

Editorial

"Development and Environment in the Mediterranean" was the theme of an International meeting held in Malta between the 3rd and 4th November 1989 at the Foundation for International Studies of the University of Malta, by the Mediterranean Working Group of EADI (European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes). The cultural patrimony of the Mediterranean is often threatened by that type of development closed within the limited framework of its economic aspect. The discussion during the EADI conference evolved on these lines, precisely on two mainstreams: "Environmental Concerns" and "Economic Dimensions". The environmental aspect included research studies and discussions on cultural, ecological, geographic, and demographic themes. The economists present during the meeting concentrated on the ways and means of protecting the environment without hindering economic and technological progress.

In this respect, the EADI Working Group and the scientific committee of the Mediterranean Social Sciences Network through Professor Salvino Busuttil, Director General of the Foundation for International Studies, had agreed in Bodrum, Turkey, during a similar meeting of EADI, that the Foundation for International Studies would publish the proceedings of the EADI meetings, through the Newsletter of the Mediterranean Social Sciences Network.

It is therefore my pleasure to present in this issue three research studies related to one of the mainstreams discussed during the Malta EADI Meeting, namely the environmental dimensions concerning development.

Development is a term that is commonly taken to mean increasing national output of wealth mainly through industrialization. But the consideration of only this aspect would not be enough to speak of development especially when knowing that sometimes this economic type of development is reached to the detriment of other aspects of human life, namely the Social, Cultural and Political. Development would be an alienation if it did not comprise all aspects of human life and all the members of society in particular and of societies in general.

Development cannot be restricted to the Gross National Product (GNP), but it has to encompass the general well-being of all the members of Society. The economic aspect is in relation to the social aspect in the concept of development. It would be absurd to have a high GNP without meeting the basic needs of the people. In this sense, development means in the first stance the employment of economic growth to meet the basic needs including food, shelter and essential services like sanitation, health, education, transport and job opportunities, minimally speaking, but also

qualitative factors like the environment, decision making, and the rights of individuals, especially of minority groups. Development is not a matter of choosing between economic and social priorities, but of integrating these two aspects, as well as the other aspects of human life.

Development contains also a political dimension. A developed country is also an independent State. Colonialism or Neo-Colonialism, oppression or exploitation, capitalism or communism, or any other situation where the people of a given society cannot be said to have a full control of their own affairs, manifest underdevelopment, even if there is economic progress. In these situations, development would mean 'liberation'. But here too, the political and economic dimensions of development are not necessarily mutually exclusive; on the contrary they can be easily integrated on objective development.

Development should also imply the Cultural aspect. Economic development cannot in any way be reached at the expense of cultural identity and patrimony including the natural environment. This aspect should not only be safeguarded, but also be an integrative part of the development process itself. That type of development which does not respect the Culture tends to be resisted. As an example one can mention the case of Iran. Many Iranians felt that the Shah's modernization policy was essentially contrary to their Islamic Culture. This feeling produced a cultural revolution where people preferred their cultural identity to economic advancement. On the other hand, modernization and economic advancement in Japan did not produce such a drastic cultural lag. This shows that, as with social and political dimensions, it is not a case of either culture or economic development. There can be a development which comprises each and every one of its dimensions¹.

In this connection the present issue features the studies of Luigi di Comite and Maria Rosaria Carli (Italy), Frank Carter (England), and Patrick Schembri (Malta).

Luigi di Comite and Maria Rosaria Carli in their paper on "Demographic Development in the Mediterranean Area" analyse the population distribution of the Inland Sea. The population of the Mediterranean, belonging to the three continents, is heterogeneous on account of tradition, education, religion, culture and economic resources. This heterogeneity is presenting different demographic trends. In this context, new economic and social orders are emerging. The di Comite-Carli analysis focuses on the main differences of the demographic balances within the Mediterranean.

Frank W. Carter carried out a case study of Hvar Island in Yugoslavia. It resulted that the pressure for economic growth can present hazards for the

1. Michael Haralambos (ed), *Sociology New Directions, Lancashire 1989*, pp 94 - 96

natural environment if great attention is not paid. Just to quote one example from this research, Carter mentions that in Hvar there are plans for building a new airport, mainly for the tourist industry, on a site of great ecological and archeological importance, when this can be easily done with much less damage on another site. This is just one of the many cases of environmental abuse in the Mediterranean basin.

Patrick J. Schembri in his study "The Natural Environment of the Maltese Islands: Human Impact and Conservation" describes the geological composition of the Maltese Islands and their ecological characteristics with their flora and fauna. He shows further how the continuous growth of the built-up areas, residential and industrial, are presenting a threat to the richness of the natural environment. This is in part due to the tourist industry, which is, however, one of the pillars of the Maltese economy.

It is hoped that the studies presented in this issue will enhance a better understanding and appreciation of the environment as a development factor. The studies on the economic aspects of development in the Mediterranean will be published in due course.

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