

by
Michael Safier

MAKERERE INSTITUTE of SOCIAL RESEARCH

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REGIONAL PLANNING for UGANDA

I. Definition

1. A regional investment and incomes policy which forms the basis for regional planning, is here defined as adding a spatial dimension either to the goal function or to the set of constraints of a general plan formulation. To define this further: either there is included among the objectives in the plan the target of shifting the regional balance of population and activities in some way, within the usual constraints of capital, manpower and foreign exchange that will affect all plan goals; or the major objectives of income and employment growth et.al. are set to be reached within constraints which includes a given level of regional differentiation which should not be exceeded. This defines a 'general' form of regional planning, as against the 'partial' form of planning for a particular region.

II. Basis

2. The basis for regional planning lies in the fact that economic development has a geographical or spatial dimension, which has its own internal logic and pattern of change over time, though these are not as yet as well defined as would be desirable for planning purposes. By positing the absence of such a dimension however it is possible to characterise those 'limiting cases' where regional planning would be superfluous.

3. Such limiting cases would arise when the spatial configuration of development is not in any way divergent from the other developmental dimensions. If all population and activity in a country, and all increases in such, were to be sited in a single locality, then in a sense the resulting spatial configuration could be said to be as subsumed under the dimension of growth. If on the other hand population and activity, and their increase over time, were to be found equally spread over every locality in a state area, then the resulting spatial configuration could be disposed of under the dimension of welfare.

4. In reality however, neither of these extremes is found. As a result then the regional distribution of development has to be treated separately in its own right. This is particularly the case where a coherent and comprehensive attempt is made to specify planning goals and their policy implications - more especially where the political dimension of development must somehow be included in the planning calculus.

III. Objectives

5. There are many objectives which can be included under the head of regional planning goals and/or constraints, but nearly all fall under one of the categories suggested by the reasoning in section II. That is to say that a regional investment and incomes policy, while it may have an intermixture of elements in its make-up, will analytically fall in one of the three following types:

a. Regional 'Growth' policies -
i.e. those programmes and projects which are directed specifically towards the improvement of use of available or potential resources. Such policies are built on the identification of natural, human or produced resources which are either not being fully exploited or used in the most efficient growth-promoting manner, and which are not transferable in space or easily 'movement orientated' within a perspective planning period. Such policies rest on the assumption that overall growth will not be fully realised unless the locational interdependence of economic activities is taken fully into account, and unless some 'accounting' corrections are made for those systematic biases introduced into the spatial dimension of economic calculation by the dominance of centralised decision-making both public and private.

b. Regional 'Welfare' Policies -

i.e. those programmes and projects which are directed towards securing the most equitable distribution of the output of the economy as between the different areas of the state. Policies under this heading are built on the selection of a set of sub-areas of the state and on a set of welfare criteria such as income level and access to social services which are considered to be the targets for equalisation. Such policies rest on assumptions about the short-run needs to spread the benefits of growth on some form of equity principle and the long-run 'improvement in quality' effects that is achieved.

c. Regional 'Integration' policies -

i.e. those programmes and projects which are directed towards securing the most economically rational solution for the 'space preferences' of the government in office. These policies are built on the recognition of a 'weighting' for political influence which must be given to any area or areas on account of their position either in respect of state unity or patronage reward. Such policies also rest on the assumption of a certain measure of political 'indifference' about the kind of economic or social benefit provided, and the identification of a package of measures that would give a positive benefit-to-cost calculation for the area in terms of resources expended.

6. The objectives listed in 5. relate to the specific objectives of growth, welfare and power. There is an additional possible objective which should also be considered, and given perhaps explicit rather than implicit coverage. This is the objective to securing the most efficient and effective structure for the 'spatial organisation' of economic growth, social welfare and national integration. Because the theory of such organisation in relation to development are less advanced and intensively tested than some of those concerning economic growth, social modernisation and political integration, this specific aspect is given less than its due consideration.

7. The weighting to be given to each of the above mentioned policy objects will depend partly on the political issues involved, partly upon the level of development and state of differentiation by regions, and partly on the kind of theoretical derivations recognised as useful and relevant. Each of these aspects of the matter must have its due attention here. Rather than launch into a long discourse on theoretical issues or the chances of adopting alternative policy strategies, it seems more useful and relevant in the first place to enquire into what is often the least well understood aspect of the situation itself, namely the facts about the level and extent of regional differentiation, analytically treated.

IV. The Facts and some Analysis of them

8. One obstacle to the formulation of a regional investment and incomes policy is the apparent lack of across-the-board, relatively recent, reliable and coherent information on the level and extent of regional differences in many developing countries. Even where such data are available in part, there is still the further difficulty of finding an appropriate scale of disaggregation at which an analysis can be made.

9. For Uganda the picture is brighter than in some African countries if not so bright as in others. The quantity and quality of regional data has been much improved in recent years thanks to the efforts of government departments, and of the Dept. of Geography at Makerere Collggg under its present head, Prof. Langlands. A part of this information together with some simple analysis, which underly the empirical basis of this paper, is presented on the table and maps attached to the paper.

10. From the table showing the regionalisation of development by districts, the salient features of the situation are apparent in broad perspective. The most developed district - Mengo - including the capital city, with 20% of total Uganda population in 1960, had within its boundaries 37% of Uganda's 'regionalised gross product' i.e. direct traceable income from cashcrop sales and employment. In the same area were found 40% of all employed persons, 40%

of all electric power consumed, 45% of all employees in manufacturing, and over half the urban population of the country. The addition of the second most developed district contiguous with Mengo - Busoga - boosts the above figures up to 36% of total population, nearly half of R.G.P., 53% of all employment, 90% of power consumption, 80% of all employees in manufacturing and 67% of total urban population. If further, the five most developed districts are lumped together to form the 'south' region of Uganda, then this area with 55% of total population will have threequarters of R.G.P., two-thirds of all employment, 95% of power consumption, 85% of cashcrop incomes, 70% of industrial employment and four-fifths of total urban population. So far as the scanty nature of time-series material will allow it seems possible to say that this situation has not altered greatly over the past decade.

11. On Fig.1. are shown both the total and per capita income of districts, and draws attention to the massive contribution to total R.G.P. of Mengo, and - to a lesser extent - of Masaka, Busoga and Teso. The figure also shows the broad north (and west) - south (and east) divisions in terms of income levels per capita, with Bunyoro as an exception on one side of the line, and Bukedi-Bugisu on the other.

12. As has often been found out however, per capita income is not always the most useful indicator of degree of overall 'development', being a univariate measure for a multivariable phenomenon. Therefore on Fig.II. the indices of Tb.1. and some others have been integrated by a simple multiple ranking sum procedure, showing as a result levels of district development, which in turn have been grouped to get a policy-relevant regional classification.

13. Thus it can be seen that the top-ranking districts of Mengo and Busoga form the 'core' region of the country. Here is par excellence the focus of 'urban industrial' growth: this growth and the infrastructure and services that support it, in an area of high environmental potential and fairly dense population, has allowed also the most intensive transformation of economic activities outside the factory and the city. The area is the centre of communications and of decision-making, has the greatest measure of capital and skilled labour availability, and constitutes the largest market.

14. Surrounding the 'core area' on all sides except to the west, there are the 'upward transitional' areas of Masaka, Teso and Bukedi-Bugisu. These areas lack the urban industrial concentration of the core, but are themselves near enough to it to be positively affected by its proximity; while their own substantial commercial agricultural development has given rise to a small degree of services (and some heavier industry) in a few main regional towns. Beyond these areas lie the 'resource frontier' districts of Toro, Bunyoro and Lango, where, further from the main centres of growth, there is some expanding activity based on local resources or environmental advantages which give rise to new primary productions - copper in Toro, cattle in Bunyoro and Cotton in Teso. These areas stand out in contrast to the 'downward transitional' areas of the far north and west, the districts of W.Nile, Acholi, Mubende and Ankole. Here productive commercial activity is an enclave in a sea of quasi-subsistence endeavour, with accessibility at a minimum. From these areas come the majority of internal migrants seeking opportunities in the south and east. Finally there are the 'special problem' areas of Kigezi and Karamoja. Here at the opposite extremes of the country are the opposite extremes of population density, intensive and extensive environmental control, and problems of relief.

14. The above account gives the 'areal' distribution of activities in Uganda, a 'macro-spatial' account. It is the appropriate level for analysis when considering the criteria for regional strategies as discussed in section VI. However, in order to delve deeper into the specifics of 'spatial organisation' and to provide a regional base for specific investment policies and their implementation, a 'locational' distribution picture is required, the 'micro-spatial' accounts. They are presented in summary form on Fig.III.

15. In brief, the idea of 'spatial organisation' may be concretely expressed in terms of five main components. Movements of people and commodities are ordered in distance, direction and volume by a network of routes and communications which are systematically related to a set of urban nodes connecting up in a hierarchical fashion into a system of central places around which levels (or 'surfaces') of development range outwards in a progressively decreasing form. The most highly developed localities will possess the 'first-order' central place (or primate city) surrounded by the closest spacing of other nodes all highly connected with each other by a dense net of routes, the whole being supported by a uniformly high level of activities and population densities. Less developed areas will have correspondingly less developed spatial systems of this nature.

16. Fig. III. is a highly simplified version of some major elements in the spatial structure of the Uganda economy showing the urban hierarchy - from the primate centre of Kampala (a) through Jinja (b) and Mbale (c) the major secondary regional centres, the smaller district capitals (d) to the smallest significant towns (e). Also shown are the main roads constituting the backbone of the transport network, but in the main attention is focussed on the levels or 'surface' of development. These have been derived from the use of a grid of squares placed over a map of the country and onto which were read various physical values representing environmental potential, population density, intensity of commercial production, and provision of main services such as electricity and water supplies.

17. The highest level of development (represented on the map by horizontal shading) is that which surrounds the highest order central places where a suitable environment and population potential produce a considerable volume of commercial activity and at the same time provide the largest market; and at the same time have the best local provision of facilities and services plus the maximum access to the rest of the country. This area is clearly the most favoured for further investment and growth. The second level of development (represented by the vertical shading) covers those areas where environment and population and commercial activities are well developed, but where infrastructure is less so, and in which local or national accessibility is more limited. The third level development areas are on the periphery (represented by the diagonal hatching) being areas with a quite reasonable potential environment, quite dense populations, but where directly productive activities are little yet in evidence and where infrastructure and accessibility are still at a low level. The unshaded areas are presently insignificant in economic terms, and would take a very considerable investment to make them less so in the future.

V. Theories of Regional Development and some Limitations

18. There is a large and growing body of literature, much of it inspired by policy issues, dealing with the description, analysis and theory of regional development and planning. However, little of the work is 'theoretical' in the strict sense of a system of hypotheses for testing derived from initial assumptions about critical relationships. Much theoretical speculation so-called has centred around the identification of forces for regional economic growth, tendencies in regard to interregional equilibrium, and the relating of size of cities, degree of activity concentrations, and direction of investments with levels of overall economic development. The kind of conclusion and guidance given to the policy maker as a result will revolve around recommendations to pinpoint potential 'leading' sectors for regional growth promotion, cast a critical eye on the expansion of cities with over 300,000 populations, mark down the 'natural' tendency for an initially high degree of concentration around the major growth pole, and restrict the spreading of investment over too wide an area for fear of scattering scarce resources without cumulative effect.