

Doxiadis Dynapolis and What Went Wrong in the Development of Islamabad

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Abstract

Islamabad, new capital of Pakistan, was designed by Coastantinos. Doxiadis (1913-75), a famous Greek planner, in 1960 on the basis of his theory of dynapolis. Since then the city has almost taken its shape. This paper examines the theory of dynapolis and analyzes to what extent this theoretical concept were successfully implemented and to what extent the issues of site, local history; culture has been addressed in the preparation of master plan. This paper is divided into three parts. The first part highlights the reason and need for the creation of new capital. The second part discusses the salient features of the site. It also discusses the Doxiadis concept of dynapolis and its application in Islamabad. The paper finally discusses the weaknesses which the city is facing after its implementation. The paper also discusses the issues of implementation of plan which played an important role in Islamabad.

Pakistan soon after independence felt the need of a new capital of the country. It was during the reign of president Muhammad Ayub Khan (r.1958-69), that the city Karachi started showing the sign of agglomeration. This, along with unhygienic conditions prevailing throughout the city, had a serious effect on the health of the government servants. The whole administration, according to President Muhammad Ayub Khan, looked worn out after the first few years.¹ Beside all these the most significant problem was political one which was not possible for a military government to face with and that became the deriving force behind the idea of shifting the capital somewhere else in the country. "The town became," according to Muhammad Ayub Khan, "a centre of agitational politics. Politicians found that they could collect mobs with the help of industrialists and businessmen and bring all kinds of pressures to bear on the government."² Therefore factors became motivating force to shift the capital away from the urban area. The government appointed several committees of experts to select appropriate site for the new capital which finally gave the recommendation for the present site near Rawalpindi. The Greek planner C.A Doxiadis was given clear objectives in the preparation of master plan and program for the development of the city.³ Doxiadis proposed a master plan based upon his philosophy of dynapolis.⁴ At present the town is almost forty nine years old and it has taken its shape. This paper examine the concept of dynapolis and discusses its strength and weakness in the light of experience gained from the past development of Islamabad.