

New urban communities in Egypt

(Policies & useful lessons)

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1) Introduction

It is become more and more obvious that urban growth in most countries (especially developing ones) and the pace of urbanization, are increasing faster than the improvement offered by national and local governments. For urban improvement to gain more momentum, new urban communities should be considered as large-scale national ventures. The value of developing new urban communities depends upon the strength of their comprehensive response to short and long-range national and regional problems. Without this response, their realization may become a national political illusion. For example, if new communities respond only to housing needs of middle-income groups rather than to the major problems of low-income groups, the communities may only seem to solve national problems.

Communities depend on a national policy for urban growth. When the planning and development of such communities is integrated with national policy, we can expect them and their regions to offer the variety of social and economic choices that large cities have always offered. New communities can be a tool to improve societies, economics, and the environment. With contrast to common opinion and despite its bureaucratic machinery, public enterprise can gain much prestige by sponsoring new town construction as an instrument for national improvement..

New urban communities must be viewed as innovative laboratories for social, economic, taxation, governance, physical, and other reforms from which the established city can learn a great deal. Thus it is beneficial for the existing cities to see new urban settlement as part of the their process for improvement. The establishment of this relation adds another argument for the necessity of having a national policy for urban growth.

2) The problem

As a result of Cairo plan (1974), Cairo structural plan (1982), and National Urban Policy Study (N.U.P.S.), It was found that the new communities policy (even as satellites or self sustained) is the best solution which accommodate a major part of the expected population of Greater Cairo region and halts the conversion of agricultural lands for urban uses.

To confirm this policy a ministerial decree no. 59/1979 initiated the formation of a supreme committee for new communities in order to encourage the construction of new communities in desert lands and redistribute population. Therefore a lot of communities were constructed allover Egypt, especially around the overcrowded region of greater Cairo. These new communities were

planned related to different policies in terms of their planner's point of view, Accordingly, different theories were put and the construction of these communities was started. This study is mainly directed to discuss these new communities experience in order to avoid the disadvantages and encourage the advantages of this experience in Egypt.

3) Egypt experience (Cairo region, and urban development problems)

By the middle of the twentieth century, the population growth in Egypt has caused major problems, which can be summarized as follows: -

- 1) The increasing rate of population growth, since Egypt population at the beginning of this century (1907) was equal to 11 million persons meanwhile it was 44 million in 1981 and increased to 56 million person in 1990. The urban population increase by 1990 was 46% of total population while it was only 17% at 1907.
- 2) Population mal-distribution, while 95 % of the Egyptian population inhabit the Nile valley which constitute only about 4% of Egypt 's total area, only 5 % of the population reside the 96% of the rest of the Egyptian territories.
- 3) As a result of population growth and urban expansions of settlements in the valley (informal expansions), a loss of agricultural land takes place, and it increased gradually consuming agricultural lands .
- 4) The uncontrolled migration from rural areas to urban areas is mainly oriented to the greater Cairo region which represents the attractive region for migration. It provides a major proportion of services and employment opportunities. These problems have lead to the adoption of new general policy for urban development.

4) Problem background data

Statistics for greater Cairo, show that while the population was 965,000 in 1897 ,the estimates for 1980 suggest that Cairo has grown twelve-fold to some 8.8 million inhabitants, the corresponding annual growth rate was 3.0% . In 1986, (referring to the most recent census) it is revealed that the population grew to reach some 12 million inhabitants, representing 20.2% of the national total. Furthermore, the population of Cairo increased at the rate of 9.3% in the seasonal period (1976 - 1986). The increase in population was attributed to both, natural increase, and a heavy inflow of rural migrants. Between 1970 and 1980, the average of annual rate of increase was 4.5% out of which 0.6% was attributed to natural increase and 0.4 to migration. In addition to rural migration there are also the internal migration in the greater Cairo region (between Cairo , Giza and Qalyubia) which represent further load on the greater Cairo region .. This has resulted into the emergence of the following problems:

- 1- The over loading of all the services which lead to incapable performance .

- 2- The damage of major part of infrastructure because it was not able to face all these new loads of population.
- 3- The appearance of squatter areas (informal urbanization) as a natural extension of the borders of built up areas .
- 4- The urban encroachment on agricultural land of Cairo region.
- 5- The over congestion of transportation system all over Cairo .
- 6- The disturbance of social and cultural life of people .
- 7- The increasing rate of crime , specially between adults .
- 8- The increase of environmental pollution .

5) The need for adopting new communities in Egypt.

Therefore it was essential to formulate a structure plan for greater Cairo region to solve its problems. Actually, the plan encompassed many planning studies and schemes that were put for Cairo. The most important of these studies was the 1974 Cairo general plan and the 1982 structural plan which mainly directed in their solutions to the new communities in order to overcome all these problems

5-1) Cairo general plan (1974)

It was prepared between 1965 and 1970 and approved by the Egyptian premiere in 1974. It postulated the establishment on an optimal urban size for the city by defining its borders. This was realized through a variety of controls including the construction of a physical barrier. The plan also called for channeling growth toward the "self sufficient" new communities and a group of satellite cities. The idea of the ring road was also discussed in this plan to be as a natural constraining for the urban growth of Cairo specially, the informal extensions. The ring road idea also was a target to reduce the crossing traffic problems inside Cairo. But the 1974 plan was soon to be modified, however, for a variety of reasons:

- First, it was thought that many of its forecasts were outpaced by the sheer growth of the informal development.
- Second, it was felt that the 1990 target date, which was set for the implementation of its provisions, was unrealistically imminent.
- Third, the plan had to be updated to take into account some of the recommendations included in the National Urban Policy study (NUPS) which was published in 1980.
- Fourth, the exorbitant costs involved in constructing and equipping the new communities created a shift in thinking with respect to the concept of self sufficiency.

5-2) Cairo structure plan 1982

The main objectives of the Cairo structure plan 1982 are summarized in two aims, which can be discussed as follows: -

The first objective: Increasing the productive ability of the National economy through: -

- 1- protecting the agriculture land and increasing its area through the land acquisition in desert areas.
- 2- Control the urban land in order to reduce the transport motions of people and materials.
- 3- The utmost use of existing infrastructure.
- 4- Organize the policy of urban fabric by promoting the homogeneous sector concept.
- 5- Protect the cultural and historical heritage of Cairo, since they represent the base of tourism sector.

The second objective: Raising the standard of living for population in Cairo through the following objectives: -

- 1- spreads the population all over the Greater Cairo region through increasing the entire capacity of it to be able to accommodate 16.5 million of inhabitants by the year 2000.
- 2- halts the conversion of agricultural lands by offering the low medium income categories of the population affordable opportunities for land acquisition in desert areas.
- 3- Organize the urban patterns of built up areas through replanning and rehabilitation of the old communities.
- 4- improving the transportation and infrastructure networks.
- 5- The protection and conservation of water resources.
- 6- increasing the efficiency of land-uses, through the optimization of industrial location choices and the maximization of the returns of the existing infrastructure
- 7- controlling the pollution levels.

6) New communities in Egypt (Experience & experiments)

To confirm the policy of new communities and to encourage the construction of these communities, it was formatted a supreme committee for new communities at 1979 and from this date about 30 new communities were planned and a lot of them were under construction such as (6 October, 15 may, Sadat, Sherok, El-ebour, El-ameria, New Menia, New Demiate, Bader, etc. ...).

The planning of these new communities represent the sum of the theoretical and practical experiences of the professional field of planning for new communities. During the last 20 years or more, the Egyptian planners

experience in formulating new communities have greatly developed. It is therefore, the product of the diversity of the different planned communities and the result of the philosophical approach for each planner. As a result of the construction of new communities, some problems were found. Therefore some of these communities were not completely succeeded. The main items, which guide to this result, were mainly due to the dis-satisfaction of inhabitant requirements. Accordingly it is important to evaluate these new communities and study the fundamental issues which lead to this slow development and gradually less success. The following table shows the actual no. of population of the new communities population and the planned no. of their population.

Egyptian new communities data

Region	New community	Existing pop. 1986	Existing Pop. 1996	Planned population
Cairo	New Cairo	-	34819	500000
	Bader	-	248	277000
	15 May	24106	65865	-
	El-Salam	19077	366317	500000
Alexandria	Burj Elarab	-	7055	-
Demiatte	New Demiatte	70	6517	270000
Sharquia	El-Salheia	464	8133	-
	10 Ramadan	8509	47839	500000
Qualbia	El-Ebour	1037	991	457000
Menofiaa	Sadate	669	19209	500000
Bader	Noberia	25754	25924	140000
Giza	6 October	528	35477	350000
Bani Suief	New Bani Suief	-	202	-
Menia	New Menia	-	68	120000

To achieve the success of our new communities it is important to study what happen in the other countries, specially the developed ones to stop on their main policies, which lead to success of their new communities. On the other hand it is essential to discuss how they solve their developing techniques about new communities. The following part of the study will discuss this issue.

7) Italian experience in formulating new communities

Italy started the policy of building new towns from over sixty years ago. The Italian experience had forecasted all the urban problems of the population growth specially in the capital "Rome" which had all the attracting

opportunities, Therefore they tried to put the policy of new towns and the decentralization concept for the new urban growth and direct this growth out of Rome in order to keep its monumental heritage and to keep its beautiful parks, gardens and low rise buildings which could not achieved in high population densities. So I think that the Italian experience had succeeded to achieve this policy since the population of Rome as a Capital of Italy do not exceed than 3 million and still have all its old characters of beauty.

Accordingly, it is possible to take into consideration some important points which were the actual reasons of this success, and I think that it is useful to study these points in order to take from them some guide lines for our strategy towards our new towns policy.

The main points are: -

- 1) The very early starting of replanning for Rome as a capital, which was, began at 1870. And was repeated at 1909, 1931, 1971 and 1978.
- 2) The replanning process was based on scientific methodology, which depends upon the planning theories of Housman and his experience in Paris planning which was the good example at this time.
- 3) The earlier and continuos updating of services data, service structures, and service design criteria in order to explore local Italian standards.
- 4) The great national program of land reclamation in the grand areas of marsh lands in all Italy (the program started after the First World War in the period of Mussolini government.
- 5) Encouraging the decentralization concept through directing the population growth out of the grand cities by creating new nuclei of settlements which called at that time: the motion of new bourghi .
- 6) The motion of new bourghi was the base of the new settlement policy since these bourghi or small villages were increased and gradually changed to large towns.
- 7) The master plan of Rome of 1931 creates new service centers with all types of services out of Rome in the peripheral zones to be in the future, attractive zones for population and encourage the people to live in. This direction was also confirmed by 1962 master plan, which put the new base for the new C.B.D. of Rome in the south part, which is completed now and named (Eur). In the "Eur" now we find the major part of governmental ministries, offices, grand commercial parts and the palace sport in a huge

park. All these services succeeded to attract population and in the same time reduce the densities in the central parts of Rome.

8) The utmost importance of designing high capacity of infrastructure to be able to accommodate all the expected populations.

9) Controlling the extension parts of Rome by the ring road out the city borders and preventing any informal buildings and sprawl areas along the ring road.

10) The activity of the municipalities staff to control the new building cases to be as in the master plan and in other way the high cultural people help the municipalities to keep all rules of building codes and land use as been in the master plan.

11) The plans of the new towns confirm the large square concept to accommodate the religious and social feasts since the people meet each other in these squares in large groups.

12) The participation of the people themselves when taking any critical decisions in the replanning process.

8) British experience in formulating new communities

8-1) English new towns policy

The development of British's new towns represents one of the greatest achievements of post war planning. Now there are 32 new towns in U.K. including four in Northern Ireland. They are home for over 2 million people who enjoy on urban environment and quality of life that are generally superior to that of the older urban areas. The position of these new towns on the map are eight in the London region: Harlow in West Essex, Basildon in south Essex, Stevenage, Hatfield and Welwyn garden city, north of London in Hertford shire, Hemel Hempstead, north west of London, Bracknell in Berkshire and Grawcly in Sussex, south of London. In addition, there are five independent towns. Corby in Northampton shire , Cwmbran in south Wales, Newton Aycliffe and Peterlee, both in country Durham. There are also 4 new towns in Scotland: Glentoths in Fifeshire, East Kilbridge six miles south east of Galsgow, New Cumberlauld twelve miles east of Glasgow. and Livingstone .

The new towns experience holds lessons for the future of planning in the U.K. Even through the new towns themselves and the ideas that gave them being are enjoy less political and professional patronage today than over before. The new

towns program had its origins in the garden city movement which followed the publication in 1898 by Ebenezer Howard . The garden city concept gained powerful support in the U.K. and overseas. The urbanization sprawled around suburban train stations and along main high ways. The speed of this dispersal, and the logistical problems it presented for utilities and for other support services such as education and health provision, forced stop gap legislation while broader policies were formulated.

The financial and economic success of the new towns concerned some of the first generation; new towns have generated substantial financial surpluses after repayment of interest and capital. However, they did have the advantage of being able to borrow (and develop) at a time of low rates of interest and low inflation.

The second and third generation new towns, starting later and borrowing at higher rates of interest, are in some cases not expected to held surpluses until well into the next century. There are both general and particular lessons to be drawn from the new town experience. In terms of strategic planning, the evidence suggests that the continuing trend towards dispersal of people and jobs from the contributions should be planned, having equal regard to social, environmental and economic goals, and the need for a balance between population and jobs, rather than being allowed to happen in a haphazard way. In the absence of strategic planning market forces are omnipotent. Second, such planning should be related to the needs of the conurbation as a whole and the problems of its constituent's parts.

Third, such planning needs the power of intervention in land and property markets, and the coordination of public investment programs, if the qualitative aspects of life are to be kept in balance with market forces.

Fourth, a single development agency such as a new town development corporation with those powers of intervention and coordination and equipped to assemble multi-disciplinary teams for the job in hand can be a highly effective mechanism for town building provided, it is equally sensitive to public interests and the wishes of community it serves. In terms of legislation, the new towns statutes are still available and, although, some improvements are needed to account for contemporary expectations for more local political participation and more public involvement process, it is a proven tool for new build, expansion and adaptation of towns and cities .

In terms of planning technique, the new towns have experimented with different forms of house design, construction and layout and have been consistently innovative in introducing new forms of housing finance and management.

Economic development efforts have also demonstrated techniques for stimulating the indigenous local economy, and for exploiting new technologies in creative and imaginative ways. The achievements in the field of social

development are also outstanding, techniques have been developed to stimulate the sense of community and to promote the highest levels cultural and creative activity, Health care and education services have shared the same spirit of innovation and community commitment.

Transportation services have also been the subject of numerous experiments, with consistent concern for the convenience and pleasure of pedestrians and cyclists, generous provision for the car and lorry, and (admittedly variable) attention to the problems of the bus service.

Finally, the art of urban landscape is one of the achievements of the new towns that will please even the most casual visitor, despite the most difficult physical conditions (including coal mines, slag heaps, and poor quality soil) considerable effort and public expenditure has been devoted to the new town landscape.

9) French experience in formulating new communities

French planning is best known for the development of national economic growth policies after World War II . The national plans and growth poles are justly celebrated by the international community. In contrast the French new town program has received relatively little publicity. This neglect is in part a function of the policy: large-scale construction did not begin until around 1970.

Furthermore, the French have put together a rather complex administrative and financial structure. Despite, the difficulties involved in making the French new town policy intelligible to the international planning community, an understanding of the appropriateness of new towns in the development of national urban growth policies should include the French experience. Although the French did not adopt the new town idea until recently, they are now engaged with typical French grandeur, in a large-scale effort.

By the mid-1970s, nine new towns were under construction-five outside Paris and one each out side Lille, Lyon, Marseilles, and Rouen. The nine new towns are now attracting nearly 20,000 homes and 15000 new jobs per year, a part of development comparable to that of the British new towns. French new town policy is also important because of the complex administrative and financial arrangements involved. In a basically liberal society with a strong private sector and numerous recalcitrant local authorities. French Planners have successfully overcome significant opposition to the new town concept.

9-1) French post war planning policies

The national planning policies developed after World War II were based on two principles: the simulation of economic recovery from the war and long-term

growth and the deflection of development away from the Paris region . A planning commission (Commissariat General du plan) was created in 1946 to oversee the development of a national plan for the reconstruction and managed growth of the French economy. Inspired by Jean Monnet , the plan concentrated investment in six critical industrial sectors: mining, iron and steel, agricultural machinery, electricity, transport and cement. These sectors were selected because of their importance in stimulating the recovery of other industries. The plan, which covered the years 1947-1953, was financed in large measure by the Marshall Plan.

The success of the first plan has led to the creation of a series of multiyear plans. Although the economic objectives of each plan have differed, all have involved the establishment of economic targets and the allocation of funds for capital investments to achieve the goals. In 1975 France completed the sixth plan. At the same time that the economic planning machinery was started, other national planners became concerned with reversing the historic trends toward concentration in Paris. The ministry of Construction attempted to encourage growth outside of Paris through controls and subsidies and to prevent new developments in Paris by refusing to issue the needed permits. Regional action was also promoted through the creation of regional administrative units. France was divided into 21 regions in 1955 for statistical purposes. Today each region is headed by a prefect with considerable administrative power

9-2) French new town policies

The national government has sought to integrate the significant differences in the origins and purposes of the provincial and Paris new towns into a unified policy. This effort was made in the Sixth National Plan, which set down investment priorities for the 1971-1975 period and affirmed in the Seventh National Plan for 1976-1980 . The section of new towns included a statement of goals, indicators to measure progress toward the goals, and financial support for the projects.

The Sixth National Plan cited four goals for the new towns:

- 1- To restructure the suburbs by organizing new concentrations of employment, housing and services.
- 2- To reduce the amount of commuting and ease the transport problems in the particular urban regions .
- 3- To create truly self-contained cities, as measured by a balance between jobs and housing, variety of different jobs and housing, provision of housing and supporting services at the same time and place, the rapid creation of urban centers, and concern for recreational facilities and environmental protection .
- 4- To serve as laboratories for experiments in urban planning and design .

Despite the diverse reasons for planning new towns in France, the nine new towns have many similar characteristics . These new towns are all rather large . The nine new towns range in size from 140,000 at Le Vaudreuil to 375,000 at Berre . The new towns consequently with a large amount of territory, average over 10,000 hectares. These sites are not green, they are located adjacent to poorly designed suburbs.

The new towns are designed to provide needed services to these nearby areas as well as the incoming residents of the new towns

In many ways the new towns are new down towns . Each one characterized by a large own town area in which a high order of commercial activities will be concentrated , including department stores , office buildings , public services and apartments . These down towns built at high densities for animating regional centers, so residents and nonresidents alike will congregate in the evening as well as during working hours . Neighbourhoods will be grouped around the down town area, with a mixture of styles and cost in the housing . The towns will include a balanced representation among types of people and functions.

10) American experience in formulating new communities

Formulation of American new communities has clearly evolved during the era of adopting national growth policies for new communities. The link between the new community process of development and the objectives of the national growth policy was implied in the statement of purpose in the new communities act of 1968, but the urban growth and new community development act of 1970 had to articulate clearly the goals of a policy and at the same time to provide an expanded role for new communities as a principle means of realizing that policy.

The Federal new communities program has begun to realize national growth policy which essentially form four basic characteristics that may be mentioned briefly as follows :-

1- Large scale: A new community is a large scale development. there is no magical number of acres at which a traditional tract development automatically becomes a new community because size is only measurement of new communities program . The average size of the sites of 16 communities approved of January 1976 was about 5700 acres . The size of course is smaller for new towns in town , which are constructed on the expensive developed land within built-up cities .

2- Balanced development: Balance means that a new community by contrast to unbalanced bedroom suburbs, must contain a range of employment opportunities and housing for low and moderate income families.

3- Unity of planning and process: A new community is developed under one plan, in one program, by one developer. This Unity of the development process is in sharp contrast to the usual process of piecemeal development of land areas fragmented into a multitude of single parcels owned by different objectives and development schedules. The loose guides of public zoning and planning cannot equal the benefits from a single ownership and plan.

4- Packaging concept: The federal new communities program is in part built on a packaging concept similar to the earlier model cities program. Both the 1968 and 1970 new communities statutes provided for the supplementary grants, to be administered by H.U.D. to serve especially as catalysts for packaging a wide range of federal aids for new communities, Even in the absence of a federal program, however, the balance and comprehensiveness of a new community represent a potential ability to deliver an entire package of urban facilities and services to a site.

11) Conclusion

In this framework of formulating new communities in Egypt and the developed countries (as discussed before); guidelines can be deduced in order to be considered for our new communities . There are both general and particular lessons to be drawn from the new community's experience, which can be summarized as follows:

- 1) The very early starting of planning for large cities and repeat the replanning to avoid all problems which can be found , and all this must be based on scientific methodology.
- 2) Encouraging the decentralization concept through directing the population growth out of the grand cities by creating new nuclei of settlements.
- 3) The utmost importance of good accessibility from the old cities and new ones on other hand it is important to design high capacity of infrastructure to be able to accommodate all the expected populations.
- 4) The participation of the people themselves when taking any critical decisions in the different stages of replanning process, especially for people which the plan is directed .
- 5) Sometimes it is useful to the new communities service structure, specially for city central districts (C.B.D.) to exceed land value and encourage different activities to begun.

6) In terms of strategic planning , the evidence suggests that the continuing trend towards dispersal of people and jobs from the contributions should be planned , having equal regard to social , environmental and economic goals , and the need for a balance between population and jobs, rather than being allowed to happen in a haphazard way.

7) New communities planning needs the power of intervention in land and property markets, and the coordination of public investment programs, if the qualitative aspects of life are to be kept in balance with market forces .

8) In terms of planning technique , the new towns have experimented with different forms of house design , construction and layout and have been consistently innovative in introducing new forms of housing finance and management . Economic development efforts have also demonstrated techniques for stimulating the indigenous local economy, and for exploiting new technologies in creative and imaginative ways . The achievements in the field of social development are also outstanding, techniques have been developed to stimulate the sense of community and to promote the highest levels cultural and creative activity , Health care and education services have shared the same spirit of innovation and community commitment .

9) To create truly self-contained cities, as measured by a balance between jobs and housing, variety of different jobs and housing, provision of housing and supporting services at the same time and place, the rapid creation of urban centers, and concern for recreational facilities and environmental protection .

10) In many ways the new towns are new down towns . Each one characterized by a large own town area in which a high order of commercial activities will be concentrated , including department stores , office buildings , public services and apartments . These down towns built at high densities for animating regional centers, so residents and nonresidents alike will congregate in the evening as well as during working hours . Neighbourhoods will be grouped around the down town area, with a mixture of styles and cost in the housing . The towns will include a balanced representation among types of people and functions.

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