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THE SURINAME-DUTCH RELATIONSHIP WITHIN
THE FRAMEWORK OF POLICYMAKING AND PLANNING

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by Betty Sedoc-Dahlberg

This paper presents a first attempt to analyse the Suriname-Dutch relationship within the framework of policymaking and planning.

It is not fully worked out and as such it does not pretend to introduce to you an all-round analysis; the outline is in general terms.

I will focus on the late colonial period, the semi-colonial period and from independence till Suriname today.

- A. The first period starts + 1947 - 1954
- B. The second period starts 1954 - 1975
- C. The third period starts 1975 - 1980

I will illustrate how steps directing to change in the political status of the country were connected in these periods with different conceptual approaches towards a planned development. A new institutional framework was designed to control the country in its totality. Development Aid became a post-colonial instrument to maintain/intensify the dependency relationship.

The late colonial period

- A. By the installation of a commission for the Study of Constitutional Reform in 1947 in Holland first announcements were made for political independence of Dutch colonies in the future.

To understand the background of this Commission one has to take into account:

- a. the economic position of the Netherlands after the World War II;
- b. the problems Holland was confronted with in the independence movements in what is now called Indonesia;
- c. the attitude of other West European countries in those days towards their colonies.

The observation has to be made that:

- Suriname was economically not the most attractive colony within the kingdom of the Netherlands; budgetary deficits were paid by the Dutch government.
- decline of the agricultural sector (coffee, sugar, cacao, except rice).
- increase of the population.
- decrease in foreign investments.

In 1947 the Dutch introduced the Prosperity Fund for Suriname. This can be considered as the first Dutch initiative to influence the countries future by a more or less planning oriented approach supported by Development Aid.

A number of projects were executed to improve the standard of living and exploitation of natural resources for economic development. (Goals formulated by the Dutch and accepted by the Suriname government).

The treasurer of the Fund was the Governor, the Queen's representative in Suriname.

The Central Planning Agency (CPA) in 1950 started with a mainly Dutch team. Development aid became a visible Dutch affair in the country. Although this Agency was formally related to a Suriname ministry; in reality it was a body in the society that was not integrated in public policy and in the budget planning of Suriname government.

The Dutch team mainly looked for a kind of integrated planning which could be described as regional local development and a solid coordination of the different sectors.

Emphasis was placed on agriculture and improvements in the social sector.

The lack of a comprehensive approach in planning in these days can be explained by the attitude of most Western countries towards planning on one hand and on the other hand by the too superficial interest in the development problems of the country. In the Netherlands a type of so-called

"indicative" planning started in the fifties. In fact it restricted planning to a kind of a development program worked out by a governmental body and enterprises. The results of the first period of planning in Suriname are:

- a) sectoral planning with little continuity and coordination;
- b) a mechanism that gave no place to any sort of feedback and evaluation of the targets;
- c) no coordination (at least) with public policy;
- d) more financial dependency; and
- e) aid became a political instrument.

I call this type of planning "marginal" planning because some improvements were made without structural reform.

The second period: semi-colonial status, 1954-1975

This period is in the history of Suriname identified by the Charter, which stands for the internal autonomy of Suriname. The Country's status was revised. Suriname became an equal part together with the Netherlands and Dutch Antilles of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It was decided that foreign affairs and defence became Kingdom matters. Legal security and the administrative system were supervised by Holland. There was full Dutch control of the external transport system.

The Prosperity Fund was followed by the Ten Year Plan 1954-1963, the country's first perspective plan. Then followed the supplementary Development Plan 1955-1963, and the National Development Plan 1965-1975. The importance of the exploitation of natural resources was strongly emphasized. This led to investigation in the field of mining and geology, forestry (physical planning).

Large scale infrastructural projects were executed. The above mentioned is related to the main goal; attaining a greater economic independence and stimulation of local resources to increase socio-economic development. A special budget was used for the social sector; education and public health. The last perspective plan in this period is a first attempt for a more integral development.

In 1955 the Planning Act passed the Suriname House of Parliament. For the execution of the TYP the controlling function of a Dutch administrator - in relation to the CPA - was therefore legalized. In the Planning process the formal goal formulation was in the hands of the government. The CPA may redefine the goals and make the breakdown in specific objectives. Within the ministries another, sometimes deviant set of goals were worked out for execution. The two planning processes were not coordinated (between CPA and Ministries and between Ministries). The drafting of the Plan, financed by the development aid, is one of the main tasks of the CPA. The Dutch parliament discussed and approved the annual plan budget.

Any coordination with the Ministry of Finance in Suriname was absent. In 1970 a new act passed the House of Parliament in Suriname which offered a legal framework to improve the coordination between national and regional planning and the procedural planning system. The formal task of the CPA became also the setting up of research projects and functioning as an advisory board to the Minister of Development concerned with national and regional planning. Moreover, the CPA was also the controlling Agency for the execution of the Planning Act.

In this period of planning the concept of development was highly influenced by the Lewis Doctrine: Industrialisation by invitation. In the late sixties and the beginning of the seventies the growth pole approach was introduced and a joint-venture strategy developed to achieve economic independence. The special regional planning body was not successfully connected with the Central Planning Agency; the human resources (manpower requirements) were not integrated in the development approach and with time the gap between CPA (Sectoral planning) and regional planning became clear. In this period the coordination between planning agencies and the ministries was absent. This planning period when future developments were devised and structured in close relationship to development in the welfare state can be best described as "dependency" planning.

The third period: Political independence in 1975-1980

In 1971 the Dutch announcement was made that the colonies in the West would become independent in the near future. A few observations can be made to understand the background of the announcement.

In Holland - an increasing migration of Surinamese to Holland.

- critics from leftist movements in the Netherlands.

In Suriname - an increase of social and political conflicts which could make military intervention possible.

Global - the attitude in international agencies as U.N. towards colonial relationships.

A new perspective plan: the Multi Annual Plan (M.O.P.) was drafted by a Committee existing of Surinamese and Dutch experts. The most important reason for installation of such a committee was the need for a plan that would be accepted by both governments to guarantee developing aid after independence.

The dominance of the Dutch can be illustrated by the implementation of the development goals, being the same as they used for the selection of the so-called concentration countries:

- strengthening the base of the whole economy;
- increasing job opportunities;
- improving living conditions of all members of society;
- optimal regional spread of economic activities.

In 1975 the Commission for Development Cooperation between the Netherlands/Suriname (CONS) was formed. This Commission consists of 3 Surinamese and 3 Dutch experts. The CONS approves projects to be financed out of the Dutch Funds for Suriname and control periodically the plan execution. Committees consisting of Dutch and Surinamese experts prepare the projects.

It may be concluded that planning in Suriname during the last period became more than before in the history of planning of Suriname a Dutch affair. The whole process is in the hands of the Dutch.

In the country the CONS was often called "The Super government". This could be illustrated by the rejection of several projects approved by the Suriname government.

It will be difficult to find a political independent country that is so controlled in its planning system by a metropolitan country as Suriname. The fact that the making of an annual Plan is formulated in the bilateral Treaty with the Netherlands and not in the Plan Act, is very illustrative.

A suitable name for planning in this last period is "Satelite" planning.

SURINAME TODAY

On 25 February the Government was overthrown by a military coup. Suriname has now a new government. A new ministry called "The Ministry of Development Planning" has been established. The Minister announced that he will underline the self-reliance approach. Special attention will be paid to micro productive projects to stimulate local people. An investment and subsidy policy has to be worked out.

There is no indication that the position of foreign enterprises and multi-nationals will change in the near future.

A national council for planning will make suggestions for socio-economic development and investigate bottlenecks in planning. It will consist of representatives of the government enterprises and trade unions. For a better coordination of sectoral planning a committee consisting of members of different departments will be created.

Conclusion

Planning from its early days till now illustrates the nature of the relationship between Suriname and the Netherlands in the late colonial period up to the first period of political independence.

Different periods in Suriname planning are distinguished. In all periods the far reaching and growing influence of the Dutch in the planning system is illustrated.

It has to be considered that there have been disparities in views between the Dutch and Suriname governments and these may in the near future lead to financial sanctions from the Netherlands with far reaching consequences for Suriname governments.

Development Aid an instrument for control of a
Third World Society: The case Suriname

	I Late col. period 1947-1954	II Semi-col. period 1955-1975	III Political independence 1975-1980
Political status	Commission for the study of Institutional reform	<u>Charter</u>	declaration of independence
Plan	Prosperity Fund Agriculture	TYP/NOS. infrastructure/natural resources	M.O.P. 1975-1985 infrastructure/natural resources Social
Planning Organization	Treasurer: Governor. Act 1950	C.P.A. <u>Act</u> (1970)	C.P.A./CONS Bilateral Treaty (1975)
Approach conceptual	modernization indicat. pl.	Lewis doctrine growth pole Joint venture	Self-reliance growth pole Joint venture
Type of planning	Marginal Sectoral Top-bottom	Dependency Sectoral and reg. integral Top-bottom	Satelite Sectoral and reg. integral Top-bottom