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Problems of Urban Development Planning

by Klaus Grimm, Hamburg *

In developing countries the urbanisation process poses one of the most serious problems, for it creates unemployment, utmost poverty and aggravates the general situation. In this article the case of Indonesia is discussed and possible strategies for a future improvement of such a situation are pointed out.

The manner in which the urbanisation process is at present taking place in most developing countries makes it plain that urban growth there is by no means accompanied by increased social urbanity in the sense that people, by moving into towns, automatically reach a higher economic, political, social and cultural level. On the contrary, in large towns where growth is very fast and uncontrolled, a general process of under-development is plainly visible. The specific dynamics which normally exists between town and country is marked by constantly aggravated antagonisms between the urban growth centres and their rural peripheries. Yet in developing countries this phenomenon is but one aspect of the problem of urbanisation.

The history of urban development particularly since the war has shown that the economic and social contrasts are sharpest in the metropolitan cities from which it may be argued that cities are by no means automatically the "islands of prosperity" of a nation. In these cities there is often a sharp division between a highly developed urban centre from which only a small privileged upper crust benefits and a constantly growing marginal sector — the domain of the bulk of the population.

Visible evidence of this development is the increasing penetration and encirclement of long-established city sectors by slums and illegal settlements. Almost every country has its own special name for these squalid settlements. In Indonesia they are called "Kampungs"; they form the background against which increasingly isolated materially and spiritually from the business activities in the centre, large crowds are leading a sad marginal existence.

The menacing nature of this trend has been realised but also that this underdevelopment can only be overcome if at the same time the urbanisation problem is solved. Town planning which is geared

to an overall development must not as in the past ignore the problem of those leading a marginal existence at the peripheries of towns. It is now appreciated that, on the contrary, improvements in the quality of life of urban squatters and slum dwellers, as well as a reduction of their number, should be given priority. Such strategies to better the lot of marginal town dwellers to be successful must be preceded by a thoroughgoing analysis of the conditions in these urban slums and what caused them in the first instance.

The Drift from the Land and the Growth of Towns

With about 130 mn inhabitants Indonesia is, in terms of population, the third-largest developing country. 64 p.c. of the Indonesian population live on the island of Java, that is on only 7 p.c. of Indonesia's total territory. Even today the population density on Java is such that about 630 inhabitants are on average crowded together on one square kilometre.¹

The population concentration on Java is for the most part the consequence of a colonial settlement policy which led to steady deterioration in living conditions in the country. One of the main causes of this deterioration is the inefficiency of the traditional agricultural structures. These are characterised by extreme inequalities in land holdings. On the one hand, there are the big landowners who traditionally belong to the leaders of society, on the other, there are the many smallholdings which are becoming more and more fragmented. In the densely populated irrigated regions of Western and Central Java, smallholdings of no more than 0.1 hectares are by no means rare. On such an area frequently rely for their living several families consisting on average of five persons.² In

¹ Biro Pusat Statistics, Population Census 1971.

² cf. W. R ö l l , Probleme der Bevölkerungsdynamik und der regionalen Bevölkerungsverteilung in Indonesien (Problems of population dynamics and the regional population distribution in Indonesia), in: Geographische Rundschau, 27th year, issue 44, 1975, p. 142.

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such conditions and with the population constantly rising, the class of farmers with too little land to till and that of the landless is for ever on the increase. Growing under-employment or complete joblessness and the threat this presents to the very existence of whole strata of the population are the consequences of such misdirected development. This explains why, in such a situation, many see in a flight into a city their only chance of survival.

Between 1930 and 1971, the share of urban dwellers in Indonesia's total population rose from 5 p.c. to 17 p.c.³ Compared to other developing countries, this degree of urbanisation is therefore still relatively small. But it is not so much the degree of urbanisation as the absolute growth of the towns which give cause for grave concern about the socio-economic consequences of such massing together.

Population Trends in Major Indonesian Towns

Town	Population in 1,000			Population Growth in p.c.
	1930 a	1961 b	1971 c	
Jakarta	533.0	2,973.0	4,576.0	758.5
Medan	76.6	479.1	620.0	709.4
Bandung	166.8	972.6	1,153.7	591.7
Ujung Padang	84.9	384.2	497.0	485.4
Palembang	108.1	475.0	614.0	468.0
Malang	86.6	341.5	429.0	395.4
Surabaya	341.7	1,007.9	1,269.0	271.4
Pontianak	45.2	150.2	194.0	329.2
Bandjarmasin	65.7	214.1	277.0	321.6
Padang	52.1	143.7	187.0	258.9
Tjirebon	54.1	158.3	187.0	245.7
Semarang	217.8	503.2	633.0	190.6
Jogjakarta	136.6	312.7	394.0	188.4
Bogor	55.4	154.1	186.4	236.5

Sources: a Kantoer voor de Statistik, Indisch Verslag, 1938.
 b Biro Pusat Statistics, Population Census 1961.
 c Biro Pusat Statistics, Population Census 1971.

The Growth of Jakarta

With a population exceeding 5 million and housing 22 p.c. of Indonesia's town dwellers, Jakarta is by far the biggest and fastest growing city. Though not a "primary city" in the true sense of the term, it presents all the terrifying features of a city threatened with an imminent "urban explosion" in the developing countries. Should the present high growth rate of 4.6 p.c. annually continue, the number of Jakarta's inhabitants would be doubled in the next 15 years and trebled by the end of the century.⁴ The pressure exercised on such civic services as water, electricity, sewage disposal, housing, transport and health — services the city

³ cf. W. A. Withington, The Kotapradjas or "King Cities" of Indonesia, in: Pacific Viewpoint, issue 4, 1963; Biro Pusat Statistics, Population Census 1971.

⁴ cf. Census and Statistical Office, DIC Jakarta, Statistical Yearbook 1973.

is scarcely able to cope with today — would have assumed dimensions far beyond the powers of the authorities to perform. In principle, these problems exist also for the other towns of Indonesia. Yet in view of its size, Jakarta is in a category of its own.

The Housing Problem

In Jakarta the population concentration reaches its peak. The peripheral city districts primarily serve the purposes of agricultural production and their population density is therefore low; on the other hand they account for 49 p.c. of Jakarta's total area. In other words, most of the city's inhabitants are concentrated in the heart of the city. There the density in some districts exceeds 1,000 people per hectare.⁵ As in the Kampung as well as in the other living quarters housing consists predominantly of one-storey buildings, the degree of crowding in these areas gives a fairly accurate idea of the living and housing conditions in the city.

43 p.c. of Jakarta's housing area is illegally occupied. These people live in bamboo huts or other makeshift shelters which have no running water, let alone sanitation or electricity. In addition, the large housing area which is officially designated as "legally settled" contains in fact considerable Kampung districts which had originally been settled "illegally" but were subsequently "legalised" without, however, receiving more than the most perfunctory treatment by way of infra-structural improvements. In 1968, 47.9 p.c. of the houses were temporary dwellings, 28.5 p.c. were semi-permanent structures and only 23.6 p.c. were built to last.⁶ More than two thirds of Jakarta's inhabitants live in dwellings of the first and second categories. More than 100,000 human beings have no fixed abode at all, sleeping under bridges, on the pavements or in makeshift huts along railway embankments or river banks.⁷

If one wanted to do no more than cope with the population increase which may be expected to occur by the early eighties and carry out the minimum of repairs, maintenance and replacements of the existing housing stock, one would still have to construct annually between 75,000 and 90,000 new dwelling units. Between 1967 and 1970 no more than 12,000 to 15,000 dwelling units were added annually to the existing stock — and these were for the most part within the reach of only the middle and higher income brackets. The planners will, therefore, have to give priority to the provision of low-cost housing.⁸

⁵ Jakarta Metropolitan Transportation Study, Jakarta 1975.

⁶ cf. Biro Pusat Statistics, 1968 Jakarta Survey.

⁷ cf. Planned Community Development Project, Urban Development Study, Preliminary Report, IA, Jakarta 1972, chapter VI.

⁸ cf. *ibid.*

Slums, illegal settlements, insufficient opportunities given the inhabitants to make use of the city's existing infrastructure — these are the immediately visible signs of the bad living conditions in Jakarta. Behind these there lurks the main problem — the inadequate integration of the slum dwellers in the productive sector of the capital's economic activities. On the one hand, there is a rapidly growing pool of for the most part unskilled workers; on the other, a totally inadequate number of jobs on offer. Official data stating that between 1961 and 1971 unemployment rose from 7 p.c. to 13 p.c., convey but a very inadequate picture of the state of the labour market; they completely ignore the existence of an inflated "informal" sector, including the immense area of under-employment. This sector, which comprises nearly 50 p.c. of those in employment and produces an appreciable part of the city's income, functions to all intents and purposes independently of the government sector and also of the "formal" employers. As a result the official statistics hardly make any allowance for the phenomenon of under-employment which, after all, is an essential factor in forming a global view of the situation.⁹

Employment in the informal sector ranges from subsistence farming on family-owned plots of land, through gainful employment of innumerable retailers, becak drivers, street vendors, shoe blacks or street sweepers, to prostitution, house-to-house salesmen and even begging. The great majority of these people belong to society's actual sub-proletariat, existing in the most abject poverty. A sample poll has shown that the average annual income of a household belonging to this group is in the neighbourhood of 190 US\$. Assuming an average household to consist of 5 persons, the per-capita income per year works out at not even 40 US\$.¹⁰

As most of the inhabitants of the slum districts are immigrants from the rural hinterland, their flight into the city itself would appear for nearly all of them to have been part of a struggle for mere existence. This is confirmed by a re-

⁹ cf. S. V. Sethuraman, Urbanisation and Employment: a Case Study of Jakarta, in: International Labour Review, Vol. 112, Nos. 2-3, 1975, p. 193.

¹⁰ cf. C. F. Papanek, The Poor of Jakarta, in: Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol. 24, No 1, October 1975, p. 3.

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V E R L A G W E L T A R C H I V G M B H - H A M B U R G

cently undertaken survey of the migrants' motives. As their main motive the migrants mentioned the extreme shortage of work in the rural areas. Only a minority mentioned factors that traditionally attract migrants into towns such as higher wages and incomes, better training facilities or the charm of living in a big town. The minority consisted mainly of people who had been socially and economically better off than the average in their place of origin. What counted for the majority was the prospect of some gainful employment, whatever that may be.

In actual fact, Jakarta would seem to offer these people a relatively secure if minimal basis of subsistence. The greatest proportion of the immigrants asked, said that they had found a source of income during the first week after their arrival, and only relatively few remained without a job for longer than a month.¹¹ Evidently, with most of the new arrivals the relatively greater security, however minimal, counted for more than what they had given up, namely the obviously less appalling living conditions in the country.

Need for a Strategy Against Urban Poverty

Urbanisation in the form in which we can observe it taking place in Indonesia is by no means a normal phase of development characterising the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society. With all its consequences it is rather the manifestation of a development process gone awry — a process which constantly repeats the conditions for the reproduction of urban "marginality". For the town planners' intent on furthering urban development the following conclusions present themselves:

The situation in the towns requires urgent measures to bring about an immediate improvement in the living conditions of the poorest of the poor. Otherwise, social conflicts will be inevitable.

As long as conditions in the country do not sufficiently guarantee the agrarian population an adequate participation in the production process, the movement from the city to the towns must be regarded as irreversible. In the medium term, therefore, the aim must be integration of migrants into the towns' economy.

In the long run the complicated problem of urbanisation can be solved only by eradicating the causes of the flight from the country and by pursuing a policy of decentralising the large conurbations.

As conditions for the growth of urban marginality are closely connected with the entire development

process, measures aimed at removing this phenomenon must of necessity be part of a national development planning. In addition, the ultra-regional interdependence of the measures that would be required makes a central direction of the planning process essential. What is wanted is a superior authority which alone is capable of setting up a more or less uncontroversial system of objectives and then achieve them. A look at the extraordinarily over-burdened town budgets suffices to convince anyone that the planning of town development cannot be treated as a mere local problem. The general inadequacy of financial and other resources in developing countries makes it doubly plain that international development aid is wellnigh indispensable.

Jakarta's Urban Development Project

The mistake town planners in developing countries used to make in the past was to model their decisions too closely on the experiences of the industrial states. As a result infrastructures and job opportunities were for decades out of step with the real needs of the inhabitants. Realising this, the Indonesian authorities have set up as part of their second five-year plan (1974/79) a National Urban Development Corporation (NUDC) as well as the National Mortgage Bank (NMG). Thus for the first time they have the machinery to carry out a centrally planned housing policy for urban districts and an institution for the long-term financing of urban housing schemes, and, in particular, low-cost housing estates.

The activities of the NUDC are initially concentrated on the urban area of Jakarta, for there poverty, problems with the migrants and scarcity of dwellings are specially acute. Two programmes are being launched in the capital; they will later be copied in other towns. These programmes have the support of the World Bank.¹²

One of the objectives is to improve the infrastructure, particularly in the overcrowded Kampung areas in the heart of the city. During its first phase, that is until 1976, the programme proposes to deal with an area of about 2,000 hectares which represents roughly 18 p.c. of Jakarta's urbanised territory. Some 890,000 low-income earners or 20 p.c. of the capital's inhabitants are to benefit from the scheme, under which roads and pavements for pedestrians are to be built, schools and health centres erected and running water as well as sewage disposal plants and drainage provided. The execution of this public works programme is the responsibility of the civic authorities. In sub-

¹¹ cf. G. Temple, Migration to Jakarta, in: Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies, Vol. 11, No 1, March 1975, pp. 76.

¹² cf. Directorate General of Housing, Building, Planning and Urban Development, Jakarta Urban Development Project, Jakarta 1974.

sequent years further 2,400 hectares of urban area are to be infrastructurally improved in much the same manner.

Sites and Services

The purpose of the "Site and Service Programme" is to open up urban areas for human habitation. The emphasis is to be on sites close to industrial estates in the suburbs. Such sites are to be equipped with basic living quarters and the most elementary infra-structure. The people who settle there are expected to contribute about 80 p.c. of the development costs; the remainder will be financed by the government as part of its usual infrastructural investments. The NMG is supposed to advance to the would-be home buyer the necessary funds and that long term, to help in particular the low-income earners.

In Jakarta's thinly populated East End, it is intended to construct on roughly 130 hectares 7,930 basic dwelling units. All of these are to have direct access to firm streets or pedestrian pavements, be connected to the town's water supply system and have an aseptic tank. Provision is also made for the construction of schools and health centres. The inhabitants of the districts, by attending training courses, will be given a chance to acquire the necessary skills to enable them to complete, improve and possibly extend their basic dwellings. The Site and Service Programme is the responsibility of NUDC. Towards the end of the second five-year plan a further 1,000 hectares are to be opened up in this manner.

Future Prospects

That the solution of the problem of urbanisation is one of the most important preconditions for overcoming under-development, has long been well known. But only the most recent past has shown that to tackle this problem successfully in the conditions obtaining in developing countries a re-orientation of strategies is necessary. It is the close connection between town growth and the marginalisation process to which more attention will have to be given. That the true nature of the problem has now been recognised is shown by the example of Indonesia. Because in view of the fact that there town planning as an integral part of a national development project is still relatively new, any evaluation of the measures taken so far must of necessity be provisional.

Looked at in isolation the measures described above should have a positive impact on the social and economic conditions of urban life. The Kampung Improvement Scheme as well as the Site and Service Programme undoubtedly lead to an immediate improvement in the housing situation.

Besides, there is the favourable effect on the labour market while these projects are in process of execution.

What is questionable, on the other hand, is whether through these measures it will be possible to achieve a mobilisation of the slum dwellers in the sense of greater social emancipation. Participation of the marginal groups in the town development process must not only take the form of mobilisation of an unpaid labour force. If help is to generate self-help, more is needed than the mere provision of basic resources. There must also be created autonomous forms of production and distribution which meet the true needs of the marginal population. In short, the aims of regional planning must be harmonized with the aims of the population they concern.

Moreover, such measures are hardly likely to solve the problem of migration. It is even quite possible that as the attractions of the town increase, even more country people than before will stream into urban areas. In the long run such an increased migration may initially result in nullifying the positive effects of the development schemes. A policy of the "closed city" such as Jakarta has been following for years, which meant that residential permits are granted only in exceptional cases, are hardly likely to stem the tide. On the other hand, there is the Government's Transmigration Scheme which encourages inhabitants in Java to settle in the outer islands. This scheme operates in the right direction, and may perhaps be effective in relieving Jakarta of some of its marginal inhabitants. Past experience shows, however, that, on balance and for whatever reasons, "Transmigrasi" has not so far had the hoped-for success.

When all is said and done, the drift from the rural areas can only be stopped by measures which eradicate the deplorable economic and social conditions in the rural areas and provide the necessary pre-conditions for an integration of the rural population into the national production process. Community development programmes which aim at communal self-help and which, in part at least, are already operative under the title "Koperasi" are suitable methods of approach which should be pursued with even greater vigour than hitherto. Such forms of mobilisation might well be extended to parts of the urban marginal population if these schemes operate in towns. But to be successful in the long run, they must be linked to a comprehensive land reform.

Thus the future of the towns lies in the country. But this makes urban development policy on a local level by no means superfluous, provided it is pursued primarily as a national task, as an integral part of an interrelated global plan.