

Frameworks for analysing international relations

The project is essentially one of building on existing papers to produce a book which it is hoped will provide the basis for international policies which are more realistic and analyses of world problems which are more professional.

The starting point is that the way in which people perceive problems very much influences how they deal with them.

During the 1950s a three-fold classification of economies came into being - described euphemistically in UN jargon as 'developed market', 'centrally planned' and 'underdeveloped', (later, 'developing'). This classification affected, and still affects, the way policy issues are analysed - e.g. it fitted the perceived need for aid from the 'First World', i.e. the developed market economies, to the 'Third World' of developing economies (now also known as the South). It influenced the way that organs of the UN (committees, expert groups, etc.) were structured. It led to the emergence of research and teaching on 'development' problems which were seen as exclusively Third World problems, and to corresponding compartmentalisation in social science faculties of universities.

The propositions that underly this project are:

I This way of perceiving the world (which had a certain plausibility in the past) has ceased to correspond to reality.

- II It has also ceased to be politically relevant. It encouraged a moralistic approach to policy problems. That is still justified from the point of view of basic ethics but it has little foundation any longer in political reality.^{1/}
- III The associated compartmentalisation in the social sciences is no longer professionally defensible; in fact, it obstructs the transfer of theory and the lessons of experience.
- IV Following Kuhn's dictum that no matter how irrelevant the paradigm currently in vogue, it is not abandoned until a plausible alternative is available, other perceptual frameworks should be explored to see whether it is possible to find one more suitable for analysis and policy, which would meet a felt need.

These four propositions provide a way of organising the study.

- I The differentiation and political realignment within each of the three worlds have blurred the boundaries between them, especially between developed and developing economies. Following a brief empirical section on the rise of the oil exporting countries, (organised in OPEC)

1/ For example, in the 'North' there is no longer a sufficiently influential coalition of political forces (except perhaps in Scandinavia) that is prepared to act upon this perceptual framework - e.g. to favour "massive transfers" of resources to the Third World.

and the newly industrialising countries (NICs), my work on Southern Europe would be drawn on to illustrate the overlap between conventional classes ^{e/} ~~of~~ of nations. (See paper 1 in CV).^{1/}

II It is now time to emphasise common world problems, especially energy and food. Their dimensions can easily be illustrated (e.g. from the work of the Harvard Energy project, Lester Brown, etc.) Attention should also be drawn to national elements in problems which are common (though they may take different forms in different countries), e.g. financing the transfer to non-oil forms of energy, and adapting agricultural systems to reduce reliance on petroleum products (fertilisers, pesticides and gasoline). The old 'Three World' classification still has force in international politics (e.g. in Special Assemblies at the UN). Indeed, it continues to have certain validity which needs to be specified. (There are still 'family resemblances within each class of country). But it gets in the way of perceiving the global problems in a manner likely to lead to constructive policies.

III A less moralistic and more professional way of looking at world problems (which does not necessarily mean a callous one) involves accepting that while social contexts of problems differ greatly there are parts of the social sciences with a certain validity everywhere. (Viz,

1/ The distinction between 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' was one of per capita income, and whereas there used to be a clear gap between even the lowest decile ~~and~~ the former and the highest of the latter, there is now considerable overlap.

there is no basic difference between 'economics' and 'development economics'). This opens the door to asking whether theoretical developments and practical experience, e.g. in rural development, in developing countries may provide lessons of wider interest - most obviously in Southern Europe, but also elsewhere in the developed world. To acknowledge and help eliminate the professional paternalism implicit in the old approach and create a greater symmetry in approach between social scientists in different parts of the world, dropping the implicit 'we are going to teach you how to solve your problems'.

IV Some other criteria for classification will be considered - a country's size (in various senses), national resources, technological capacity, location, etc. These all affect how governments behave, whether they are 'developed' or 'developing', 'market economy' or 'centrally planned'. Common interests are shared by countries which have, for example, an export potential in oil (and the oil exporters in fact straddle the old frontiers - OPEC itself containing members with per capita incomes that put them high in the developed category). While a country's economic system will not become irrelevant, nor even per capita income, its physical characteristics, especially its degree of selfsufficiency in energy and food, are likely to be more important in determining the alignments of international politics. I can draw

here on papers 3,4 and 5 and to a lesser extent some of the others^{1/}, there are, however, as I am well aware, difficulties of reconciling them fully. Hence the need for a period of reflection ~~study~~ reflection.

1/ I also expect to be lecturing on inflation at Notre Dame during the coming academic year. ^{should} provide material that can be integrate

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