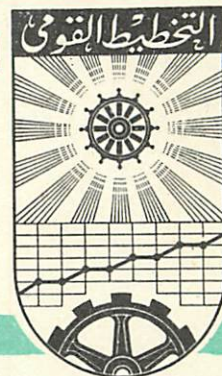


UNITED ARAB REPUBLIC

THE INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL PLANNING



Memo. No. 1053

SOME IDEAS CONCERNING
AIMS, TASKS AND PRINCIPLES
OF ORGANIZATION OF SPATIAL
PLANNING

By
Dr. Siegfried Voigtsberger

December 1973

SOME IDEAS CONCERNING
AIMS TASKS AND PRINCIPLES
OF ORGANIZATION OF SPATIAL
PLANNING

DR. SIEGFRIED VOIGTSBERGER
PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY
OF ECONOMICS, BERLIN, GDR
VISITING PROFESSOR AT THE
INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL
PLANNING, CAIRO, ARE.

Foreword

This is a working paper. It was drafted during the early months of 1973 to outline roughly some basic problems, arising when territorial planning is developed as part and parcel of overall national planning. It was mainly intended to set some guidelines for the ongoing research of the author, but may be useful also, to provide a skeleton for a discussion about the subject among interested scientists and government officials. That is the main reason, why it is published, although some of the ideas laid down in the **Memo** are still in an embryonal stage and need a thorough check in the light of practicability under the prevailing conditions.

I wish to thank Mrs. Azza Soliman and Mrs. Samia Labib who revised the draft and Mrs. Badria El-Gannayni who did the final typing.

S. Voigtsberger

Some IDEAS Concerning

Aims, Tasks and Principles of Organization of Spatial Planning

1. Aims, tasks and principles of organization of spatial planning are part and parcel of the socialist state's economic policy. Therefore they can't exist independently, but only within the framework of overall national planning as an integral part of the state planning system. To stress this relationship means, simultaneously, that spatial planning is an indispensable part of economic policy and planning, that plays a decisive role as an instrument in social and economic development.

Spatial planning becomes extraordinary important in the following cases- which to a certain degree matches the A.R.E.'s conditions:-

- a- considerable differences in the level of social economic development between the country's parts,
- b- considerable differences in the spatial distribution of natural resources,
- c- space, suitable for social use being a rather scarce factor,
- d- large countries (or economically integrated groups of countries) where the effects of distance (transport costs) itself have a relatively heavy impact on the development of the country (or the group of countries) as an economic unit.

Therefore spatial planning is deemed highly essential.

2. There are two relevant foundations that have to be explored in order to derive aims, tasks, and principles of organization of spatial planning:

- the objective laws, ruling social and economic development and consequently exercising their influence on the spatial structure; and
- the very special natural, technological, economic and socio-political conditions prevailing in the country and their spatial differentiation, i.e. the conditions under which the objective laws operate.

This points, already, to the fact that spatial planning can't be looked upon as an economic matter, in the narrow sense of cost-profit-relations, but only in the wider scope of planning social life, involving to a large extent non-economic factors.

3. In a society determined to achieve socialism the main aim of spatial planning, which is an integral part of national planning, has to be the creation and the permanent improvement of a spatial structure providing the conditions for the highest possible degree of meeting the ever growing individual and social needs in all parts of the country and for the most effective utilization

of the resources available.

That means:

- a- to diminish and in the long run, to overcome unjustified differences in the living conditions of the people between backward and advanced regions, especially between rural and urban areas. This regards housing and service facilities (social and technical infrastructure) as well as working conditions and a sound distribution of working places.
- b- Choice of a location policy for the productive forces which allows:
 - to exploit the advantages of inter- and intraregional labour division and of economies of scale.
 - to use most economically the different conditions (natural resources, soil conditions, climate, quality of population, historically grown economic structure, ample capacity in infrastructure etc.) prevailing in the different regions,
 - to arrange production sites in a way, that they form local complexes with housing and service facilities, to ensure short commuting distances (times); if this is not convenient for technical or other reasons then cheap and efficient passenger transport has to be provided

c- Protection of environment against negative effects of human activities (air and water pollution, soil erosion etc.), this includes improvement of its condition, where such effects are already existing, and to develop the natural surroundings into a state more suitable for human life than in its original shape.

d- Choice of a territorial structure which keeps the country well prepared against any aggression from outside.

4. These aims provide only a general guideline. Therefore, to set the definite planning targets, the country's conditions have to be analyzed, i.e. prerequisites for a successful spatial policy as well as problems to be met.

Some of the most important features of Egypt's economy upon which spatial planning can rely on are:

a) A nationalized sector, comprising more or less all important industries, and therefore offering the opportunity to put the most dynamic section of the economy right under the control of the people and their representatives. Thus creating a sound basis for economic policy and planning (including a strategy of spatial development).

b) The public character of the overwhelming part of national investment, enabling the country to spend it on the entire

people's interest, rather than on the interest of a small class of profiteers. This widens the potential foundations of socialist development.

These two interrelated factors can be a strong backing to turn the people's wants and needs into reality, i.e. in our case to implement a well-balanced spatial development policy. Beside these features, some further properties of the economic structure should be considered in this context. These are:

- c) An industrial base which is already relatively manifold and can rely on a considerably strong and fast growing heavy-industry and power basis. Especially, the power-generating capacity of the High-Dam-Power-station, opens up a broad scale of development opportunities for Aswan region as well as for the country as a whole.
- d) The Valley's and Delta's fertile soil and favourable climate for different perennial and annual crops and therefore high yields per hectare and top quality of several agricultural products.
- e) A fair quantity of natural resources (oil, ores etc) until now only partly exploited and therefore still offering to open up new economic activities in different parts of the country.

- f) Favourable conditions to employ tourism as a basic activity in several regions and localities, thanks to historic monuments as well as to natural conditions (climate, beaches etc.) and above all to the hospitality of the Egyptian people.

Some Serious problems that Spatial Planning in Egypt has to meet:-

- a) More than 90% of the country's territory is due to the natural conditions, a space which can be made suitable for human life only at the price of heavy investment. This checks the utilization of the nations territory, although there are quite promising potentialities, especially in the form of oil and mineral resources in the desert regions.
- b) Population was growing fast during recent years (now growth seems to slow down) and a low activity rate of the population prevails, partly as a reflection of the age-structure and possibly of traditional barriers in the case of females, but to a considerable extent due to the fact, that the growth of potential labour force out-numbered the development of working places.
- c) The above mentioned natural conditions and the high rate of population growth lead to a high population density on the inhabited land on the one hand, and by far a larger

space with practically no population at all on the other.

- d- Striking differences in the level of economic development exist between different parts of the country as a result, there are great differences in the living conditions and employment opportunities between urban and rural regions, as well as between different rural regions, different towns and cities, and even within the cities between different quarters.
- e) Stemming (at least partly) from this, large uncontrolled migration flows occur, leading to heavy pressure on a few centers especially Cairo and to a certain degree Alexandria.
- f) The neighbourhood of the aggressor Israel forces the country to be permanently on a state of alert. This limits the resources available for peaceful development, and gives strategic points a high priority thus influencing spatial development to a great extent, especially in the eastern part of the country.

Besides this, a part of Egypt's territory is still under the control of the aggressor and it has to be expected that after liberation the development of these regions becomes a very urgent matter in order to overcome the effects of the occupation in the shortest possible time.

5. It's surely a hazardous attempt to derive the tasks of spatial planning in a given country prior to a thorough field research, just proceeding from a general framework as sketched above. Nevertheless, some provisional ideas are put forward here to get the discussion moving.

The prevailing situation reveals clearly, that the gradual equalization of the level of living conditions between the different regions on the one hand and adopting a location-policy which helps to increase the growth-rate of national income on the other hand, should be the main features of spatial planning.

A planning policy for that purpose should take into account:

Since agricultural land is scarce it should be safeguarded against reduction caused by the extension of other activities. That means, that development of non-agricultural sites (industries, housing and services) should preferably take place on land not suitable for agricultural purposes. Hence, it becomes necessary to break the borders set by Valley and Delta and to extend gradually the economically used space.

There are two ways to do this:

- The first is the utilization of the desert regions that are directly on the outskirts of Valley and Delta for nonagricultural sites developing in spatial connection with the already

inhabited space and are closely interrelated with existing centers and (at least partly) relying on the facilities available in the "old" areas.

- For the second the development of new centers in frontier regions based on the exploitation of mineral and oil resources and, proceeding from this, the creation of interrelated complexes of economic activities has to be considered.

The first, that is, to proceed from the economic basis available in the valley and in the Delta and to extend and supplement this basis by means of increasing the scale of activities already sited in the region and by adding new activities, preferably such, which cooperate with the old ones, plays an important part in the gradual equalization of economic and life conditions between the regions.

The second, i.e. opening up new regions, promises to be economically especially in areas with deposits of natural resources, which are exploitable at relatively low production costs, thus justifying-at least in the long run-the rather high investment in social overhead costs, which normally appears in such cases.

Therefore it is deemed essential to elaborate a well-balanced strategy concerning optimum proportions between both ways, and high priority should be given to this task in the on going research.

But at least for a certain time to come the first way of development still seems to be the main road. There are several reasons for:

- The development potential of the existing agglomerations (probably with the exception of Cairo and Alexandria) is not yet exhausted, thus offering the opportunities to make certain regions more productive as well as more attractive to a much lower price than developing new regions remote from the now inhabited space.
- The development of new regions requires a relatively large amount of investment diversified among different activities (basis and supply industries, social services and housing facilities, public utilities etc.) which has to be timely concentrated as far as possible in order to use it efficiently as soon, and as much as possible, by means of shortening the gestation period and exploiting all kinds of agglomeration economies and in order to create in time all necessary facilities for human life in this area.

Thus the opening up of new regions heavily strains in the initial stage the accumulation power of the nation. Consequently it calls for concentration on only one or a few areas at one time. The more scarce investment funds are the more this principle has to be observed. Because the investment-ratio per inhabitant is according to experience high in such areas, where all necessary conditions for human life have

to be created and the natural surroundings are in a certain sense even hostile to it, only high productivity can justify the development of new economic regions in the desert zone. Hence labour-saving technologies are compulsory there and immigration has to be controlled, in order to avoid a large share of economic inactive or low productive population (considering only the people in working age) putting heavy burdens on the demand for social services and public utilities. But on the other hand, one has to consider agglomeration economies which call for a certain minimum of population to run all necessary activities on an economic scale. Size and structure of such emerging self-sustaining regional-economic complexes are therefore another topic of pre-eminent importance for spatial planning.

Nevertheless it becomes quite obvious that these new growing areas, although of high importance with regard to the development of productivity, national income and as nuclei for turning Egypt's economy into one which can cope with the scientific-technological progress in the world and therefore of high importance for the national economy as a whole will directly involve a rather small share of the entire population and cover during the on going Ten-Year-Plan only a few, well selected areas. This leads to the conclusion that the necessity to improve the working and living conditions of the overwhelming part of the people can't be met if one relies on this way only. On the contrary, to over-emphasize this course of development would rather mean to widen the gap between backward and advanced regions, than to close it.