

INDUSTRIES, EMPLOYMENT AND URBAN REDEVELOPMENT IN EGYPT

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Redevelopment problems of cities and regions are intimately connected with the industries and the employment which they create. The Second Five Year Plan of Egypt accords high priority to rapid industrialisation, especially to the development of basic and heavy industries. It envisages sizeable increase in manufacturing and mining industries in the public as well as the private sectors. We may, therefore, anticipate considerable increase in employment also. These factors will have impact on the structure of cities and regions.

We live in an industrial era and hope to depend for prosperity and better standard of living on the fruits of industry. Nevertheless, administrators as well as planners have seldom shown appreciation of its real nature and varied problems. To most people the word 'Industry' means something necessary to provide an economic base to the city and to stabilise its employment potentials, but unpleasant and untidy-grim masses of disfigured buildings, smoking chimneys, noise, odour, etc. The town planners try to classify industries very superficially as 'Light', 'Medium', 'Heavy' or 'Noxious' and 'Harmless'. Without

1. Just over 300,00 persons were engaged in the manufacturing industry in Egypt in 1951. It is very important to notice that in the decennial census of Egypt of 1947 of only about ten per cent of the working population gave their occupation as some form of manufacturing, as compared with sixty per cent who registered as farmers. Moreover, more than half of the former should properly be classed as cottage-industry, handicraft workers, as shown by comparing this enumeration with that of a census taken 1952, which dealt only with "industrial establishments" as distinguished from cottage industries. It enumerated 301,476 persons, as compared with the total enumeration of 665,703 in 1947 census. Even of that a large proportion of the 19,475 establishments it covered had little to distinguish them from cottage industries. More than half of them employed less than five persons each, fully eighty per cent of them less than ten each.

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detailed investigations of the nature of industries and their location pattern in our cities and regions, we make a sweeping generalisation that industries have developed wherever they could. Generally this is not true; most industries have not simply grown haphazard but have been conditioned by hard economic facts, such as the availability of raw materials, power and labour, cheapest and most convenient methods of moving people and goods, nearness to markets, etc. If in the central districts of our industrial cities we find a dismal jumble of houses, shops, factories and schools, it is not because of any historical accidents but because planning was either totally absent or quite often it came on the scene after the industry had already determined the salient features of the city structure and the urban pattern.

With the phenomenal increase in population and the rapid urbanisation, we are witnessing sporadic growth of new industries, exodus of rural population to urban centres, growth of conurbations, urban encroachment on good agricultural land, slums and appalling traffic conditions and long daily trips to work.

Industry and employment are closely related to each other. Cairo and Alexandria account for a high proportion of total industrial production, Cairo accounts for 27.41% of total industrial employment and 16.5% of total value added. The share of Cairo and Alexandria combined rises to 53.39% and 39.2% respectively according to 1957 census. We notice the great importance of Cairo which alone averages almost a third of total establishments in Egypt. Added to Alexandria their combined share would rise to as high as 71.9 in brokerage. On the average they account for more than half of producers' services. In terms of output rather than number of establishments it is probable that the share of Cairo is even higher (Table I).

There are indications that in the context of expanding economy under the five year plans, new industries and extension of existing industrial plants may alter substantially the employment pattern of Cairo and Alexandria areas and of the country generally. Therefore, one should know what these trends and tendencies are; how they vary from one type of industry to another? Are there any indications of industries moving out of the large cities to outlying areas? Can Zoning squeeze moving out of the large cities to outlying areas? Can Zoning squeeze

Table I. Geographical Distribution of Producers Services (1954).¹

	Egypt		Cairo		Alexandria		Cairo and Alexandria
	No. of Establishments	% of total	No. of Estab.	% of total	No. of Estable.	% of total	% of total
Gross Trade	14586	100	5710	39.1	2947	20.2	59.3
Banking	475	100	111	23.3	100	21.5	44.8
Brokerage	2699	100	1041	38.5	902	33.4	71.9
Transport	1778	100	418	23.5	425	23.9	47.4
Warehouse	1651	100	477	28.8	391	23.6	52.4

out noxious industries from central districts of urban conglomeration? Is it possible and desirable to displace existing industries, under redevelopment schemes? How will this affect the economic base of the industrial city, the distribution of industrial population, employment potentials, retail business, public and private investments, etc.? Unless we know answers to these vital questions, urban redevelopment plans will lack definition and reality. This paper is an attempt to analyse the trends in growth of population and urbanisation in Egypt, to investigate the problems cited above, and to explore planning possibilities. (map 1)

Rapid Urbanisation :-

Problems relating to industry, employment and Urban redevelopment in Egypt will have to be viewed in the context of the following phenomena :

- a) rapid increase in population,
- b) rapid urbanisation and growth of cities,
- c) continuous exodus of landless agricultural labour from rural areas to towns and cities, in search of either seasonal or permanent employment, thereby causing over population of cities.

Three outstanding features of population growth have marked the last half-a-century in our country :

1. Source : Central Statistical Commission "Fundamental Statistics"

antages of better housing but they have committed to the expense of long daily journeys to work, which have to be made in over crowded, fatiguing and unhealthy conditions. Further, the volume of traffic in the core of the city has increased to such proportions as to cause acute traffic congestions, accidents, parking problems.

Industrial workers, who cannot afford the long and expensive trips have tried to live as near to the places of work as possible in apartments and slum-dwellings, which lack even the minimum amenities essential for civilised life. The prohibitive land values and the intensive development in the core of the city have become, indeed, the main bottlenecks to redevelopment.

Industrial Zoning :—

One of the most effective planning tools devised to promote the best use of land and building is zoning. However, zoning is by no means the panacea for all ills. Often, zoning has been misused to retard replanning and reconstruction of cities.

Most communities require a certain amount of industrial development to produce a sound economic base and to stabilise employment. Few communities can support their residential areas without offering gainful employment in industry. Trades, services, transport and other types of employment are ultimately dependent, to a large degree, on primary or productive jobs offered by industry. Industrial land use is, therefore, as legitimate and essential as any other land use established under zoning. A careful investigation of non-conforming uses in industrial cities will reveal that it is not industries alone that have invaded residential areas, but residences also have often encroached on industrial zones. The central business district in Cairo occupies a rectangle roughly delineated by Goumhoriya Street and Opera Square to the East, Ramsis Street and Tahrir Square to the West, Saha Street and Bab-el-luk Square to the South, and Alfi Street to the North. The inner industrial belt embraces such areas as Marouf, Maspero, Boulak, Kolali and Sabtia, Ghala, Daher, Azhar, and Abdine, in almost a ring around the central business district. The outer industrial belt includes Imbaba, northern Shobra and Zeitoun, Shobra el Khaima, Toura and Mausara. However, mixed land use is visible in all these areas. (Map II).

Generally best sites for industrial location are those which are easily accessible by routes of transportation by railways, highways, and waterways. Therefore industrial potentialities of areas and sites, bearing favourable relationship to transportation, should be recognised in the zoning and rezoning processes. Further, industrial zoning and highway planning should go hand in hand in our comprehensive development and redevelopment schemes. Special consideration should be given to the street layout of industrial areas, when redevelopment is taken up. It is wasteful to encourage or proceed with the construction of an intricate net work of streets in an area zoned or rezoned for industry as this may cut the potential industrial sites into individual parcels, too small for proper use by large firms.

Concentration or Decentralisation :—

Some planning enthusiasts advocate compulsory scattering of existing industry and dispersal of urban population as a solution to redevelopment of large cities. But is this possible, and desirable in Egypt under the existing conditions? Relocation of existing industry is bound to be a slow and difficult process. It is not economically sound, particularly under present exigencies, when the Egyptian economy has entered a crucial phase of development, to condemn factories which are in good working order, merely because they happen to be near a residential area. That all factories should be confined to industrial zones, insulated from residential areas by a belt of open space, is the blindest dogmatism.

Many economists and industrialists, on the other hand, advocate that industries which are concentrated, grouped together and located in one zone, offer many advantages, such as :

- a) Truck traffic is more efficient and less dangerous when industries are put together in one area.
- b) Utilities and services like water, electricity, sewerage etc. can be provided more economically for groups of factories than if they are scattered.
- c) Public transport for the workers can be more easily provided for groups of factories than if they are decentralised.

- d) Grouping is more economical in land because the demand can be averaged out between expanding, declining and static industries and between large, medium and small factories, so that the amount of reserve land needed is less.

Though these advantages are very real and there is considerable force in the above arguments, the advantages of planned decentralisation far outweigh the advantages of concentration.

What we therefore need in Egypt at present is a clear declaration of national policy of industrial location and relocation, based on a full assessment of the nature of our industries and their problems and a thorough study of the industrial structure of our cities.

Under present conditions, an effective policy of relocation and dispersal of industries necessitates a higher level public expenditure, than is within the capacity of local planning authorities. Large funds are necessary to extinguish industrial rights in congested areas and to assist suitable firms to move out to planned industrial districts. Moving a factory is a very difficult and costly process. Quite apart from the cost of land, new buildings, shifting of plant etc. there is the difficulty of recruiting new labour, training it and housing it. These difficulties are likely to prove serious obstacles to mobility of industry. It will therefore, be necessary to offer the industrialists some positive inducements providing attractive sites and buildings in the right places.

Many small manufacturing firms hang on to the obsolete premises and workshops because of their inability to cover the costs of shifting. It may be worthwhile to persuade a group of small establishments engaged in the same trade or industry to move out together, to a small town or to an organised industrial district in the city. A co-operative transfer of this sort will ease the problems of small enterprise. This, in which we notice a marked tendency for similar firms to cluster together in the core of the city.

Where should Industry Go ?

Where should the new industrial firms and those which are displaced be located ? What should be the line of policy regarding industrial location ? When we have the following alternatives ?

- a) extending the fringes of existing industrial towns,
- b) building satellite towns around the metropolitan cities.

Agricultural economists prefer the fringe extension of existing industrial towns to building of satellite towns, as they fear that the latter would probably take away more good land from agriculture and would absorb into industry existing agricultural labour over a wide radius, instead of taking the unemployed from the cities and towns. In a country like Egypt, with an economy based primarily on agriculture, this will have adverse effects on agriculture and agricultural production.

Industry in small towns : -

Most rural areas are losing their population due to migration to towns and cities. If some industries could be attracted to country towns, then the improvement of rural services and amenities would be easier. Further, the aimless drift of the landless labourers from villages could be arrested only by a strengthening of rural economy.

Some of the problems that unplanned urbanisation and misplaced industries tend to create may be avoided by the establishment of small centres of industrial production, all over the country.

Although there has been considerable development of large-scale industries, Egypt remains, by and long, a country of small scale production, all over the country. The location and relocation of cottage industries therefore assume great importance in urban redevelopment.

Most of the cottage industries are facing great odds on account of lack of facilities like good sites, electricity, water supply, etc. It is therefore suggested that local authorities should make provision for 'Flatted Factories', in which many small industrial firms scattered throughout a large city in blighted premises could be relocated and grouped together, with advantage.

Regional Basis :—

Local planning for industry and urban redevelopment cannot be successful unless it is fully backed up by an effective policy worked out at the regional level. Such a policy should be linked with the controls over the admission of new industry and relocation of existing industry in the entire metropolitan region, or resource region.

Urban redevelopment problems and policies are intimately tied up with employment potentials and economic base. No urban renewal scheme can succeed, unless there is an equivalent transfer of employment. Because, employment is the great magnet, which mainly determines

where people seek to live. If a large number of people are displaced from congested areas due to urban redevelopment, while the volume of employment remains unaltered, the effect will be that they must travel much longer journeys every day to work, which will only aggravate the problems. At the same time, it is essential that the urban area should be constantly alert to the means for maintaining, adopting and expanding its economic base. It cannot therefore ignore the need for and the claims of industry and commerce. A poor and static city can ill-afford replanning and reconstruction. How to reconcile these two conflicting forces is at the greatest dilemmas that city planners and city administrators are facing at present.

Need for a Realistic Approach :—

Town planners have often been accused of putting too many obstacles to development of land in the fond hope of developing and redeveloping urban areas. Geographers and Economists criticise that 'Planning for planning's sake is the planner's occupational disease.' Geographers often think that planners are too ambitious and unrealistic in their approach and propose impracticable solutions to urban redevelopment problems.

Over generalisations regarding industrial location are dangerous. Each industry, and indeed each factory, has its own individual problems, many of which cannot be foreseen by even the most informal planner. Therefore the planners have to have close contact with geographers and industrialists, so that the present barriers of mutual incomprehension and conflict of interests, which divide the two, may be removed. Interest of both industry as well as planning can be best served when the geographer and the planner work together and learn to appreciate each other's problems.

1. Fogarty, M.P. : *Town and Country Planning*. Hutchinson's University Library, London 1948.

Table II. Population of Cairo and Alexandria, 1882 - 1960

	Cairo			Alexandria	
	Population of Egypt (000's)	Population in thousands	% of total	Population in thousands	% of total
1882	6706	399	5.9	233	3.5
1897	9635	590	6.1	316	3.3
1901	11190	678	6	354	3.1
1917	14177	1065	7.5	573	4
1927	14177	1065	7.5	573	3.5
1937	15920	1312	8.2	686	4.3
1997	18966	2090	11	919	4.8
1960	26065	3346	12.5	1513	5.5