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PLANNING FOR THE CARIBBEAN

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Planning in many countries in the Caribbean Region illustrates common internal problems which are very often related to their societal structures and supranational development patterns which influence the government policy and consequently planning in the countries.

Both components are not easy to separate. To get a deeper insight and knowledge of the processes which are taking place and the factors that influence the planning activities comparative and normative analyses are necessary.

With 10-30 years of planning experience behind us in our countries, I thought that for an extended analysis of the planning problems it might be meaningful not to limit ourselves only to procedural and other wellknown bottlenecks. It is our own task to find out if there are other fundamental planning problems that can help us to explain the minimal requirements of planning in the Caribbean.

One of the fundamental problems is the absence of links between the people at the one hand and planners and policymakers on the other hand.

Though past influences will be investigated to understand the current attitude towards planning and the additional problems related to forecasting and structuring of the future, external relation patterns with their internal political and economic impact, dependency models, will not be discussed.

This paper presents a first attempt at conceiving an approach in planning that can be considered more suited to our societies. It is not fully worked out and as such it does not pretend to introduce to you an all round concept of a development model in planning; the outline is in fairly general terms. I have not carried the points that were raised into any depth although the subject matter requires this. I hope to publish such a study soon.

This draft serves as a discussion paper and might be of interest to those persons who are involved in planning in the Caribbean.



The discussions consider both market and planned economic systems. Indicative and imperative planning will not be emphasized. I shall try to construct a model that emphasizes the interaction between expectations, and interests of the people, plans and realizations of the development goals in a society. This model will offer us relevant information for what we will call forward evaluation.

It gives us the opportunity to understand in a relative way the circumstances under which we live, our aspirations, desires and goals and confronts us with realities as conflicting interests.

The communicative model in development planning might be used for national and inter-Caribbean coordination of and cooperation in planning activities.

## II. PLANNING AND OUR HISTORY

### General Remarks

One of the principal characteristics of planning is the collection of relevant facts to improve our knowledge of the past and the present. This is of tremendous importance both for defining goals of development and for forecasting. Due to the circumstances -the limit of time- and considering the purpose of this meeting, I will not go deeply into a social historical analysis of our societies but I shall restrict myself to mentioning two characteristics of the region that are related to our history and which are in my opinion very essential to understand planning problems.

#### 1. Exocentrism

The first characteristic we can typify as "exocentrism". 1)  
The main feature is that exogeneous standards or standards developed abroad are considered as dominant and are used to judge the development in our society. This phenomenon is described in the literature and is not specific for the Caribbean region alone although loss of potential leadership 2) especially of the socio-economic weaker classes and some ethnic groups illustrates a specific type of exocentrism. The inconsistency very often caused by absence of any harmony between exogeneous standards and local value systems is a principal bottleneck in the forming and implementation of innovations especially in the social and agricultural

planning sector. Exocentrism is presented in economics, politics and social cultural matters. In economics the market economy is inherent to the colonial system. In most of our countries there was no internal process that aided rational choice. Fundamental discussions on planning of market or planned economics have not really been taking place among planners themselves;<sup>3)</sup> it has been and is still an academic matter.<sup>4)</sup> We are content here with a mere mention of the complexity of internal and external factors currently influencing these discussions.

In relation to politics I only intend to make the remark that democratic systems based on experiences in western societies were implemented in most of our countries with different social structures. The structure of government and the forms of administration were devised to serve the goals of the colonial motherland. In the social cultural sphere there are many illustrations of the foreign frame of reference. In the light of planning it is a relevant fact that the majority of the local professional planners in government circles were educated abroad.

Additionally, I can mention the inferior position or absence of applied social sciences (planning) in the curriculum of sociology at most of our Universities, caused possibly by the fact that planning as a subject was until recently not included in courses in most universities of Europe and the U.S.A.

2. Jugglerism

The second characteristic I will typify as "jugglerism".<sup>5)</sup>

The product of a society where the masses are deprived of any authentic participation of the development activities; societies where peoples were manipulated and in which they hardly directed nor controlled their destiny and future; societies where individuals who tried to get their future in their own hands were eliminated. One should not forget that in colonial society climbing on the societal ladder meant a maximal adaptation. People were forced to live from day to day and try to stay out of trouble; and managed by an administrative apparatus that gave no room for participation in the decision making process or insight in the machinery of the colonial system. As a result of this there did not only develop a large gap between the people and the government but moreover in many cases open forms of hostility of the people towards government because it represented oppression. In this type of society in which uncertainty was the main characteristic the people lost the most important property of every human group that is to socialize the youngsters to a kind of self-reliance; to help them to take their future more or less in their own hands; to make them aware of their own interests to develop an association with and a genuine interest in relationship with members of the government. This process just described was deeply rooted within the colonial system. It is characteristic for people who could during a long

period of time not only not make decisions about their future but also were forced to live a life that, as I mentioned before, was typified as a day to day life in which they tried to make the best of it. A life under which people had to try to find solutions for their problems within the frame of a colonial value-system. This process has led to what I called jugglerism.<sup>6)</sup> This phenomenon is well illustrated in planning<sup>7)</sup> where in a way an ad hoc policy decision is more or less institutionalized, and in which the slightest indication of certainty regarding the future leads to a tendency to disregard planning. Responsibility for one's own government and for the society as a whole is something that was absent. The change of attitude toward one's own life and toward the government and its development activities is a slow process.

The use of dominant exogeneous standards to assess one's own society and to use foreign solutions, that are not related to local requirements for solving internal problems, which is typical of exocentrism, and also the juggling attitude<sup>8)</sup>, a skill used hastily to operationalize short run policy, are in my opinion, the two main characteristics of our colonial past which guide us to a better understanding of planning problems in our societies.

As you might have noted from the preceding paragraphs both characteristics are emphasized because the discussion concerning planning problems are too often seen as problems of manpower, financial resources, etc.



### III. EXPERIENCES IN PLANNING

#### 1. General Remarks

Most of the countries in the Caribbean region have experiences of 10 to 30 years in planning. I do not intend to describe the processes extensively.

We can illustrate the interaction between exogeneous and endogeneous factors that influence the processes of development in our countries by dividing the planning period in three stages.

#### 2. Three Stages

The first stage can be typified as a stage in which mainly separate projects were developed and executed. It is a kind of marginal planning based on marginal improvements in the society often benefitting the colonial motherland and foreign enterprises. The development activities were predominantly defined by colonial experts. In this stage our countries had a colonial or semi-colonial status.

In the second stage development problems were analyzed by using western development concepts and western solutions were found. Planning activities were related to western foreign involvement.

I refer to the overestimation of the significance of foreign investments and markets. In this stage in many of our countries representatives of the first

generations of intellectuals who had enjoyed their education abroad returned to the country and participated in planning. In this stage some of the countries became independent. I will typify planning in this stage whereby future developments are devised and structured in close relation to developments in the welfare states as dependency planning.

In the third stage significant differences of approach developed among those who participated in planning activities. The differences were in my opinion on the one hand caused by the insufficient results of planning and on the other hand by the development of indigenous opinions or acceptance of new foreign development concepts.

We can conclude that we have not yet reached the stage whereby future developments are organised and structured on the basis of locally developed standards.

#### IV. A COMMUNICATIVE MODEL IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

##### 1. Main Elements in Planning and the Task of the Planner

Let us first of all ask ourselves what are the main features of the planning concept we use. In various definitions the following common elements can be noted:

Planning generally will be a cyclical and iterative PROCESS, whereby one can distinguish different phases. In this process FORECASTING -anticipation on future developments- is of great importance. Planning requires SCIENTIFIC METHODS and deals with problems of EFFICIENCY and OPTIMALIZATION. It makes proposals for ALTERNATIVE POLICIES.

Bearing in mind the problems of our societies we must consider whether it is possible to help the goalmakers by participation in the first stage of goal formulation by discovering the expectations, interests, wishes and goals of the people. This may be called forward goal evaluation. Moreover let me stress that the people are as much the agents as the object of development. This is relevant in planning irrespective of the type of planning. Every form of planning is related to human activities.

In connection with the problems related to our past exocentrism and jugglerism, it is thus in my opinion necessary to widen the task of the planner. We should not prolong a situation in which there exists a



considerable lack of communication between the people on the one hand and the planners and policymakers on the other hand. It can be considered as urgent that the people get involved in the planning process and thereby influence decisions<sup>9)</sup> on matters that concern them.

2. Characteristics of the Communicative Model in Development Planning

Based on the planning experiences in the sub-region we can ask ourselves whether a model more suitable to our means can be developed. I will make an attempt to develop such a model. We should try to give special attention to:

- a) reduction of jugglerism by an approach that stimulates the people to anticipate on future developments,
- b) reduction of exocentrism by helping the people to find solutions within their own social and cultural frame,
- c) communication, namely finding out what are the wishes, expectations, interests and goals of the people.

Based on this the planners can make a forward goal evaluation for the goalmakers and adjustment of the development goals to the expectations, wishes and goals of the people. With this exocentrism can also be minimized by the planners.

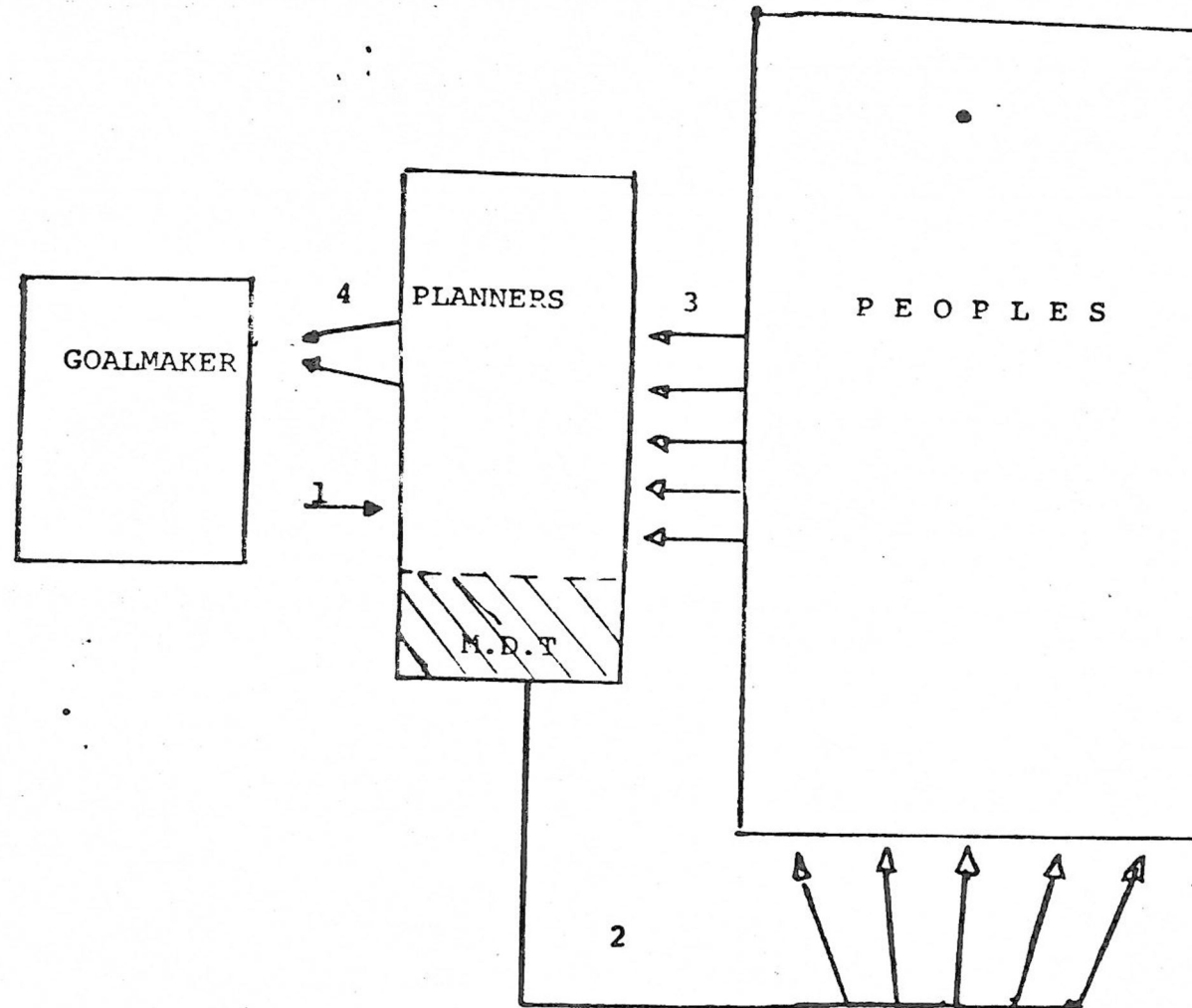
While not neglecting problems concerning manpower, financial resources, etc. I want to focus, as I mentioned before, on another category of fundamental problems; those which are related with the people and their past. Therefore discussions related to sectoral planning or ideally to a main point like the orientation of planning activities on the total national economy or to planning as a supplementary activity, will also not be emphasized here. Of course there are interconnections between the problems that are related to the attitude of the people, nature of policymaking and the other problems in planning.

3. Mobile Development Teams

From the planning point of view the main conditions for the model, which I call the communicative model in development planning, are not only broadening the functions of the planner but also the creation of mobile development teams. These teams consist of mid-level trained professionals. The composition should be multidisciplinary. They have to be trained as a team together on teamwork, survey design and execution, and they must be well informed about the initial development goals and the planning process. The most relevant are representatives in the following fields: medicine, social welfare, education (adult), nutrition. Furthermore, depending on



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the area, there will be in the team trained persons on agriculture, husbandry, cattle breeding, fishery, technical skills, etc. The training will be finished on the job. All the members of the team should have insight in the social and economic problems of the country. One of the most important features of these teams is their mobility. Their composition and location will depend on the activities to be performed. Periodically they return to their location to evaluate, instruct and inform the people and assist them in solving problems.

The teams will have the following tasks:

1. to find out what are the expectations, wishes, interests and goals of the people,
2. to find out what are the reactions on the initial development goals formulated by the goalmaker,
3. to deliver information to those areas where this is needed.

The teams are supposed to do their surveys independently. They are in a direct working relation with the planner. Knowledge and instruction has to be transferred to local persons who will take over during the absence of the team. With this system the people do not develop a dependency on the teams; it stimulates self-reliance.

4. Description of the Communicative Model in Development Planning

In this model we distinguish four phases. The process is cyclical and iterative. In the first phase the planner collects information and gets insight in the initial development goals formulated by the goalmaker. He starts to make a table which illustrates what is developed in different regions and what has to be done in the regions based on the mentioned goals. For every region he specifies the goals in relation with each other. In the second phase he selects a number of locations and instructs the teams. The result of the work of these teams should be constructed into a table with information about the goals in relation to expectations, wishes, and interests of the people and possible solutions. The teams should identify selected problems that are related to goals, and help to solve them. In the third phase the planner receives the reports from which he can find out what diversity exists on what subjects and in which areas there are common goals. In the fourth phase the planner makes a report for the goalmaker with suggestions about priorities, etc. and extension programmes, manpower in general, the bottlenecks of his policy and policy alternatives. At last the final plan can be made.

5. Relevancy of Three Categories involved in Planning

Now the relevance of the three categories of people involved in planning will be mentioned:

I. For the planners:

1. more knowledge of the field, for example, available know-how and its resources,
2. insight in the possible conflicts between initial development goals and expectations, interests and goals of the people,
3. rational framework to define and offer alternative policy goals.

II. For the people:

1. stimulation of activities that are oriented to the future. The first step is forecasting on local level,
2. introduction of alternative possibilities and improvement of skills,
3. conscious participation in the development process and activities.

III. For the goalmakers:

1. less risks in executing their policy. A policy that is largely adjusted to the wishes of the people has more chances of success than the one which is not.
2. No perpetuation of irrelevant and non-development oriented activities. Urban and rural areas both participate fully in this model.
3. More realistic view on the society and the future.
4. Basic material is available to develop a network of ideas that can eventually result in a development philosophy.

V. RECAPITULATION

The communicative model outlined here can be typified as a planning model in which an institutional framework has been developed to continuously adjust the development goals defined by the goalmakers to the goals and expectations of the people. Priorities and choice are now more rational, not mainly political, and also take note of financial possibilities. At the same time this model offers the possibility to find out in a very early stage if implementation of innovations will be successful. Its character is strongly evaluative and communicative. It informs us about the openness of the people for change and gives us the possibility to improve our information techniques and make the necessary adjustments on our own society. It can be used in all types of planning and will be adapted to local circumstances.



Notes

1. The influence of politics and policy nowadays is not excluded.
2. There is a process which can be characterized as a continuous self-elimination (outside of the group to which one originally belonged) of those who have climbed up on the societal ladder.
3. I mean that even though a verbal preference for one of those two named models might be stated, one usually does not go into the problems of institutionalization (organization, mechanisms, procedures, execution).
4. I refer to the well-known discussion within the local universities.
5. A division in the three categories: policymakers, planners and the people is here irrelevant.
6. Also here the influence of politics and policy nowadays is not excluded.
7. I refer to the weak participation of planners in negotiations with for instance foreign enterprises.
8. Because those who wanted to live a life with a perspective could only do so by trying out different possibilities and being smarter than others, a short run success was in many cases the most one could get.
9. In the colonial period the problem solving capacity was suppressed. This might have led to the conclusion that it was absent. In the communicative model in development planning I emphasize the presence of this capacity by the people.

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