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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GROWTH AND SERVICE CENTRES' POLICY
AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

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by

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ABSTRACT

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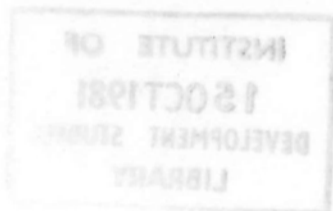
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THE EFFECTIVENESS AT GROWTH AND SERVICE CENTRES:
POLICY AS ON INSTRUMENT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA.

By

Oiro Obwa



ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the strategy of growth and Service centres as an urbanisation and rural development instrument in Kenya. The issue that decentralisation of urban development through designation of hierarchical growth points based on the theoretical framework of the Central Place Theory is critically analysed within the Kenyan Context.

Constraints to this planning exercise are highlighted as being past government policies, settlement patterns, and the land tenure system. The effectiveness of the policy as being generatic to the rural surroundings in that the centres will create cash markets for the rural economy by providing industrial goods plus Government services is seen as highly hypothetical in an economy that is neither regionally integrated not internally oriented.

Alternative transformative approaches are suggested in the last part of the paper.

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GROWTH AND SERVICE CENTRES' POLICY AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

INTRODUCTION

In 1966, just after the publication of sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 (Kenya's blue-print for national Development), which defined the various aspects of planning such as Physical, social and Economic, it was decided that National physical plans should be drawn up on which the nation's Social Economic and financial plans should be based.

The present Physical planning Department (then known as Town Planning Department) of the Ministry of Lands and Settlement was charged with the task of drawing up National physical plans.

What was the drawing-up of such plans meant to achieve? What were the policy objectives of physical planning in Kenya? How has physical planning done in meeting some of the national objectives it set out to achieve? This paper attempts to evaluate the performance of the policy with particular regard being given to its objective of establishing a suitable infrastructure for an equitable distribution of the benefits of growth especially in the rural areas.

1. PAST DEVELOPMENT POLICIES IN KENYA

The development policy in Kenya during the colonial period emphasized growth at the expense of general development in the country. The character of this growth economy was that it was to depend entirely on imported Capital and Personnel. The natural result was an in-built inequality in development. Inequality in incomes, in opportunity, in regional development and more importantly between urban and rural areas. To a large extent, this policy was continued in independent Kenya. The Nature of the economy has been and still is, a dual one; with modern and traditional sectors or rural and urban sectors and a highly stratified social structure. Development accent and stage, especially before 1966, in the urban and rural sectors of the economy differ significantly. The urban sectors receive more benefits of growth while the needs of the rural sectors has been relegated into the background. The result was that the rural people began to see the logic that urban areas were better off than their areas. They therefore started to migrate from rural areas to the towns to share the little that they could get in towns. In turn the towns, especially Nairobi, the primate City accumulated planning problems.

The provision of social services such as education, health, housing, sewage and other social infrastructural facilities, employment, traffic congestions became urban planning problems. This made the work of town planning more acute. This was also the work assigned to the department of town planning and was inherited by the physical planning department, with an enlarged assignment to design a strategy for distributing equitably the benefits of growth in the rural areas. This, it was hoped, would help in getting to the roots of the urban planning problems, namely, arresting excessive drift to towns by developing the rural areas.

To this end, the department adopted the strategy of growth and service centres both as an urbanization and a regional development strategy. The logic of the strategy is that with the rural areas developed or developing fast, through the policy of growth and service centres whereby urban development is decentralized and distributed evenly throughout the country migrants would not only be attracted to the private city, but also to those designated centres with an enlarged industrial, commercial and administrative bases. Since a growth centre could be a regional capital and so remote from the actual smallest unit of development, centres were arranged in a hierarchical order with different levels of service to the rural population. The exercise was to be carried out by the department of Physical Planning, Ministry of Lands and Settlement. The important thing to stress however, is that the growth and service centres policy is itself a strategy for rural development. It was thought to be the surest way to spread and distribute equitably the fruits of growth especially in the rural areas where the majority of Kenyans live. The evaluation of the policy must therefore examine its performance in rural development.

Have the centres been generative to their hinterlands or have they been parasitic to them? An answer to the question is what is attempted here, together with a possible rational alternative strategy to the one evaluated.

2. ESSENTIALS OF GROWTH AND SERVICE CENTRES POLICY

Physical planning deals with development which is related to the use of land. It also deals with the causes of movement of people, e.g. rural to urban migration or urban to rural migration, as well as movements of goods. It significantly modifies the environment. Thus, physical planning can be said to deal with emerging patterns of production and residence, and the distribution throughout the country of

the physical infrastructure of development such as: roads, railways, power plants shops and factories, public buildings, houses, schools as well as hospitals. (4)

In Kenya, physical planning is said to have two principal objectives:

- (a) In a national or regional context it is aimed at planning a national strategy for the location of capital investments.
- (b) In an urban context to plan both large and small towns in detail, so as to produce a co-ordinated economic land-use for development projects with a satisfactory environment.

Of these, objectives (a) is the most important for the purposes of this paper. Let us see its importance. Physical planning work at the national and regional level would involve the following:

- (i) The compilation of essential physical data that would influence investment decisions. These factors include ones such as population, the location of existing infrastructure and the pattern of settlements, roads, railways and communication, agriculture potential, the physical constraints and potentials of the region including topography, climate, water supply, and soil types.
- (ii) Secondly, it would involve a thorough analysis and projection of such dynamic factors as population growth, population migration, economic development, technical and cultural change and the urbanization rate.
- (iii) The preparation of a strategic plan (5) complete with operational maps and supporting statements. This exercise has to synthesize development resources and incorporate the planning proposals of all the various ministries and agencies concerned with physical development such as the Ministry of Works, the Ministry of Water Development, the Ministry of Power and Communication, National Housing Corporation. The plan therefore will have to show the fundamental proposals such as:
 - (1) Major cities and towns selected for intensive growth i.e. growth centres.
 - (2) A network of smaller towns and villages as administrative and social centres and centres of economic development

to serve the local needs of the people in the rural areas i.e. the service centres.

(3) The development of the road, rail air and communication network and extension of power grid.

(4) Areas for Agricultural and other resources development. Thus, physical planning is the infrastructure plan on which all other plans economic, social, and financial would be based.

As had been pointed out, while it is true that the government emphasizes rapid growth, it is also concerned with how that growth is to be distributed. The policy efficiency for this was the growth and service centres' policy. The Department of physical Planning explains this policy in this vein.

"the proposed network of centres in the current plan reflects the Government's aim of an equitable distribution of Physical infrastructure and social services in concentrated forms of settlement in any given district rather than be dispersed throughout the district."

Further it is explained that such an approach is necessary because:

(a) The most efficient way to provide government services in the rural areas is to gather such things as schools, shops, administrative facilities, health services into one place so that they can easily serve the people.

(b) The second advantage of grouping services is that Water supplies, roads, sewers, and electricity supply lines can be installed to serve these activities more cheaply than if they were scattered over a wide area.

(c) Having grouped the facilities enumerated above, the trunk and secondary roads can be built in such a way to place the new centres at a point which the people will find most convenient to reach and to market their produce in.

(d) Grouping will also enable commercial growth of such centres and so activities will increase and so towns will grow.

(e) The designation of centres is also meant to help the government policy of encouraging foreign investment in the country. It is believed that if rural centres could be provided with the necessary infrastructural facilities then foreign investors would be attracted to these areas. Infact the 1974-78 plan reinforces this point by explaining that "once a centre has its basic infrastructural facilities, it will tend to attract commercial and industrial development which will enrich the lives of people of the rural areas and provide improved employment opportunities".⁶

How has the Government gone about the task of trying to draw up the strategic plan we have just dicussed above?

This was done under a national physical study in which existing centres were studied on the basis of an alien theory (without modification) viz. The Central Place Theory (CPT) whereby centres were studied and given points according to existing services they had namely, administrative, commercial agriculture e.t.c. A centre with the highest point was given the title of an Urban Centre while the lowest was designated a local centre with in between, rural and market centres. Other points considered in designating a centre are ones such as:

- (1) Needs of the area.
- (2) An examination of the local population distribution.
- (3) An analysis of existing infrastructure and transportation network.
- (4) The needs arising from development of local records and consultations with the provincial and district development committees.

Of critical importance in the establishment of these centres is their relationship to the hinter land since the policy is in itself rural development oriented. Once the centres are established in a hierarchical order with the highest centre providing higher level services while a lower provides lower level services it is hoped that more people will benefit through such an arrangement. The relationship between the centre and the hinter land is expected to be mutually beneficial in that the growth of a centre is to stimulate the agricultural hinterland by providing for most of the social infrastructure and industrial raw materials. They are also expected to be the basis of

rural industrialization since most of the smallscale industrial activities such as shoe repair, bicycle repair, tinsmithing flourmilling, e.t.c. take place in them.

From the hinterland come the agricultural products to be sold in the produce markets of those centres. The money thus obtained by the farmers is spent on industrial goods such as Unga, Clothes, Shop detergents, cooking oil etc. In other words the monetary economy is being encouraged in the rural areas thus expanding the monetary sector of the economy and considerably diminishing the traditional subsistence economy.

Surely, this reasoning in itself is persuasive except there may be some operational difficulties. At any rate, the rural population to be served by such centres by the turn of the century are as follows:

Urban Centres: Are supposed to serve a rural population of 120,000 people. They are medium size towns serving as the main commercial and trade centre usually for an entire district (most urban centres are administrative headquarters at the district level). Some of these urban centres have a potential for industrial growth because they enjoy rail communication and other advantages.

These are towns such as: Kitale, Kericho, Nyahururu, Nanyuki, Naivasha, Sagana, Fort Hall, Kisii, Bungoma.

Rural Centres: These are supposed to serve a rural population of 40,000 people with administrative, social and commercial services. They are expected to be small towns with a resident population of between 2,000 to 5,000 people. Services to be provided at these centres are

- Will most probably be divisional administrative headquarters
- Local hospital
- Secondary school
- Police stations
- Post office and bank services
- Public water supply
- Electricity
- All weather roads.

They are also the centres for the development of rural cottage industries. It can therefore be seen that Rural Centres will be very important in improving the standard of amenities in the rural areas.

Markets Centres

Market Centres are supposed to serve a rural population of 15,000 people with a resident population of less than 1,000 people by the turn of the century. They should have health centre, secondary school, chief's headquarters, mobile bank services, public water supply. Land-use Development plans drawn up for these centres make provisions for commercial and light industrial uses as well as traditional produce markets.

Local Centres:

These are supposed to serve a rural population of about 5,000 people and probably a resident population of only 200 people. They have no administrative functions but act as important trading and social centres. Till now, there are a total of about 1,753 service centres spread across the country. To these must be added the growth centres such as Kisumu, Kakamega, Nakuru and Eldoret, Nyeri and Embu. Most of them are provincial headquarters. They owe their status to their administrative, commercial and sometimes industrial capacities. They also have a substantial service infrastructure. The much talked of foreign investors are supposed to utilize these growth centres in making their investments in the country.

The most important thing to emphasize here about the policy of growth and service centres is that they are in themselves an exercise in rural development. The expected end results of this policy were:-

- (1) Decentralization of urban development through the creation of growth points and service centres in the rural areas.
- (2) Government services provided in the designated centres in the rural areas and growth points such as educational institutions, medical institutions, water supplies, electricity supply will adequately and effectively serve a great majority of the rural masses.
- (3) Investment decisions will take into account the designation of centres and establish themselves in rural areas as well as creating even industrial development in the country.

The burning question however is, how has physical planning exercise performed particularly with regard to developing rural Kenya. To what extent has it succeeded in helping decentralize urban development in the country? Have services especially government services such as water supply, health, electricity been allocated according to the centre principle? And if so, how effectively have they reached the people? Do foreign investors take into account the growth centres when taking locational decisions? These are the questions we now turn to discuss.

3. EFFECTIVENESS OF GROWTH AND SERVICE CENTRES POLICY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

(a) Growth centres

The first and second aims of the policy stated above assumes that the centres so designated will be generic to the rural surroundings in that they will create cash markets for the farm products and that they will modernize the rural economy by providing industrial goods plus government services; hence the decentralization of urban development through the designation of growth points and service centres where government services are directed.

This strategy is however only sound in an economy that is regionally integrated and internally oriented. And this fact is so important that we have to thoroughly understand it in order to consider how effective growth and service centres' policy can be in developing Kenya's rural areas. What do we mean by a regionally integrated and internally oriented economy. And how can it help the growth and service centres' policy achieve the aim of rural development?

An internally oriented economy touches very much on external trade and foreign exchange questions. Should tariffs be imposed on certain kinds of goods or should free trade be encouraged? In other words, should a government adopt an inward looking or autarkical strategy for industrial development? Should the international trade principle of comparative advantage be accepted as a given fact so that young developing countries do not engage in manufacturing but only provide raw materials? These inevitably are the questions that are generally raised when a country starts to consider the relationships between Agriculture and industry in the national economy.

The course usually taken is that national industrial development have to be encouraged. To do this, national industries are usually protected against competition from foreign manufacturers. Import substitution is therefore the usual step taken. And in most cases import substitution is directed only at finished goods and less essential commodities. In other words, external trade is restricted only to exports, imports of raw materials, machinery and spares in most cases to help the protected industries. One important aspect of import substitution is that it does not necessarily make the economy internally oriented if it is not carried on upto the second state i.e. the stage where backward linkage industries are created. Most countries are therefore wrong in indulging in protection without having the intention to carry it to its logical conclusion. In other words, the economy becomes more externally oriented.

So the economy would be internally oriented through import substitution only if the industries to substitute imports are fed by the products of other industries in that economy. This is important in that if a cloth factory is established in a growth centre; a factory for the manufacture of spares, would be established in another centre, may be in the same region. Cotton growing in the same region would be directed at feeding such a factory. In other words the economy is internally oriented and regionally integrated. In this respect therefore industries being established in Kenya like the Motor assembly plants are not meant to make the economy regionally integrated and internally oriented, but to secure a firm market for international capital against competition from other international capital.

Another very important aspect of a regionally integrated and internally oriented economy is the nature of the relationship between the sectors of the economy i.e. the private and the public sector. Planning is a highly manipulative exercise and must be able to manipulate the two sectors so as to achieve maximum benefit to the nation. In this regard therefore, if the private sector is large and is owned largely by nationals, the public sectors purpose for **existence** is to finance and to generally facilitate its existence. The role of the public sector will only be to provide signals for growth through the fiscal and monetary policies so as to influence

the investment trends of the private sector. However, if the private sector is big and foreign owned, it will aim at shipping out of the country their profits. Their aim will not be to reinvest the profits accruing to them in the country but to take it out of the country. Investment decisions will therefore be made outside the country. In other words if the department of physical planning designates some centres as growth centres, their achievement of such a title will largely depend on the good will of the private investor who in this case is foreign and in most cases has very little loyalty to the host country.

The growth centres thus established in this case will only be centres where foreign investors can penetrate the wealth of the rural areas and then transfer such wealth outside the country. Reinvesting will take very little consideration.

Thus, for a country to be internally oriented and regionally integrated, in a third world developing country, where you don't have indigeneous capital and indigeneous capitalists, the public sector must be larger and stronger than the private sector. The private sector's area of operation must be clearly delineated and there should be certain areas of the economy such as the service industry, especially the financial institutions and the general distributive and exchange sectors of the economy where they can not be tolerated at all. They can only be allowed in parts of the manufacturing and extractive sectors. And even in such sectors they should not be given free hand. They must operate jointly with public corporations.

In this way, public sector investment is assured and can be carried out according to national interests. Capital investments will be directed to centres that are designated as regional growth points. Such regional growth point investments will be aimed at stimulating the growth in its hinterland. The growth results thus realized would be further invested in the service centres. The centre and the hinterland will thus be mutually beneficial to each other. It is easier to gain compliance through administrative directives only where public agencies are involved but much more difficult to receive the same where private sector predominate.

For this reason therefore, unless the public sector is enlarged and made more powerful than the private sector, the centres will only be parasitic to their hinterlands and not generitic.

Lastly and more importantly, regional trade must be encouraged through the use of an enlarged and powerful public sector. To this end regional trading corporation to handle distributive and exchange trade must be established and not marketing boards that are exploitative to the peasant's produce. Strong marketing and production co-operatives must be established to help regional trade for the peasant's produce. They will in return handle the industrial goods from the growth centres that are meant to increase the agricultural production of the peasants and through this exchange, to expand the monetary economy in the rural areas and effectively diminish the size of the subsistence sector of the economy. In other words there will be a mutually beneficial relationship between the centre and the hinterland.

These then are what make up an economy be regionally integrated and internally oriented. In Kenya, none of these conditions for the establishment of such an economy exists. Nor are arrangements or attempts being made to make the economy regionally integrated and internally oriented. The economy is highly externally oriented. The country's protectionist policies is indeed harmful to the economy considering the example of Firestone.⁷

Secondly, the Kenyan economic structure has been one where the private sector is much larger and indeed stronger than the public sector. The public sector refrains from engaging in economic activities and exists only to service the private sector and facilitate its growth. However, the private sector, though large and strong is to a large extent foreign owned and controlled. Their investment and location decisions are made outside the public policy makers knowledge; and often they refuse to cooperate when some of such decisions are required to be in harmony with national interests. As a result, the concessions and freedom that is given them makes the country a highly open economy indeed. This intensifies the aspect of an economy that is highly externally oriented. This trend has to be corrected by enlarging the public sector and reducing the size of the private sector if the policy of growth centres is to be effective.

(b) Service Centres

It is recognized that growth centres which in most cases are provincial headquarters, are remote from the local level of development; and as a result, it is necessary to have lower level centres that provide lower level services - hence the designation of urban, rural market and local centres. In the same way, the important thing about them is their relationship to the hinterland. So in evaluating their effectiveness, we would consider mainly the allocation of services, especially government services in these centres and how they effectively serve the rural population of the centres' hinterland.

In these centres, especially rural centres downwards the nature of investment is one that requires small amount of capital and hence most investments are from local sources. Since local sources of capital is scarce, the nature of investments manifests itself in petty commercial activities such as dukas, hotels, posho mills, bars etc. which locals can comfortably raise. This has been made easier by the trade licensing act,⁸ and the establishment of parastatals aimed at helping promote (or africanize) commercial sector of the economy. In the service centres therefore the nature of investment is local because capital needed for such investments is low. The industrial base of the centres is also narrow and comprises mainly of what the ILO⁹ report calls informal sector activities.

To-date, the commercial and meagre industrial bases of these centres have played a large part in creating a monetary sector in the rural areas. However, the sad fact is that there has been no corresponding increase in the hinterland's agricultural production. As a result, these centres' commercial bases have acted as a means of showing the rural masses the industrial consumer goods which they can't afford because their purchasing power is not enough.¹⁰ However they serve well the elites who have the money and can afford the industrial goods sold at such centres. Such rural elites would be formed by groups such as teachers, government workers (e.g. Junior Agricultural Assistants (J.A.A.) District Officers (D.Os.) Agricultural Officers, health Assistants or in short government officers serving in the rural areas), traders, small and large - scale farmers (here are excluded the subsistence farmers who again are the majority fo the rural dwellers).

The rural elites therefore are the ones that gain from the commercial and industrial services in the service centres. they are infact the participants in that economy. The subsistence farmers (i.e. the peasants) who are members of the subsistence economy hardly benefit from the growth of the commercial and industrial base of a service centres. The peasants who in this case are the majority of the rural dwellers can be made to participate and benefit in the commercial exchange economy if a transformational approach to their development is adopted. Since this is far from being the case in Kenya, the centres will continue to serve the few rural elites and have nothing to do with the rural peasant masses. A second very important consideration to be taken into account when considering the effectiveness of service centres as an instrument of rural development is the services that have to be provided in these centres by the Government and aimed directly at helping uplift the standard of living of the rural people.

Services like electricity, water, educational and health facilities etc. form a very important part of modern sector economy and profoundly affect the lives of the people they are provided to. They help to create a healthy nation with a well educated populace. As a result, if the nation's policy is aimed at developing the rural areas where there is almost an absolute lack of such essential services, then the provision of such services is not only necessary but essential for the achievement of developed rural areas.

The question is, how are these services to be provided to the greatest majority, if not all of the people in the rural areas, taking into account the fact that settlement patterns in the rural areas is not as dense as in towns where such services can be provided to the greatest number at low cost? It was an attempt to answer such a question that the government through the department of physical planning decided that certain centres in the rural areas should be selected to serve as places where such services can be provided for the surrounding population. In the words of the department, "the proposed network of centres in the current plan reflects the government's aim of an equitable distribution of physical infrastructure and social services in concentrated forms of settlement in any given district rather than be dispersed throughout the district." The central thrust of the arguement therefore is that

The rural extension workers are the ones that help the
 agricultural and industrial services in the various countries. They
 are the ones that help the peasants in their economic activities.
 (i.e. the peasants) who are members of the various agricultural groups
 benefit from the growth of the agricultural and industrial sector of a
 country. The peasants who do this work see the growth of
 the rural sector as a means to participate and benefit in the
 economic development of the country. It is a participatory approach to their
 development is adopted. Since this is the case, the rural extension
 workers will continue to work for the rural sector and
 have nothing to do with the rural sector's success. A rural extension
 worker's consideration to be taken into account when considering the
 effectiveness of services consists in an improvement of rural develop-
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 applied to serve as a basis for the provision of such services.
 For the economic population. In the words of the Department of
 the proposed network of services. The current plan for the
 government's rural extension activities is to provide such
 services and rural extension is organized through an efficient
 system which would work for the rural sector.

a central place or places should be found on which services especially of economic and social nature can be grouped to serve the people of the surrounding centre.

It is the opinion of this paper that the way this policy has been interpreted and carried out has been completely out of touch with the realities in the rural areas and as a result it has failed to be effective in achieving its aim. As a result, some of the services have been provided in the rural areas in complete disregard of the principle of grouping them together. At times some of these services e.g. schools, water supply health services have been provided in these centres but have proved so ineffective in serving the people because of distance from those centres and the people they are supposed to serve.

Schools, health centres and dispensaries are an excellent examples of where such services have been provided without the concept of service centres being taken into account. This has mainly come about because of the harambee movement where people decide to build schools based on clan and/or kin competition among people without bothering to check the government's position with regard to how much social infrastructures are to be allocated. The same thing happens with health services. Politicians and local councillors would start an harambee project for the provision of any level of health facilities in utter disregard to the government's planning decision that since health centre has been provided in say a rural centre, another health centre can not be provided in a nearby local centre because it would not be able to staff and equip such other centre for lack of funds. But since such a centre or harambee secondary school has the support of an influential politician (probably the minister for health or education for example) it would succeed in getting government support and the one proposed in a rural centre will be abandoned. In other words development is spontaneous and not according to plan.

In fact in some cases Government officials are completely unaware of the existence of physical plans that have to guide the allocation of the services that their departments have to provide. This has made the exercise of designating service centres as centres where government services to serve the rural population be a big joke that can not be taken seriously. In other words plans are

not implemented.

If some of the services being provided out of the scheduled centres has made the policy of service centres be ineffective, distance of the centres from the population they are supposed to serve have made it even more ineffective; and unoperational. To illustrate this point I shall take two such services water supply and health services to prove the point.

Supposing in Siaya District we have a rural water supply programme. A Consultant has been engaged and has established a general flow path for water; complete with communal water points; you would find generally that communal water points will not be enough to serve the people so that they collect the water from a reasonable walking distance. Only people who are lucky enough to have the communal water points near their homes will use the water. Otherwise, the people who live far from the communal points will have to pay for individual connections. However, the question is, do the rural people have enough income to afford individual connections? Hardly. So there would be a rural water supply all right but the beneficiaries will be extremely few, i.e. some of the rural or urban elites who are able to afford individual connections; and the few lucky peasants who have communal water tap near his homesteads. The same would be the case with the small resident population in a market or a rural centre. They would easily get it because of the organized pattern and layout of the centre which would enable them to have individual connections. In some cases such centres' water supply may be managed by the local authority responsible and so would have the water connected to all residential and commercial plots and charge rates. In this case the individual would be spared the expense of paying for his own connection. However, the water supply in such centres hardly serve the surrounding population. Therefore rural water supply would require closer and more dense settlement patterns in the rural areas almost as in urban areas for them to effectively serve the rural population. Such dense settlement patterns would also greatly reduce the cost of providing such services to the Government since water pipes will be directed from the storage to few clusters.

Secondly we can look at the provision of health services in the rural areas according to the network of centres. In this regard we had better consider a district with low population density such

as Turkana, Samburu, Kajiado. Most of the population to be served by these centres be they urban down to local are an average of 10 miles away from such centres. A really sick person would die on the way to reach a local centre to be treated in a dispensary! And if the nature of sickness is one which can not be treated by the dispensary he/she would be transferred to a far away district hospital. By then the relatives of the sick shall have given up because may be they don't have the money for transporting the sick person that far or the bus services might be highly irregular in such areas that it would take days before a public transport means is available.

The position of the service centres especially in the districts with low population densities where distance from the centres to homesteads of the surrounding population is of considerable length to make services provided at these centre serve the people effectively need to be reappraised. In any case the over-riding criterial in selecting and designating centres should be distance from the population to be served. Say, if a local centre is to serve 5,000 people and the government is serious that services such as water, schools, health centres, roads can be provided for the 5,000 people ONLY at the designated centres, then every one of the 5,000 people must live not more than a mile away from the centre; the average distance of the homesteads of the families of the 5,000 people should be only $\frac{1}{2}$ mile.

If this is the case, then nearly all the services to be provided by the Government will effectively serve them.

However, such a situation would be difficult now. The approach so far adopted by the government have been that little attention is paid to the distance from the centres to be established. Particular attention was paid to the services existing in a centre when the study for designation was being made and not to the distance from the homesteads of the people that the centre was to serve. This is the central mistake that makes the policy to a great extent ineffective. It was a fundamental mistake in that the settlement policy in the former non-scheduled areas (the present peasant districts) was not decided on. For example, it should have been decided in the first instance that if we are to engage in distributing the benefits of growth to the rural population through the policy of service and growth centres, should we adopt concentrated forms of

settlement around these centres so that services provided can effectively serve the people or should a dispersed settlement like in the 'remote' districts be encouraged where some centres are established in which services are provided without bothering whether the services provided in those centres serve the people effectively or not. It seems clear that the last position was the one adopted so far in the country. And this has created problems in development and has to a greater degree intensified imbalance in development to the extent that it has become in-built in the economic system of the country. This is a sad affair to say the least considering the fact that the policy was primarily aimed at diminishing or eliminating all together imbalance in national development. The Government had in fact to admit this in the National report to the Habitat Conference in Vancouver this year. The report, lamented the fact that despite the policy of service centres, government services do not effectively reach the people in the rural areas because of distance of the homesteads to those centres. A more realistic approach to rural development is therefore necessary. This is what we consider next.

4. AN ALTERNATIVE:

If the policy of growth and service centres has been ineffective in bringing about development in the rural areas, it is because, it did not seriously consider the main issues that are involved in rural development or what rural development is all about. Secondly, it probably did not take into account the appropriateness of the settlement patterns and policy in existence in the country and how they can best suit or otherwise, the designated centres. The policy was on the other hand based on an alien theory, the central place theory (CPT) which did not take into account our peculiar economic social and political conditions. Circumstances have therefore proved this policy based on an alien theory irrelevant to development of the national economy. But it has effectively served the interests of international capital monopolies on whose governments economic set-up, it traces its origin.

Therefore, in an attempt to look at an alternative policy that can serve a future national economy of Kenya, an attempt is made to define what rural development means, an attempt is also made at defining the traditional settlement patterns in Kenya and

how such settlement patterns can usefully be served by the growth and service centres policy.

Rural development, is a highly transformative exercise. It has to be because the problems it is aimed at solving are formidable. The word development refers to an exercise in profoundly altering the structure of the society concerned in all fields, social, economic and political. Thus, when we talk of rural development, we refer to the social, economic and political changes that have to take place in the rural areas that greatly affect the lives of the people living in these areas. The phrase "greatly affect the lives of the people" is here used advisedly to help emphasize the postulate above that rural development is transformative. People living in the rural areas are mostly poor, illiterate, and can die in great numbers due to the incidence of pestilence and epidemic; since medical services are extremely poor. There are also low standards of public and personal hygiene. Rural development objectives therefore would be:

1. To eliminate poverty by increasing agricultural production, incomes and employment opportunities.
2. Widespread provision of rural welfare amenities such as; Educational facilities, health services, water supply e.tc. so that poverty disease and ignorance are eliminated in the rural areas.

The objectives can only be achieved through a transformative approach. This is because, to increase agricultural production, in the rural areas, the customary land tenure systems have to be altered to suit modern technologies necessary to allow increased use in modern agricultural methods and the provision of credits that would enhance agricultural development. To make this possible, large tracks of land have to be cultivated as single units by individual communities. The settlement patterns must also be arranged in such away that they are concentrated at a point of the community's piece of land while leaving the rest to be farmed as a unit.

With large tracks of land being farmed as a Unit, employment opportunities and income of the rural people will increase.

The provision of welfare amenities such as educational facilities, health services, rural water supply, electricity supply and rural access roads is usually difficult to achieve especially when people in the rural areas live in scattered homesteads all over the district. These services have high overhead costs and so can not be easily provided to the rural poor by the Government on individual basis. But they can be easily provided to groups (large groups) of people in the rural areas. Infact the people themselves would help a great deal in meeting the cost of these services if they derive sufficient income from their farms. And the only way to derive huge incomes from rural agriculture would be through group farms. It therefore means that if rural development is to increase production, income, and employment of the rural people together with the increase in the provision of welfare amenities, then out of necessity, scattered settlement is not the sure way to go about it, but closer and dense settlement patterns based on clan or kinship groupings of the populace. This immediately brings into the discussion, the question of settlement policy in the rural areas: what settlement policies should be embraced to bring about a transformational approach to rural development?

In rural Kenya, three main types of rural settlements can be distinguished: Firstly, there are the scattered or ground homestead Units which account for 70% of the rural population and is found in all provinces except Northern Province. The settlements are said to be associated with kin-based land tenure systems and semi-pastoral and mixed peasant farming. They are also found in areas of high densities ranging from 150-600 per square kilometre.

Secondly there are the pastoralists settlements. The economic activities of these kinds of settlements are centred around livestock and most of these communities move from one place to another in a seasonal manner in search of water, pasture and in order to control livestock disease. Their settlements therefore take the form of temporary camps. They require large territories whose utilization are relatively exclusive to a given clan, age-set and neighbourhood. They account for 12% of the rural population.

Thirdly, there are the plantation estates and settlement schemes. They are significant as rural settlements types because of the labour lines where workers live in villages. They are common

especially in large scale farms in the Rift Valley and the plantation estates such as Kericho, Tinderet e.t.c. The other kinds of settlements in this category are the settlement schemes like Haraka, Million acre, Mwea-Tebere. They represent 4.5% of the rural population.

These are the major types of settlements found in rural Kenya, besides the ones in the service centres which have a resident population. The first type that accounts for 70% of Kenya's population is the most typical rural settlement in Kenya. This, together with the nomadic settlement pattern represents, the traditional settlement patterns. In other words, Kenya can be said to have agricultural and pastoral societies.

Any meaningful rural settlement policy must be aimed at them especially the second category of the nomads and pastoralists since they are the most backward and most scattered societies. They are controlled by the environment rather than they controlling the environment. They can not be left in their present forms of settlement and some aspects of their life-styles if the government services is to reach all Kenyans.

The policy of scheduled network of centres in the rural areas must now be reconsidered and be moulded to take into account these traditional settlement patterns. The policy should aim at organized cluster settlements from which to select for the provision of categories of services in a hierachical order. They could also be based very closely on clan, village or kinship as the smallest unit of settlement in the rural areas.

The clan would be an area of living for all members with a clan shamba and clan residential area. In other words the Shirika type of settlement currently in operation in the settlement schemes would be extended to the rural peasant areas (former non-scheduled, african reserves). Clan lands would then be adjudicated and a single title for the members issued to them. Such clans would then be production and marketing co-operatives to be registered as modern commercial enterprises so that they become legal entities with powers to sue or be sued in a court of law.

The department of physical planning, Ministry of Lands and Settlement would then be charged with planning the use of clan lands for the benefit of members. Each clan would have three zones.

- (1) One of residential purposes in which each member of the clan is given a two-acre farm for cultivation of foodcrops to satisfy individual household needs and for the building of his houses.
- (2) One for agricultural purposes to be farmed collectively by all members of the clan as a large Unit. The produce from here are marketed and the money realized are used for the provision of social amenities such as water, electricity, schools e.t.c. in a joint venture with the central and/or local authorities. Some of the money is also given to the members according to their work to enable them buy personal effects such as clothes, shoes, household, utensils, furnitures e.t.c.
- (3) The third zone is left for any small - scale off-farm activities that might be engaged in by the villagers (clan members) e.g. shops, carpentry, tinsmithing, as well as other community services.

Once clans have been identified designated and planned for by the department of physical planning, the Ministry of Works will work out a road network to all clans in the district so as to facilitate mobility and the marketing of produce of goods grown in the clans. All other operating ministries and parastatals would allocate their services in the clusters.

A location for example, may have 5-10 clusters of clan groups. All of them would be joined up by a network of access roads within a location. The centre hierarchy would therefore be:

Local Centre:

In every clan cluster and provided with water supply with individual connection to all members in the residential areas; a dispensary, commercial plots, nursery school, electricity (through time), primary school, light industrial activities, administrative services e.g. government department offices. They would perform the functions currently performed by market and local centres.

Rural Centre:

In every location would have, health centre, secondary, primary, nursery schools, village polytechnics, dispensary, administrative services e.g. chief, assistant chief's camp, Government department offices, water supply industrial commercial and residential zones, post office. They would in short perform the functions that are currently being performed by urban and rural centres.

Growth Centres:

Initially in every province, later in every district. The policy would be to create as many of these as possible to serve every district and would be the major employment centres for members of the district. Public as well as private investments will be channelled into these centres. They would have an expanded industrial and commercial bases so that they act as employment centres for people in the district, and beyond. Only a deliberate policy aimed at directing capital investments into these centres can produce the required results. That is why the point that the public sector be made larger and stronger than the private sector has been embraced throughout this paper.

To increase internal trade and movements of people in a district, there would be an extensive programme of road networks connecting all the category of centres, horizontally and vertically.

These proposals, I recognize are very hard to implement if we take the existing arrangements in the economy to be given. In that case they would be largely irrelevant.

However, if we realize that there is an urgent need for change in the orientation of the national economy then there are no alternative to them. Perhaps it would be of use to draw the attention of the reader to the findings of two works¹² done on the Kenya's economy which make these recommendations almost have no alternatives. The two works both done by world bodies warn that unless some changes are made in the economy - and such changes I believe must be structural ones - then only disruptive politics will alter the situation!

The world bank report for example warns that easy solutions to Kenya's economic problems such as the tripartite agreement, the settlement schemes are over and that only difficult choices like the ones proposed here remain. The ILO report for example warns that the problems of the economy is analogue to a person with a broken leg (and not one with headache) who needs immediate attention. It further warns that if action is not taken quickly then the problems will pile to the extent that only drastic action (a diplomatic way of saying revolution) will change it.

In other words if the nation is to tackle development problems such as unemployment, imbalance, landlessness, poverty, disease and ignorance; then the most realistic area to start and concentrate on is rural development. And rural development is a highly transformative exercise. To adopt a transformative approach to rural development the following policy areas must be concentrated on:

(1) The overall National development policy first and foremost must adopt a highly nationalistic posture.

(2) Industrial Policy

Must aim at creating a large and strong public sector by keeping away foreign participation in certain sectors of the economy such as the financial institutions and reserving them only for Kenyan interests. Sectors for foreign investor participation such as manufacturing extractive sectors should be clearly delineated. However, even in such sectors foreign investors would only be allowed to participate jointly with the public corporations.

The merit of this policy is that a serious attempt is made to control the economy by Kenyans. Investment decisions that would expand the industrial base of the growth and service centres would be taken in the country and not outside it.

Profits made by the enlarged public sector will be reinvested in the country and not be shipped outside.

(3) Land Policy

To be altered in such away that it takes into account the traditional land tenure system in which the individuals right to a piece of land is only the right to use land and never to own it.

The individual land tenure system as postulated by Swynnerton was an alien phenomenon to the African and has created an obsession in individualism in the country to the extent that the sense of individualism among people especially among the elites, is running riot. The basis of all problems in Kenya now is the land policy as postulated by Swynnerton.

The African values with regard to land holding must now be restored to him so that his loyalty and sense of respect to the community is upheld. This in actual fact would require all rural land in Kenya to be vested in the state. It is only when this is made that clan communities will have their settlements planned as suggested above so that they become the smallest planning units in the rural areas. Together with the policy that all rural land is vested in the state would follow the provision outlawing any transactions in land. Land would have no mercantile value. The government would only charge rents to public corporations, cooperatives and individuals that use land in any way.

- (4) A settlement policy that encourages living in clusters in the rural areas. The clusters will be places where people live and work together.
- (5) Central planning to be engaged in and be given legal backing so that plans once drawn become legally binding to all sectors of the economy. All sectors would then be manipulated by the planners to enable them to target reasonable tangible national achievement.
- (6) Peoples' participation in development be heightened through national mobilization of the citizenry.

These are some of the difficult choices that have to be made which the world bank report on Kenya talked of. Unfortunately for Kenya, there are no alternatives to them especially policies 1 - 3. Again it is only when such policies are accepted that planning; physical, social, economic and financial will be meaningful. There shall have been a definite attempt to create an economy that is regionally integrated and internally oriented.

In this way the benefits of growth will be equitably spread to all members of the community. Otherwise planning in Kenya, especially physical planning will only create conditions where growth and service centres act as gathering points for rural wealth to be shipped to Nairobi the national metropole for onward transmission to international capitals such as Bonn, Washington, London, Paris. Physical planning and indeed any other type of planning will not develop, but underdevelop further the rural areas. Policy makers had therefore take heed; otherwise they and the planners will only be holding sinecure offices.

at this time only at the state level. It is only when the state is able to coordinate the various planning agencies that the rural areas will be able to develop. The government would have to decentralize the planning process to the local level. The government would have to decentralize the planning process to the local level. The government would have to decentralize the planning process to the local level.

(a) A settlement policy that encourages living in clusters in the rural areas. The clusters will be places where people live and work together.

(b) General planning to be engaged in and to give legal backing to that plan once drawn. All sectors would be managed by the planners to make them to target resources towards rural development.

(c) People's participation in development to be heightened through various mobilization of the community. There are some of the different options that have to be taken into account. The world bank report on Kenya talked of. Unfortunately for Kenya, there are no alternatives to these centrally planned policies. Again it is only when such policies are accepted that physical, social, economic and financial will be mobilized. There shall have been a better strategy. The state as a whole should be reorganized and integrated and fully organized.

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5. Leo Poyck's letter DURP 400/IN/98 of 23rd May, 1973 on service centres centres to Provincial Physical Planning Officer Kisumu, on upgrading of service in Siaya District Kisumu Physical Planning Office. This letter was a reply to a request by the Siaya D.D.C. for the department to upgrade certain centres in the district. The reply explained the policy behind the centres and their objectives, to show why the request could not be accepted.
6. Republic of Kenya op.Cit.p.120
7. The case of Firestone Company and protection policy has been a great source of debate among economists as to its rationality. This is because the economy was being called upon to shoulder the irresponsibility of a foreign company through protection. The result was increase in the price of tyres of very low quality indeed. The company was given the right to authorize the importation of tyres which it was unable to produce For more of this see, the following:
 - (1) M.G. Phelps and B. Wasow (1970). Measuring Protection in Kenya is consistently biased against viable sectors of the economy.
 - (2) J.H. Power (1972). The role of protection in industrialization policy W.P. No. 34. University of Nairobi, I.D.S.
8. This act prohibited non-citizens especially Asian dukawallas from carrying out business in certain areas.
9. ILO report. op. cit.
10. This again as is pointed in the ILO report is because of the poverty in the rural areas when most are still in the subsistence economy.

- 11. This fact was revealed when the author was on an M.A. thesis research in Siaya District. Most of the officers in the District and Province were completely unaware of what the department of physical planning is all about. See Oiro Obwa, "District Planning as a strategy for Rural Development in Kenya. A case study of Siaya District. University of Nairobi, DURP. 1976.
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1. For a paper analysis of industrial in Kenya see...
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 6. (1) M.S. Phelps and H. Wason (1970), Measuring Protection...
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