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11 Population Dynamics, Urbanization, and the Planning of Large Cities in the Arab World

The increasing concentration of population in a few large cities of the Third World—the Muslim world included—continues to remain a source of growing concern for the efficient management of those cities. The concern has particularly deepened at a time when conventional metropolitan administration and planning have come to confront an expanding list of socioeconomic, spatial, physical, and political crises that demand immediate, comprehensive, and innovative responses. Third World cities have attempted to deal with their problems in a variety of ways, using their own experiences and those of the cities in developed countries. The large cities of the Arab world are no exception.

This chapter is concerned with the issues of efficient management in five metropolitan centers in the Arab world, namely, Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt, Baghdad in Iraq, Casablanca in Morocco, and Algiers in Algeria. Specifically, the relationship between population processes and metropolitan development planning is investigated to indicate the extent to which population factors, including their present and future trends, have been incorporated into urbanization strategies, urban planning processes, and the management of the five metropolitan centers.

This chapter also reviews the extent to which integrated urban planning for these cities has in the past been hindered by conceptual, institutional, legal, administrative, and organizational structures; in addition, it also examines the initiatives introduced to correct those structures. It concludes that metropolitan

planning either does not exist or, where it does, is largely noncomprehensive. Plans remain primarily physical and only pay lip service to the socioeconomic and demographic trends and issues. This chapter recommends some approaches for integrating population, urban problems, human resources, and socioeconomic development factors in the urban planning process.

The region of the Middle East and North Africa had an estimated population of 206 million, or about 4.6 percent of the world total, in 1980. By the year 2000, its share is expected to increase 5.8 percent, for a total population of 354 million. Thus, the relative increase in the region's population between 1980 and 2000 (71.8 percent) is much larger than that of the world as a whole (37.6 percent) or that of the less developed regions (46.2 percent). This is primarily due to a relatively faster decrease in death rates in the region while birthrates are expected to continue at a high level; international migration out of the region as a whole remains insignificant.

Among the four countries—Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, and Morocco—that are the focus of this chapter, only Egypt and Morocco have promulgated some official policies to directly reduce fertility and population growth. Algeria does not have a direct official program for family planning, although such services are provided through family health services. Iraq encourages population growth through increased fertility, reduced mortality, and controlled migration (Omran 1984; United Nations 1980a). Therefore, the population in the four countries is expected to continue to grow at annual rates in excess of 2 percent through the 1980s (Table 11-1).

Such high rates of population growth continue at a time when rates of economic growth are slowing down. This results in imbalances that are likely to become more acute, given the increasing demand for employment by a growing labor force, particularly in the largest cities. With a generally young population and high dependency ratios, improvements in health and in women's education and participation in the labor force will result in a rapid growth of the labor force at rates higher than those of the total population.

Unemployment problems in the low-capital/large-labor countries have, up to now, been somewhat mitigated by labor migration to European or capital-rich countries in the region. The exchange of labor for sizable remittances of foreign exchange capital seemed to begin to address some of the imbalances between population and resources, but such processes appear to be only temporary and are already on the decline. Combined with continued rapid urbanization and shifts of labor from agriculture to manufacturing and service sectors, such shifts will place a heavy burden on the labor absorption capacity of the formal as well as the informal sectors of large city economies.

This is especially the case because the urbanization processes in the region have generally been skewed toward increased concentration of the urban popu-

TABLE 11-1
Demographic and Socioeconomic Indicators

	Algeria	Egypt	Iraq	Morocco
Part A (est. 1985)				
Population (000)	21,993	46,800	15,676	23,602
Median age	16.9	20.2	16.7	17.0
Dependency (%)	97.7	77.9	96.3	94.6
Sex ratio (/100 females)	99.6	103.5	102.9	100.2
Urban population (000)	14,656	21,759	11,071	10,369
Percent urban	66.6	46.5	70.6	43.9
Rate of annual change (1980-85) (%)				
-Total population	3.28	2.52	3.43	3.26
-Urban population	5.10	3.30	4.70	4.90
Crude birthrate	45.1	38.4	44.9	44.0
Crude death rate	12.3	12.5	10.7	11.5
Infant mortality rate	109.0	113.0	72.0	99.0
Percent change in infant mortality rate (1965-1980)	-30.9	-17.1	-41.3	-34.2
Life expectancy	57.8	57.3	59.0	57.9
Part B				
Population of working age (1983) (%)	50	57	51	52
Average annual growth of labor force (%)				
-1973-1983	3.6	2.4	3.1	2.8
-1980-2000	4.5	2.3	3.7	3.1
Labor force in agriculture (%)	59	56	50	60
Population per physician (1980)	2,630	970	1,800	10,750
Gross national product per capita; dollars (1983)	2,320	700	NA	760
Average annual growth rate (1965-1983)	3.6	4.2	NA	2.9
Population density (/km. ²)	11.0	49.0	36.0	53.0

Note: NA = Not Available.

Sources: United Nations, Department of International Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects: Estimates and Projections as Assessed in 1982* (New York: United Nations, 1985b); and World Bank, *World Development Report 1985* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

lation in the largest cities. With the notable exceptions of Algeria and Saudi Arabia, from one-fifth to two-thirds of the urban population lived in the largest city of each country in the region in 1980. The same statistic will hold true up to the year 2000 for the countries studied in this chapter, with the exception of Algeria (Table 11-2). More than half of the urban population of Egypt will continue to be concentrated in the largest two cities by the year 2000, and more than 60 percent of Iraq's urban population will be concentrated in the single city of Baghdad. The largest cities in the region have generally been growing much faster than the rest of their urban systems. While the region had no large cities (with four million or more population) in 1950, it now has three and is expected to have seven by the year 2000. It is the problems, planning, and future of five of these cities—Alexandria, Algiers, Baghdad, Cairo, and Casablanca—that will become the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

Population and Planning of Large Cities

The relationship between the planning and management of large cities and national population trends and policies is a two-way street. On the one hand, population trends and policies condition and determine the development of large cities and form the basis for determining urban problems and demands, as well as the standards, resources, and programs needed to deal with them. On the other hand, large city urbanism influences population behavior and trends, as well as the effectiveness of population planning and policies. Thus, the effective planning and management of large cities requires detailed and disaggregated data in both of these areas. It is not clear that such population data and evaluation research results are available to, or demanded by, planners of large cities in the Middle East. While concern with the impact of the large city on the development of the population has, at best, only received lip service in city plans, the concern with population trends (at least of the total city populations and their breakdown by age and sex) has typically been an integral part of the planning process. The concern has, however, remained largely limited to making projections that are often based on unrealistic assumptions about the long-range trends of migration and population distribution and the existence or effectiveness of national policies to deal with them. Therefore, it is not uncommon that city master plans either grossly underestimate the impact of rural-to-urban migration on city population growth or wishfully assume that some other level (usually the national government) will manage to control the magnitude and direction of migration so that city growth would be limited to what was felt to be appropriate population targets. Such was the case with the 1955 plan of metropolitan Cairo, which was based on a 1980 target population of 3.5 million. Needless to say,

TABLE 11-2
Extent of Urban Concentration, 1960-2000

Country/Largest City	Population of the Largest City as Percent of the Urban Population			
	1960	1980	1985	2000
Algeria/Algiers	27	12	11	10
Egypt/Cairo	38	39	39	36
Iraq/Baghdad	35	55	69	64
Morocco/Casablanca	16	26	23	26

Source: Calculated from estimates in the United Nations, *Urban, Rural and City Population, 1950-2000 as Assessed in 1978* (New York: United Nations, Population Division, June 1980b).

that target had already been surpassed by 1960, when the population of the metropolitan area reached 4.8 million (El-Shakhs 1971). While the effect of rural-to-urban migration was underestimated in the early planning for Cairo and Alexandria, it was simply ignored by European planners in the case of Casablanca, Algiers, and Baghdad (Berger 1960; Clark 1980). Similarly, the impacts of increasing international migration of both simple labor and qualified professionals on the large cities in the Arab world remain unnoticed or largely underestimated. There are many important aspects of such effects, including the shortages of professionals and skilled manpower and changes that remittances suggest on the consumption and investment patterns in these cities. It has been suggested, for example, that the number of automobiles in Cairo and the proliferation of housing built on agricultural land in the city and elsewhere have been partly the result of such migration.

We continue to suffer from our inability to project adequately the long-term changes and shifts in population distribution processes. For instance, while the United Nations has scaled down its projection of Cairo's population in the year 2000 from 20.0 million to 13.2 million, the city's latest master plan (General Organization for Physical Planning 1983) is based on a 16.5 million projection. Such projections are based on past experience or trends and fail to take into account the continuous restructuring processes at work both within metropolitan areas and national settlement systems.

The problem with setting rigid or unrealistic population targets is that they form the basis for projecting the housing, infrastructure, employment and ser-

vice requirements along with the design of projects and programs to implement them. The unanticipated or undesired portion of population growth would therefore tend to overcrowd the city's short housing supply and overload its utility, service, and employment capacity. By necessity, such people who are not planned for would seek satisfaction of their needs in any way possible in the informal sector and outside the city limits, where plans, services, and development controls are either very weak or nonexistent.

A better understanding of the future dynamics of migration and population distribution is crucial for rational planning of these cities. There is always the reverse danger of overbuilding large metropolitan areas during periods of rapid growth. The resulting rigidities in terms of capital plant, industrial infrastructure, production technologies, work patterns and characteristics, and political interests may inhibit a city's responsiveness and ability to adapt to future economic and population shifts, should they occur. These issues require more flexible plans and responsive planning mechanisms. Furthermore, the nature of the planning process, the resulting plans, and the consequent implementation and development of projects and programs in metropolitan areas have important demographic and social development consequences that are still little understood and thus rarely considered. This is particularly important with respect to differential impacts of alternative plans and strategies dealing with employment, housing, and services for the increasing numbers of the urban poor. For example, any imbalances between incremental improvements in income, education, and nutrition among the poor could lead to an increased demand for children and the reproductive capacity of couples while health improvements would decrease mortality, trapping the poor in a vicious circle (Economic Commission for Western Asia 1982; Linn 1979). Alternative approaches to community organization and participation, housing upgrading, location and access to services and employment, transportation, and informal sector activities should be evaluated not only in terms of satisfying certain needs or demands but also in terms of their effects on population factors. There is no evidence to date that any of the urban plans, community development and housing upgrading schemes, or even studies evaluating them considered their impacts on such issues as fertility, mortality, and life expectancy among the poor.

Urban Expansion and Problems

Clearly, all the cities reviewed in this chapter have one thing in common: by virtue of their location, function, and historical development, they all became major centers of attraction for migrants. As a result, they grew rapidly in population and expanded in area at a time when national population distribution poli-

TABLE 11-3
Estimated Future Expansion Land Needs Based
on High and Moderate Density Assumptions

City	Population (000)		Land Area km ²	Density P/ha ^a	Estimated Land Needs (Year 2000) km ²	
	1985	2000			Medium Density 145 P/ha	High Density 257 P/ha
Alexandria	3,101	5,500	193	120	217	125
Algiers	1,553	2,588	210	45	116	67
Baghdad	7,200	12,800	139	163	517	298
Cairo	8,500	13,200	297	236	653	376
Casablanca	2,601	5,242	113	158	233	134

^a P/ha = persons per hectare; one hectare is 10,000 square meters or approximately 2.47 acres.

Sources: United Nations, *Compendium of Human Settlements Statistics: 1983*, 4th issue (New York: United Nations, 1985a); and M. G. Kitay, *Land Acquisition in Developing Countries* (Cambridge, MA: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 1985).

cities and metropolitan planning were either nonexistent or ineffective. Currently, they all have significantly large populations whose natural increase will continue to fuel their future growth, with or without additional migration. Moreover, the factors that made these cities more attractive relative to the rest of their urban systems, as well as those that caused rural-to-urban migration, do not yet show signs of important change.

Cairo's area has expanded fifteenfold during the last century. Most of this expansion occurred since World War II. The other cities have similarly experienced an increased expansion in their built-up area during the same period. It is estimated that additional expansion, from 30 to 220 percent, will be needed to accommodate their projected populations by the year 2000 (Table 11-3). Cairo, Baghdad, and Algiers expanded as a consequence of their role and function as national capitals. Alexandria and Casablanca continue to be major commercial ports. In addition, or as a result, they all acquired substantial industrial functions; over the last thirty years, Cairo has become the most extensive industrial agglomeration in the country.

The processes of migration and concentration of urban population and economic activities played an important role not only in these cities' rapid popu-

lation growth but also in changing their demographic and social structures. Several socioeconomic issues, related to increased population pressure, can be defined as common to all the cities reviewed. They may vary in intensity but are nevertheless significant in all cases and can be summed up in the issues of urban poverty and inequalities in income and quality of life within metropolitan areas; increased demand for and reliance on informal activities for employment, housing, and urban services not satisfied by the formal sector; polarization and conflict among classes or population groups and between economic sectors; and, finally, a sense of alienation and lack of initiative and participation in the formal development process and its institution on the part of large segments of the population, including women. Unfortunately, the information and research results necessary to adequately address these issues are either lacking or unavailable.

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

The severe pressures on the supply of housing and urban land initially led to increased overcrowding and density in the older sections or *medinas* within the cities. Densities reach levels from 100,000 to 150,000 people per square kilometer in parts of Casablanca, Cairo, and Alexandria, and occupancy ratios of up to three or four persons per room are not uncommon in such quarters (Table 11-4). With the saturation of the old quarters, the migrants and the poor invariably settled in any available space in the built-up area or, more frequently, on the outskirts of the cities in informal, illegal, or squatter housing.

Although estimates vary widely and current statistics are not available, it has been estimated that the proportion of the metropolitan area's populations living in informal, illegal, or squatter housing (such as the Bidonvilles of Casablanca and Algiers; the Sarifas of Baghdad; and the City of the Dead and other squatter areas in Cairo) ranged from one-fifth to two-thirds at various times during the last three decades (see Table 11-4). For example, squatter housing constitutes more than a quarter of all urban housing in Morocco (World Bank 1981) and illegal, informal housing constitutes more than half of all construction activities in urban areas in Egypt (Hardoy and Satterthwaite 1981).

Clearly, more detailed and accurate recent data on the extent, nature, quality, and impact of these forms of settlements on the population are needed. The fact remains, however, that squatters and unplanned, unregulated, unserved, and substandard housing provide the primary accommodations and environment for the urban poor. By any measure, such settlements make up a large part of the metropolitan areas where the poor are trapped in a vicious circle. The unhealthy environment and lack of access to employment and low incomes "induce poor

TABLE 11-4
Metropolitan Area Profile

City Characteristics	Cairo	Baghdad	Alexandria	Casablanca	Algiers
Population (in thousands)	8,500	7,200	3,101	2,601	1,533
- 1985	13,200	12,800	5,500	5,242	2,600-4,800
- 2000	4.0 (1976-82)	5.0 (1970)	3.1 (1970)	4.2 (1970)	5.7 (1970)
Population growth rate (%)	51.1 (1976)	—	51 (1976)	60 (1970)	—
Percent males	47 (1977)	19	50.7 (1976)	113 (only city)	210
Land area (square kilometers)	297	16,300	16,067	15,800	4,500
Density (per square kilometer)	25,700 (1980)	—	133-133,000 (1976)	2,000-150,000	—
Density range	6,933-109,481 (1980)	517	217	233	116
Land needs at moderate density, year 2000 (square kilometers)	653	—	—	—	—
Literacy rate (%)	66 (1976)	—	63 (1976)	—	—
Population per physician	630 (1976)	—	—	—	—
Population per hospital bed	892 (1976)	310 (mid-1970s)	210 (mid-1970s)	460	—
Percent squatters	23	29 (1965)	—	20 to 70 (1971-75)	—
Percent squatter housing	50 (1977)	44 (1960)	—	—	—
Persons per room ratio	2.1 (1980)	3 (ca. 1970)	1.9 (1976)	—	2.8 (1966)
Percent unemployment	6.0 (1978)	—	7.0 (1978)	20.6 (1971)	—

Note: Estimates vary among sources and are subject to differences in definition.

Sources: For Cairo: General Organization for Physical Planning (1983), Martin et al. (1986), PADCO (1982), U.S. AID (1982), and census data, among others; For Baghdad: Gulick (1967), Hals and Satterthwaite (1981), and Kaout (1984), among others; For Alexandria: Comprehensive Plan: Alexandria 2005 (1983), PADCO (1982), U.S. AID (1982), and Egyptian census data, among others; For Casablanca: Abu-Lughod (1980), Clark (1980), Ibrahim (1980), and World Bank (1981), among others; and for Algiers: American University, Area Handbook of Algeria (1975), Blake and Lawless (1980), and Klay (1985), among others.

education, health, nutrition and family planning, which interact among and reinforce each other, thus leading in turn to low productivity and poverty" (Linn 1979).

Attempts to deal with the issue of squatter settlements and the provision of housing for the urban poor in Middle Eastern cities are many. They range from early efforts at demolition of squatters and resettlement in vast public housing schemes (as in Baghdad and Algiers); to legalization and upgrading approaches; to a widespread use of housing cooperatives as a vehicle to expand housing supply and access to urban land for low- and moderate-income populations (as in Cairo and Baghdad). The use of housing cooperatives, in particular, has been widespread in the region (at least in Egypt and Iraq). The little available research evaluating this approach seems to indicate that it was not very helpful to low-income groups, that it is inequitable, that it encouraged low-density suburban sprawl, and that it helped foster income segregation (Eke 1981; Raouf 1984). The terms and requirements of credit and membership in organized cooperatives tend to be enjoyed only by the formal labor force.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE INFORMAL SECTOR

The growing demand for employment and services not satisfied by the formal sector fuels the proliferation of informal approaches to generate income, housing, transportation, utilities, and services. These informal, unplanned responses often result in conflicts between the two sectors in standards, transportation modes, and land use allocations. Managing the coexistence or integration of the two sectors presents a difficult, unresolved task. Despite a growing recognition of the crucial role played by the informal sector, it is still looked down upon as undesirable.

This approach to the informal sector reflects a profoundly noneconomic view of its contribution to income generation and satisfaction of consumption and housing needs for the poor and, more generally, to the economy of large cities. Although no precise figures are available, its share of the labor force in the cities reviewed here is suspected to be substantial, particularly in the areas of construction, retail trade, and services. It is, though, in the largest cities that biases against the informal sector tend to be greatest. The desire for modernization and beautification of such cities conflicts with the demands for basic needs; disproportionate government attention and public investment displace or disturb informal productive functions; and those who benefit from the informal sector employment normally wield little influence and exert little, if any, political pressure on strategic planners and decision makers (El-Shakhs 1984; Lea and Courtney 1985).

Nature, Structure, and Limits of Metropolitan Planning

INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION

Practically all large cities in the Middle East, especially those discussed in this chapter, have had a long history of municipal planning in one form or another. This has ranged from land use, subdivision, and building codes and regulations to overall development schemes or master plans, often devised by Western consultants (as in Cairo and Baghdad) or by colonial planners (as in Casablanca and Algiers).

Municipal planning in the sense of regulation of land uses and some, but not all, of the basic services and utilities continued well into the post-World War II period in the European physical planning and design tradition. The changes in the post-World War II period have been minimal, and the tradition of physical planning with emphasis on infrastructure continues. Indeed, comprehensive metropolitan planning either does not exist or, where it does, only pays lip service to the socioeconomic and demographic trends and issues. Several reasons may be given for this. (1) The actual mechanisms of urban social and economic development are still little understood, and adequate applicable models or methodologies of integrating population factors in urban planning are not yet well developed, particularly for developing nations. (2) Social, economic, and political development processes are usually considered as part of national rather than local concerns and are dealt with sectorally from the top down. Thus, municipalities lack both the legitimacy and power to effect such change within their own boundaries. (3) The detailed demographic, social, and economic information crucial for planning is often either not available or not disaggregated at municipal and metropolitan levels. This includes information about the informal sector. (4) Urban plans are still mostly perceived in the tradition of rigid and long-range physical master plans partly because of dated planning legislation, which requires them, and partly because most planners and architects feel more confident in developing such plans.

Another problem relates to the highly centralized form of government and the shortage of professional planners. It is, therefore, not surprising that the overall responsibility for urban functions (in the areas of housing, education, health, transportation, and industrial development), finance, and more generally, urban and regional development rested and still rests with national agencies rather than with local organizations. Moreover, given the physical nature of metropolitan planning, the national organizations responsible for overseeing urban plans have invariably been the ministries of housing, reconstruction,

development, and/or resettlement or some specific organizations within them (for example, the General Organization for Physical Planning within the Ministry of Development in Egypt). Such organizations assist municipalities in developing plans either directly or through their regional provincial offices or by hiring consultants, but in all cases, they retain the authority to approve them. Only major large cities may have the staff necessary to undertake their own planning functions, but even there the scope and impact of such plans, and the power and resources necessary to implement them, are severely limited. In particular, the urban governments are highly dependent on the national governments for their financial resources, the formulation of social and economic policies, and the setting of laws and regulations.

Furthermore, all important urban social functions and services, such as education, health, family planning, and social welfare, are entirely integrated administratively in the national systems and are centrally planned and controlled by the respective ministries and implemented by their provincial or regional offices. Typically, the provincial administrators of such functions have a dual reporting system to the central ministries and to the governors or prefects, whose roles have been expanding to supervise and coordinate actions of government agencies within their jurisdictions (U.S. AID 1982; World Bank 1981). However, policies, finance, standards, performance criteria, and civil service allocations are all set and controlled nationally.

The absence of integrated middle-level (that is, regional or metropolitan) planning often makes it difficult for local governments to be responsive, and for local planning to be adaptive, to local issues. National policies, legislation, and regulations are formulated to achieve broad national goals and are frequently adjusted in response to national issues and priorities, which are not necessarily synonymous with those at all local levels at all times. Although efforts are usually made to allow for local differences in priorities, regulations, standards, and so on, any further refinements take time through the complex process of national approval, planning, or legislative change. Conversely, any changes at the national level may interrupt the continuity and effectiveness of local programs. Such problems in national/local coordination, which could be mediated through effective regional or metropolitan planning, are many.

While functional integration of planning (such as economic, social, and physical) at the municipal and local levels has been difficult to achieve—because of the limited authority and responsibilities of local governments—spatial coordination of metropolitan planning across municipal boundaries has been even more problematic. This is particularly the case, as with Cairo, if the metropolitan area does not fall within one province, governorate, or prefecture. To overcome such problems, governments experimented with the creation of special or regional planning levels and authorities. These included a metropolitan planning

commission for Greater Cairo (1965) and attempts at the regionalization and localization of development planning in Morocco (1970).

The systems of local government have been slowly evolving toward a less centralized structure in most countries in the region over the last twenty years or so. There has been a continuous and conscious effort on the part of national governments to clarify and strengthen the resources and powers of local governments, especially at the municipal or commune levels. However, since local governments' resources are limited (typically generated from local fees and minor taxes prescribed by national governments), and they have no power to raise new taxes or retain the major taxes that they collect, their system of finance is deficit oriented. They rely on central government budgeting subsidies (or revenue sharing) and grants to make up the gap between their resources and expenditures. Central government funds generally amount to from 60 to 70 percent of the local government budgets. Such allocations are neither uniform nor systematic and are made annually through a complex bureaucratic and time-consuming process of budgetary requests from the bottom up to the central sectoral ministries.

The results often bear little relationship to the actual local needs or requests and are frequently a function of the connections and standing of the governors. There has been a general recognition that a regional planning level is necessary to provide the institutional links between national and local planning, on the one hand, and between socioeconomic and physical development on the other. Thus, Egypt was divided into eight planning regions in 1979 and Morocco established seven such regions in 1971. In both cases, though, the regions were not intended to be decentralized administrative units and had little power, unless their boundaries coincided with one province or prefecture. Morocco's ambitious initiative was intended to integrate spatial planning with the development goals and allocations of the national economic plan and thus transform urban planning from an exclusive concern with land use and housing to become a part of a comprehensive scheme of social and economic development (Abu-Lughod 1980; Clark 1980). Egypt's regional planning commissions, assisted by agencies affiliated with the Ministry of Planning, were intended to coordinate governorate plans, develop regionwide economic and social development plans, and determine development priorities. While such mechanisms are theoretically plausible, they have not, in practice, been able to perform their intended functions.

CONCEPTUAL AND PRACTICAL CONFLICTS AND LIMITATIONS

Aside from the institutional and structural problems explained above, urban planning in the Arab world, like in most Third World countries, also

suffers from conceptual and practical conflicts and limitations. The modern conception of urban planning (such as dealing with economic, social, and spatial processes and the interactions between them) is still weakly developed in the region. Planning, for example, suffers from weak local autonomy and control and strong national sectoral interests. While most governments in the region have long desired and attempted greater decentralization, this contradiction is still unresolved. Therefore, urban planning often ends up dealing exclusively with physical infrastructure and land use planning in some idealized pattern, with little attention to economic and social development or to the desires and needs of the ordinary people. Public participation in the articulation of goals and trade-offs in planning the urban future is usually minimal or nonexistent (Clark 1980).

Practically, the problems have several sources and dimensions. First, there is a lag in time between the phenomenon and the response. The process of planning and implementation is slow. The legislation, regulations, and powers needed often do not exist or are outdated or are beyond the control of local authorities. Enforcement procedures are weak, overlooked, or, in some cases (for instance, the penalties of demolishing illegal housing in Egypt or the preservation of agricultural land in Cairo), uncertain and frequently overruled when they prove to be politically unacceptable or impractical. Political boundaries, or planning and administrative jurisdictions, have generally not evolved fast enough to fit the growing scale and interdependence of metropolitan areas. Thus, the authority and capacity of urban governments for planning and implementation often do not correspond with, or lag behind, the rapidly changing nature and scope of metropolitan functions.

Second, large cities and their planners have often been caught in the squeeze between inflated expectations, grandiose goals, visual aesthetics, and high standards, on the one hand, and limited resources and implementation capacity on the other. This frequently results not only in heightening frustrations as a result of lower levels of achievement but also in the misallocation of scarce resources. The desire and efforts for modernization and beautification conflict with basic needs and affordability and tend to be biased against the informal sector. While such efforts weaken this sector, they shift the burden of services and social and economic functions to formal sectors and governments that are frequently unable to perform them, at least for the poor.

Third, there is the ever-present conflict between the public interest—broadly defined in terms of the total population needs and goals of equity, opportunity, and justice—and the private interest of the urban elite, landlords, and bureaucratic organizations. While the training of professional planners prepares them to respond instinctively to wider issues of equity, they are usually a part of the privileged minority with whose ideology and interests such con-

cerns are bound to conflict (Lea and Courtney 1985). Such interests may be hurt if plans are uniformly enforced, which raises questions about the real desire and commitment to implement the plans.

Finally, the nature of urban infrastructure, particularly physical infrastructure, is such that it requires a long time to be developed, has a long life span, is not geographically transferable to fit differential shifts in demand, and is normally not structurally adaptable to suit changing needs. Their high cost, long economic life, and structural rigidity severely limit the options and flexibility needed to adapt urban environments to their changing demographic dimensions, economic functions, and service demands. It is often not feasible to replace them or change them once they become obsolete, inefficient, or simply redundant.

Recommendations for Action

The Arab world is not lacking in initiatives and wealth of experiences in dealing with the formal and informal urban sectors and the urban poor (for example, resettlement, upgrading, health and family planning, and development of small enterprises); nor is it lacking in initiatives for organization for regional development, administrative decentralization, development of frontier regions, growth centers, and national planning. Among their multiple objectives, such initiatives had two in common: to create a more balanced development and to enhance the quality of life and participation of the population in the development process. What seems to be in short supply, however, is a body of evaluative research on the experience in implementation of such initiatives, their intended and unintended impacts on population factors, and their effectiveness in achieving their initial goals.

Given the common tradition and heritage of cities in the region, their development experiences are not irrelevant to one another, and, given the dearth of evaluative research, they stand to benefit from exchanging existing evaluations of policies and planning efforts. The large cities would also gain from joint comparative research on common issues and possibly the training and exchange of planning and development professionals. Additional benefits would be gained if the old initiatives are redesigned and carefully implemented and new initiatives and responsibilities are introduced at the metropolitan, national, and international levels.

METROPOLITAN-LEVEL INITIATIVES

The issue of striking a balance between centralization and decentralization in the planning and implementation processes is not unique to national govern-

ments but also applies to metropolitan organization and planning. Because the size, density, and functional complexity of large cities and metropolitan areas tend to negatively impact the initiative and self-reliance of local population groups, especially the poor, their organization should become an explicit parameter in urban development and population strategies. The articulation of various settlement units into interdependent settlement complexes of small and medium-size "cities within the city" could enhance the productive contribution of the informal sector, increase household and community initiative and self-reliance for basic needs and services, expand training and employment potential, and reduce the populations' demands and dependence on central and metropolitan governments and their public sector (El-Shakhs 1984). After all, the most important resource of a metropolitan area is its people.

Such organizational decentralization would promote local identity and a sense of belonging and create a closer working relationship between populations and their local urban authorities. The potentials of their joint contribution to the development of education, health, nutrition, and population planning programs should not be ignored (Linn 1979). This partnership in development at the level of small communities could also lead to more flexible, innovative, and collaborative efforts "in which the beneficiaries have a more participative and responsible role in both planning and implementation" (Rondinelli 1985).

Specifically, metropolitan-level initiatives may include planning integration at the community level, articulation of responsibility for urban functions, popular participation in urban services, and creation of an integrated information base. It is important that these initiatives be seen as complementary to one another and be devised accordingly.

Integrated community planning requires that the metropolitan community be involved in the process of analyzing the internal structure of the metropolitan area for identifying viable communities for planning and action programs. The existing patterns of land uses, activities, administrative and political subdivisions, community organizations, and people's perceptions of the size and boundaries of their community would be important considerations in this process. The process should cover the total area both within and outside each central city or municipality. The resulting network of communities would serve as the basic spatial framework for the planning, participation, and implementation processes. It would facilitate strategic planning processes, which integrate physical, economic, social, and institutional aspects, as well as formal and informal sector mechanisms and contributions.

To articulate responsibility for urban functions, metropolitan authorities should consider and encourage the contribution of local urban authorities, such as communes and districts, in the area of urban social services. This requires an articulation of each service into those aspects that ought to remain metropolitan-

wide and those that could be best performed locally (for instance, informal and adult education, senior citizen care, and certain aspects of preventive health care, nutrition, and family planning).

Popular participation in urban services should include such functions as planning, management, and delivery of such services. Metropolitan authorities or separate municipal authorities in a metropolitan area, whichever the case may be, should consider the establishment of a metropolitan fund that would provide grants-in-aid and technical assistance to encourage and support initiatives by local communities or groups, be it block, neighborhood, or district associations. The fund could draw upon unrestricted resources, and its impact could be enhanced by using it as an incentive or by matching community development grants for both formal and informal activities. There are numerous approaches and experiments in urban participatory movements that would provide for a useful exchange of experiences.

Finally, integrating the information base for urban planning should incorporate, guide, and encourage the contributions of the informal sector in the development of metropolitan areas, particularly in housing and small-scale enterprises. Metropolitan and municipal authorities can use this network of community participation not only to channel education, training, and technical assistance to both the formal and informal sectors but also to develop a better integrated information base for planning and coordination of metropolitan functions. This two-way relationship would help in defining and clarifying issues of quality of life, basic needs, priorities, standards, regulations, and the nature of interactions between them and population issues. It would also help in developing a better demographic and socioeconomic data base in such areas as household income, effective employment, occupational structure, and attitudes toward women, children, and family planning.

NATIONAL VERSUS LOCAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Recent efforts toward administrative and planning decentralization (as in Egypt) or deconcentration (as in Morocco and Algeria) are good first steps in the continuing process of articulation of the relations between different levels of government. Such an articulation should clarify those aspects of each urban function that ought to remain the responsibility of national governments (for example, to preserve scale economies, sectoral efficiency, capacity for technical innovation, equity, and vertical coordination) and those that should be decentralized (for instance, to promote initiative, participation, relevance, local identity, and territorial integration). The national responsibility for urban functions, on

the one hand, would include formulation of broad policy framework and priorities, establishment of minimum standards, research and technical innovation and assistance, financial assistance and equalization of resources, assistance in information collection and in dissemination of detailed and aggregate national statistics, education and training of professionals, and allocation of major resources of national significance. Local responsibilities for urban function, on the other hand, should include program planning and design, establishing local priorities and standards, training of professional middlemen, facilitators, and community organizers, allocation of local resources, urban land and service infrastructure, operational policy measures, and management techniques, including incentives, controls, regulations, and monitoring, and implementation and evaluation of the programs and projects.

In the real world, the distinction between local and national responsibilities is more fluid and can be maintained only if the desire for so doing is present at both levels and the technical abilities of the local governments are adequately developed. This requires continued cooperation between the two levels and between them and the international community, from which appropriate theories and techniques may be learned. Among many areas where international communities and organizations could be of assistance to the processes of planning and management of large cities in the Arab world, improvement of the information base, development of appropriate methodologies and models particularly for integrating population issues in planning for the urban future, and the education and training of professionals are appropriate and important.

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