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Up to the twentieth century, city self-government and self-financing was historically the norm. Then both a major slump and two world wars impelled in Europe the centralization of government powers in national States. It was this degree of centralization which was inherited by the former colonial dependencies, the newly independent countries, in the 1950s and 1960s. Those countries faced unprecedented levels of urbanisation and unmanageable concentrations of population. This led governments and aid agencies to emphasize rural development (to discourage out-migration to the cities), population redistribution and industrial decentralization.

However, a different tradition stressed the economic importance of raising productivity through the concentration of population and resources, propelling rather than restricting economic development. This approach was much more common in north and South America, and received some recognition in some postwar city planning efforts in developing countries (notably in Calcutta, 1966). However, what forced this approach to become the norm in the big cities of the developed countries was the deindustrialization of the 1970s and 1980s and economic globalization, forcing city planners to develop innovative approaches to high unemployment and urban and industrial dereliction.

The DPU began graduate programmes and consultancies in city economic management from the 1970s, and was instrumental in persuading the British aid ministry to revise its

Preface

1. Introduction

# Preface

I am unusually conscious of the inadequacies of this account. It is, in the main, non-academic, extracted from my far from perfect memory (and therefore covers not the whole topic but only those fragments with which I was involved or at least came across) and rarely supported by proper references. Nor am I confident that I have recorded the correct sequence of events in the story: my apologies.

I owe a great debt of gratitude to Tim Campbell (Urban Age and former World Bank Urban Department), and Peter Townroe (formerly East Anglia and Sheffield Hallam Universities) for the careful reading of earlier drafts and copious suggestions to improve the text. Errors remaining are exclusively my own.

> *"Economies are too important to be left to economists and cities too important to be left to architect-planners"*

# 2. The postwar urban agenda

In the 1950s when the nucleus of what was to become the Development Planning Unit was being fashioned, opinion that concerned itself with the "underdeveloped countries"[1] was powerfully shaped by a series of international reports describing the rapid (and implied in some cases, rapidly accelerating) population growth of those countries, the supposed maldistribution of populations, and rapid rural-urban migration, leading to what seemed to be unprecedented and unmanageable

ulation with the one-child policy. In any case, popula-
tion growth rates were already falling (pressed by the
remarkably improved rates of infant survival, improved
maternal literacy and age of parturition, and health care).

In terms of population redistribution, the more ambi-
tious the policy aims, the less effective; people proved
remarkably resistant to moving to thinly populated areas
precisely because thin population indicated the low eco-
nomic potential to support population.

Decentralization as a policy objective, proved resistant
to change[4], even though the costs to business and the
exchequer, of  relocation to poorly serviced areas were
not insignifcant. Even in Britain where population and
industrial decentralisation were additionally justifed by
the need to disperse targets to escape destruction from
mass bombing, and with more resources to devote to
the issue, the results       in Br

# 3. The alternative case

The United State was not subject to the debilitating centralization of political authority (so far as cities were concerned) that engulfed the war economies of Europe (and was subsequently inherited by the former colonies of European empires). Some measure of centralization occurred – in the New Deal of the 1930s, and in the wartime organisation of national production – but the political autonomy of the States of the Union and, to a lesser extent, the cities, survived intact. It is therefore not surprising that the frst postwar works to identify the peculiar economic attributes of the city should have been written in New York by the justly famous Jane Jacobs (1961; 1969). Nor was it surprising that

the means to restore prosperity and employment to their cities. The stage was set for the rediscovery of the entrepreneurial city.

In the United States, this conversion was most dramatic and, in time, major industrial cities – Pittsburg, Cleveland, Boston, New York, etc. – found new economic roles, now in services rather than manufacturing, and through relating to a newly emerging global economy, rather than just national markets. Only Detroit, the star performer in the postwar growth of the car industry, missed out on the recovery process and fell further and further into slump, becoming, to use Lant Pritchard's (2004) terminology, a "zombie city" with a labour force constantly larger than the available capacity to employ.

The reconsideration of urbanisation and the reorientation of city management was reflected in some of the deliberations of the United Nations 1976 Vancouver conference, leading up to the creation of a new UN agency, the UN Commission on Human Settlements (Habitat), with its headquarters in Nairobi. A close associate of the DPU, Cho Padamsee was deputy director of the preparatory work for the Vancouver conference at the UN headquarters in New York, and Otto Koenigsberger nominated me to prepare one of the policy papers on the economic significance of cities (Harris, 1976).

As the DPU began its training and consultancy work in

Surveys", important contributions to the urban research base, drawing on fndings from a large number of countries and cities. Urban issues started being addressed in the routine Bank Country Economic Reports. UNDP also helped fnance a number of economic planning exercises.

 The new planning approach included several complementary components:

- A new research-based analytical approach to

DPU 60th Anniversary

## NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

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**5.** See the "interpretation" in Vernon (1960b).

**6.** In contrast to the then-fashionable demand that cities and urban capital be dispersed in the countryside, "deconcentrated", the Calcutta plan defed the conventional wisdom: "rapid economic growth, certainly in the short term, may require a yet greater concentration of capital investment and industrial expansion to maximize the growth potential in the Calcutta Metropolitan District" (Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization, 1966, p.22).

**7.** Some economic statistics relating to Madras, DPU, Jul/ Nov.1981 (mimeogr).

**8.** For the introduction to the Bombay focus, see Harris (1994).

**9.** Liverpool's crisis in the UK was one of the most notorious. Mrs. Thatcher appointed one of her most senior ministers, Michael Heseltine, to be responsible for the city's revival. The Minister journeyed weekly to the city to oversee the reconstruction. The planners had advised that outside investment was not attracted to the city because it was ugly so there was a campaign to beautify the city. The story is told of Heseltine and city offcials walking round the city to plant fowers, while behind them, gangs of unemployed youth followed, tearing up the fowers.

employment (Harris et al., 1996). Germany funded a CDS for Aden. There were many other self-funding city strategy studies, for example, of Johannesburg and Durban. Taiwan funded two studies – of I-Lan county (1993) and Keelung City (1997) (RSP Singapore), and Indonesian sources, Jogjakarta.

However, the most significant push for City Development strategies in Asia came when the Japanese government offered Japan's postwar planning experience, with its planners and funding for a spectacular upscaling of city studies and plans in Asia. In a remarkably short space of time, this produced a scale and variety of city strategies that made generalisation about what was produced most difficult.

Once begun, the speed with which formulating city strategies spread was quite extraordinary. By the middle of 2001, it was said 50 CDSs had been completed, 46 more were underway, with possibly 150 in all. Of course, it also needs to be noted that the number of cities with one million or more population increased dramatically in these years (1980-2010), testimony to the extraordinary growth in the world's productivity in this period.

**10.** See Dillinger (1992). Juarez later became notori     lat4  l         D     q   whic7   ed C                                    lat4

# 5. Assessment

When, in September 2002, Patrick Wakely and I undertook an assessment of the first three years of the work of the Cities Alliance it was not yet clear what of substance had been achieved, although some of the problems had emerged sharply (Campbell, T., 2001a; Cities Alliance, 2002). Thus, without repeating the detail of the Report itself:

> 1. The speed of implementation was itself a problem since the stress fell upon producing a product, a plan (even if it was an "Action plan", not a Master Plan), rather than reshaping the institutional structure of city government, whether to institutionalize economic, poverty and environmental monitoring, or the participatory underpinning of management.

> 2. There were rarely the skills available in the city to staff the effort, and no time to encourage the development of those skills for permanent strategy-

powers, great autonomy, to city government, it certainly did touch directly on domestic political issues. One of the most important factors determining the centralization of State power  has been the degree of insecurity the State

*NOTES TO CHAPTER 5*

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**12.** Comparable to this were the 50 cities in Tamilnad (India) of the World Bank Urban Development Project.

**13.** As a businessman in Mumbai once remarked to me - "If we could only get rid of the deadweight of India, we could duplicate all Singapore's success". In fact, in my 1978 report on Bombay (Mumbai), Economic Development, Cities and Planning (Harris, 1978), I recommended that India's big cities were far too important to be governed by local authorities and the surrounding provincial governments, and should be separated and granted, as in the Chinese case, provincial status. Of course, there was little question of this coming about – the provincial governments would not allow the cities, pork barrels in provincial politics, to slip from their grasp.

**14.** We visited Bandar Abbas in the south, Anzali, Rusht and Qazvin in the north, and, of course, Teheran.

**15.** And subsequent public debate in print – see Harris (2007).

# References

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