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Fairness, Globalization, and Public Institutions

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questions, the World Bank has been seeking an alliance with NGOs in order to reach the poorest more effectively.

The IMF, in the early 1990s, acknowledged the shortcomings of its structural adjustment programs. It emphasized the social and political aspects of adjustment. However, the Asian financial crisis has shown that its policy has been based on the principle that “social development requires a strategy of high quality economic growth,” and it is still stuck to a structural adjustment policy.

The WTO situation is rather complex. There, the relation between free trade and social protection has come to the agenda. Greater free trade has produced the recognition that trade liberalization would undermine social protection measures and labor and social regulations and standards. On this issue, developing and middle-income countries were almost universally opposed to the insertion of social clauses in the rules of the WTO, while the United States and France supported it. The former claims that such insertion is an attempt to defend the high-cost economies of the West from international competition and represented protectionism, while the latter claims that the abolition of child labor and free association of labor are fundamental rights.

Regarding the second criticism, there is not much progress responding to the unfair decision-making procedure in international institutions. The problem of the “democratic deficit” has become serious for many international institutions. This deficit means that those who are influenced by their decisions cannot participate in decision making and governance. The IMF and World Bank show no intention of changing their weighted voting systems. However, they try to appeal that their policy programs for individual countries have become more attentive toward the recipient country recently. As for the WTO, many NGOs want to participate in its negotiations.

Despite these steps, international economic institutions are now faced with the difficult task of legitimizing their decisions and policies. Without a sense of ownership of international institutions by every participant, it is getting more difficult for these institutions to play a positive and legitimate role in international society.

Food Politics

A Multilayered Causal Analysis

Sohail Inayatullah

MULTILAYERED CAUSAL ANALYSIS seeks to unpack issues about the future by utilizing four modes of analysis. The first mode is the “litany,” or the typical, official, present-based description of the issues. In this mode, concerns about fairness are generally expressed at the individual level: how I was mistreated, how

globalization has led to losses for my business, and how the government is not doing anything about it. These are front-page stories that highlight individual or, indeed, national plights. Success stories abound also: how individuals have done well in globalization or found new exports and/or new trading partners, and how local economic development offices have, in fact, been helpful.

Most popular (and much professional) analysis of futures issues remains locked at the level of “litany” (or “anthem”) alone, never going deeper into the underlying causes and solutions.

The second mode of analysis is focused on societal, technological, economic, environmental, and political drivers. Thus changes to public institutions are accomplished through certain systemic changes in policy: a new law, a new procedure, or new modes of access. Farmers in the United States have argued from this perspective and have succeeded in gaining subsidies, for example.

Most policy futures work stays at these two levels: changing how individuals behave and how systems function, but nothing more. However, deeper analysis includes two other levels of understanding and intervention: the worldview level—deeper assumptions on the nature of globalization and fairness—and the myth/metaphor level, or hidden, unconscious stories that give meaning and shape to the worldview, policy, and litany dimension.

In the farming example, there can be a range of worldviews. For example, the Prout model of Indian philosopher P. R. Sarkar argues that globalization is best when conditions of equality (cultural, political, and economic) exist. In conditions of inequity, globalization can hurt individuals and businesses. Thus agriculture should be self-reliant and developed via producer and consumer co-operatives using a mix of organic, high-tech genetics and industrial processes. The issue of subsidies is resolved partly by developing economies that ensure that each nation is agriculturally self-reliant. However, the real unit of the economy should not be only local but, with technological advances, become planetary. If that is the case, then food ceases to be a national commodity and becomes a global right. Switching to this worldview, the intervention needed is a real world food organization with power over nation-states. Thus rethinking the individual and systemic issue through a change in worldviews (using an alternative model of political economy and globality) leads to different solutions, among them fundamentally changing the organizational structure of farming in this example.

Even deeper than the worldview level is the myth and metaphor. For Sarkar, this is like the family traveling in a caravan: there is direction, and if someone falls behind they are picked up. Food politics must thus be both local (local community empowerment) and global (food as a human right).

Alternatively, from the globalized view, subsidies only increase inefficiency. Farming production and prices are best determined by the market. Locating farming at the national level of one nation hurts farmers in other nations. What

is needed is a broad agreement on opening up food markets. Sovereignty is not challenged per se, but global institutions should naturally evolve. The story behind this is that the free movement of goods and services leads eventually to the benefit of all. Those who can produce the best and cheapest food should; others should do something else.

Again, if we switch worldviews to the Green-Left perspective, what is important is the quality of the food as well and the impact of certain farming practices on nature. By switching, for example, to a world vegetarian regime, water currently being wasted could be saved, grains currently being used to grow cows for humans to eat could far more efficiently be directly eaten by humans. Thus the current farming discourse is unsustainable for the planet. The issue is not subsidies but changing eating as well as farming practices.

As well, the Green-Left calls for fair trade, not free trade. For them, global trade is skewed toward the rich and powerful and against small farmers from Third World nations. Farming is essentially about power. The powerful should enter new relations with those whose relative (commodity) prices fall in relation to the prices of manufactured goods and services. Farming is structurally unfair. But subsidizing rich American farmers may also not be the best policy. A vegetarian version of this new left may be better.

From a fourth worldview, the issue is not about farming per se but about national-local politics. There is agreement to subsidize farming nationally, knowing full well that such legislation will lead to domestic votes and that the WTO will uphold protests against subsidies. Globalization thus will continue even if it appears that the United States challenges its further development. The story behind this practice is strategic politics—just do what you can to stay in power—essentially, the ends justify the means.

The main point is that there are multiple levels of analysis. Proponents of each worldview seek out “litany” data and statistics as well as policy prescriptions to support their worldview. They are living their story. They use public institutions to realize, via the systemic level of analysis, their worldviews.

For productive pedagogy and analysis, the key is the capacity to move up and down levels, seeking to understand divergent worldviews and the policy and litany statements that result from them. For long-lasting change, however, interventions need to be at every level at the litany, *Time*-magazine level, at the systemic institutional change level, at the worldview, and at the level of myth/metaphor. This might mean an understanding that for farming to be fair, it needs to be (1) local (local community and capacity building), (2) sustainable (mixing types of farming regimes, moving away from meat production and reducing water inputs), and (3) global (food as a human global good and right), and a strong global regime for food production and consumption is needed. This may mean moving toward a “what works” paradigm, that is, which institutional

structures work best for prosperity, planet, people, and future generations across civilizations.

Biotechnology and Fairness

Walt Anderson

IT IS WIDELY ACCEPTED that there is a serious “digital divide” in the world, measurable by the enormous disparities in access not only to computers, but also to more basic communications technologies such as telephones and radios. Many different efforts now underway are attempting not only to get communications and information equipment in the hands of people, but also to enable them to use it effectively and gain practical access to the ever-expanding realm of public knowledge.

Less discussed, but no less serious, is what might be called a “genome gap,” the inequality of access to the new capabilities of the life sciences and biotechnologies. The promise of new developments along these lines is so great that some people see the beginnings of a new stage in evolution as human beings enjoy health, abilities, and longevity far beyond anything known in the past.

There are many dark sides to this bright picture, the most serious of which are expressed in a simple and obvious set of questions: Which human beings? Whose diseases will be cured? Whose life will be extended? There is already an enormous wealth gap in the world, and inseparable from it is the “health gap”: people in the wealthier parts of the world live longer, eat better, are better protected against disease. With new life-extending and performance-boosting enhancements, that gap can grow even wider, to the point that the rich and the poor are hardly the same species.

Such enhancements are already here, and there is no doubt that many more are on the way. Current research and development in biotechnology guarantees that new products will become available, and market conditions (particularly the increasing numbers of older people as the baby-boom generation ages) guarantee a strong demand for them.

Concerns about the safety and efficacy of such products can probably be resolved over time. The more possible it becomes for some people to live longer and function more effectively, the more acute becomes the difference between those who have access to such benefits and those who do not. All of those treatments cost money, and some of them cost huge amounts of it, and it hardly seems likely that publicly funded medical insurance, welfare agencies, NGOs, and international health services are going to bring enhancements to everyone. The best-case scenario (of astonishing breakthroughs in science and technology that fundamentally change human life) can easily become the worst-case scenario of inequalities beyond anything the world has yet seen.