

URBAN ENVIRONMENT AND URBANIZATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: AN APPROACH ON THE EXAMPLES OF INDIA, LYBIA AND TANZANIA

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Nowadays, the developing countries increasingly undertake actions at various levels aimed at perceiving and understanding problems of their social and spatial transformations, especially in the context of development conditions of the contemporary world.

The afore actions and meetings lead us to the following conclusion: developing countries bear a heavy load of underdevelopment and technological dependence, so that bridging of the gap between the "developed" and "developing" - is an imperative of the time.

With respect to such ideas, science and technology are defined, in a broader sense, as decisive development means, thus acting as important existence factors.

Within towns, physical, technical, social, economic and political problems, which could have been avoided only if we knew the local reality better.

Developing countries have their own national and local characteristics and problems, that ought to become part of the general picture of the state - as a starting point requiring changes of the arbitrary programs and dynamics of construction, in order to conform with some specific conditions.

There are different climatic conditions and local building materials; existent and distinctive concepts of human settlements and social structures; there are specific and unique economic and demographic characteristics; there are cultural-ethnic features and spatial-formation values, which must become part of the synthesis and development programs concepts; their implementation and creation of an adequate human environment is of prior importance instead of implementing arbitrary

"models" and imitating solutions that have heavy implications on local people and their environment.

With respect to the above, an example of changes, that has happened in Libya, is very indicative:

"Changes in spatial concepts were reflected qualitatively on the volumes and stylistic changes in architecture, shaping of land, as well as on other fields of creative efforts. Old models were converted into the new ones, the pedestrian scale into the automobile, compactness into sprawl"(1).

The research of the relation between human beings and space, within the sphere of "developed" and "developing" - their "production and consumption of space" and all accompanying consequences in the process of changing urban environment, will enrich the picture of these two phenomena, expressing a different way of life in many aspects.

These factors will be reflected through people by way of their behavior, showing a complex relationship with characteristics of place - through distances, directions, locations, land use, groupings, etc., that people use with the aim of organizing and developing space. Pointing out the importance of the place as an achievement of man's "existential" space K.N. Schultz said:

"Since ancient times, man perceived that different places show a variety of characters. Such characters can be so distinguished that, in reality, they are determining all fundamental forms of our environment - contributing to the fact that the majority of inhabitants, will develop the feeling of belonging to the same place"(2).

Simultaneously, throughout time, these factors are distinguished in the light of various quantities, confirmed by the historic development of each environment: expressing man's conditions and achievements in time and space that make urban environment a realistic indicator of civilization.

So, owing to the knowledge of the interactions between persons and their environment, in different periods of a particular society - it will be possible to make various adaptations of a country's specific circumstances, corresponding to contemporary development conditions. Consequently, architecture and urbanism forms will evolve in close correlation with the international values system, yet expressing conditions of a specific environment and aspiration of a concrete society.

This aspect of the afore subject points out the author's intention, firstly, to state the theoretical views and than to perceive urban environment of developing countries. This is supported by examples of India, Libya and Tanzania, with the interpretation of their specific urbanization processes in the light of interdependencies in everyday interactions between persons and their environment, explaining influential factors in historical terms as elements of the continual development process.

Methodologically, the determination of the observed subject in this context has the form of the individual interaction of the author himself and the environments he lived in. The focus of observation, hereby, has its formal and informal sphere. The informal one derives from the fact that the author-researcher, participated in the life of his "objects" for nearly ten years,

professionally and as a private person. This covers his work, official trips, membership in various establishments, reciprocal relations with neighbors, shopping and recreation activities etc.

In order to express some specific features of the above mentioned societies, at the global level the researcher has to be acquainted, at least to a certain extent, with the domestic culture, learning their norms and expectations. Therefore, a great number of information is collected from the informal contacts that do not have solid grounds for comparison, yet representing a background for better understanding of the phenomenon that belongs to the formal sphere of the research.

The importance of the experienced generalization can be seen in the study of V. Milic who said:

"Structuring of informal relations enables the creation of various features of the collective domain of the social structure (lifestyle, style in architecture, etc.)"(3).

In order to achieve a complete picture, i.e., to fulfill predetermined objectives, this work, in its formal research sphere, must incorporate macro and micro aspects of the social life.

If one wishes to distinguish specific features of spatial-physical components of urbanization, then, the specific relations between the global society and human settlements ought to be explained, including comprehensive analysis and explanations of social and spatial conditions of concrete people's living habits. This is necessary because global societies are not an abstract totality, but more or less entities that differ among themselves with respect to cultural, functional and territorial aspects.

In this case, within India, the formal research territory concerning the exact living conditions covered West Bengal State with Calcutta as metropolitan areas that attracted surrounding states. Taking into consideration that Calcutta is the largest city in India, as well as the center of industrial potentials of the country, it seems to be representative enough.

On one hand, diverse rule confirmations will be attained in an inductive way owing to the experience of concrete people, while, on the other hand, a deductive role should not be diminished. All this because the information concerning the organization and culture of the global society, determines also the relation between the society and the natural environment. Within this concept V. Milic pointed out:

"Although the micro structure (people with determined features and their immediate relations) is not a passive reflection of the structure, organization, culture and general state of the global society, however, it is developing under the prevailing influences of the global society"(4).

Taking Libya into consideration, the concrete or formal field of the observation will focus on regions of Tripoli and Benghazi - two of the country's biggest towns as representative samples, with respect to the size of the territory they cover, the population and other elements promoting urbanization.

In Tanzania, the concrete conditions of the urbanization process will be observed through the regions of Dar es Salaam and Ruvuma, two the most specific and contrasting regions. In addition to the information gained from other regions and the country as a whole, it can be said, that the sample is representative enough.

It should be taken into account that the author spent nearly two years in India, working as the Team Leader and the concept manager of New Calcutta (known as "Salt Lake City") Master Plan. Furthermore, he spent four years in Libya as a regional planner responsible for Tripolitania. Finally, as the Director of Town Planning Department in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development of the United Republic of Tanzania he spent two years, and two more years afterwards, as the Team Leader for Ruvuma Regional Integrated Planning in the same country.

The nature of the work and responsibilities within these contrasting environments, contributed to a large extent that formal contacts were made and useful experience gained.

Beside this concrete field, surveys, were conducted by the author himself, and employed as valid information sources. The author also used various archeological, philosophical and literature works, urban and regional plans, official statistics, UN information sources, bank reports, designs, as well as similar researches from other parts of the world.

In certain cases, especially as far as family life is concerned, the only source of information was through friends.

The evolving process of urban environment and urbanization in developing countries will be highlighted upon the examples of India, Libya and Tanzania through the following perspectives:

- as a specific product of their own historic

and cultural context;

- in their dynamic dimensions;
- applying a comparative approach.

As the research takes place in traditional societies, the space (in which settlements are distributed) differs in ecological, economic and social aspects. It must be taken into account that the countries in question had a different past. India is the cradle of the old civilization, some of them witnessed an intensive process of urbanization and modernization (Libya), while others are still at an initial stage (Tanzania). Therefore it has been accepted to use the structural-functional method, including the technique of observation and comparison, which are often used by anthropologists in cases similar to the mentioned ones. J. Cvijic used the mentioned techniques in similar circumstances:

"Direct observation, observation *in situ* gives more accurate results in the Balkans than in Western Europe, as the South Slav population is not processed or modified and becomes almost uniform under the influence of civilization"(5).

Thus, there is a certain justification to assume that scientific observations, based on information and experience will prove more accurate than those where many non-professionals participated in data processing.

With respect to that, V. Milic pointed out the meaning of the mentioned technique:

"It greatly extends researcher's prime experience and enables the formation of a realistic impression and a feeling and a holistic view of the studied subject, be it a local community, a social organization, or only about a social phenomenon"(6).

The weak side of this method is that it does not enter "into internal and psychological side of the social life, but it does not diminish its validity of use" in this work. Namely, it is more directed towards collective social forms arising from the structure of an urban environment, that lead to a conclusion.

Theoretically, the social structure should be as dynamic as possible - allowing causal explanations of various kinds of structural changes. It will enable the definition of the "Urban ENVIRONMENT" phenomenon. Therefore:

- to study a town structure means to see and to know those social and economic forces of a country, affecting the town formation;
- to study urban form means to investigate its

determinants and values preserved by the towns as well as guiding motives behind it.

- to study architecture of a countries means to see its development, arising as the expression of many influencing factors and, particularly, the essence built into it by the creator, guided by his feeling, knowledge and experience;
- to study old and new parts of towns making comparisons between them, means to know the social, economical and physical changes that took place in a particular community. On the other hand, the research in complex societies accelerated the development of new conceptual and methodological means focused on the social process, rather than the creation of static models, based on group actions, within an institutional frame. The illustration of the afore proves that urban life, with its more amorphous and fluid model of social relationship, does not allow a clear formulation of normative rules but is open more towards the observations of the behavioristic spectrum. This standpoint will be followed in this study.

In general, under the term "Urban Environment" following should be understood: this is a place where citizens live, move and work under specific ecological, sociological economic and technological conditions which in synergy, have a psychological and aesthetic impact on individuals.

The above reasons caused the concept of this work to emphasise the idea upon which a human settlement is not only built on the surface but represents a system of living. Accordingly, the phenomenon called urbanization is perceived in a broader territorial circle which has made the process of generalization easier.

While incorporating an experienced generalization or hypothesis into scientific rules, the historic-comparative method was used. All this was aimed at confirming the fact whether a stable general relation, revealed in one society, exists in the other two observed, and whether it represents a similar or different socio-historic type.

A permanent comparison and confrontation of indications received from various sources was a usual technique of verification in this work.

While developing his own views, the author applied two ways of work: constructive - synthesis and critical - analysis. The first is focused on writing and expressing of his own ideas and views on the subject. The second represents criticism and analyses of the written work. Both ways together lead to more productive and rational results.

It is expected that the research of the specific development of urban environment forms, and their adequate effects, will contribute towards a better knowledge of the human settlement metamorphosis process, in developing regions, and thus, give a new dimension to the urban literature that concerns this world.

It is hoped, that this work will be useful for all those who will deal with problems of urban and rural development in the world of "developing" countries, be it as experts on technical cooperation or direct builders within the process of urbanization of these countries.

They will, through this work, comprehend that modernization has not only the technical, but, also, its cultural might, and that the new must not disrupt validities of the localities. They will conclude, that there is a faster way to obtain strength for future actions through the considerations of domestic tradition and recently implemented projects, trying to perceive domestic ideas, errors and messages.

On the top of that, the reader will reveal that it would be meaningless to try to copy old models, static and inflexible by their nature for contemporary needs. Finally, one will see that the conflict between old and new, big and small, can be avoided through a comprehensive approach to the problem of evolving human settlements, studied in the light of active forces that influence urban or rural transformation, but also, through all possible ways of resistance to the creative forces in the entire process of urbanization.

The "New dimension" of UN establishment that favours cooperation between developing nations, will be enriched with worthy experiences from which is possible to draw conclusions for the creation of their own directions of human settlements development, contrary to "planting" old models, out of place to the environment for which they have been imported.

Perceived as a system in which a great number of elements are in balance (or not) supplementing each other (or not) within the process of urbanization - urban environment has: its structure in which processes take place; its measure of qualities; its own land use and focal points; its form and scale; its levels; and can be divided into periods. The center of all the above elements is the man.

With respect to all indicated views and aims, considered in historic terms, the intention is to perceive problems, which developing countries

face today, in a more comprehensive light, using experience and dealing with their past. D. Stefanovic explained the importance of this approach as follows:

"A great importance of a complex scientific research on the facts which conditioned the previous development of town types, in a particular area, and with effects they have brought is evident; particularly, it is worthwhile to establish reasons for created conceptions on optimal ways and development phases of the regional systems to be built in near future"(7).

Such a method of study is based on the findings of archeologists, historians, writers. Although, it is clear that the past is a subject of continuous investigations, the author is of the opinion, that it is not too early to try a synthesis. With respect that the theory is proved through practice, it will be possible, in this case, to reject wrong ideas and correct opinions through continuous verification, which, gradually, will lead to the creation of a scientific generalization.

The dynamics of urbanization is perceived through changes that take place continually: birth, development and disappearance of phenomena. Within this generally stipulated state, the category of causes has an outstanding dynamic and specific effect:

"From a broad spectrum of conditions which are indispensable for birth of a phenomenon or for occurrence of one or several changes, the most influencing factors of a definite phenomenon are to be selected, while the remaining factors allowing causes to work alone, are perceived as general or special conditions"(8).

At the same time, the characteristic effects of such a complex processes of man's spatial organization (man-organizer) and man's spatial shaping (man creator and builder) are explained.

Having in mind the above, the desire was to attempt an elucidation of the more complex relationship between man and space. That relationship depends on man as a being who is not only used to work, to organize and to build, but who has his own cultural life, conduct and reactions through his emotions.

Therefore, this research will be useful for architects, sociologists, economists and geographers who are doing the research related to the fields of their own occupations.

Such a study can induce the interested public, to learn something new about the exotic environment, that, for centuries, has been

attached to a traditional way of life, and, almost overnight, due to diverse accelerating forces, started writing their contemporary history, i.e., the history of urbanization.

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