

My Way of Writing Papers

How to tackle a Giant

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Introduction

There is an expression: “stands on the shoulders of a giant.” By doing so, even if you are a dwarf, you can get a wider outlook. However, before you could stand on the shoulders of a giant, you must wrestle with him. This paper is to share with you such a record of wrestling with a giant. And the giant is the late Professor Shigeru Ishikawa, the dean of development economics in Japan. Ishikawa made a significant contribution to the development of academic research in the international development field through the publication of a number of pioneering works. In the later years he was engaged in practice-oriented intellectual support in the realm of development cooperation. After his passing on January 4th, 2014 at the age of 94, two academic journals published special issues reviewing his work. I contributed a paper to each of them. The first is "Shigeru Ishikawa and Development Policy Research" published in *Asia Keizai (The Asian Economy)* in 2015, henceforth referred to as the "Policy Research" paper. The second is “Ishikawa’s Methodology in Development Economics” published in *Kokusai Kaihatsu Kenkyu (Journal of International Development Studies)* in 2018, henceforth referred to as the "Methodology" paper. Both works are forward-looking, rather than mourning or eulogizing, and aimed to reaffirm the unique significance of Ishikawa's research, to indicate the direction for further studies, and to identify and articulate the issues to be examined. Below, I will describe the ideas and concepts for these papers, the questions considered in the writing process, and the final points I reached. In this essay, I will first discuss the "Methodology" paper and then the "Policy Research" paper. I will provide my comments to Ishikawa’s works and talk about my method of writing an academic paper.

The basic rule of writing a paper that attempts to capture the entire work of one scholar and evaluate it is to "fight in his ring," i.e., to examine and criticize it based on the scholar's own definition of the issues and argumentation, as well as the materials and information available to him. The reader may wonder how a dwarf can fight against a giant in such a disadvantaged manner. It might strike one as a mystery. The answer to

that mystery lies in the following question: "Which is harder, to write or to read?" Yes, of course, it's harder to write. It's much harder. When writing, you have to focus your energy and attention on the process of keep writing, so less energy and attention is left for other things. That is, even if you are a dwarf and the author a giant, it is possible for you to notice what the author fails to notice. That is why and how I was able to work on and write the above two papers.

1. Key ideas, issues examined, and achievements of the "Methodology" paper

1.1 . Key ideas

Guiding the writing of this paper was the idea to trace the development of Ishikawa's research over time, to find the logic inherent therein, and to investigate the issues to be examined, with a view to inheriting and developing his scholarship further. For Ishikawa's methodology of development economics, four main contributions were taken up, namely: 1) issue setting and research method of development economics, 2) (under)development of market economy, 3) stages / types of development, and 4) political economy of "adaptation." Here, we focus on the first three.

In 1990 Ishikawa published a monograph *Fundamental Problems of Development Economics* (henceforth referred to as *FPDE*), his manifesto on the defining characteristics of the discipline. For him the "fundamental requirements" were: that research questions are defined on the correct grasp of development issues of the contemporary developing countries; and that the uniqueness of such questions are fully investigated, possibly employing concepts and analytical tools different from those of conventional economic theory. In examining Ishikawa's methodology, it is thus necessary to take a broad view encompassing not only concepts and analytical methods but, more importantly, the definition of the development issues to be investigated.

In the first chapter of *FPDE*, entitled "Is There Need for *Development Economics*?", Ishikawa expresses his positions and thoughts on the *raison d'être*, defining characteristics, and constituents of development economics. Ishikawa defines "economic development" in the contemporary world as "a process of building and enhancing political and economic conditions for sustainable economic growth and development and thus maintaining political and economic independence in former colonies and subordinate areas in today's international environment." Ishikawa defines "economic independence" as containing three aspects, namely, i) macroeconomic balance, ii) household-level income-expenditure balance and welfare, and iii) production / resource allocation systems. Countries that have not yet achieved "economic independence" as defined above are identified as "developing."

Ishikawa recognizes two defining characteristics of contemporary "economic development" initiated as political decision and identifies them as unique questions in development economics, namely: 1) the "underdevelopment of market economy" and 2) the "diversity of initial conditions." Ishikawa goes on to propose two central research agenda corresponding to the definition of the two key research questions: 1) to characterize economic systems of today's developing countries and processes of change in them; and 2) to classify today's developing countries according to the main characteristics of their initial conditions and formulate differentiated development models that describe development processes of different groups. Throughout his long career Ishikawa pursued these two research agenda and endeavored to formulate stage theories of system evolution and typology of development processes. His political economy of "adaptation" was developed in relation to the mechanism of stage transition of economic systems.

1.1.1. The question of (under)development of the market economy and the trajectory of research on this them

For this question, Ishikawa published two important articles: "The Customary Economy and its Penetration by the Market Economy" (1973, Chapter 6 of *BPDE*); and "the basic problem" and "The (Under)development of the Market Economy and the Role of Government – the Case of Import Substitution Industrialization " (1975). These two articles correspond to the aspects of "(expansion of) coverage" and "(deepening of) relationships" in the conceptual definition of "(the development of) the market economy," respectively. Both articles represent Ishikawa's endeavors based on his recognition that "the dominant theory of economic development is based on the economic theory built on the premise of a well-developed market economy and thus there is a wide schism between the object and methodology of research on economic development, thus constraining its relevance and significance," and are driven by his determination "to overcome such a situation, by conducting his own research on the condition of underdevelopment of the market economy and the dynamic process of the development of the market economy." Ishikawa first defines the basic concepts such as market, market rules, market economy, and development / underdevelopment of market economy and then identifies and stylizes standard mechanisms (in economic history studies) of market economy development as the two fundamental processes dominantly driven by private agents, i.e., i) "development of market rules" and ii) "development of individual economic entities and their interrelationships." Furthermore, he discusses the role of government in i) and ii) above.

1.1.2. Development stage theory and development typology as research paradigm

The cornerstones of research paradigm in Ishikawa's development economics are the development stage theory and the development typology. Ishikawa's stage theory is conceived from the perspectives of both productive forces and institutions. Typology mainly reflects the perspective of productive forces, but it can also take into account the perspective of institutions. In general, the scopes of stage theories are two-fold: one broadly captures the target country as a whole; and the other focuses on various aspects of reality within a country separately. The former ("Grand Stage Theory") is based on the value premises of "Modernism" (market economy / democracy) and identifies and stylizes the process of economic, political, and social change at the national level from the perspective of modernization theory. Ishikawa only formulated his grand stage theory late in his academic life (2006) in the form of economic-cum-political development stages encompassing productive forces, economic system, and political system. By contrast, Ishikawa's sectoral stage theories were presented much earlier (1994) in the context of his critique of the structural adjustment policies of the World Bank in an attempt to seek empirical support for the advocacy of alternative policy prescriptions aimed at "fostering infant markets" in specific policy domains. Ishikawa referred to Gurley-Shaw's "Theory of Financial Development" as important precedent, albeit with caveats on its application to today's developing countries, and set a research agenda of "studying and stylizing the experiences of developed countries in institutional development in various domains and, on that basis, formulating policy propositions."

Turning to development typology, the fundamental determining factor is the diversity in the initial conditions in the endowment of productive factors. The three basic models are: i) the Lewis model for labor-surplus economies; ii) the vent-for-surplus model for natural resources-surplus economies; and iii) the staple model for linkage-based transformations (or lack thereof) of export-led economies. and to maintain products as the key factor of the export product (Staple) model, the basic model, and each variant thereby falls to the development sustained or trapped. For each of the three, there are variants that present scenarios of sustainable or trapped development.

1.2. Examinations for inheriting and further developing Ishikawa's works

1.2.1. The concepts of and research on (under)development of the market economy

I addressed the following four issues central to Ishikawa's arguments, namely: 1) concepts of the "market economy" and "(under)development of the market economy," 2) and 3) practical importance of "underdevelopment of the market economy" based

on cases presented and as general argument, and 4) change of the character and ability of the government in the process of the development of the market economy.

Ishikawa posits the empirical recognition of "the underdevelopment of the market economy" as the cornerstone of his development economics. As an opinion on its practical importance, Ishikawa lays out as an issue to be verified a basic proposition that productive forces ("the level of accumulation of capital, technology, management capacity, etc. as a whole") are not effectively utilized being constrained by the underdevelopment of the market economy. However, it is open to further scrutiny whether Ishikawa's cases are appropriate as examples of the fundamental recognition of "the underdevelopment of the market economy" and whether his reasonings in verification are appropriate. In fact, Ishikawa wrote in general terms:

"The development of the market economy, in i) social division of labor, ii) physical infrastructure of distribution, and iii) institutions of market exchange, often occurs as adaptation to the development of productive forces. It is difficult to find cases where the underdevelopment of the market economy hinders development processes."

If Ishikawa is correct in this assessment, the unique significance of the problem of "underdevelopment of the market economy" seems to greatly diminished.

1.2.2. Development stage theory and development typology as paradigms of research
I set three questions for examination, namely: 1) Is "stage theory" effective, important, and applicable? 2) Is "typology" effective, important, and applicable? and 3) In what way Ishikawa's works could be inherited and developed further.

Development stage theory and development typology form the basis of Ishikawa's research paradigm in development economics and of his models of economic development. How should they be positioned and evaluated in the research of development economics? Since words "stage" and "type" are used in everyday language, we may not be fully cognizant of them as technical terms used for description and analysis in research. We need to increase our awareness on this matter by studying Ishikawa's works seriously and then to decide whether we will use these words as technical terms and, if so, in what way.

Ishikawa remarks on development stages as follows:

"Stages are distinguished by differences in resource allocation systems, the consciousness structure of the stakeholders involved ... and many other conditions. This concept is not analytically essential; operationally, however, it is very useful."

In addition, while Ishikawa emphasizes the significance of the domain-specific stage theory, he admits the difficulties that may be faced in its application and points to the following as next tasks for research:

"In order to have this approach accepted, we need to accumulate research by formulating a development stage model for each individual market (product or factor market) that constitutes the market economy, as well as for each of various policy issues, determining the current stage within such a stage model, and identifying policy options satisfying the dual conditions of being adequate for the current stage and facilitative of stage transition. This task needs to be carried out separately for each particular country group. This is a very exacting research agenda but I believe we must face it."

Ishikawa raises and comments on the following three research topics regarding the typology-based models of development processes:

- (1) All three basic models require theoretical reinforcement.
- (2) The typology of today's developing countries based on factor endowment is not exhausted by the three basic models and their variants already formulated.
- (3) Even if typology-based models are formulated, it is not easy to construct dynamic models based on them.

In order for Ishikawa's "development economics" to be inherited and developed further, his research agenda / methods / results needs to be understood and appreciated as of unique significance, and appropriately linked to the interests of subsequent research and adapted into it. I believe that Ishikawa's basic viewpoints (underdevelopment of market economy and diversity of initial conditions) merit special recognition, but as mentioned above, Ishikawa's research paradigm (stage theory and typology) is extremely demanding. It imposes a heavy burden that seems impossible to bear. Therefore, even if it is accepted as a guideline for "research to be done," it will be unrealistic to expect that the task can be carried out to meet the standards required by Ishikawa. In reality, there will be no choice but to aim for "*Ishikawa Lite*". In itself, there will be no choice but to learn through trials and errors where and how to make it "*Lite*." Even so, it would be useful to be aware of the level of "incompleteness" with regard to the gap between what should be done and what is actually done.

2. Key ideas, issues examined, and achievements of the "Policy Research" paper

2.1 Key ideas

I traced the trajectory of Ishikawa's research in International Development Policy over

time, identified three phases and characteristics of research in each, and evaluated main results of his research. Ishikawa laid the groundwork of his policy research during the first phase (from the mid-1970s to the late 1980's) and continued to build upon it by engaging in investigations aimed to overcome the limitations of academic and practice-oriented studies prevalent in the international development community. Ishikawa's research during the second phase (1990's) is characterized by the establishment of "Development Cooperation Policy Research" on a country-by-country basis. This endeavor was based on his unique brand of "development economics" as presented in *BPDE*. The third phase (2000's), in contrast, saw Ishikawa's attempts to expand his perspective and pursue "International Development Policy Research" as systems theory encompassing both development policies and assistance regimes.

2.1.1 Phase 1 (1970's to 1980's: Laying the basic perspectives to policy research)

BPDE (1990) contains three elements that predict the character and direction of Ishikawa's subsequent research on international development policy:

- (1) "Political conditions" are clearly stated in the definition of "economic development."
- (2) Investigation of political matters is considered to be indispensable in order for policy-oriented development research to be relevant and useful.
- (3) In Chapter 7, entitled "The Underdevelopment of the Market Economy and the Limitations of Economic Liberalization," two basic propositions are presented which are to serve as leitmotifs of Ishikawa's subsequent research in development policy.

2.1.2 Phase 2 (1990's: Developing the "Development Cooperation Policy Research")

The following are important issues found in major works that reflect the development of Ishikawa's research activities in the 1990s:

- (1) Methodology of Development Cooperation Policy
- (2) Examination of the World Bank's structural adjustment and his own reformulation
- (3) Systematization of "Development Cooperation Policy Research"

2.1.3 Phase 3 (2000's: Toward the construction of "International Development Policy Research")

In 2006, Ishikawa published *International Development Policy Research* compiling his main works in both development policies and assistance regimes and a new

voluminous overview chapter. This publication represents a landmark in Ishikawa's policy research and addresses the following important issues:

- (1) Search for development models that contribute to poverty reduction policy
- (2) Laying the framework for the "International Development Policy Research"
- (3) Search for guidelines for assistance policy for Africa

2.2. Examinations for inheriting and further developing Ishikawa's works

2.2.1. "Cultural diffusion" in Ishikawa's "International Development Policy Research"

I summarized and characterized the trajectory of Ishikawa's policy research above using the "cultural diffusion" model and applying Ishikawa's description of the cultural diffusion model to researchers:

Researchers often determine the subject and method of research under the influence of "cultural diffusion" of ideas from external sources rather than based on their original thoughts. For external elements to be absorbed by researchers it is necessary for the gap between them to be reduced and made compatible with each other. The process of adaptation will take one of the two forms: i) external elements are modified to suit researchers' previous works; or ii) researchers' previous works are modified to suit external elements. The process of "cultural diffusion" is bound to involve trials and errors for adaptation one way or another.

Ishikawa had his brand of "development economics" as "base culture", which laid out a basic perspective on developing economies, a research posture of concentrating on fundamental problems, and emphasis on relevance to the actual conditions of today's developing countries in policy discussion. Various information from the international development community was received as "external cultural elements." The main ones were: the World Bank-led policy of "structural adjustment"(1980's-1990's); "poverty reduction" as the overarching goal and "aid modalities" as the implementation framework (1990's-2000's); and "Africa" as the main recipient of assistance the "political system" (2000's).

2.2.1.1 Ishikawa's adaptation to the World Bank's "structural adjustment"

Ishikawa's basic standpoint on developing economies was solidly established as "base culture" around 1980 before the emergence of the World Bank's "structural adjustment," which enabled Ishikawa to examine and evaluate this external cultural element on the basis of his own scholastic accomplishments. He pointed to the inadequacy of neoclassical economics, the theoretical underpinning of the World Bank's "structural adjustment" policy, for the understanding of developing economies

where the market economy is underdeveloped, and claimed that the policy was not expected to be successful in low-income countries. Ishikawa's research achievements were particularly noteworthy in the advocacy of the "market-economy-development-promoting approach" and in the emphasis on the motivation and ability for "adaptation" on the part of developing countries.

2.2.1.2 . Ishikawa's adaptation to "poverty reduction" goal and "aid coordination schemes"

Throughout the 1990's, the "poverty reduction" goal gained force and came to be established as the overarching goal of the international development community. Simultaneously, there emerged a movement to establish more effective "aid coordination schemes" for the realization of "poverty reduction" on a global scale. Facing this new external cultural element, Ishikawa initially adhered to the "economic growth" goal that constituted an essential element in his "base culture" and questioned the grounds for justifying the replacement of the "economic growth" goal with the new overarching goal of "poverty reduction," pointing out that there was no credible development models that support its realization. Subsequently, however, Ishikawa went through further adaptation and came to accept the "poverty reduction" goal by incorporating it into his proposed version "sustainable poverty reduction supported by growth promotion," and, to help achieve that goal, devoted himself to the formulation of new development models that relate growth to poverty reduction. In this endeavor, Ishikawa reemphasizes the role of "industrial policy for building modern industries and fostering markets," an essential element of the argument in growth policy in his brand of "development economics," his "base culture."

2.2.1.3 . Ishikawa's adaptation to emphases on "Africa" and "political system"

In the 2000's the main concern of the international development community converged on low-income countries, of which "Africa" in particular. At this juncture, Ishikawa made another adaptation and shifted the main focus of his development policy research onto low-income countries and Africa among them. In doing so, he paid a lot of attention was paid to the developments in policy and research circles in the United Kingdom and, under the influence of this, gave central importance to "political systems" as the focus of reform. In this adaptation, Ishikawa expanded his development stage theory by adding stages of "political systems" to those of productive forces and economic systems and presented a development model that explicitly showed the stage transition of political systems. Furthermore, in his attempt to emphasize the overall picture of the modernization process, Ishikawa revised the

very definition of “development” so that it encompassed not only economic but political, administrative, social and cultural aspects as well, and presented his new “vision of development” that corresponded

From the mid-2000’s on, Ishikawa’s policy research was oriented toward the mutual learning and mutual understanding between Japan and the UK. Ishikawa’s central theme of study was comparison of the UK’s and Japan’s aid models, based on experiences in Africa and East Asia, respectively, on initial conditions, development process, and the role of aid. Based on the experience of East Asia that he studied in building his brand of “development economics” as his “base culture,” Ishikawa emphasized that modernized economic structures brought about by promoting economic growth had transformative effects on political systems and expressed his hope that this experience would be studied and understood by the UK side.

2.2.2. Main features of Ishikawa’s “International Development Policy Research”

Based on the above summary as informed by the “cultural diffusion” model, the following five salient features of Ishikawa’s development policy research are identified. They provide important viewpoints and guidelines in undertaking development policy research.

- (1) Build a unique policy research on the basis of one’s own brand of development economics
- (2) Start from one’s own way of grasping reality
- (3) Lay down strict requirements for policy research
- (4) Emphasize long-term development and the role of government
- (5) Orient the process of research according to one’s sense of mission, sense of responsibility, and sense of obligation.

2.2.3. Evaluation of Ishikawa’s “International Development Policy Research”

2.2.3.1. Contributions of Ishikawa’s “International Development Policy Research”

All of the five characteristics mentioned above are notable as Ishikawa’s contribution to development policy research. Some comments are in order.

Regarding the first point, it is important that Ishikawa endeavored to formulate his own thinking and policy prescriptions on “structural adjustment.” For Ishikawa “structural adjustment” needed to be conceptually and methodically based on developmental stage theories classified according to the difference in initial conditions. It is extremely significant that Ishikawa elaborated his development policy research in accordance with his standpoint on “structural adjustment.”

The second and third features are exemplified by Ishikawa’s emphasis on empirical

support in envisaging development models with poverty reduction as central purpose. The fourth feature, "developmentalism," is the subject of great controversy in development economics and development policy. Among the advocates of developmentalism, Ishikawa occupies a unique and important position in that he formulates a long-term development scenario as a "development model" that includes stage transition and that he emphasizes the fostering of market economy as the role of the government with particular attention to the institutional and organizational aspects. Ishikawa's standpoint and method of commanding the overall picture of development and determining the essential roles of government are of great significance.

The fifth characteristic, having a "sense of mission, sense of responsibility, and sense of obligation," is strongly related to the reaction or response to contacts with external cultural elements emanating from the international development community. Ishikawa is truly exceptional in that he took these external elements seriously, that he expressed his own views based on their systematic examination, and that he aspired to be actively engaged with the international development community. Underlying this was his strong sense of mission, responsibility, and obligation to contribute to the development of developing countries.

2.2.3.2. Critical comments on and research agenda in the wake of Ishikawa's "International Development Policy Research"

I pointed out the following five points to be further examined regarding Ishikawa's development policy research:

- (1) Emphasis on the "role of government " and neglect of limitations in the "ability of government "
- (2) Lack of integration the "adaptation *to*" and "adaptation *of*" arguments related to policy and institutional reforms
- (3) Absence of discussions connecting "adaptation," "cultural diffusion," and "political system"
- (4) Unclear causal links between political system reform and economic outcomes
- (5) Inadequacy in development scenarios starting from the "stage transition of the political system"

Conclusion: My method of writing a paper

The above summaries of my two articles represent a record of struggle against a giant named Shigeru Ishikawa in an attempt to inherit and further develop his research. What I intended to achieve in both "Methodology" paper and "Research Policy" paper was two-fold: to identify and recognize Ishikawa's unique contributions and to present critical comments and tasks for further examination and exploration. I feel a sense of

accomplishment that I was able to achieve both. There was only a blurry rough outlook at the beginning of the struggle, but the vision gradually became more focused and the outline appeared as the draft was revised repeatedly. It was a process in which the prepared seeds germinated and seedlings grew out of them. It was up to me, the author, to plant the seeds, but what transpired subsequently was more like a biochemical process of fruition beyond my control.

In summarizing my method of writing a paper, I would say, "I do my work to the fullest extent possible and wait for a voice from heaven." There is no knowing in advance which of the planted seeds will germinate or what they will subsequently look like. Therefore, all the seeds that are available must be planted. It's a hassle and a tedious task that isn't fun in itself but rather often painful. However, it seems the I cannot hear the heavenly voice unless I go through that exacting process. Then, when the heavenly voice is heard, all the unnecessary pieces disappear from the scene and the finished paper appears without hesitation. I did not think twice in presenting my judgement that Ishikawa's research is too heavy to be handed over to the following generations of scholars and practitioners, and in putting forth my espousal of "*Ishikawa Lite*" based on that judgement, although they related to the very core of Ishikawa's unique scholastic achievements.

The two papers discussed in this essay represent the results of the application of my method of writing a paper to the full extent I could. Each is a record of a struggle in my endeavor to do so, and a report of a voice from the heaven heard at the end.