

A TYPOLOGY OF  
UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS

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The problem to be attacked in this paper is a very conventional one in the social sciences: what would be a useful typology for description and understanding of the various components in the United Nations system, here simply referred to as "organisations"? Of course, any UN organization is a complex entity. They are difficult to approach empirically if for no other reason because the organization will defend itself against any real empirical investigation by "outsiders", and also difficult to come to grips with because of internal diversity. Organizational reality may differ very much from organizational rhetoric, and that reality may again vary according to level in the hierarchy: the Executive Director may differ from the Board (using these terms as generic terms although they fit some organizations better than others), these two levels of high authority may differ from the professional staff which again may differ from the general staff, and so on. But there is nevertheless something that might be referred to as the "atmosphere" of the organization, to be perceived by an outsider and checked against reports from insiders, in some kind of dialogue that will not stand up to very rigorous demands of social science investigation but nevertheless may be useful.

What, then, should one mean by a fruitful typology, in this case? Nothing particular beyond what is usually meant by a typology: it should be possible to locate the organizations within one and only one type, and its location in that type should say something interesting about the organization. However, something more than this should be required. There should also be a process, the possibility of an organization to move from one type to the other. In principle there should be tra-

jectories. And these trajectories in the typological space should even constitute a typology that also can be used to classify organizations, again with the requirement that such classification should say something interesting about the organization. Obviously these organizations are not static entities, they move in time and any useful typology should be able to describe that movement. But this also points to one basic difficulty: if the types are points on a trajectory then it may very well be that some parts of an organization have moved to the next type in line whereas others lag behind, meaning that the classification in one type only may be hazardous.

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Having been a consultant to eight of the major organizations and some of the smaller ones some experiences have been made that serve as raw material for the construction of a typology. More particularly, it looks as if there are two simple variables of particular significance in understanding the "atmosphere" or ethos of a UN organization, or of very many other organizations for that matter.

First, there is of course the distinction between the politically progressive and the politically non-progressive organization. This has to be given a relatively clear meaning and the simplest definition I can conceive of that seems to be meaningful in this context is as follows: "politically progressive" is an organization that tries to help or promote the interests of the underprivileged through some kind of structural change. Of course, all United Nations Organizations are parts of a grand ameliorative endeavor in favor of the underprivileged, be they individuals, groups

of individuals, countries or groups of countries. But some are more so than others. The crucial point seems here to be to what extent the organization tries to bring about a structural change, the assumption being that a new structure will not produce the same distinction between privileged and under privileged as did the old. Other organizations may be much better known in the public eye as helping people, such as organizations for children or for those struck by disaster, but it is very clear that these are "do-gooders". As such they do not change existing structures, and for that reason the evil they are combating may easily be reproduced, even more so than before because of the expectation that when the situation becomes too disastrous somebody will be there to pick up the bill of caring for the victims.

The opposite of the politically progressive is here referred to as the "politically non-progressive". It will include the politically regressive, the organization that actually works actively to maintain structures that reproduce the gaps between the privileged and the underprivileged. But there are also organizations that are inbetween, that cannot clearly be said to be one or the other. This may actually apply to many and it might be difficult to find any one part of the United Nations system that is clearly regressive, with the exception of the Washington-based organizations, those coming out of the Bretton Woods construction. May be this could be kept in mind when something is classified as "non-progressive": it is not synonymous with regressive or, to use a term that many would think of in that connection, "reactionary".

Second, there is another concern of similar importance but not so much dealing with the impact the organization has on the outside as with the "atmosphere" reigning inside the organization: intellectually flexible versus intellectually rigid. By "intellectually rigid" is meant the tendency of the organization to come up with standardized answers to problems, answers that become increasingly predictable over time; by "intellectually flexible" is meant simply the absence of rigidity. This can be made very clear by trying to indicate under which conditions an organization is one or the other. It should be remembered that these organizations are staffed by professionals, and in principle these professionals come from all over the world; the organizations are universal. The intellectual atmosphere of the organization, thus, depends on the intellectual state-of-affairs of the profession or professions on which the organization is based. And here it is easily seen that there are extreme combinations that would make the organization very rigid or very flexible.

They are the uni-professional organizations, based on a scientific discipline with a very well organized, but also rather closed paradigm, not only requiring of all problems that they should be put on the "normal form" but also being able to do so, to their own satisfaction. Add to this that the professionals may not only be trained in that very same paradigm and for that reason become rather similar, but also be mainly recruited from the same group of countries, and even from the same classes within those countries so that their world outlook in more general terms also is similar. Of course, they may also come from other classes or from other countries, but be trained by the former in a socialization process

so effective that differences in social and global outlook may be washed out. The net result is rigidity.

On the other side would be the multi-professional organization, with no particular profession dominating the other. Then, these professions could be based on disciplines with a much less rigid paradigm, even a paradigm so intellectually sloppy that it imposes very little discipline on the professionals in the sense of a commonly shared way of perceiving problems, as described above. Of course, that does not mean that there is no intellectual discipline, only that it is of a more individual kind, everybody finding his and her own way through the conceptual jungle. And, in addition to this, class and country background may shine through more clearly, precisely because the paradigms are looser; possibly also because professionals from other classes and other countries may be stronger personalities, more able to stand up against the intellectual pressures from the centers of inculcation of professional values and scientific base.

In short, there are five variables underlying the distinction between an intellectually rigid and an intellectually flexible organization: whether the organization is by and large uni- or multi-professional; to what extent that profession is based on one or more scientific disciplines; with a more or less closed paradigm; and the extent to which narrowly based recruitment, socially and globally, conditions the outlook. If these five dimensions are all conceived of as dichotomies then we get 32 types and only the two extremes are clear candidates for the labels "intellectually rigid" versus "intellectually flexible". What about the inbetween types? There has to be a cut

somewhere, and it is difficult if not impossible to make it in an exact way. It has to be based on judgement, and the reasons given for that judgement will always be disputable. But if that dispute is an interesting one about the organization that may not be the worst that could happen - in fact more important than absolute scientific parsimony.

Clearly one would now proceed by combining these two dimensions into a fourfold-table, yielding four types as given in the diagram:

Table 1: A Typology of UN Organization

intellectually flexible	C	D
intellectually rigid	A	B
	politically non-progressive	politically progressive

We could start filling in the table with UN Organizations, but before that something must be said about the possible use of the typology for a more dynamic analysis.

First, there is an obvious question: would one theoretically expect some kind of correlation between the two dimensions? Could it be that in order to be politically progressive the organization would have to be intellectually flexible, or have to be intellectually rigid? My own tentative answer would be no. There may be an empirical correlation caused by all kinds of historical circumstances, but not one which is more deeply rooted in the logic of these two dimensions as such. An organization may be politically progressive precisely because it is intellectually rigid, crystallizes the energy of those who work in and for it, and like a magnetized piece of iron becomes strong because the forces are aligned. But it may also become politically progressive precisely for the opposite reason, because it is so intellectually flexible that it can see the merits of any new situation or new perspective on a situation, capture it and move in a progressive direction unimpeded by judgements sedimented into solid paradigms decades, if not even generations, ago. And the same holds for the politically non-progressive: intellectual rigidity may freeze the activities of the organization perhaps leaving it content with victories obtained in distant periods, just as intellectual flexibility may leave the organization confused and sloppy, unable to do anything useful in any direction, be that progressive or regressive.

Second, if there are trajectories in the system is there any point of departure, or any point of arrival, not to mention any one trajectory that stands out as the more likely one? Again I would tend to keep the system open and not tie it to particular assumptions. Depending on how the outside world, meaning the strong

forces in the outside world tend to conceive of a certain problem there will be standard operating procedures or absence of such, in either case this will be born out of a certain political momentum, like when the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was born out of the Stockholm Conference in 1972, itself an outcome of the ecological movement at that time. Thus the organization is launched in one of the four types, that is the point of departure. How it then moves would be difficult to say, but one could formulate a relatively definite theory as to where the point of arrival would be. There will be pressures inside the organization to make it more professional, meaning a body of people which shared basic use and ways of handling problems, if not uni-professional or uni-disciplinarily at least shaped by the organization in such a way that they become relatively intellectually rigid. A strong Executive Director may impose rules on the staff that would speed up the movement of the organization in that direction. And at the same time there may be pressures on the organization from the outside to make it politically less progressive: Any structural change in the global system will definitely be opposed by those who benefit from the present structure, and by definition they would be stronger, at least for some time, than the underprivileged - what else should be the meaning of being "privileged"? To be more concrete: They might threaten, and in fact do execute, the withdrawal of funds from the organization, withdrawal of membership with the hope of rendering the organization obviously impotent, and so on. In other words, there will be a tendency for the organization to move from the politically progressive to the politically non-progressive.

Combining these two lines of thinking the point of arrival, hence, will tend to be in the bottom left-hand corner. But no position is forever. This is not the "black hole" of the United Nations universe, sucking in everything there is after some time. There may be ways of coming out of it, but probably only after a revolutionary change in the organization, some really new departure coinciding, usually, with the appointment of a new Executive Director, lifting the organization into one of the other three types. And here on purpose I use the word "lifting": obviously the position down in the bottom left-hand corner is an easy one, one where the streamlining inside the organization may mirror well the "harmony" obtained between the organization and its political surroundings.

Let us then try to test out the usefulness of this typology in practice by locating some UN organizations, tentatively - as hypotheses in the various corners of the table, using the order indicated from A to D. To identify the organizations we shall use the descriptions of them currently used by the United Nations.<sup>(2)</sup>

The most typical candidate for type A classification would be the organizations in the Bretton Woods system: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, usually referred to as the World Bank), the International Finance Corporation, the International Development Association and the International Monetary Fund. They are all based in Washington, the first three with the same address. Their tasks are described as "furthers economic development of members by loans for productive projects and by furnishing technical advice; all loans are made to or guaranteed by governments", "seeks to assist less developed member countries by helping to promote productive private enterprise and their economy; provides risk capital without government guarantee for productive private enterprises, assists development of local capital markets and stimulates the international flow of private capital", "furthers economic development of members by providing finance on terms bearing less heavily on balance of payments of members than those of conventional loans (its credits have been for terms of fifty years, interestfree)", promotes monetary cooperation and currency stabilization, facilitates trade expansion; sells currency to help members meet temporary foreign payments difficulties; aids governments by consultation on financial problems; supplements reserve assets of participations in Special Drawing Rights Department; respectively. Obviously these formulations in and by themselves define the organizations very much as parts of the current dominant world economic system, with IBRD making loans available to governments and IFC more focussing on the

private sector (but in both cases under the condition that the projects are "productive"); with the IDA supplementing this system for those in heavy financial difficulties but obviously within the terms of reference provided by the first two (only with a longer time perspective) and with the IMF helping stabilize the world economic system as a world system in general. In short, these are not organizations in any sense working for a restructuring of the world system but for the maintenance of the status quo, for its expansion and stabilization.

And when it comes to the intellectual climate it is, of course, dominated almost completely by economists. In fact, these four organizations, with a staff around 7,000, is a major employment agency for economists produced by the universities around the world, in addition to finance specialists. It should be noted that they are very heavily integrated, IFC and IDA both being affiliates of IBRD (IDA actually has the same officers and staff as IBRD, IFC has a separate staff). However, saying that they are "economists", meaning that the recruitment profile is uni-disciplinary, is not quite enough. One would have to add that they in all probability also would be within the broad sub-type known as "neo-classical", with its many sub-sub-types; most of them trained in the First World.

Another candidate for the same type would be the World Intellectual Property Organization, WIPO, which "promotes protection of intellectual property, encourages conclusion of new international treaties and harmonization of national laws; ensures administrative cooperation among inter-governmental "unions" by centralizing their administration; assembles and disseminates information, carries out technical and legal studies, and maintains services for international registration or other administrative cooperation; extends legal and technical assistance to developing countries, promotes access to technological information contained in patent documents". Obviously an organization with that set of functions would protect those who have produced that which is seen as intellectual property, of individuals or other juridical persons capable of that kind of pro-

duction, In other words WIPO would protect those who already have against claims by the have-nots. In addition it is also clear that there would be a high proportion of lawyers in the staff, and probably lawyers trained within more or less the same tradition of civil law, originating in privileged classes in privileged countries. This organization is located in Geneva, meaning among other things that if problems should arise for the privileged in other Geneva-based organizations there would be at least no geographical difficulty in redefining the matters so that they can be handled by WIPO, meaning a type A organization. This would apply particularly to all matters bordering on technology and transfer of technology.

In this type one would also classify another Geneva-based organization, the General Agreement On Tariffs and Trade, GATT. According to the list of functions GATT "establishes and administers codes for orderly conduct of international trade, helps governments reduce customs tariffs and abolish other trade barriers and provides forum for other trade negotiations". This places GATT in the very center of a major concern of the dominant world economic system, that of free trade - helping remove obstacles such as tariff and non-tariff barriers, and in general helping stabilize the system ("orderly conduct"). In doing so it would probably have to call on the expertise both of economists and of lawyers. In other words, it might be multi-professional, multi-disciplinary. But then there is that third important variable, the general social and world outlook precisely when it comes to the goals, the processes and the indicators of the international system or sub-system, in this case the system of international trade. Where professional training and intellectual paradigms to some extent may divide, a shared outlook on not only how the system works and functions, but also on how it should work and function, may unify. It is probably safe to say that the organization would not in general employ people who are explicitly, even vocally, against "free" world trade, such as protectionists of the traditional or more modern varieties.

And that opens for efforts to classify the rival of GATT (although much has been said and something has been done to make them appear as more compatible than they actually are, for instance in operating jointly the International Trade Center "which provides export promotion assistance for developing countries"): The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD. The task of UNCTAD can be described in many ways but it is definitely concerned with at least trying to change the structure of the dominant world economic system by giving to the (formerly) underprivileged a position of equality with the (formerly) privileged. Its methods would in general be in line with the New International Economic Order (NIEO) and be concerned with improving the terms of trade of the underprivileged through a number of measures, improving their command of the parts of the world economic cycles passing through their territories, thereby making them more independent in their action, and by promoting cooperation among formerly underprivileged countries, so-called South-South cooperation. From the very start in 1964 the organization had such goals and provisions of NIEO, to some extent the results of the experience of the first Secretary-General derived from his experiences in the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA). In other words, the organization as such can certainly be seen as politically progressive.

However, it can also be seen as intellectually rigid. It is highly uni-professional, being based on economists. These economists may perhaps exhibit a broader spectrum of variation among themselves than would be the case for type A UN organizations with an economic bias, to some extent due to a broader basis of recruitment, with more representation not only from Third World countries, but from progressive Third World countries. However, economism as such is strong as an ideology. Paradigms for international economic cooperation will have a tendency to have the doctrine of "comparative advantages" centrally located, in the very core of the paradigm. This is also reflected in the name of the organization in which a very clear view of goals and processes and indicators are expressed: the primary goal is probably development, but a subsidiary goal is trade. The connective "and" very easily becomes a doctrine: development

through trade. Again, it is highly unlikely that people who would feel that trade and development to a large extent are antithetical (meaning that the name of the organization should be UNCTOD, United Nations Conference on Trade or Development) would be employed, if they are sufficiently explicit and vociferous about it. Social dimensions would tend to be neglected, such as the restructuring of societies when given even much more opportunity for participation in the world trade system. Economists would tend to look at the volume of trade and the net earnings, not at the social volume of traders in a broad sense, and their net impact on the social structure, and so on, and so forth. There is a uni-disciplinary (although admittedly not necessarily uni-paradigmatic) single-mindedness that protects against taking other aspects of goals and processes of developments seriously, either referring them to other organizations as their tasks and functions, or denying that they exist or are of any importance, or denying that there should be any incompatibility with the goals of the organization. Or - as the most extreme case - even proclaiming that if development through trade comes about then all these other aspects of development will also become readily available, as fruits ripening in the process.

In type C I would place two of the giants in the system, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Their tasks are clearly non-progressive, not for that reason necessarily regressive. They are not concerned with any basic change in structure, as is UNCTAD, but with its improvement, and thereby also its stabilization. ILO "brings together government, labour and management to solve pressing international labour problems, provides technical cooperation, conducts World Employment Programme which helps countries combat unemployment; develops world labour standards for consideration by governments, runs research and publications programmes centered on basic social and labour problems, promotes humanization of work in countries through its international programme for the improvement of working conditions and environment". The organization is as mentioned tri-partite, bringing in the representatives of labour. However, the representatives of bureaucracy

and of corporations, the two major pillars of modern societies, are in the majority in any government's delegation, in addition to the obvious circumstance that the labor representatives may be recruited in such a way that their views are harmonized with those of the other two in advance. That is not the basic point, however, the basic point being that precisely by being tri-partite the ILO freezes a structure based on buying and selling labor, the labor-buyers (state and capital) appearing together with the labor-sellers (workers). In so doing it certainly mirrors present-day reality and for that reason may be good in articulating problems within that social formation, But this is not the same as an effort to transcend it. Just to the contrary, it may well be that precisely for that reason a certain stability is built into the whole world system through the ILO, certainly also the intention when Lloyd George and Clemenceau launched the organization as response to the Russian October Revolution in 1917 (the original constitution of ILO came into force 11 April 1919, the revised constitution 20 April 1948).

On the other hand the ILO cannot be said to be intellectually rigid. Just to the contrary, there is a high level of diversity of programs, particularly of research and publication "centered on basic social and labour problems" differing both in paradigmatic basis and in political outlook. There are certainly many economists and lawyers within the organization, but also others including those with no particular professional background, coming out of organizational work rooted in the three pillars of the organization. Thus, it is an organization with no clear intellectual doctrine, even to the point of being what one could call "muddled". That word, however, in this particular approach to the UN system, is not a dysphemism: it may indicate an action-paralyzing confusion, but may also be indicative of promises for the future, of a chaos out of which new ideas may more easily emerge than from the rigid single-mindedness coming out of much intellectual order, in other words out of intellectual rigidity.

Much the same can be said about FAO, which "helps countries, through expert assistance, to increase production from farms, forests and fisheries, and to improve distribution, marketing and nutrition". To see more clearly what this means it should be contrasted with the corresponding description for the International Fund for Agricultural Development, IFAD: "to finance development projects in the agriculture sector which are designed to introduce, expand or improve food production systems within the framework of national priorities and which meet the following basic objectives of IFAD's goals: to increase food production in the poorest food-deficit countries; to increase food production in other developing countries; and to improve the nutritional level of the poorest population". It is not quite clear whether the latter necessarily makes IFAD a progressive organization; it might also be ameliorative within the present system. But at least the rhetoric is very different from that of FAO, more reflecting the type of thinking of the mid-1970s (IFAD entered into force 30 November 1977). To many people it would be clear that such goals cannot be realized without some structural changes, not only between countries but also within.

This is not the case for FAO, however, which—in line with the Bretton Woods system organizations—is production oriented. And this is also in line with the other functions of FAO: it "coordinates the freedom from hunger campaign action for development, (and) in collaboration with the United Nations, administers the World Food Programme, which provides food for economic development and relief" - in other words clearly ameliorative, relief oriented actions. Thus, there will be nothing in this formulation of the functions of FAO that would stand in the way of agro-business since they certainly "increase production from farms, forests and fisheries", at least in many fields due to the high level of productivity. It may be argued that they do not "improve distribution, marketing and nutrition" - but then the word "distribution" is ambiguous. To the left it means a more egalitarian statistical distribution of some goods or services, to the right it usually means an effective network of transportation etc. so that the goods and services can reach consumers that can articulate their

demands in the form of market behavior. FAO picks up the latter.

On the other hand, again, FAO cannot be said to be uniprofessional. It employs a great variety of people, from very many different backgrounds where profession, discipline, class and country are concerned. Again it may appear muddle-headed, and one may then discuss whether this is a confusion that is used for any progressive purposes or can be used in that direction, or is simply a disorganized, disjunctive chaos out of which nothing holding much promise for the basically underprivileged in the world, those who are not only hungry but are located in structure positions that will ensure that they remain hungry, emerges. However that may be, it should be noted that if there is a political will to make the organization more progressive then intellectual flexibility may be almost a necessary condition, although certainly not a sufficient one. An active and progressive Director-General can make use of intellectual flexibility, playing on the elements that would harbor some promises for a new departure, whereas intellectual rigidity so often transforms into complacency because there is already a ritual for doing everything, and everybody's commitment to that single-mindedness is reinforced through a surrounding of uniform single-mindedness in the same direction. So what I am saying is that the transition from type C to type D may be much more easy than the transition from type A to type B.

Moving now into type D it has to be confessed immediately that the classification of two major UN agencies in this type, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) cannot be derived from any reading of their functions as officially described. UNESCO "seeks to broaden base of education, bring scientific benefits to all, encourage cultural exchange and appreciation, improve free flow of ideas", and WHO "serves as directing and coordinating authority on international health work, cooperates with governments in carrying out public health programmes". But, there is an emphasis in UNESCO's functions of "benefits to all", and in WHO the slogan

"Health for All"; even by the year 2000, is rather important. Both of them, through the active policies of the particular Director-Generals of recent years, may be said to be engaged in progressive work. In saying so I am thinking particularly of the New International Communication Order as envisaged in UNESCO resolutions and now attempted carried out that may change basically the structure of news communication among the major regions in the world. And I am thinking of the programs in primary health care (and related programs) for WHO, programs that may also dramatically change the structure of health promotion around the world, making it less of a privilege for privileged classes in privileged countries. In both cases this means helping provide the unprivileged with the means of production, of news and of health, some of it costly, most of it a question of political commitment and action.

When it comes to the intellectual climate UNESCO is clearly intellectual flexible. It is probably the organization in the UN system within which one can find the greatest variety when it comes to professional training and intellectual disciplinary background; possibly also the greatest variety in social and global outlooks. Some of this has to do with the juxtaposition of education, science and culture in one organization committed to "peace and development"; promoting and carrying out an enormous variety of studies in these fields and in the interfaces between them. But then, under the broad heading of "education" almost anything goes where profession and intellectual background is concerned. The discipline "education" is very often an object of contempt from other disciplines, more advanced in their own views, but exactly for that reason less a harbor for pluralism and flexibility. The same actually also applies to "science" since all kinds of sciences are involved, and even more so to "culture" covering practically speaking anything. I must confess that I have always been attracted by this chaotic multi-headedness (as opposed to muddle-headedness) although it certainly also has its exasperating aspects. Cosmos is, I think, most properly reflected through chaos - and UNESCO has both.

This differs from the situation found in WHO. No doubt this organization started out as an organization of physicians and still to a large extent is, meaning that it might more properly be referred to as the World Medical Organization. It may even be said to reflect the usual hierarchy found in the health services of member states, with physicians on the top, and then the technical personnel, and the patients at the bottom, even so much at the bottom that they are totally marginalized, not included. In the technical staff there would be openings for medical, technical personnel, in the professional staff for physicians of all kinds, but probably increasingly for public health officers (I would even venture a guess: among the secretaries there would be a number of former nurses!). This would certainly make physicians feel at ease since the environment is more or less identical with what they are used to. They themselves and other members of the staff may be former, even present patients. But as such they would be bound by a certain loyalty to the medical professional faith: not only do medical services help; they are the only ones that help - they are not only a sufficient condition for production of health, but also a necessary condition.

The injection of other perspectives in an organization of that type must have been, and certainly is, very difficult. Some vehicles for such perspectives would be social scientists reporting on non-Western medical practices (anthropologists) and on non-medical factors conditioning health (sociologists). The authority of the psychiatrists might be supplemented, even complemented by the insights of psychologists, and so on. That the organization would try to protect itself against such newcomers goes without saying. But to the extent such transplantations grafted on that body of medical professionalism stick, at least for some time, a certain amount of intellectual flexibility might be present to draw upon. It is interesting to contrast WHO with UNESCO: In UNESCO intellectual flexibility is built into the organization from the very beginning to the extent that it is impossible even to conceive of a UNESCO that would become intellectually rigid in

the sense defined here. The staff may become more conformist, more stream-lined but that is not enough to qualify for intellectual rigidity. In the WHO, however, intellectual rigidity was built in from the very beginning through the medical professions, particularly the physicians themselves - any change being the result of deliberate and difficult uphill work. Thus, WHO might easily slide into type B and from there (or directly) into type A; the UNESCO could probably only change into type C.

That completes the first effort to make use of the typology, as a preliminary exercise. It only remains to place IFAD more explicitly: it would be either type D or type B depending on how open it is paradigmatically and politically. One hypothesis might be that it started in 1977 as a type D organization and then gradually attains type B characteristics as working routines in how to define and handle projects become institutionalized. But there are many other organizations in the United Nations system, what about them? Let us try a second effort.

One cannot possibly attempt to cover all of them, but something can be said. Thus, to complete the classification of the fifteen "specialized agencies" (defined in chapter IX of the United Nations Charter): What about the so-called technical organizations, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO, Montreal), Universal Postal Union (UPU, Bern); International Telecommunication Union (ITU, Geneva), World Meteorological Organization (WMO, Geneva), and the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO, London)? One hears very little about them, and this is often taken as a sign that everything is as it should be, that they are "technical" with clearly defined goals protected by consensus and rational use of professional skills to come closer to those goals through standard operating procedures technically defined and agreed upon. A glance at the definition of their functions may inform one that they are certainly not in any sense engaged in structural change but in quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement in terms of production and productivity of what already exists. They are status

quo oriented organizations, probably all of them bearing the seeds of some kind of "cultural revolution" in their womb. This became very clear when under the auspices of the ITU the conference for allocation of frequencies for radio communication was convened last time: a setting for the struggle between the haves and the have-nots, with the haves having at their command more technical proficiency than the have-nots. The organizations are actually relatively small, the staff highly professional although not necessarily uni-professional but probably very much aligned when it comes to basic paradigm, the goals and processes and indicators of the organization. Thus, they could probably all be characterized as type A organizations, meaning "non-controversial" organizations, and probably relatively well protected against any departure from that safe position.

The same does, in my view, apply to a much bigger organization (although not much bigger than ICAO): The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA, Vienna). IAEA "promotes uses of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, assists in atomic research and applications, ---, applies safeguards against diversion of materials to military use, and implements controls under Treaty of Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ---". The emphasis could be put on the last function quoted, and it may be rewritten, in clear text, to read "how to protect the present division between haves and have-nots of nuclear weapons." It is difficult to see that the IAEA has been as much bent on reducing the nuclear weapons arsenals of the haves as on not developing the nuclear weapons potential of the have-nots. If the latter were the case, however, it should be classified as a type B organization, or even type D if one assumes that physicists and lawyers are not sufficiently alone in defining the paradigm of the organization.

There are many more, but there will be no effort to say something about them all, the insight based on participant observation already being more or less expended. But something can be said about the United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP

(with headquarters in Nairobi). It seems to be the typical case of an organization that has undergone mutations and exhibits characteristics of all four types through its short history of little more than ten years. There can be little doubt that it was started as a progressive organization, with the goal of changing production and consumption structures so as to protect not only underprivileged people and underprivileged countries, from the hazards of environmental degradation, but also to protect an other underprivileged part of the world system not able to articulate its concerns in the fora of the United Nations system: nature itself. In the early life of the organization there was very much attention given to alternative production and consumption systems less polluting, less depleting and more respectful of the maturity of global, national and local eco-systems, inspired by traditionalism and contemporary innovation.

Over time, however, the ameliorative rather than transformative character of UNEP has become increasingly clear. There is no scarcity of dramatic warnings in the annual environment statements, but the actions undertaken are actions that do not challenge basically the production/consumption system but tries to establish general standards to keep the damage under control. Essentially this would take the form of harmonization of national legislation, and of course exchange of information about the nature of the legislation and how it operates. In so doing the organization may easily become regressive, making it difficult for poor countries to launch programs of industrialization (and it is essentially a question of industrialization), for the simple reason that this would speed up pollution and depletion rates whereas those that are already in the game will tend to be judged in terms of whether the situation deteriorates even further, not in terms of where they already stand (except for particular companies, particular industries). In short, the global perspective that comes naturally to a UN organization would lead the system to think and act in terms of global loads both where pollution and depletion are concerned, and direct itself explicitly against eradication of tropical forests, for instance,

without ordering in the same tone "developed" countries that have already (even long time ago) depleted their forests to engage immediately in reforestation programs of a similar magnitude.

Correspondingly, when UNEP started it was clearly a highly intellectually flexible organization. Environment was new as a concern, a dozen years old or something like that, and not only were there great doubts as to how one should proceed, there were not even clear models at the national level. Ministries of the Environment (or sections within existing Ministries) were either very young or not yet created, meaning that the field was open for professionals of many kinds. Many of them would be in various natural sciences and not only the biological ones, others would be social scientists and not only economists. That intellectual flexibility created a broad background for the formulation of programs that still has a ring of the provocative and the original.

However, over time standard operating procedures became established. Important among these was the tradition of formulating "environmental impact statements", using a cost-benefit paradigm to handle the problem conceptually. Fundamental would be notions of thresholds, of unacceptable damage, and the injection of cleaning up and recycling technologies to compensate for pollution and depletion respectively. In other words, system-conforming procedures were found and professionals could then be increasingly trained more or less in the same direction so as to become more uni-paradigmatic, if not uni-professional. Characteristically the statements issued by the organization would tend to be without any naming of the main polluters or depleters, whether they are seen as governments or corporations, but there are certainly exceptions to this. Of course, as an organization with Member states it is difficult to do so without offending particular members, and since there is a correlation between power in the world system and capacity for both pollution and depletion there is an obvious political problem. In a sense the WHO has an easier

task as long as it can continue blaming diseases on micro-organisms, without going into any social analysis of the factors making those micro-organisms health hazards, not to mention the social processes underlying the production of new types of somatic and mental ill-health (such as cardiovascular diseases, malignant tumors and mental disorders).

Thus, what is being said here is that UNEP has had a career in the system, starting as a type D organization and now on its way to type A, perhaps not fully arrived, through both types B and C, in a sense at the same time. And similar moves may be seen, perhaps, in the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC, Geneva) which becomes a progressive organization the moment it starts questioning not the single act of human rights infraction, but their structure, nationally as a pattern of overt oppression maintaining a system of built-in repression and dominance in all kinds of ways, and internationally as a system maintaining dominance among countries. This type of problématique actually refers to all three generations of human rights, both the civil-political rights of the first generation, the social, economic and cultural rights of the second generation and the rights of the third generation to development, environment, peace etc. For all three one may have two quite different approaches: one casuistic, focusing on the single act and the single actor and the individual victim, and an other approach that would be more structural, looking at the more enduring characteristics that produce acts of human rights violation. The famous case of the head of the commission who had to resign early 1982 can be seen in this light: he tried to bring the concerns of the organization into the more structural domain and was very much opposed by those elites in centrally or peripherally located countries touched and offended by that approach. The quietude surrounding the organization as it reverts to a type B position is not a sign of success except for those who were frightened by the excursions into type B, even to some extent type D because there was a tendency also to rely on information provided by non-lawyers, lawyers in general having a tendency not to be too good at detecting, or even

describing structural factors at work.

I think one might classify the United Nations Childrens Emergency Fund (UNICEF, New York) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, Geneva) and the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO, Geneva) as relief organizations that have not built into them any particularly progressive perspective, not for that reason necessarily being regressive, however. They are doing their work, more or less efficiently. Intellectually they are probably very flexible, to some extent at least making it possible to launch new approaches because of lack of a solid paradigm legitimizing the highly standardized operating procedures. In other words, in the terms of the analysis they would be type C organizations. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO, Vienna), however, could probably better be characterized as a type B organization for the same reasons as for UNCTAD. It is concerned with the structural change in the world economic system, placing a much higher proportion than has been the case so far of the world industrial production capacity in the Third World (the Lima Declaration). In so doing they may perhaps be said to create inequalities within the Third World, between the newly industrializing countries and the others (and within the NIC's between those located in East- and Southeast Asia and the others), and they may also be strongly helped attaining their goals by the relatively rapid de-industrialization process now taking place in the traditional industrialized countries as a consequence (and perhaps also a cause?) of the "economic crises". To UNIDO development is based on processing.

This leaves us with the three research organizations of the United Nations: The United Nations University (UNU, Tokyo), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR, in New York with UNIDIR specializing on disarmament research in Geneva), and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD, Geneva). It may certainly be argued that these organizations should have and do have all academic freedom . the others have not.

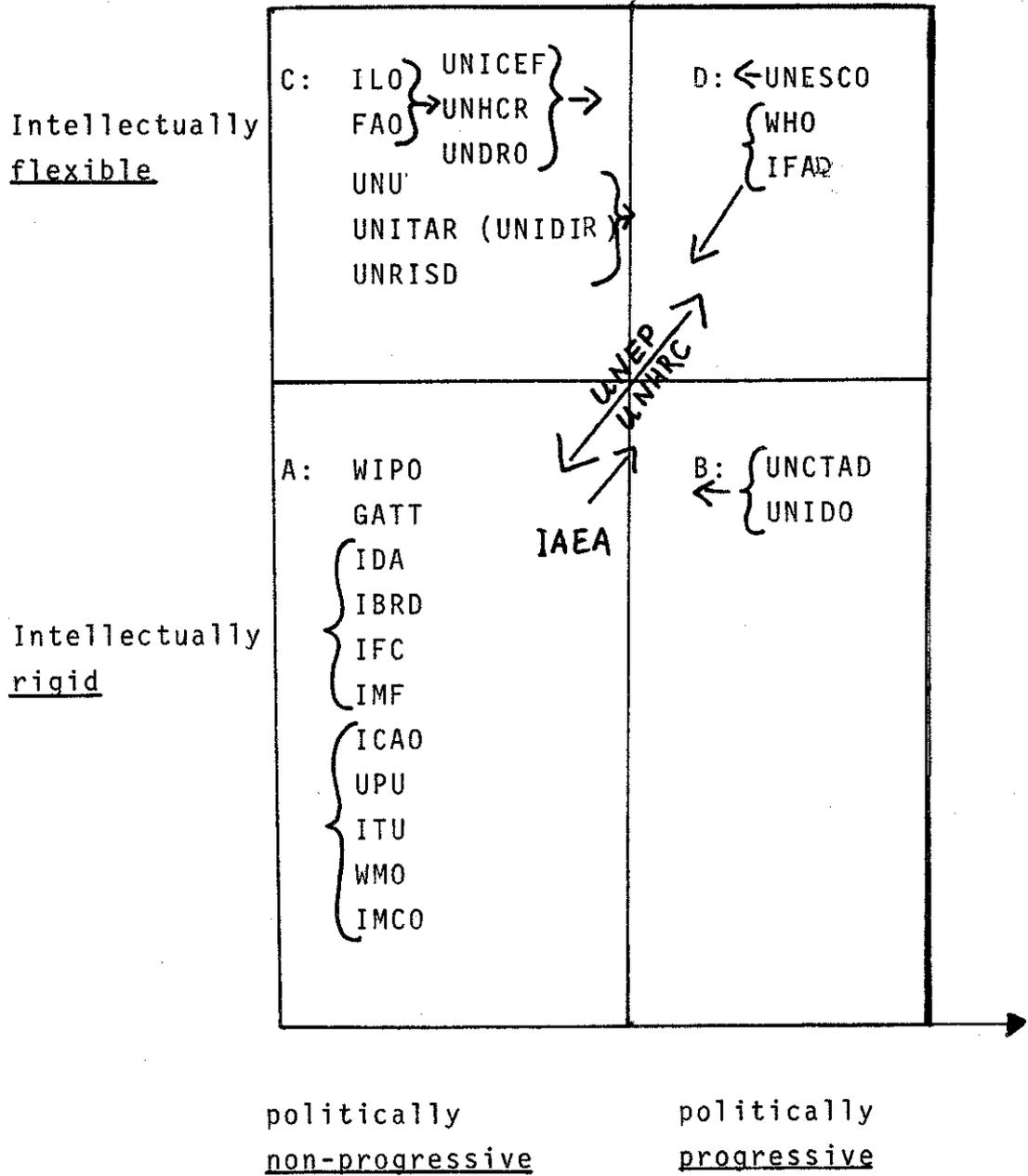
They are not built into the political agenda or calendar of the United Nations system but are relatively free-standing organizations for purely intellectual pursuits. In principle they would be free to do research on the type of topics that could be used to underpin progressive policies, and also by the current emphasis on inter-disciplinary research maintain a high level of intellectual flexibility, being multi-disciplinary. In short, they should be forward-looking think tanks for the entire United Nations system, not necessarily being programmatically anchored as type D organizations, but somehow covering the whole territory with any type of political/intellectual style.

In practice they do not, possibly not because their freedom is explicitly circumscribed, but because of a number of implicit constraints. One of them is very simple: as parts of the UN system they would tend to conform to their environment. One reason is simply this: they would to some extent be competitive with the research branches of all the organizations mentioned, all of them engaging also in research one way or the other. In doing so they may try to be better, both in terms of theory and data and proposals, but not too much better, because that would define them out of the system, as doing the type of work generally associated with universities, think tanks and non-governmental organizations.

In short, they have to take on some of the characteristics of the system meaning being relatively conformist and legitimizing their research by reference to established paradigms within established sciences. What differs from this might be attractive as reading material, raise some brows here and there, but not be taken seriously as an input to the other organizations. Thus, although they will not become entirely uni-paradigmatic as long as they retain a certain inter-disciplinarity efforts to establish them as type D organizations would tend to be relatively short-lived. There will be a relapse to type C after some time.

That concludes our survey so far. Let us summarize it with all the provisos possible in a repetition of the chart of table 1:

Table 2: Classifying UN Organizations



Altogether these are 27 of the organizations in the UN system, a considerable part of the total system - but excluding the core of it in New York (the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Secretariat itself), the International Court of Justice in the Hague and all the committees and other subsidiary organs of the General Assembly; also excluding the regional commissions (ECE in Geneva, ESCAP in Bangkok, ECAL in Santiago, ECA in Addis Abbaba, and ECWA in Beirut), the functional commissions and other committees. What could easily be included, however, would be the militarily oriented organizations reporting directly to the Security Council, such as the Emergency Forces and Peace-Keeping Forces and the observer groups, etc. By and large I would tend to classify them as type A organizations preserving status quo if that status quo has been brought about by non-progressive forces or for non-progressive goals (or so it seems), and with a uni-professional paradigm, that of the military peace-keeper, usually very low on peace-making and peace-building capacities. Class and country origin hardly matter much.

If one now should look at the distribution in the table the point about non-correlation is brought out ( the correlation is low,  $Q = 0.38$ ). Then, I have tried to equip the diagram with some dynamism. Basically the four Bretton Woods organizations and the five technical organizations, and in addition to that WIPO and GATT, are seen as so intellectually rigid and so much tied to the existing world order that they can be said to have come to rest, at least for some time still, as type A organizations. But this may not be the case for IAEA which may move into a type D position provided the have-nots get the real upper hand in the organization. There is, however, also another condition: a much stronger expertise of a non-technical (in the sense of non-physical) nature to legitimize new departures in this very sensitive field. In the same vein WHO and IFAD are seen as potentially coming down to type A if conservatively bent physicians and conservatively bent agricultural specialists get the upper hand in the organizations.<sup>(3)</sup> In so doing

they would follow in the pattern that UNEP and the UNHRC are seen as being examples of, possibly oscillating between types D and A. On the other hand, a number of organizations are seen as conditioned by their professional outlook as either rigid or flexible. UNCTAD and UNIDO, for instance, are seen as only being capable of moving into type A because of their economistic (and engineering) biases, possibly exchanging positions with some of the technical organizations in type A in a more distant future. UNESCO will retain its intellectual flexibility so if it moves it would be to a type C organization (where it actually was in some period during the 1950s), in a possible exchange with some of the organizations in type C that also are seen as so intellectually flexible that they could only move to type D, possibly under new leadership or new approaches.<sup>(4)</sup> Thus, the system will not come to rest. There is no assumption that they will all end up in type A, even if this is referred to as the "point of arrival". It is only quite likely that many of them will sooner or later pass through type A. And that makes one ask the basic question: Under what conditions does an organization come out of that "black hole" in the UN system? Put differently, under what condition does an organization get to type D or launched as a type D organization?

I think, in general, when the total UN system is in crisis and simply does not know what to do, only that something must be done to make it look as if something will be done. The "conference of the year", for the "issue of the year" is launched, out of it grows one more organization as the visible sign that the pressure to do something has been received. If the pressure groups are strong in demanding a new departure at least the rhetoric, probably also some initial moves will be progressive, and intellectual flexibility comes partly as a consequence of not knowing what to do (there is no profession ready to absorb the political shock), partly as a consequence of yielding to a multiplicity of pressure groups that all want a visible sign that "their" people are in. In short, the situation in the early 1970s as a reaction to the quadruple shock from ecological degradation, oil crisis, NIEO and women. And such situations will occur again.

N O T E S

(1) The UN organizations are UNESCO, UNCTAD, WHO, ILO, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNU ~~UNU~~

(2) Very useful in this connection is Basic Facts About the United Nations; I have used the 1964, 1977, 1980 and 1982 editions.

(3) I would say that today, 1985, this process has already gone quite far.

(4) The chart in Table 2 was made in 1982. Two of the organizations in D (for "departure") have been heavily attacked by the Reagan administration in Washington, particularly UNESCO - WHO not (see footnote 3 above). One organization in B has also been attacked, UNCTAD - but less so. In other words, the classification was not a bad predictor of where the Reagan administration attack would set in. Obviously, that administration prefers an organization to be type A (for "arrival").