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 pers-
pective 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 UNRISD 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 populars 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

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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 practitioner continually does this. However, a historical-critical approach to

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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. 1/ 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 manageably 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.

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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 compartmentali-
zation 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 "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 departmentali-
zation". 2/ 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.

2/ Report on the World Social Situation 1961, p. 23.

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 compara-
bility 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, differen-
tially hampered by misinformation, scanty resources, and the short-
comings 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 imper-
fections 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

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

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3/ The Economic Commission for Latin America was probably the first
economically-oriented United Nations body to try to incorporate
(from the early 1950'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 Echavarría, soon escaped from its ancillary role and
led to a quite different kind of development dialogue. See, in
particular, José Medina Echavarría, 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

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,

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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 /and7
by proving evidence of imbalances." (p. 39).

4/ See Introduction to Planning for Balanced Economic and Social
    Development: Six Country Case Studies (United Nations, New York,
    1964).

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

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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".

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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.

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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 geogra-
phical 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 preocupations,
theoretical backgrounds and terminologies.5/ 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 any-
thing 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

5/ The Report of the Meeting of Experts on Social Policy and Planning
     was published in the United Nations Social Development Review, 3,
     1971, pp. 4-14.

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

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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 develop-
ment 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 employ-
ment 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

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 partici-
pation 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 quatations, 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:

i. 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

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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 "develop-
ment" is an inspirational myth, originally justifying the attempted
reproduction throughout the world of certain patterns for the organi-
zation of production characteristic of the recent past of parts of
Europe and North America, then overloaded 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

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

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6/ The International Social Development Review, 3, 1971, contains the
text of these resolutions.

/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

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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

Preceeding 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

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:

/(a) A

(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 res-
ponsibility 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 infor-
mation and ideas in a relatively coherent form. However, the con-
ventions 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 specializa-
tions, 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 back-
ground 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

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

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 univer-
sity 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 gui-
dance. 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. Mean-
while, 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

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 poli-
tical 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 inter-action 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

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 controlable only in small part by technocratic rationality.

/The differing

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 <u>laissez faire</u> or reliance on market forces.

(a) <u>Development economics re-examined and broadened</u>

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 limita-
tions 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 incen-
tives. 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

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

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 justifi-
cations 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

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

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.7/ 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/

7/ 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

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.9/
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

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9/ Albert O. Hirschman, Journeys toward Progress, Development Projects
    Observed, and A Bias for Hope. Warren F. Ilchman and Norman
    Thomas Uphoff, The Political Economy of Change (1969), Michel
    Crozier and Erhard Friedburg, L'acteur et le systeme (1977).

                                        /was that

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

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 fall 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

(f) <u>Institutionalized Marxist socialism and "far-reaching structural change"</u>.

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 "unfied 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

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.S.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 accomodating 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

/market-oriented

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,
implying 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 un-
avoidably 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'Environment 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

<div align="right">/was presented</div>

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

11/ See Ignacy Sachs, "Population, Technology, Natural Resources
and the Environment: Eco-development: a Contribution to the
Definition of Development Styles for Latin America", Economic
Bulletin for Latin America, XVIII, 1 and 2, 1973. This
approach obviously links with the quest for "appropriate
technologies" and similar initiatives that have flourished
during the 1970's.

/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

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

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

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 Develop-
ment 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:

i. 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 interde-
pendence 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 institu-
tions 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 Hammar-
skjöld Foundation for "another development", published in 1975.

/The most

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 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 ? Conseivably, 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 centre at once. The gap between the capacity of govern-
ments 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 con-
ventional wisdom:

i. "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 sacri-
fices, 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 interven-
tionism 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

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12/ Celso Furtado, El Desarrollo Económico: Un Mito (Siglo Veintiuno
    Editores, México, D.F., 1975).

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 des-
tructiveness of new technologies, and over-population. The more direct
challenge denied the possibility or desirability of anything identi-
fiable 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 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 relation-
ships to the international discussions of prescriptions for development,

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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 inter-
dependence 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 weak-
ness 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.

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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 circums-
tances. 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.

13/ Report on a Unified Approach to Development Analysis and Planning
     (E/CN/.5/519, 5 December, 1974).

/These requests

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

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 develop-
ing market economies",(10) 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 ". 14/ 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 troubled 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 develop-
ment goals set by each country for itself. Since each country had
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

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14/ Application by Governments of a Unified Approach to Development
    Analysis and Planning, Report of the Secretary-General,
    (E/CN.540, 22 September 1976).

/development planning

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 coun-
tries such as those of Latin America unavoidably generate increasing
dependence on the world centres, increasing inequalities in the dis-
tribution of consumption and wealth, increasing insecurity and relative
if not absolute poverty for large parts of the population, and in-
creasing 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 struc-
tural 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

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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, 17/ 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. 18/

Moreover, the ideas entered into a series of normative declara-
tions 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. 19/ 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

17/ See, in particular, Raul Prebisch, Towards a Dynamic Development
Policy for Latin America (United Nations, New York, 1963); Trans-
formation and Development: The Great Task of Latin America (Report
presented to the Inter-American Development Bank by Raul Prebisch,
1970); and Social Change and Social Development Policy in Latin
America (United Nations, New York, 1970).

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

19/ Regional Appraisals of the International Development Strategy:
Quito, 1973; Chaguaramas, 1975; Guatemala, 1977.

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 develop-
ment, 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

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support for a long time to come. At the same time, an international
declaration of objectives can be possible only through evading phi-
losophical-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 participationist
self-reliant approach described above, in a variant deriving directly
from the later stages of the unified approach project. [21]

20/ Aldo E. Solari, Rolando Franco, Joel Jutkowitz, _Teoría, Acción
 Social y Desarrollo en América Latina_ (Textos del ILPES, Siglo
 Veintiuno Editores S.A., México, D.F. 1976).

21/ See Joost B.W. Kuitenbrouwer, op.cit, and also reports of
 advisory missions to the Philippines, Pakistan and Papua-New
 Guinea.

/In Africa,

In Africa, the unified approach entered into discussion mainly
through a joint Economic Commission for Africa / UNRISD study presented
to the Sixth Session of the Conference of African Planners in October
1976, 22/ and through visits of ECA/UNRISD 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/

22/ Application of a Unified Approach to Development Analysis and
     Planning under African Conditions (E/CN.14/CAP.6/4).
23/ Report on Recent Progress and Current Status of Work on the Unified
     Approach and Related Projects (UNRISD Internal paper, 1977), page 3.
24/ Ibid., p. 5.

/The African

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 invest-
ments in existing patterns of production and comsumption. The people
of the rest of the world needed to free themselves from their economic,
political, and cultural domination, and from the disastrous example

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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.

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6. 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 dilemmas 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 premisses
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-

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.