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UNDER-DEVELOPMENT IN HOUSING BY P. AMIS.

The argument of this paper I wish to suggest is that in the recent History of Nairobi a process of "capitalist" penetration and integration has occurred in the low-cost housing market. Hence such sectors of the housing market are in no ways "marginal" and any so-called "dualism" no longer exists. While I reject a dualist model, in many ways it is the "articulation" of these so-called dual economies that is crucial to an understanding of the housing market. To summarize at the start to allow the reader to follow the argument; I would maintain that this penetration of the low-cost housing market is having the following effects, a destruction of what I shall later define as a Mutual Reciprocity Economy (MRE) an increasing concentration of ownership, social stratification and landlordism, a change from a complementarity of interests between landlords and tenants to one of conflict, a greater degree of security in illegal settlements from demolition and finally and most importantly because of the above process an inability of areas to upgrade themselves as Turner has suggested. I will also suggest that site and service schemes have had the unforeseen effect of institutionalising such process with their comittant results. In many ways on a small scale this mirrors a lot of the arguments on development of underdevelopment together with the unevenness of development put forward by such authors as Frank and Cardoso for Latin America and more specifically Colin Leys in relation to Kenya ! Finally my analysis implies that housing improvements and reform are at best limited without similar reforms in the social, political and economic structures prevailing in urban areas. A position first expounded by and associated with Engels.

Firstly we shall discuss the related fields from which I wish to draw on concerning this "articulation" and penetration. Then some theoretical ideas from this work will be used to define our two respective housing economies. We shall then apply this method of analysis in the case of two recent developments in Nairobi, namely housing companies in Mathare Valley and site and service schemes. Finally we shall offer some policy ideas in the summary of what is mainly a critique.

Before continuing to show my two housing economies, namely National Capitalist and Mutual Reciprocity Economy (MRE) in operation it will be useful to look at related work so that the 'articulation' between the two respective economies within the housing market may be seen. The main threads of this argument come from a variety of sources, mainly interconnected, namely under-development theory, the informal sector, urban anthropology, the experience of rural economies in the third world, French marxist urban sociology and marxist theory together with some N. American urban analysis of urban renewal and improvement areas. However at this stage it may suffice to say that a Capitalist Housing market is typified by profit maximising, competition and conflicting interests between landlord and tenants; while a MR Economy by co-operation, kinship and complimentary interests of landlord and tenant as its title suggests.

Essentially all of this is based upon and located within some ideas of under-development theory, mainly capitalism's historical penetration and integration of third world economies and the resultant hybrid economy that typifies peripheral economies.¹ For example this hadn't occurred before 1900 in Kenya and colonialism is seen as a particular political manifestation of such integration both as cause and effect. Relevant to this integration is the observation that the Capitalist Mode of Production (M.O.P.) interacts in a dialectical way with other MOP either basically destroying them or conserving them.³ Bettelheim labels these two processes as dissolution and consolidation respectively, a method which McGee uses in relation to third world cities suggesting that in 'shanty towns' consolidation is the key process, i.e. that the economic system is not being replaced and destroyed by more rigorous capitalist relations.⁴ I will maintain and hopefully show precisely the reverse that dissolution is the main process operating within the low-cost housing market in Nairobi. Whether this is universal or Nairobi is a special case is an open question, the answer to which will surely lie in a nation's wider political economy.⁵ It is however worth reiterating that this integration is a dialectical process, thus I would maintain that 'dissolution' is the dominant process but would not dispute that 'consolidation' is also occurring within the housing market. Related to this is the fact that a MRE is, like other pre-capitalist MOP on a wider scale,

not always simply destroyed but can be modified by capitalist penetration. Indeed in some instances they may be transformed into capitalist relations or the ME Economy may be strengthened or indeed even 'created' as a defence against such penetration. For example Bromley and Gerry note such modified forms of traditional community structures to cushion casual workers from income instability.⁶

In a similar vein we may see the connections between the development of capitalism with tribal loyalties and kinship structures. If we reject the conventional structural-functionalist model used in Anthropology emphasizing stability and instead interest ourselves in the dynamics of change etc, I think we can see that a dialectic between class and tribe exists. (In some ways this is similar to Clyde Mitchell's Historical and Situational change).⁷ On the one hand in recent settlements it would appear that 'moral' restraints may restrict landlords or at least regulate them, and that these pressures may effectively redistribute income.⁸ Bujra has noted this for Nairobi, or at least Pumwani and and this phenomenon has also been observed in the Barriada settlements of Peru.⁹ Yet on the other hand tribal allegiances may be used to politically and economically strengthen an elite position and thus encourage stratification. This may occur by the use of Client-Patron relationships within a tribe, thus creating an economic clientele for business ventures and providing political support for the leadership. Jørgensen notes the fact that most Housing company shareholders in Nairobi were from the same tribe.¹⁰ In Kampala the Luo Union was led by successful businessmen who used it for their own economic ends.¹¹ However tribalism also has a legitimation function (even ideology of tribalism) that a 'tribe' sticks together particularly when threatened from outside and internal differences are pushed aside. Hake on tribal associations in Nairobi reports that

"The tribal societies have certainly played a significant role in binding together an urban society that otherwise might have polarised much more radically between the haves and have-nots".¹²

Kinship as well as tribal structures are also important in offering

important openings for jobs and houses being very scarce resources as well as providing for the individual (especially the 'new' migrant) security in a heterogenous and fluid situation.¹³

However Ngugi, the Kenyan novelist accurately explodes a one-tribe therefore one interest myth.

"When they came back they were angry.....

.... For to us what did it matter who drive a Mercedes Benz ? They were all of one tribe: the Mercedes family: whether they came from the coast or from Kisumu. One family. We were another tribe: another family.¹⁴

Similarly at the micro-level tribal prejudices are reduced by the necessity of living together and by facing the same economic conditions.¹⁵ Anthropological work on the Copper Belt of Zambia comes to the general conclusion that "trade unionism transcends tribalism", although I would maintain they (urban anthropologists in general) confuse this with "urbanism" as a prime cause of detribalization. This 'detribalization' is it would seem to me, more a result of industrialization and an industrial setting than any necessary function of 'urbanism'.¹⁶ Here the development of capitalism and consequent industrialization would seem to break down tribal loyalties. We can now suggest that tribalism and ethnic links is in a dialectical relationship with the development of capitalism. On the one hand the rewards of the capitalist economy and its competitiveness encourage fractional disputes usually mobilised on tribal lines, being the easiest so to do, it also encourages client-patron relations together with a legitimation (ideological) role of tribalism. Yet on the other hand the capitalist system as we have seen in Zambia and at a micro-level increases stratification and polarization creating an emergent proletariat and bourgeoisie weakening tribal loyalties.¹⁷

It should be clear from the above that the relationship of kinship structures, tribalism, 'communities' and previous MOP with the development of Capitalism is a complex dialectical process involving both the destruction and/or strengthening and preservation of previous systems, depending upon the particular historical

situation. It is crucial to be aware of this when we discuss the 'articulation' of our two housing systems (i.e. there is no 'inevitability' as such).

At a smaller scale I think work on the so-called 'informal sector' and its relations to the 'formal sector' is instructive. For the moment I shall not attempt a definition of the informal sector, an elusive task indeed, because what can be suggested about it, i.e. its relation to the state, formal sector or future potential often hinge on its definition. In many ways the 'informal sector' is a definitional problem to which I shall see to replace with my MR Economy. The theme I would like to suggest is that the informal economy appears to some extent to be self-destructing. Thus if the informal economy is successful it tends towards destroying its own informal base and become formalized with a tendency to move up the occupational structures and income levels, hence leaving a void where it could be said to have most potential, namely as a source of income etc, for those at the 'bottom' of the social system. The experience of the Village Polytechnics and subsequent Craft Training Centres in Kenya as almost the change in name implies is a good example of this evolution. Here an increasing formalization, i.e. training for certificates and of skills not as previously intended in the logic of Village polytechnics has occurred. Originally these skills were intended to be of use to local low-income rural communities and thus reduce the drift to the cities. However Mazaras C.T.C. now teaches electronics, a skill far removed, albeit for the individual probably highly useful, from the original idea of skills to be ploughed back into appropriate rural development.¹⁸ The lesson is that this has occurred through WPs/CTCs very success destroying its 'informalness'. Obviously if there is no longer any need for their original role this needn't be of any concern to us, that this is the case is at least debateable.

Similarly Roberts suggests that the informal economy may run the risks of resulting low profit margins and insecurity that the formal sector would take. This may take the form of the development of specific products and markets. The suggestion is that once a market, technique or product has proven its viability as a profitable concern in the informal sector, the formal or large-scale sector will either move in with investment itself or 'take over'