Yosef Dital

ADMINISTRATION AND CONTROL OF HIGH URBAN LAND PRICES

The purpose of this paper is to show that high prices of urban land are the result of lack of planning and the misuse of power by public institutions and not by private land owners as it is generally thought. The paper concludes with the suggestion that undeveloped private urban land will be better controlled by public institutions through tax reforms and better planning.

The argument which presents the above suggestion is as follow:

Land is nature's free gift to man; however, since it is in short supply, especially in and around urban centers, prices of land are exorbitant.

It is quite impossible, administratively, to set a limit on urban land prices since the forgone price increment would be passed on the consumer by land owner.

In a free market environment, allocation of land for urban development is done according to the 'highest and best use" principle. In a none free market environment, administrative rules such as "first come first serve" determine the allocation of land for development.

Supply and demand are not the only forces which affect urban land prices. Planning authorities influence land prices by administrative decision such as awarding Guilding and developing permits and by giving public services such as roads, water and other utilities. Thus planning authorities exercise power by being able to transfer development and land rights from one subdivisison to another.

The public planner in addition to hi: power to transfer rights, is in a state of dilema vis-a-vis a "long-range planning" approach which circreases the uncertainly of future urban development and thus circreasses land prices, and a "short range planning" approach which diminishes the municipal government's ability to supply land services on time.

Another diremma which faces the public planner is the amount of urban land that should be available for development at any period of time. On the one hand awarding more development permits increase the amount of land that has to be serviced at a greater cost to the public. On the other hand, fewer and more concentrated land plots for development mean higher land prices.

2. Differences in costs

This article reports on a study,* which compared the costs, per capita, of absorbing additional population in 7 development towns : Hazor, Safed, Maalot, Migdal-Haemek, Beit-Shemesh, Sederot and Yeruham.

It turns out that the costs in the most expensive town (Safed) are 4 to 5 times those in the cheapest town (Migdal Haemek and Beit Shemesh).

There are several reasons for these differences :

a. In some localities, there were enough employment opportunities to absorb additional population, while in others, it is necessary to go into great expense in order to create employment.

b. Differences in topography cause construction in certain localities to be more expensive than in others, up to 2.5 times !

c. In some places, i.e. Safed, additional increase requires big investments in infrastructure (roads, water supply, sewage etc...), while in others, existing facilities can accommodate the increases in population that are forecasted for the next 5 to 10 years.

The differences in costs between the "more expensive" and the "cheaper" localities justify the re-examination of the priorities that the Government gives to these towns, as significent savings can be achieved in population growth is diverted from "expensive" towns to the "cheaper" ones.

3. Efficiency in the use of resources

Efficiency in the use of resources implies that the marginal contribution to the development of a town by an investment of a shekel in industry be equal to the contribution that will be achieved if the same shekel be invested in housing or education.

It seems that this is not the case. Notwithstanding the difficulty of estimating what is the effect on the development of a town of an additional investment in one area or another, big discrepencies can be shown.

Because of bureaucratic reasons there are areas, such as development of indpstry, for which funds are available, but these funds cannot be used for other areas, for instance for the development of public transportation.

* Based on development plans prepared by the Ministry of Housing.

present paper demonstrates that the Beduin underwent a process of fertility increase before fertility decline, both of which were preceded by the process of mortality decline between the mid-1950's and the late-1970's. While mortality decline and fertility increase were the outcomes of economic growth, fertility decline is the outcome of social modernization. Both processes lead to decline in population growth rate. This reinterpretation of demographic processes has important implications for planning towns for the Beduin society in terms of improvement in their social well-being on their path from nomadism to semi-urbanization.

Dr. Eli Borukhov

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF "POPULATION DISPERSION POLICY"

1. Alternative Interpretations of "Population Dispersion"

The policy of "Population dispersion" has been a central objective of the Government of Israel during most of the years of its existence and large resources were invested toward its achievement.

The objective of "Dispersion of the population" can be interpreted in several ways. One interpretation is that the Government will seek to disperse the population in small settlements, dispersed, more or less, evenly throughout the country. Another interpretation is that the Government will seek to increase the share of the population that lives in the outlying districs. This interpretation implies that in these districs the population can live in relatively large settlements, which are cheaper and not necessarily be dispersed in a large number of small settlements which are much more expensive.

Whether we accept this interpretation or another, it is interesting to know what are the differences in the cost of absorbing additional population in the various settlements in these districs.

For instance : Apparently the costs per capita of absorbing people in small rural settlements are higher by 3 to 6 times than the costs in larger urban settlement.

Dr. Hillel Raskin **PRINCIPLES O FLAND USAGE IN NATURE FOR REST AND RECREATION DURING LEISURE TIME**

In modern society, leisure time has increased significantly. The need has been felt to utilize this time in the correct way, in order to overcome the frustrations and tensions of everyday life. In Israel, a society has developed which engages in insufficient physical, creative and social activities and which has environmental problems typical to urban society. Today, it is an accepted fact that areas must be earmarked for recreation, in nature, to improve the quality of life.

There are several logical principles which should guide the choise of open areas for recreation :

— the land must serve all kinds of population.
— a legal framework should guarantee land for recreation.
— data on suitable areas must be gathered.
— land should be purchased and safeguarded according to a master-plan which takes into consideration the future needs of the population, as well.
— bodies responsible for recreation should be clearly defined.
— recreation areas must be carefully spread out over different parts of the country.
— planning should be flexible, avoiding permanent structures in order to adapt to the changing needs of the population.
— local residents should be involved in planning.
— different authorities such as schools, government agencies etc. should be involved.

Avinoam Meir, Ph.D. **DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION AMONG THE NEGEV BEDUIN IN ISRAEL**

ABSTRACT

The sedentarization of Beduin in Israel made it necessary for the authorities to channel the process into planned semi-urbanization. A forecast of future Beduin population size, however, did not consider the demographic transition and response theories within the process of change among the nomads. The