

In general, the study gives a thorough description of the flows of trade, capital and labour between the developed and the developing countries and discusses some of the effects of these flows on the respective economies. But, similar to the literature on dependence, no precise and operational definition of "interdependence" is given which could be applied in the analysis. Therefore, the study remains rather descriptive and does not provide a basis for the evaluation of the proposals concerning the economic relations between North and South. Thus, one misses some of the expected new insights into the controversy of the developing countries' position in the world economy and one has no new appreciation of the mutual benefits North and South can derive from international economic cooperation.

Norbert Wagner

JÜRGEN OESTERREICH: *Elendsquartiere und Wachstumspole. Beiträge zur räumlichen Planung in der Dritten Welt.*  
Köln: Deutscher Gemeindeverlag, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1980. 204 pp., DM 19.50

The author is a leading German authority on problems of urban development in developing countries. This volume is in effect a distillation of his years of experience as a scientist and in an advisory capacity. Urban conglomerations in developing countries are growing twice as fast as the population, and slums four times as fast. This is affecting the equilibrium in the immediate living space, i.e. the microsystem, in the community, i.e. the mesosystem, and in the regional environment as a whole, i.e. the macrosystem. Residential areas, cities and whole regions are sinking into poverty.

The author's fundamental question is whether this process of pauperization can be influenced and reversed. Does the spatial organization of society play a role, and if so, at which level? Do prescriptions such as large-scale housing programs, satellite towns, and growth points carry much hope of success? Is their inefficacy thus far revealed due to dispensing, dosage or packaging? Do we require new means or new instruments? What are the obstacles to possible innovation?

The contributions in this book deal with the premises and prerequisites of urban and regional planning methods under the socio-economic conditions obtaining in developing countries. Thus, the study is concerned not with spatial structures as such or paradigms for these but with the decision-making processes which lead to the localization of activities, i.e. to concrete spatial structures. The author is seeking, on the one hand, premises, i.e. pre-

requisites which are beyond all doubt, and, on the other hand, prerequisites which are in principle variable. In other words, on the one hand the approach is empirical: "What is the situation?", and on the other hand normative: "What methods are needed to structure space, be it as housing, as urban and regional planning, or as environmental planning?"

The author's most important thesis runs as follows: People - including, and especially, those in the Third World, who are still relatively close to a self-supporting economy - are in principle capable of and in the position to solve problems of environmental order themselves. This is certainly true of housing, but less so of cities the larger they become. Autochthonous, self-reliant methods of solving problems run counter to the tradition of European methods of planning, i.e. imposition from above. However, it would in any case be sensible to treat the latter with a little more circumspection; for their success at all levels in the Third World is limited, be it at the neighbourhood, the community or the regional level.

This thesis is considered in eight articles. Chap.I deals with two spontaneous settlements in Kuala Lumpur with different ethnic groups. It is clear that the spontaneous settlers have attempted to overcome economic and political disadvantages through solidarity.

Chap.II describes an experiment in Zambia. District (or neighbourhood) democracy, based upon traditional village democracy, has been harnessed for a housing and sanitation project. It has proved that self-determination is not only possible but a motivation to self-help, and moreover reduces red-tape and paperwork. On the other hand, such a project depends upon a tolerant political structure and a specific form of project organization still regarded as unconventional.

Decision-making in environmental planning at the communal level follows general stereotypes. Chap.III takes the example of Kuala Lumpur to show that the institution "urban planning", imported from Great Britain as part of the colonial pattern, no longer fulfills its intended purpose, viz. to channel development. Instead, it provides a stage for the leadership to present and confirm itself. At the same time it is the facade behind which the interest groups haggle over each case.

The fourth contribution makes use of observations on Moroccan provincial administration to confirm the finding that decision-making on investment and its localization does not follow European patterns. The Gallic facade given to many procedures conceals and props up a massive structure for the preservation and promotion of the interests of traditional power structures.

Chap.V considers the question of how the growing number of urban dwellers earn their livelihood. It is clear that the "informal sector" will grow in impor-

tance in the future because of its capacity to use resources in a way which offers the greatest chance of survival.

One of the major components of physical planning is the housing problem. This is studied in Chap. VI. Data from several countries, and Singapore in particular, indicate that this problem is, in principle, insoluble so long as it is reduced to only technical details of construction and economics. Approaches involving spontaneous solutions seem to offer greater hope of success. Here the housing unit is regarded as part of the district environment. City districts granted a measure of self-determination tend to order their environment themselves and lessen the pressure of the housing problem.

Chap. VII offers a wide-ranging discussion of conventional urban planning in the Third World through case-studies of Casablanca, Lima, Lusaka, Nairobi, and Singapore. This reveals that the results of such planning are less a product of the quality of the planning itself than of the power structures in which decisions are made and of the effective routine within these. Conventional planning runs into difficulties sooner or later as it is incapable of meeting the needs of the majority of the population with anything approaching adequacy. Self-determination within districts appears to be a solution to this problem as well. In these terms, planning at the communal level should be regarded as mediation between the microsystem - the immediate living space - and the regional macrosystem.

In terms of its theoretical claims the contribution of regional planning to guiding development in the Third World is very modest. In Chap. VIII the author illustrates how far removed the theoretical approaches of regional planners are from the real processes of decision-making, and how much further removed from environmental decision-making at a regional level. The author pleads the case of some minimum degree of regional self-determination and, thus, for a modification of many existing decision-making structures.

This committed, knowledgeable and provoking book should become compulsory reading not only for urban planners but especially for development economists and sociologists.

Dieter Weiss