

ON THE THEORY AND STRATEGIES OF POLARIZED
DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA

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COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE
GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

REPORT

The Commission on the Status and Development of the Government in the United States was organized by the President in 1955 to study the structure and functioning of the Federal Government and to recommend ways to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

1957

SUMMARY

The author's thesis is that in the implementation of polarized development strategies in Latin America account has not been taken of the type of structure of the urban system of each country, with the result that in many cases there is a lack of functionalism between the urban structure and the polarized development strategy.

In the analysis it is argued that there is a need to consider both the size of the countries and the type of urban structure (primate, rank-size, mixed and amorphous) to determine the most suitable intervention strategy in each case. Three types of strategy are studied: the strengthening of primacy, equidistribution, and the strengthening of medium-sized urban systems; each of these urban strategies is associated with a specific way of fitting the economic and functional aspects into the regional-urban system.

INTRODUCTION

Relatively recently (May 1974) the Latin American Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES) and the Latin American Institute for Social Research (ILDIS) published, through Editorial siglo XXI, a book entitled PLANIFICACION REGIONAL Y URBANA EN AMERICA LATINA (Regional and Urban Planning in Latin America), which contains the interesting material from the International Seminar of Viña del Mar (Chile) on the same subject sponsored by the two institutions in 1972.

Practically half the seminar, and half the book, deals with questions related to the theory and strategies of polarized development in Latin America. Between the date of the seminar and that of the publication of the book, the literature on this subject in Latin America has not made any notable progress, although both Coraggio (Coraggio; 1974) and Santos (Santos; 1974)

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have published monographs on the topic. It is perhaps timely to add some additional comments to the discussion. These could be justified on a number of grounds, but it is enough to point out that despite the considerable criticism in Latin America, of both the theoretical framework and the specific strategies of polarized development, it is still easy to pick out countries in which the effort to obtain a geographically more harmonious development is founded on traditional concepts of polarized development.

A number of highly positive conclusions can be drawn from a retrospective review of the material and discussions of the Viña del Mar Seminar.

In the first place, and beyond the natural differences in ideology, politics or professional training and experience of the participants, there was a striking unanimity of opinion not only that the theory of polarized development (at least in the most widespread Perroux version) must be revised (which would not necessarily lead to the formulation of a different theory, although that alternative is not ruled out) from the standpoint of the particular reality of Latin America, and that the strategies of action (which flow from the theory) must be completely redesigned to adapt them to the usual objectives of regional development in Latin America and adjust them to the prevailing spatial, economic and technological conditions in the region.

The revision of the theoretical structure of polarized development has two aspects: (i) the question of the internal coherence of the theory as a body of non-contradictory propositions of positive and predictive validity (this aspect has in fact been better analysed by non-Latin-American specialists such as Friedmann, Hansen, Lasuén, Hermansen and others); (ii) the question of the ideological factors it involves as a consequence

of the fact that it is conceived within the framework of the industrialized capitalist economies, a question which has been examined extensively and in depth chiefly by Coraggio (Coraggio; 1973, 1974).

The revision of the specific strategies of action stemming from the theoretical conception of polarized development has been undertaken chiefly by Boisier (Boisier; 1972, 1974) starting from the premise that in the Latin American context, for present purposes characterized in each country by scanty inter-industrial relations and by even scantier inter-spatial (or more properly, inter-urban) relations, the objectives of a strategy of polarized development are more concerned with the questions of integration and diffusion than those of point growth. The set of propositions widely known today as INDUPOL (INDustrialization, Urbanization, POLarization) represents a first attempt to stress the need to operate on the basis of urban systems and of techno-industrial operations with a good capacity for geographical disaggregation.

The two positions should be viewed as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. The specialists who point an accusing finger at the ideological implications of the theory are aware of the potential of technically well-designed strategies, while those who stress the need to readjust the strategies are well aware of the ideological background of the theory and the dangers which arise from applying it mechanically in the Latin American context. It is perhaps a useful division of labour with its consequent specialization of tasks. Just as to perform a concerto, it is necessary to have both an excellent conductor and also a virtuoso soloist, to advance today in the social sciences a modicum of division of labour is essential.

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Thus both the above-mentioned seminar and the book should be considered valuable efforts (complementary to those of other institutions and different individuals) directed in a general sense at the major task of establishing a Latin American doctrine on regional planning and development, i.e., the creation of a specific body of theory, stemming from the particular social, economic and spatial conditions of Latin America.

This is not an idle claim. The subcontinent does present a wide range of empirical situations and experiences which facilitate inductive reasoning at least. Again, there is a sufficient number of specialists of the highest level and a respectable number of academic and research institutions of the highest quality. There are a number of theoretical and methodological questions related both to the positive and normative aspects of regional development to which the Latin American experts have made or are making substantive contributions. Dependence between socio-political structures and spatial structures, the essentially systemic approach to regional development, questions related to consistency in multiregional systems, the relationships between the size of countries, openness to the exterior and city systems, contributions to the theory and strategies of polarized development and the study of the differentiated patterns of location among national and transnational firms are some of the topics significantly associated with a budding Latin American school of thought.

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SIZE, DISTRIBUTION OF CITIES AND POLARIZATION

The geographical size of the countries, the type of city distribution they present and the nature of the functional strategies of polarization in each particular case, should be viewed as interrelated questions. Perhaps to some extent the apparent failure of the polarized development strategies in Latin America is linked to the lack of association among these elements. The failure is in any case more apparent than real, since as has been pointed out, the same could be said of Christianity as of polarized development (in Latin America): something which has been so little practised cannot be said it has failed.

To begin the study of the interrelationship between geographical size and both the distribution of cities and also the strategies of polarized development, it is useful to take as a starting point the set of (technological) hypotheses which make up the theory of polarized development.

Reduced to its simplest form, the theory of polarized development is based on a set of hypotheses whose validity in a given situation constitutes an indispensable pre-requisite to build any strategy of polarized development with any chance of success. These hypotheses may be formulated as follows:

(a) there is a process of functional polarization (i.e., economic growth can be seen as a series of disequilibria caused by the appearance and disappearance of a series of innovatory, dominant and propulsive activities);

(b) there is a process of geographical polarization (i.e., the spatial structure is modified as a result of the appearance and disappearance of urban centres which generate forces of attraction and diffusion on the economic activities on the geographical environment);

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(c) both processes are self-contained (i.e., there is a reciprocal feedback effect so that either of the two processes induces the appearance of the other);

(d) it is possible to introduce exogenously these destabilizers (poles) into the functional structure of activities and in this way it is possible to provoke geographical polarization.

The validity of these hypotheses is not generally questioned in the case of developed economies where the two basic collateral conditions exist on which these hypotheses may be based and which thus enable a strategy of polarized development to be drawn up. These conditions are the existence of interindustrial relations which make up a relatively full I-O table of transactions and the existence of interspatial relations (or interurban relations) which also make up a more or less full table of transactions. In these conditions, and given the validity of the feedback hypotheses, it is legitimate to think that the introduction of a new "polar" activity will generate a series of effects which will spread simultaneously through the matrix of industrial relations and through the matrix of spatial relations.

The basic problem is that these conditions do not generally exist in the developing economies. Interindustrial relations are scanty and weak; interspatial relations are still more so. They are precisely economies with a low level of integration.

For this reason, a strategy of polarized development in a developing economy has a completely different and much more complex content. It is not merely a question of introducing destabilizing elements (poles) into the system; at the same time the system of economic and, in particular, spatial relations must be created.

The immediate significance of recognizing the above fact consists in the admission that a strategy of polarized development involves a much greater quantity of financial, technological and

management resources than is usually supposed. In other words, a correctly drawn up strategy of polarized development is a large-scale matter rather than a succession of small isolated actions.

The second element which must be introduced to give form to this more integrated approach to the phenomenon of polarization is the absolute geographic size of the countries. Naturally, it is to be expected, a priori, that there will be some differences in the form in which a strategy of polarized development is inserted in "small" and in "large" countries. This point has received little attention in the regional economy literature; among others, Geisse and Coraggio (Geisse and Coraggio; 1970) from one point of view, and Gutiérrez, Ortiz and Villamil (Gutiérrez, Ortiz and Villamil; 1971) from another, make important contributions in relation to the treatment of the subject of this paper.

While it is concerned with the problems of metropolitan planning, the well-known article of Geisse and Coraggio provides an excellent example of how different spatial scales call for different instruments of control and orientation, based on non-traditional concepts. The argument of the two authors, which refers to metropolitan regions, could perfectly well be used in the case of very small countries which, under certain conditions, operate like "big cities".

The following are paragraphs taken from the above-mentioned article (the footnotes and some intermediate paragraphs have been removed):

"What are the effects, on the tasks of regional planning, of adopting the view of the metropolitan region as a big city instead of seeing it as a small large space?

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"Firstly, the basic underlying theories and their corresponding strategies change. If the region is visualized as a "small large-space", the theory of the poles of development seems a good starting point. This in turn determines a large part of the research topics: emphasis is placed on the concepts of location economies and above all on urbanization, the degree of diversification of the different centres of the sub-system and their possibilities of endogeneous growth; a calculation is made of the multipliers and their side effects and the desirability is implicitly shown of a higher degree of isolation of the regional centres bordering the metropolitan area. These efforts, in the real framework of a system of highly open economies with a small total diameter, give rise to obvious problems. The search for an "opposing" development pole within the metropolitan region becomes fruitless (if the region is correctly delimited). In the second place, the concept of mobility "and accessibility" used is spatial. This leads to in depth studies of the conditions of physical and economic accessibility, through a description of the infrastructure which should be created to achieve greater spatial accessibility. This is found to be relatively simple, and in the end there is talk of sequels, costs, etc., or dialectical alternatives are raised such as restricting accessibility to favour the autonomous growth of peripheral centres within the metropolitan region.

In the third place, the analysis of institutions lends great importance to the possibilities of the spatial decentralization of power and administration, with an implicit or explicit conception of strong municipal

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governments. Once again, in the real context of a big city, this task is almost impossible, since the margins of decentralization and their social benefits are severely limited by the small diameter of the system.

On the other hand, what happens if the metropolitan region is viewed as a large city?

Firstly, it becomes meaningless to strive to establish one, two or more integrated polarized centres which oppose gravitational force of the metropolitan nucleus.

It is difficult to think that good urban planning would result in each district becoming a diversified unit, with industrial activities, services, trade, etc. It would make more sense to think of zones with a certain degree of specialization according to their advantages of location and the foreseeable trends in a market system. The explanation of this change of approach, once again, is that in a system with high accessibility and mobility the population can (relatively) have access to the benefits of industrialization, or growth in the services sector, without needing to be located in the same place as the activities are carried out. Certain patterns of spatial division of labour which may be unacceptable at the international level and even at the interregional level, are perfectly acceptable within a city. The general keynote is that the geographical disassociation of functions ceases to be a problem and becomes an instrument for the efficient organization of space. The idea of the big city leads both to bolt the concentration of efforts to obtain an effective organization of activities in space, and also to increasing the mobility of the population to accede to the benefits of development, rather than attempting to orient dynamic activities towards the areas whose situation

it is desired to improve. In this context it can be highly inefficient to use industrial location as a principal instrument of redistribution. With regard to spatial mobility, it is clear that its main determinant is not physical friction in space but rather the social and occupational mobility of the population.

Thus, for example, priority is given to the study of income distribution and the location of the various population strata, their technical and vocational training, and all the mechanisms through which spatial mobility can be increased via the redistribution of income, the training of human resources, etc. Finally, with regard to the institutional side of the question, attention is concentrated on the central use of the more efficient instruments to bring about the desired economic and social organization of space, and on the analysis of the private or semi-private bodies which take decisions throughout the region".

Of course Geisse and Coraggio do not only advocate a change of methodological approach because of a question of scale of regional size; their argument is clearly - and correctly - based on the different functional structure of a metropolitan region. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the subject discussed in this work, the fact remains that "small" countries can also be conceived as a "big city", depending, naturally, on the degree of internal mobility and interdependence. As a result, in the case of "small" countries it would also be necessary to change the approach to regional planning and to change the way in which the insertion of the strategy of polarization is conceived, if in fact this is the right instrument of change in such circumstances.

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From a different and no less interesting point of view, Gutiérrez, Ortiz and Villamil point out the need to adjust the planning schemes - too Keynesian and thus based on hypotheses of limited openness of the economic system - to operate in small countries, which are normally characterized by a considerable degree of openness.

While the above mentioned authors devote their study almost exclusively to the overall aspects of economic planning, it is nonetheless true that if regional planning (on the national scale) is understood as a component of national planning, its practice should be modified to the same extent as the latter's content is altered. Again, if a polarization strategy is contained in a regional planning scheme, its content and scope should also be revised in a situation of high openness.

According to Gutiérrez, Ortiz and Villamil, the essential characteristics of the small countries, which are determinants of the "mode" of planning, are:

- (1) The small countries usually have relatively more open economies;
- (2) their economies are relatively less diversified;
- (3) aggregate supply is less diversified than aggregate demand;
- (4) there is relatively little occupational diversification, as a result of the two previous characteristics;
- (5) there is a high degree of dependence in various fields: economic, political, cultural, social and technological;
- (6) the indices of concentration tend to be higher and the external sector is linked to the dominant country or countries;
- (7) the social system in the small countries is more homogeneous in its sub-systems and usually has a high degree of centralization, which implies that the whole system may be affected by the manipulation of a limited number of variables.

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Taking this set of characteristics as a starting point, the authors suggest a planning model which is more oriented towards the control of the intersystemic flows, the reduction of uncertainty, the generation of information and the design of a strategy for the minimization of losses to insure the stability of the system.

It may be seen from the analysis of the above-mentioned studies that the scale of the area under control (whether a region or a country) has a decisive influence on the methodology and also on the operational instruments of planning, both when the scale is measured in purely geographic terms and when it is measured in relative functional or economic terms.

A preliminary working hypothesis may therefore be deduced; a strategy of polarized development must differ in conception and specific content when applied to "large" spaces and to "small" spaces, and in the latter there is still a possibility that the formulation of a strategy of polarized development may not make sense.

The third element which must be introduced into the analysis is urban configuration.

In a significant work by Vapňarsky (Vapňarsky; 1969) it is argued that the models of urban ranking called "primate model" and "rank-model" cannot be considered mutually exclusive situations within one country; the author maintains that instead a perfect compliance with the rank-size rule by all the cities of an area, except the largest, is compatible with a high level of primacy.

Taking the regions (or the countries) as ecological systems, Vapňarsky centers his attention on the attributes of closure and internal interdependence of such systems. The closure of a system is defined by the author as the proportion of all existing interactions beginning or terminating within a particular system which

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are also completed within the same system. Internal interdependence is defined as the total amount of interaction that takes place between all possible pairs of units of the system (for example, cities) divided by the total population living in the units.

From the foregoing definitions Vapñarsky deduces two major hypotheses. The first of these establishes that for sufficiently well defined regions (that is, those with a relatively high degree of closure), the lower the degree of closure, the higher the degree of primacy of the city which establishes the main links between the given area and the external world. The second hypothesis establishes that the higher internal interdependence, the higher the possibility of the fulfilment of a rank-size rule in the distribution of cities.

Since closure and internal interdependence are independent attributes of a system, the author distinguishes four possible situations:

- a) High closure and low interdependence. This combination would characterize a very underdeveloped area that is also practically isolated from the external world. No city of appreciable size is likely to occur, and no rank-size pattern can be expected.
- b) Low closure and low interdependence. In this case the primacy of the city establishing links with the external world can be expected; at the same time no well-defined pattern would be expected for the rest of the cities.
- c) Low closure and high interdependence. While the largest city will tend to show a high degree of primacy, the rest of the cities will probably fulfill the rank-size rule.
- d) High closure and high interdependence. These conditions fulfill a rank-size type distribution for all cities.

To this typology a further factor can be added, that of the size of the country, when such a factor is considered relatively independent of the degree of closure and the level of internal interdependence. There would therefore be eight typical situations:

- 1) Large countries, high interdependence and a high degree of closure. The United States would be the most marked example of this situation.
- 2) Small countries, high interdependence and a high degree of closure. Some European countries, for example, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, and others fit this category.
- 3) Large countries, low interdependence and a high degree of closure. Peru and Mexico would be considered examples of this category.
- 4) Small countries, low interdependence and a high degree of closure, as for example, Paraguay.
- 5) Large countries, high interdependence and a low degree of closure. As Vapñarsky himself suggests Argentina shows these characteristics.
- 6) Small countries, high interdependence and a low degree of closure, as for example Puerto Rico.
- 7) Large countries, low interdependence and a low degree of closure. Perhaps Brazil would fit this category.
- 8) Small countries, low interdependence and a low degree of closure. Panama is a case in point.

It is necessary to super-impose on this framework of basic conditions the range of alternative strategies for the development of geo-economic space so as to establish some possible pattern of association.

In a recent document, Boyce and Boisier (Boyce, Boisier; 1974) discuss some of the strategic proposals more commonly designed for use in the urban-regional structure and compare such alternatives

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with the existing situation in Venezuela. Of the strategies discussed, three are of interest in the context of the study: geographical equity, urban primacy, and the systems of medium-sized cities.

The strategy of "geographical equity" consists in disseminating the resources (for example investments in industrial parks) throughout the urban spectrum for the benefit of the greatest number of the population, in other words, so as to make employment opportunities as equal as possible, on the basis of resource mobility rather than population mobility.

Although a strategy of this kind is easily criticized from the point of view of the scarce resource allocation efficiency, it served as the conceptual basis for experiments as important (but also not very successful) as the so called "Operation Bootstrap" implemented in Puerto Rico during the 1950s, and also the attempt to spread industrial parks over India during the first five-year plans.

Of course, where capital is scarce, a strategy of geographical equity is irremediably condemned to failure if at the same time the implicit scheme of industrial development is adapted to the requirements of modern technology; in such a case it is impossible as a general rule to overcome the problems of scale and indivisibility. Similarly, if the degree of internal interdependence (at the level of urban centres) is low, it becomes impossible to use the mechanism of the geographical separation of processes and functional complementarity between urban centers. The result is that from this point of view a strategy of "geographical equity" could not be introduced in the context of a poorly interdependent economy. Of course, the strategy could be used to generate greater interdependence but at the cost of idle capacity, perhaps excessively high (this appears to have been one of the results achieved in Puerto Rico).

The strategy of urban primacy - diametrically opposed to the foregoing - raises the hypothesis of a high level of correlation between urban size and economic efficiency (efficiency in a different sense from the Parebian optimum); that is, that large cities are more efficient generators of economic progress than smaller cities, this rule being valid for any segment of the urban system. It follows as a corollary that the most effective policy of urban growth would be that which stimulates the accelerated growth of the primate city so that the urban hierarchy could be used to disseminate the gains of the primate city throughout the entire geographic space.

The strategy of strengthening the growth of the primate city on the basis of its supposed higher efficiency received the support of important theoreticians of urban-regional development such as Alonso (Alonso; 1968, 1971) and Mera (Mera; 1970) among others. The basic argument used by Mera is that in developing areas the economic efficiency of a country (measured in terms of income per capita) increases as the population of the central city increases in relation to the total population of the country (the index of primacy increases). Mera collected information for a period of seven years in a large number of countries, and through several statistical analyses, came to the conclusion that in developing countries the largest cities are the most productive. In contraposition to this conclusion, Boisier, Smolka and de Barros (Boisier, Smolka and de Barros; 1973) find in a cross-section analysis of more than 200 Brazilian cities, that in Brazil the largest cities are likely to be less productive ^{1/} than the medium-sized ones; in the latter, industrial productivity per worker grows at an increasing rate whereas in the former it grows at a decreasing rate.

1/ Although the average productivity is higher in the larger cities, the variations in productivity within a similar class or urban size differ in favour of the medium-sized cities.

In any event, empiric evidence, both in favour of as well as against the strategy of urban primacy is scanty, and that which exists is unilateral in the sense that it measures either the costs or some form of benefit without both concepts being considered simultaneously.

The strategy used in the case of "systems of medium-sized cities" represents to some extent a middle path between the extremes just mentioned and, in its essence, is a suggestion for: i) determining the existence of cities well integrated around a central city of relative medium size (larger in any event than a given minimum size); ii) applying in such systems a complex development strategy on the lines implied in the INDUPOL concept (Boisier; 1974).

In recent years it has become evident, particularly in Latin America, that there is a growing interest in the role that could be played by "medium-sized" cities (admitting the relativity of the concept) in connexion with regional development strategies. A recent study by González (González; 1974) presented to the X Congress of the Interamerican Planning Society, reviewed some contributions on the subject.

The conceptual basis of a strategy oriented towards "systems of medium-sized cities" is based on the hypothesis that in such a case it would be possible (although not as a universal rule) to overcome the classic antinomy "efficiency-equity" provided that it is possible to develop in such systems, and particularly in their nodal cities, activities with greater (localized) productivity than could be obtained either in large cities or in centres which are too small.

The last alternative strategy to modify the urban-regional structure is represented by the introduction of new elements in

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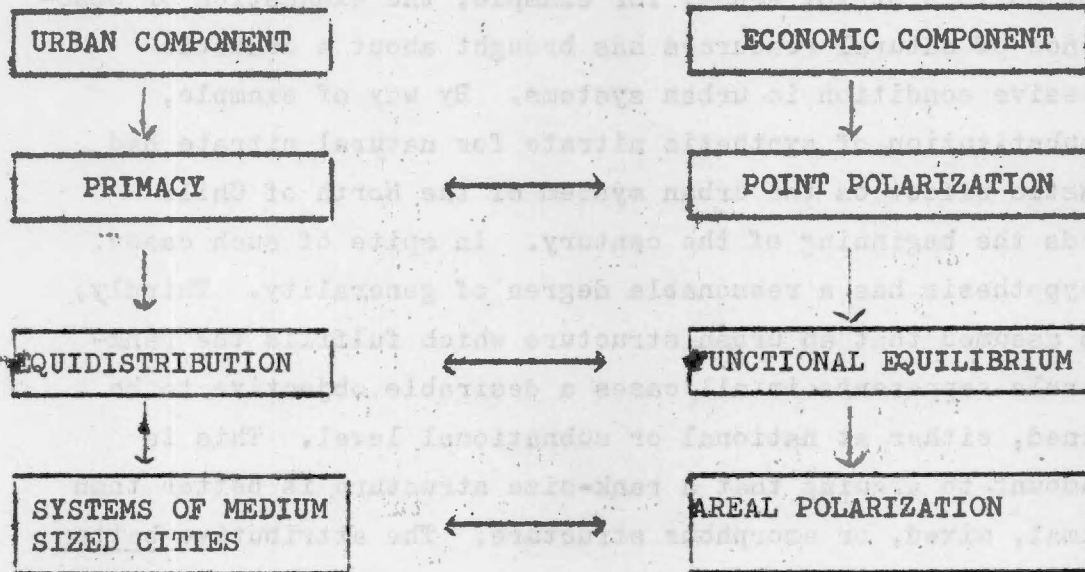
the system, that is, the creation of new cities. The analysis made in this study refers, however, only to the three cases mentioned above.

A close association can be observed (although not completely exclusive as regards its categories) between the three urban (or spatial) strategies outlined and three alternative forms of introducing the functional or purely economic aspects in them (a strictly functional and point polarization approach in the "large city" style and a corresponding approach to an effort of more complex polarization such as INDUPOL).

Thus, an urban strategy of primacy finds its functional complement in an effort aimed at point polarization (corresponding to the classic interpretation, or that of Perroux, of the phenomenon); an urban strategy of equidistribution is translated into a functional and operational modality of the large city type (or of functional equilibrium); an urban strategy of systems of medium-sized cities fulfills its operationality in a scheme of areal polarization (INDUPOL). This form of association provides simultaneous answers to the questions of WHERE it will act and HOW it will act to modify given urban-economic structures, such as are given in the chart below.

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STRATEGIES FOR INTERVENTION IN URBAN-REGIONAL SYSTEMS



Now it is necessary to return to the eight typical situations of interrelations between size, closure and interdependence and to introduce certain additional hypotheses. First, the size of the countries is taken as an invariable; of course, this refers to geographical size. Secondly, it is assumed that a "high" degree of interdependence in an urban system constitutes an irreversible attribute of the system. Historically, this is not so in a strict sense, for example, the exhaustion or obsolescence of natural resources has brought about a dramatic regressive condition in urban systems. By way of example, the substitution of synthetic nitrate for natural nitrate had a drastic effect on the urban system of the North of Chile towards the beginning of the century. In spite of such cases, the hypothesis has a reasonable degree of generality. Thirdly, it is assumed that an urban structure which fulfills the rank-size rule represents in all cases a desirable objective to be obtained, either at national or subnational level. This is tantamount to arguing that a rank-size structure is better than a primal, mixed, or amorphous structure. The attributive better must be understood as a reference to the generally accepted proposals of regional development, that is, a greater degree of integration, greater mobility, greater dissemination of technical innovations in geographical space. etc., etc.

It is possible - according to Vapňarsky - to identify four types of urban structures: rank-size, amorphous, mixed and primal, the first of these would be found in countries - large or small- with high closure and high interdependence. It could be said that such countries have already overcome the conflicts and contradictions between the organization of space and the level of economic development, conflicts which determine the need for a planned effort at spatial and regional development. Whatever

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destabilizing factor is introduced into these economies whether it be a new industrial activity, or a new city, or an urban inter-connexion tends to modify the level of operation of the system rather than the nature of the system itself. In such cases, the system of functional interrelationships (the matrix of inter-industrial transactions) and the system of spatial relations (the matrix of interurban transactions) are so related and intermingled that action at any level is automatically mapped into the other. There is no need obviously for a deliberate intervention strategy.

The second type of urban structure - amorphous - would be found in countries - large or small - with high closure and low internal interdependence. An amorphous structure must necessarily be unstable in time and, as a result, it is necessary to try to determine what is the trend of change of such a structure. In large countries it seems logical to assume that the condition towards which an amorphous urban structure tends would be the rank-size pattern. A large country would tend to maintain a relatively high degree of closure, and the very process of economic growth would tend to result in an increase in the degree of internal interdependence. High closure and high interdependence would tend in time to shape a structure of the rank-size type. In contrast, in small countries it would be expected that their small size would tend to reduce the degree of closure of the economy instead of raising the level of internal interdependence. Low closure and low interdependence would tend to transform the urban structure into a primal structure, although not necessarily a stable one.

In the first case, therefore, a strategy directed towards strengthening or establishing systems of medium-sized cities combined with a strategy of areal polarization (INDUPOL) may

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represent the suitable approach for intervening in the incipient urban-space system. In the second case, a strategy of urban primacy and point polarization would represent the correct way of modifying or orienting the urban system.

The third type of urban structure - mixed - would appear in countries - large or small - with a low level of closure of the system and high interdependence. A mixed structure (primacy for the totality of the urban and rank-size system excluding the primate city) certainly constitutes a system of considerable stability. In the case of large countries with a mixed structure, the combination of a spatial strategy directed towards the creation or strengthening of systems of medium-sized cities with an economic strategy of areal polarization would represent, again, and in this case, the most suitable approach for intervening in the process of growth and spatial conformation. In the case of the small countries with a mixed structure, which already by definition show a low level of closure, a combined strategy of urban equidistribution and functional equilibrium (implicit in the image of the "large city" as defined by Geisse and Coraggio) would signify the better answer to the urban-regional problems of such countries.

The fourth type of urban structure - primal - would correspond (according to Vapñarsky) to large or small countries with a low level of closure and a low degree of internal interdependence. The stability of such a structure varies depending on the size of the country. In geographically large countries (particularly if they are going through a period of accelerated urbanization) the most probable direction of change in the urban structure would be towards a mixed structure. Again, the combination of a spatial strategy oriented towards the strengthening of systems of medium-sized cities with an economic strategy of areal polarization would represent the most suitable form of approaching the

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urban-regional aspects of development planning. In contrast, in geographically small countries (and presumably those with small populations) the primal structure of the urban system would imply a high degree of stability. Under such conditions only a combined strategy of primacy and functional polarization would be possible.

CONCLUSIONS

The study presented in the foregoing pages represents a first effort on the part of the author to synthesize in a single document, various recent contributions of Latin American experts in the field of regional and urban development problems, linked in one way or another to the theory of poles of growth.

As part of this very effort of synthesis, the author has formulated - as a basis for future discussions - the thesis of a lack of suitability among the prevailing urban structures, in each case, and the strategies of polarized development which have been attempted in the same cases. It is argued in the discussion that the most common urban strategies - primacy, equidistribution, systems of medium-sized cities - must be parallelly associated with economic strategies of point polarization, functional equilibrium, and areal polarization respectively in order to define consistent measures of control and orientation.

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