

Book Review

Mohammad A. Qadeer. *Urban Development in the Third World: Internal Dynamics of Lahore, Pakistan*. New York: Praeger. 1983. xivx + 282 pp.

Anyone who likes to analyse the world in terms of comparative statics would, in the light of this book's contents, find his approach erroneous as the book leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that only by unfolding the forces of *dynamics* can one grasp some reality underlying any change. The author, who grew up in the walled city of Lahore, has, with a beautiful combination of his personal experiences and theorising ability, produced a remarkable study of the intricate processes which may have shaped the existing physical and socio-economic structures of the city.

The fundamental question which he has tried to answer in this book is: Are the Third World cities burdened with so many problems despite numerous action plans and development schemes? In his view, the present condition of the Third World cities resembles a typical situation "where the more things change the more they remain the same: a phenomenon of changing parts but persistent system" (p. 4). In an effort to explain this puzzling phenomenon, he turns to the study of internal dynamics of Lahore, which he defines as "a set of processes that underlie the changing economic, social and physical organisation of a city" (p. 10).

The book is composed of eight chapters. In Chapter 1, the author provides a succinct description of the nature of urban crisis in the Third World and spells out the reasons for making Lahore his case study.

Chapter 2, which is of crucial significance for appreciating the contents of the remaining chapters, presents an overview of theories and concepts illuminating the internal dynamics of the Third World cities. The author here puts forward twelve different propositions about the role of various factors in shaping the socio-economic structures within a city. He maintains that external factors (colonization etc.) may have influenced the development process in the Third World countries, but internal factors play a more important role in urban development in these countries. In this context, he particularly mentions the dualistic structure of socio-economic activities, in which the firm (formal) sector on the one hand and the bazaar (informal) sector on the other, operating through their specific sub-sectors, determine the

course of a city's development. Since most of the analysis in the following chapters is carried out in the framework of this dualistic mode of operation, the author has made sure that the salient features of the bazaar and the firm sectors are properly spelled out. His taxonomy of sub-sectors is further enriched when he introduces the "economy of illicit activities" into the dynamics of dualistic modes of operation. He regards these activities as one of the most common features of life in the Third World cities. Interactions of bazaar, firm and 'illicit activities' sectors provide a broad framework within which internal dynamics of a city could be studied.

Chapter 3 is entitled "The Social Economy of Pakistan". The author here reviews the political history of Pakistan, albeit briefly, as well as the social structure, income distribution and modes of operation in Pakistan's economy. The role of "shadow economy of corruption", institutional evolution, and social relations of production and consumption are also examined in detail. All this is done to inform the reader about the general environment within which urban development in Lahore has taken place since independence of Pakistan in 1947. His main finding in this chapter is that there exist contradictions at every level of Pakistan's society. As a result, even though one sees some improvement in the economy, the development process in Pakistan has fragmented its economic and social structures into broad and interconnected sub-sectors where army generals, bureaucrats and landlords continue to hold dominant positions.

Chapter 4 is entitled "Lahore: Growth and Change". It presents an analysis of the two visible indices of the city's development, viz. population and physical growth. According to the author, Lahore's population has grown five-fold over a 33-year period (1947-81), a growth to which the most important contribution was made by internal migration. Physical development of Lahore shows that there was no dearth of public action or private initiative as is sometimes believed. There has been an addition of 12000 houses in the city every year since 1961. Schools, dispensaries and other community services have all increased many times over these years.

However, the author observes that this growth has not significantly improved the quality of life in Lahore. It has resulted in an increase in the number of *Katchi Abadis* ("Squatter Clusters") and a higher proportion of poor-quality houses than ever before. The appearance of posh housing colonies in the post-independence period has exacerbated class differentiation, initially introduced by the colonial urban planning. Most of the public services are provided to serve the "upper circuits" of both the firm and the bazaar sectors, whereas the "lower circuits" find their lives becoming even more difficult than before, owing to increases in traffic jams, pollution, and urban crimes.

Chapter 5 is one of the core chapters in this book. It gives an in-depth analysis of the major economic forces which may have produced the social and physical development discussed in other chapters. A number of theoretical propositions presented in Chapter 2 are put here to both logical and empirical tests, which have

enabled the author to challenge some of the prevailing theories about urban development in the Third World. According to him, first of all, unlike some of those Third World cities where demographic expansion has outpaced economic activities, Lahore has had a population growth which has been very much in line with its economic growth. The bazaar sector, which is an expression of indigenous mercantilism and is rooted in a traditional caste/clan division, has played a vital role in the development of this city. The State has also played a central role in this process. However, it has benefited primarily the firm sector and is responsible for external influences on the local economy.

One of the most prominent features of Lahore's development is that it has led to fractionation of its economy in sectors and enclaves, distinguished by social classes, consumption patterns, modes of operation and organizational arrangements. Unequal access to the State authority, which is also one of the major sources of corruption and illicit activities, has perpetuated this socio-economic cleavage. As a result, the city has totally lost the cultural coherence which it once enjoyed.

In this chapter, while analysing the role of the State in Lahore's development, the author makes a very important observation about the debate on public versus private ownership of resources. According to him, in Lahore the social classes which are now responsible for perpetuating underdevelopment consist of officers and professionals as much as of landlords and capitalists. This may suggest that as long as the decision-makers at various levels enjoy monopolistic power, a simplistic solution of changing the status of industries from private to public would not make any difference to the pattern of development.

Chapter 6 entitled "Space and People", describes the distribution of houses, stores, workshops and industries in the city, with reasons for their location. The author here quite convincingly tries to show that Western urban models may not be applicable to the empirical realities of Lahore. For example, one does not find a strict division between residential and commercial zones, so characteristic of Western urban planning. Similarly, unofficial housing construction is a predominant feature of the city's development which is also against the Western concept of urban land use.

He identifies six types of neighbourhoods in the city, namely (1) the walled city, (2) the civil lines, (3) New Indigenous Communities, (4) the planned schemes, (5) cantonment and (6) *Katchi Abadis*. An interesting feature of these neighbourhoods is that even though they are differentiated along class lines, they are not spatial monopolies. One certainly finds a dominant social function and architectural idea in each neighbourhood but they are composites of diverse elements. There is a deep-rooted economic and social interdependence between different residential areas, so much so that people living in the upper-income areas would find it unimaginable to live without the services of sweepers, milkmen, washermen and the

like. However, since those providing such services cannot be accommodated within the posh residential areas, they make their own housing arrangements by raising huts in the places nearby. According to the author, this may explain how *Katchi Abadis* come into existence in different parts of the city. In this chapter, the author also provides an equally impressive analysis of other spatial developments in the city.

Chapter 7 explores the working of such elements of urban institutional system as schools, hospitals, water supply, housing and similar other elements. The author here finds it an inescapable conclusion that most of the amenities generated in this city generally benefit the upper class. This has happened despite the declared intentions of the planners to improve the living conditions of the common people. According to him, dualism, corruption, influence-peddling, privatization of services, unequal access to the State power, lack of popular representation in the civic affairs, and lack of maintenance of public facilities are among the major reasons for the present state of affairs. In this chapter, a detailed analysis of the above-stated factors has been done to show how they affect the distribution of goods and services in different classes.

Chapter 8 presents an excellent overview of the main findings of the study. In this summary, the author maintains that the major factors responsible for the city's "misdevelopment" are (1) The adoption of pre-packaged institutions and policies by the city planners, without any regard for local conditions and indigenous modes; (2) the use of State authority in support of the dominant firm sector and upper classes, and to the detriment of the general polity – corruption, in particular, is an outcome of the presence of the State in different institutions of the city, (3) discouragement of one of the most vital entities of the city life, the bazaar sector, which, according to him, has made a major contribution to the city's development; and (4) emphasis on changing *modes* and *structures* of institutions rather than on their *operations* and *functions*.

As a starting point for the city's improvement, he recommends that (1) administrative reforms must be enacted to make public agencies responsive to public needs; (2) city planning, housing designs, and community layouts should be brought in line with indigenous traditions and requirements (3) suitable adjustments be made in the location of different agencies to minimise the transportation needs of the public; and (4) basic services, such as provision of latrines, water taps, baths and garbage collection facilities, should be made available under collective arrangements.

This book by Professor Qadeer is undoubtedly an impressive and in-depth study of the problems of a Third World city like Lahore. By focusing only on one city he has meticulously unfolded not only the mysteries of urban development, but also of the development process in general. His treatment of 'firm' versus 'bazaar' sectors as a broad framework of his analysis has added a new and more comprehensive method of analysing the development process in those countries where dualism

continues to be a predominant feature of socio-economic activities. Disregard of local traditions has been a common failing of the planners in the Third World, which must be rectified in the light of the author's assessment of the contribution made by the bazaar sector in Lahore's growth.

His analysis of the role of the State may not draw consensus but is certainly well articulated and thorough. In terms of his logical reasoning and knowledge of Lahore city's affairs, the author touches a zenith when he explores the role of illicit activities in shaping the socio-economic structures within the city. Here, he leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that without taking into account this part of the internal dynamics of a city no development strategy could achieve its desired objectives.

However, to some economists, who like to draw inferences from properly selected data sets, the book might be somewhat deficient on this account. The author at certain places has relied more on his logical reasoning than on empirical evidence. This is particularly true when he talks of the role of the State and the process of class differentiation. Moreover, since these two themes have appeared in more than one chapter, their discussion sometimes sounds repetitive and rhetorical. Similarly, had the author also presented some profile of housing and income distribution in the city, his analysis would have been even more meaningful.

Nevertheless, this is an excellent book, written in superb literary style, and must be read by city planners, development economists and all those who want to learn anything about internal dynamics of cities in the Third World.

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