The most striking feature of the international treatment of development during the 1970's, however, was the successive bringing into the foreground of a series of "major problems" treated with what became a stereotyped ritual.

Population, the human environment, the status of women, habitat, employment and hunger were taken up in this way. In each case the problem was real enough and had long been the overriding concern of some institutions and sectors of opinion, mainly in the First World countries. Their persistence and usually some evident intensification of the problem brought it into the forefront of attention.

The United Nations General Assembly might then proclaim an International Year to recognize the importance of the problem. A world conference would be convened, preceded by regional conferences and meetings of "experts" on the relation of the problem to other problems; the World Conference would approve a Plan of Action, and more regional conferences and specialized meetings would be convened to discuss application of the Plan of Action (generally little more than another aggregation of objectives). A temporary or permanent international secretariat would come into being and a fund to finance practical measures to deal with the problem would be set up.

Recognition of the problem would go through several phases. Simple cause-and-effect interpretations of the problem and direct remedies would be intensively publicized and then subjected to criticism from many directions. Representatives of the Third World would indicate their suspicions of the origins of initial interpretations of the problem and their disposition to recognize the need for action only to the extent that this would not divert attention from development and from the duty of the rich countries to help their development. In any case, it could be demonstrated that the problem was complexly related to
related to all other major problems; it could be solved only in the context of development. Thus, all roads led back to the unified approach.

But who was to do the unifying? Conceivably, any of the major problems might provide the starting point toward a comprehensive conception and strategy of development, around which the other problems and desiderata might be grouped, but they could not all occupy the center at once. The gap between the capacity of governments and other human institutions in the real world to diagnose, choose and set priorities, and the demand that they advance toward multiple objectives in a unified way was wide enough already, and each "major problem" threatened to widen it further. At the same time, it could be argued that, overwhelmed as they were, governments would not act on the major problems unless these were brought to their attention insistently, backed by organized popular pressures and warnings as to the indispensability of quick solutions to ward off catastrophe.

Meanwhile, outside the international bureaucratic and academic circles of obligatory faith in the benevolence and rationality of governments and their capacity to act on major problems once convinced of their importance, several kinds of challenge to the whole structure of international development strategies, new international economic orders, plans of action, and prescriptions for "another development" became more insistent. Each of these challenges included variants ranging from wholesale negation to qualified criticisms of the conventional wisdom:

1. "Development" was reduced to the status of a mobilizing myth, most eloquently by Celso Furtado: "Myths function as lamps that illuminate the field of perception of the social scientist, allowing him to have a clear vision of certain problems and to see nothing of others at
others at the same time as they give him spiritual tranquility, since the value judgements that he makes appear to his spirit as a reflection of objective reality.

"Today we know irrefutably that the economies of the periphery will never be developed in the sense of becoming similar to the economies that form the present centre of the capitalist system. But how can one deny that this idea has been very useful, to mobilize the peoples of the periphery and induce them to accept enormous sacrifices, to legitimate the destruction of archaic forms of culture, to explain and make them understand the necessity of destroying their physical environment, to justify forms of dependency that reinforce the predatory character of the productive system."

"It can thus be affirmed that the idea of economic development is a simple myth. Thanks to this it has been possible to divert attention from the basic tasks of identifying the fundamental needs of the collectivity and the possibilities that the progress of science opens to humanity, so as to concentrate attention on abstract objectives such as investment, exports and growth." 12/

ii. Faith in the market as arbiter of developmental choices, in the inexhaustibility of natural resources, and in the ability of human ingenuity, spurred by market incentives, to solve problems as they arose, persisted and became more aggressive during the 1970's as the shortcomings of governmental and intergovernmental interventionism became more glaring. According to the proponents of variants of this position, from Daniel Moynihan to Herman Kahn and Milton Friedman, the main danger for the human future lay in the zeal to bind it by regulations and the main stumbling block in the way of the

development of poor countries lay in their hankering after welfare
state policies and socialist planning. The dominant forces in
a good many Third World countries had clung to such views even during
the years of rising prestige for planning and "social development"
measures. During the 1970's their influence on government policies
became more open and even doctrinaire, particularly in certain "semi-
developed" countries of Latin America and Southeast Asia. While the
governments of these countries participated in Third World solidarity
in demands for changes in international economic relations, that is,
for better access to markets and credits, they remained aloof from the
accompanying formulas on socially-oriented or unified development, and
actively opposed some of the more specific commitments for action on
"major problems".

iii. Two kinds of challenges emerged from alarm over the prospects
for resource exhaustion, environmental contamination, potential destruc-
tiveness of new technologies, and over-population. The more direct
challenge denied the possibility or desirability of anything identifiable
with previous conceptions of development. Some variants of this
position derived from it conclusions on the duty of the rich national
societies to limit their consumption and assist the poorer countries
in an equitable transition to "zero population growth" and "zero
economic growth", thus approximating to one of the approaches to a
unified approach described above. Other variants concluded that the
rich societies should set their own houses in order and help other
societies only to the latter showed promise of viability. Still others
concluded that the momentum of current trends and the limited capacity
for foresight and rational action made the avoidance of catastrophe
unlikely either for humanity as a whole or for the better-off societies.
Small groups and families might be able to shield themselves by

/preparing in
preparing in advance for austere and self-reliant life styles and by withdrawing from the urban-industrial centres where catastrophe would be most sweeping. In the international discussions of development and of such "major problems" as population, environment, and food supply the variants of this challenge figured prominently as heresies to be renounced.

Variants on the other challenge emerging from this diagnosis admitted the possibility of solutions to the resource, environmental and population problems, but insisted that these solutions would have to be comprehensive and "counter-intuitive". Piecemeal "practical" responses to problems as they arose would only make matters worse through their impact on other systemically related areas. One variant then questioned the capacity of human institutions to devise and manage such comprehensive solutions; social and political limits would cripple development before the environmental and resource limits were reached. Another variant reasoned that solutions guaranteeing human survival would require a high degree of regimentation and suppression of dissent; under these conditions the values of human welfare, equity and creativity along with freedom would go by the board.

iv. Diagnoses of the inherently exploitative character of the international capitalist order and of the structures of class and power in national states led to many variants of the conclusion that both must be destroyed as a precondition for authentic development or acceptable human social relationships. These positions, through their links with the dominant forces in certain Third World countries, with organized terrorist movements, and with international political struggles, on the one hand, and with participationist and "another development" visions, on the other, had complex and ambiguous relationships to the international discussions of prescriptions for development,
as was suggested in relation to one of the approaches to a unified approach, but logically negated their relevance. The dominant forces in the central countries could not be committed to end their exploitation of the rest of the world, even if the governments they controlled entered into agreements to do so. The most that could be expected was an unacceptable "renegotiation of the terms of dependence", benefitting only the exploiting minorities in the dependent countries.

The only solution for the latter, once their own people gained control of them, would be to cut all economic and political ties and accept the consequences in austerity and in liquidation of the minorities identified, through their economic roles and their consumption patterns, with the previous ties of dependency. Relations could then be reopened selectively, and mainly with national societies having similar genuinely revolutionary regimes. More qualified proposals for "delinking" gained wider influence and also challenged the suppositions on the benefits or possibility of intensified international interdependence on fairer terms that continued to dominate the proposals for a New International Economic Order.

The same revolutionary positions denied that existing national governments, whatever the intentions of individuals within them, had any ability to achieve authentic development. Even those labelling themselves "socialist" were really "bureaucratic capitalist". The weakness of their political leaders and bureaucracies in the face of the international order and the transnational enterprises; their inability to identify themselves with the people; and their consumerist aspirations ruled them out. A profound and creatively destructive uprising of the masses was called for; and the will of these masses rather than international prescriptions would govern the longer-term future.
5. The place of the unified approach project in the international rethinking of development

The term "unified approach to development" has retained a certain currency in international circles during the 1970's, and a good many of the ideas put forward under this label in meetings or by development advisers can be traced to the project here discussed. Variants of these ideas, however, would have circulated in any case. The main feature that distinguished the partial consensus reached in the project has barely received a hearing in the rising chorus of voices proposing or demanding universally applicable solutions to the problem of development.

The Preliminary Report, as has already been stated, did not pretend to offer either an original theory of development or a comprehensive set of practical prescriptions. Despite some internal inconsistencies, it tried to propose a flexible way of thinking about development, of confronting its minimum criterion of acceptability and viability with national situations and an international order in which nothing could be taken for granted, in which planning and formulation of norms tended to become ritual activities compensating for inability to influence real trends within the constraints under which social agents, inside and outside national governments, acted. A study under intergovernmental auspices could not honestly do much more than say: if your society has such-and-such characteristics and the institutions or groups you represent want to achieve such-and-such objectives, you should take into account certain factors, and you may find certain methods more helpful than others. These bare bones of a proposition, of course, might be given life through intensive studies of national experiences, but the limited material ability of the project to do this had been exhausted at an early stage.

/ The Commission
The Commission for Social Development and the Economic and Social Council, to which the Preliminary Report was presented, naturally wanted more than this, and requested that a final report "be prepared in such a way as to be of the greatest possible practical use to planners, decision-makers, and administrators". Since the project team had already dispersed and its budget was exhausted, preparation of a final report on the scale originally envisaged was no longer practicable. UNRISD responded to the request with a brief "final report" submitted to the 1975 session of the Commission for Social Development. This report spelled out in more detail some of the proposals on development analysis and planning contained in the Preliminary Report and introduced the idea of "capacitation", but also reiterated that: "It is a conclusion of the study that action for unified development should depend on diagnosis of particular circumstances. Practicality, therefore, must lie largely in general principles of approach and suggestions of ways of going about reaching concrete solutions, rather than in a universal action model of unified development presumed suitable for all types of developing countries. Even so, suggestions in a report of this kind on such a vast subject must be put forward with considerable modesty." 13/

The United Nations policy-making bodies did not allow this answer to be final. They next requested the Secretary-General to "prepare a report on the application by Governments of a unified approach to development analysis and planning," and also to prepare proposals for "pilot projects" demonstrating the practical application of a unified approach.

These requests, in fact, juxtaposed two very different visions of the unified approach that were advanced by representatives of different governments. The first derived from the thesis that "far-reaching structural changes" within national societies were the essential precondition for a unified approach. Certain governments felt they possessed the correct specifications for such changes; while they could not expect to obtain inter-governmental consensus on them, they could use the unified approach to keep them in the forefront of attention and demonstrate their own achievements.

The second derived from the conception of the unified approach as mainly a question of integrating social programmes, and also from a supposition going back to the beginning of United Nations social activities that the concentration of advanced methods and integrated services on a local population would provide lessons and achievements that could then be duplicated on a national scale. Although this expectation had rarely if ever been gratified, the perpetuation of small-scale social technical assistance projects, the obvious virtues of integration of services, and the political and informational bureaucratic difficulties in the way of such integration at the national level had continually revived it. The unified approach project had harboured hopes of this kind, particularly in relation to the importance of localized information, but its main emphasis had been on the national level. A unified approach focussing on pilot projects might be expected to appeal to governments that had no intention of sponsoring far-reaching structural changes and preferred to direct attention to the potential of modest but better-administered incremental changes.

In practice, the appeal proved limited to a few aid-providing countries.

Since the Secretariat was not in a position to decide which governments, if any, were applying a unified approach, however defined,
or to evaluate their efforts, it fell back on its traditional method of dealing with controversial mandates. It circulated a questionnaire to governments, as it had also done recently in response to another resolution requesting information on the introduction of far-reaching social and economic changes. It sorted out the twenty countries that responded into "countries with centrally planned economies", "countries with developed market economies" and countries with developing market economies", and summarized the information they provided, mainly on their planning systems, concluding that "while many countries have introduced an integrated or unified approach to development planning, clearly there is no unique approach that can be considered applicable to all countries." Some members of the bodies to which this report was presented expressed disappointment at the inconclusiveness of this conclusion, but in view of the small number of governments that had trouble to reply to the questionnaire, it was evident that this method of pursuing the unified approach could not yield much more.

The Secretariat also prepared proposals for pilot projects, but in spite of their cautious formulation these encountered resistance in the Economic and Social Council: "Several representatives expressed the view that the projects on the unified approach must take fully into consideration the imperatives of the sovereignty of Member States. They emphasized that full account must first be taken of the development goals set by each country for itself. Since each country has its own conception of the appropriate economic, social and political systems, development plans and policy measures adopted by Governments could be formulated and implemented only in the context of the actual conditions prevailing in individual countries. A project on integrated

development planning should therefore neither seek a universal
applicability of its findings nor be used to monitor and pass judge-
ment, based on a single set of criteria, on the development objectives
and performance of developing countries." 15/

ECOSOC requested reformulation of the proposals, but by this
time the unified approach as a distinct line of inquiry seemed to
have reached an impasse; moreover, its consideration in the UN policy-
making bodies was being submerged in that of several other kinds of
normative approach of considerably more interest to most governments:
first, the reformulations of international development policy, in
particular the Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New
International Economic Order, the Charter of Economic Rights and
Duties of States, and the 1975 General Assembly Resolution on "Develop-
ment and International economic co-operation"; second, the various
crusades for attention to "major problems"; and third, the proposals
emanating from the International Labour Organization and the World
Bank for development policies focussed on satisfaction of basic needs
or elimination of critical poverty. These last approaches were some-
times identified with the unified approach.

The reformulated project proposals of the Secretariat were
limited to studies of changing priorities revealed by the national
plans of developing countries, studies of national experiences in
the implementation of plans, and training for officials of developing
countries on the "main aspects of integrated development planning".
The skeptical and radically revisionist attitude toward plans and
planning that had been prominent in the unified approach project
seemed to have faded away. 16/

15/ Projects on the Practical application of a Unified Approach to
Development Analysis and Planning, Report of the Secretary-General
(E/5974, 4 May 1977).

16/ The 5-page report cited in the preceding footnote seems to be the
most recent manifestation of the unified approach as a separate
topic in UN deliberations.
The unified approach project exerted some influence in the regional commissions of the United Nations and was influenced by currents of thinking already present in them, but the elements interchanged differed, in part because of the nature of the contacts between the project and the commissions, in part because of the differing national situations and policy preoccupations faced by the commissions. The project’s studies of national experiences had already suggested the latter differences.

In Latin America, a region that was beginning to be labelled "semi-developed", questions of viable choices between styles of development and the relation of such choices to ideologies and to the distribution of political power were in the forefront of attention. Did the capitalist "development" or modernization of peripheral countries such as those of Latin America unavoidably generate increasing dependence on the world centres, increasing inequalities in the distribution of consumption and wealth, increasing insecurity and relative if not absolute poverty for large parts of the population, and increasing repression of protests? How could the evident gains in productive capacity, economic and social infrastructure, qualifications of the labour force, and governmental administrative resources be converted into gains in human welfare and who would be the social agents of such a conversion? The experience of different countries of the region suggested that policies concentrated on rapid economic growth through governmental stimulation of market forces, or on structural transformation and social equality, could be successful on their own terms, at differing high costs, and if backed by sufficient power, but that the prospects for policies trying to reconcile multiple objectives of growth and welfare under conditions of open political competition were rather poor. Styles of development meeting the minimum
criterion of the unified approach seemed to call for a transformation of values and expectations as well as power structures, but the circumstances of semi-development, in particular the consumption aspirations of the "modern" sectors of the population, made the way to such a transformation hard to envisage.

The Economic Commission for Latin America had posed problems of this kind in several studies, and contributed to the project the approach labelled above "political and social structural analysis". The ideas generated in the project in turn influenced further studies and polemics in the ECLA Secretariat on styles of development.

Moreover, the ideas entered into a series of normative declarations approved by the ECLA member governments at its 1973, 1975 and 1977 sessions, within the context of their periodic appraisals of progress under the Second Development Decade. The propositions on "integrated development" in these declarations, while actively supported by a minority of governments, show a surprising degree of acquiescence by the majority in what amounted to a condemnation of what was visibly happening in the name of development and an affirmation that "the objective of development in Latin America must be the creation

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18/ See, in particular, the papers by Raul Prebisch, Anibal Pinto, Jorge Graciarena and Marshall Wolfe in CEPAL Review, 1, First Semester 1976.

of a new society and a new type of man". The 1975 Declaration placed this aspiration in a more sober perspective: "In spite of the professed aims and of the greater material capacity to eliminate poverty which ought to be implicit in the favourable economic growth rates of several countries, it is ... not surprising that the rate of progress toward the attainment of social development goals is extremely slow. It is now more important than ever that the governments of Latin America should not -- either through excessive optimism regarding the spontaneous results of accelerated economic growth or through pessimism regarding the possibility of looking into the future and influencing the processes of social change in such a complex and changing situation -- lose sight of the fact that, in order to achieve equitable and integrated development, greater efforts are needed together with a thorough, realistic knowledge and appreciation of what is happening."

Finally, an exhaustive study of development theories and their application in Latin America carried out by the Planning Institute associated with ECLA dismissed the unified approach and the inter-governmental normative declarations associated with it in terms that have already been mentioned:

"The unified approach is not only the clear expression of a technocratic utopia but also, in spite of its name, it is a utopia made by aggregation of objectives, whose validity by themselves hardly anyone can deny, accompanied by continual reserves to the effect that the particular situation can legitimate their not being achieved and even their being set aside for an indeterminate and interminable future. A unified approach to development worthy of the name supposes a unified social science, which does not exist at present and which could only be constructed on certain philosophical postulates, derived from a general theory, which in turn could not count on general support for
support for a long time to come. At the same time, an international declaration of objectives can be possible only through evading philosophical-political differences, so that the only possible base of a unified approach, a common philosophy, is ruled out from the beginning. When such a declaration purports to be a unified approach, the only way to do it that is apparently legitimate is through the aggregation of objectives. 20/

In the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) the reception of the unified approach was at first conditioned by the relatively complex social services and planning-administrative machinery of the larger countries and by periodic meetings of an ESCAP committee on social development. The unified approach was seen mainly as a new attempt to tackle the previous concerns of the committee: better integration of government social and economic programmes, higher priority to the "social", and more adequate statistical indicators for the social objectives of development. However, the increasingly ominous incapacity of urban-industrially biased economic growth and social programmes to cope with mass poverty in mainly rural populations together with the presence of China as a demonstration of the possibility of a radically different style, brought about an openness, in ESCAP papers and in advisory missions, to the participatist self-reliant approach described above, in a variant deriving directly from the later stages of the unified approach project. 21/


21/ See Joost B.W. Kuitenbrouwer, op. cit., and also reports of advisory missions to the Philippines, Pakistan and Papua-New Guinea.
In Africa, the unified approach entered into discussion mainly through a joint Economic Commission for Africa / UNRIISD study presented to the Sixth Session of the Conference of African Planners in October 1976, 22/ and through visits of ECA/UNRIISD teams to seven African countries. The study analyzed all available African development plans currently in force in order to "determine the degree to which the plan documents represent a systematic attempt to deal with the problem of uneven development, insofar as this could be ascertained from the range and specification of plan objectives, from the type of planning information and procedures used, and from planned policies and projects relating to the provision of essential services, the composition of production, research and technology, institutional change, and external economic relations". 23/ The visits to countries similarly concentrated on planning objectives and techniques. The study and visits found, not unexpectedly, a certain correspondence between the objectives stated in the preambles to plans and the human-welfare-oriented terms of reference of the unified approach project, but also very nebulous relationships between these objectives and the projects and techniques contained in the body of the plans. "Several reasons were given to explain these divergences --lack of manpower and finance, inadequate political commitment, unavailability of relevant data, deliberate distortions by executing agencies. Another argument sometimes given was that projects on behalf of the 'little man' are extremely difficult to organize and manage, while big projects involving intensive capital investment can be set up and run much more effectively." 24/

24/ Ibid., p. 5.
The African study thus started by accepting the plans as valid expressions of national policy and the planners as key social agents, and by pointing to gaps and shortcomings tried to suggest modest and incremental improvements rather than radically different styles and strategies. How could planners make better diagnoses, and influence policy more effectively toward human welfare objectives under conditions of rudimentary information, political instability, and very limited resources susceptible to allocation by the state? At the same time, the United Nations African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) was diagnosing the existing styles of development of the African countries as neither acceptable nor viable and proposing variants of the self-reliant participationist approach; however, the contacts between this line of thinking within Africa and the unified approach project were slight.

The terms of reference of the unified approach project had focussed on the needs of the "developing" or "poor" countries. Its potential relevance to the countries that defined themselves as "developed" was never clearly specified. According to some of the approaches that entered into the project these countries figured mainly as sources of aid and of useful lessons for the "developing" countries; since they were "developed" it could be assumed that they already had a unified approach or did not need one. According to other approaches to a unified approach, the "developed" countries were part of the problem, not part of the solution. Their people needed transformations in their style of development just as much as did the rest of the world, and might find such transformations even harder to achieve, in view of their material and psychological investments in existing patterns of production and consumption. The people of the rest of the world needed to free themselves from their economic, political, and cultural domination, and from the disastrous example...
of their patterns of artificially stimulated consumption, technological recklessness, and environmental devastation.

The contacts of the project with the Economic Commission for Europe, however, hardly touched on such questions. The facet of the unified approach of most interest here was that of informational enlightenment: the devising of development indicators and "social accounting" to supplement the partially discredited GNP and national accounts, in national situations in which statistics were abundant, relatively reliable, and capable of providing answers to new questions presumably including the question of the relation between economic growth and human welfare.
The dilemmas of international policy-oriented research and lessons for the future

The preceding pages have focussed on a few manifestations of the international aspiration to shape the future through norms and prescriptions that, over the past three decades, has generated hundreds of meetings and hundreds of thousands of pages of documentation. On the margins of the ceaseless activity generated by the cycles of meetings of the international agencies one finds an even more diverse and complex ferment of theorizing, empirical research, polemics, and ideological proselytizing whose practitioners interact with and contribute to the international normative-prescriptive efforts but scorn their ritualism, utopianism, evasiveness and lack of scientific rigour.

If the project did not manage to prescribe a "unified approach to development analysis and planning", and in fact concluded that this, taken literally, was not a meaningful objective, it did make more explicit than heretofore certain dilemmas that any international policy-oriented research project would have to face. It also suggested that such dilemma could not be avoided within the context of such a project. If policy-oriented research were to make any contribution to human welfare it would have recognize a permanent tension and ambiguity in the demands made on it, and maintain a critical attitude toward its own terms of reference and the suppositions underlying them.

A mandate to reconcile the irreconcilable has at least the virtue of reproducing conditions somewhat similar to those of policy making in real national societies. The most likely outcome may be evasion, but this is not the only possible outcome. Presumably such an outcome can be guarded against by bringing contradictions out into the open and incorporating them into the hypotheses of the research; a course that should present fewer drawbacks and dangers for a team pursuing policy questions at the international level.
international level than for advisers to national political regimes.

What are the dilemmas and tensions that international policy-oriented research must learn to live with?

First, there is the tension between the ideal of explicit definition of basic concepts, hypotheses and value premises and the pressures toward a combined eclecticism and consensualism that the heterogeneity of the situations confronted seems to legitimate. It cannot be accidental that the interminable discussions of development have left intact the confusion between development conceived as empirically observable processes of change and growth within social systems and development as progress toward the observer's version of the Good Society. In the first sense development can be evaluated positively or negatively or judged inherently ambiguous in its implications for the human future. In the second sense development is by definition desirable. Nor have the discussions overcome the confusion between development conceived as a process subject to uniform laws and development conceived as a wide range of possible real patterns and possible aspirations. Can the term development in the last analysis be anything more than a symbolic stamp of approval for changes that the user of the term considers unavoidable or desirable?

The unified approach project tried to delimit what was to be approached without a definition, through the legitimation of different styles of development responding to a minimum criterion of acceptability and viability; but this left room for argument that practically any combination of policies that any regime cared to defend would eventually meet the criterion. It would be as easy to defend a strategy of immediate structural transformation, egalitarian distribution, and self-reliance, at the short-term expense of levels of investment, production and consumption, as it would be to defend a strategy of maximization of investment and growth in production, at the short-term expense of highly inequitable distribution, dependence on foreign capital, and repression of protests.
International policy-oriented research will have to continue to struggle to define development along with other concepts more clearly in terms of its own needs, but in full awareness that no definition will satisfy all users or prevent overloading of the term as an expression at the same time of the real and of the desirable.

Second, there is the related tension between the ideal of arriving at a comprehensive and coherent theory explaining the phenomena the research confronts and aspires to change, and the pressures toward incongruous marriages of the pragmatic and the universal. Theories of development and social change have proliferated in recent years, but the explanatory power and prestige of all of them has waned. The unified approach project was able neither to make a reasoned choice among the theories already current nor to construct an original theory. It confronted, in addition to the obvious hindrances of inadequate time and disciplinary and other divergences in the team, an inhibiting prejudice against theorizing in the institutional sponsors of the project. Theoretical argument is divisive; also, according to oft-repeated views in UN policy-making bodies, it is a luxury that cannot be afforded in view of the urgency of the problems demanding solution. Theoretical explanations are already available or can be dispensed with. The recurrent superficiality or evasiveness of the generalizations in UN documents, seeking to stay within the limits of the permissible, confirms this evaluation. The policy-making bodies thus call for the "concrete" and the "practical", but with the proviso, implicit or explicit, that the concrete and practical prescriptions must refrain from judging specific national situations and policies. Thus the compilers of reports must aim at prescriptions that appear concrete but are general enough to be applicable by any government that chooses to listen. The result has been a long series of secretariat responses to demands for "practical" solutions to urgent problems that were forgotten as soon as presented. This was true of the "practical
the "practical application" proposals deriving from the unified approach project. However, as was noted above, the project resisted advancing very far along this path.

The well-worn retort that nothing is more practical than a good theory comes to mind, but does not take one far toward resolution of the tension. Probably international policy-oriented research will continue to be more a consumer than a producer of theories, and will have to open itself to the possible validity, under defined conditions, of a wide range of theoretical challenges to the relevance of the "practical".

Third, there is the tension between the ideal of searching criticism of the conventional wisdom on development and the insertion of the research into a complicated array of institutions and expectations deriving from this wisdom, at a time when the wisdom itself has practically lost whatever coherence it once had. Policy-oriented research is expected to come up with something new and to criticize the old. There would be no occasion for it if its sponsors thought that existing diagnoses and policies were satisfactory. The very urgency with which "practical" prescriptions are demanded indicates a pervasive sentiment of crisis.

Criticism must thus apply itself to a contradictory mixture of conventional suppositions, particularly on the role of the state, of sweeping and apparently radical "new" objectives -popular participation, elimination of poverty, satisfaction of basic needs, etc.- and of terminological innovations giving an air of novelty to policies that have long been current. The "unified approach" itself began mainly as a terminological innovation for a desideratum previously labelled "balanced social and economic development".

The most useful corrective will probably be the cultivation of historical awareness. The history of development as a mobilizing myth is short, but long enough for the observation that those who forget history
forget history are condemned to repeat it to have become very pertinent.

The quest for a unified approach to development in terms of norms and prescriptions has been carried as far as it profitably can be, if not farther. The most hopeful direction for the next stages of policy-oriented research lies at levels between the comprehensive theoretical or ideological explanations for societal change and the local manifestations of change and policies designed to influence change. Comparative studies with a historical perspective focussed on the ways in which different social agents of change perceive their roles and act, and the confrontation between their perceptions and the specific settings on which they are trying to act, are still few. Presumably research in this direction will leave something intact in the aspiration for rationally planned action to bring social change and economic growth into closer correspondence with certain generally accepted values of human welfare, equity, and freedom. In all probability, however, it will leave even more untenable than at present the myth of the state as a rational, coherent, and benevolent entity, capable of choosing and entitled to choose a style of development, so powerful but so unimaginative that it seeks generalized advice and then acts on it.