Land-use Change

SITE BACKGROUND

Fanja is located 70 km from Muscat along the Ninea Highway. Consisting of 30,300 inhabitants in 2013 Fanja represents one of the typical top-composed settlements formed by mud brick houses. These houses together with the small air-strips, farm fields and the Wadi12 area is a neighboring oasis village, such as Al Maha, Bani al Sherif. Since 1970 ongoing readjustments between MCA and Fanja are manifested and represent a typical settlement structure in the process of inner Oman region (Dabkiya).

Phases of development have been shaped and accompanied by innovation from villages such as the introduction of new roads followed by postal stations, new schools, new hospitals and even new sewage systems. These developments are often due to or bypass roads that started after 1970 continuing do show the effects of urbanization. This is visible in the rural-urban transformation process that took place either on vacant lots or by dividing existing bigger plots into smaller ones.

The top-hill houses in Fanja were closely built due to feasible factors. In fact the free land was built up. As it was difficult to divide the arable land into smaller areas, the farmers were not able to sell plots. Although this situation is rather unusual but it reflects the fact that the farmers are rooted families but come from different parts of Oman. Though not all families who settled in Fanja have roots in the area, they are still accessible by roads. As it was difficult to construct new roads in the mountainous area the farmers were forced to settle and build around the recently established petrol station. Families just started to build houses regardless of the available space and the landscape. This marked a focal point of new settlement type found in new clusters along the Wadi Samail, new clusters along the Wadi in Fanja. This goes hand in hand with the incremental growth. The newly opened highway Muscat-Nizwa marked a new era in rural settlement development. This new road opened in 1976 (since 2005 ongoing) to Inner Oman or more often from Muscat. New houses are recorded at the fringes of the former settlement clusters. The newly linked road Muscat-Nizwaushered a new era in rural settlement development. This new model is typical for the urban countryside and the new areas of expansion in the rural countryside of Inner Oman. This new road opens up the area to other economic activities and thus new development opportunities. The newly opened road Muscat-Nizwaushered a new era in rural settlement development. This new road opened in 1976 (since 2005 ongoing) to Inner Oman or more often from Muscat.

GROWTH AND DENSI FICATION (1950-1990)

The decade consolidated what had been started before. Family structures started to change from extended families living on one plot to smaller family units who built their own individual houses. This took place either on vacant lots or through dividing existing larger plots into smaller ones. This pushed the farmers to move or separate buildings. Fanja grew surprisingly but in an incremental way not extending beyond the original settle-

ment and agricultural area. Growth happened through the introduction of family structures, the increase of the existing population, and the increase in the number of non-residential buildings that started after 1970 contin-ued to be driven by development and transfor-mation until present. Also the process with econom-ic motives a decisive change. From that moment on even the location was chosen based on the same reasons as the farmers who settled here. This showed the way of construction and activity patterns of the farmers. In addition to the these natural population growth, changes of family structures and changes of income-generating activities and life style patterns that shape development from inside the area then the ex-ternal factors and the development needs in Fanja took into consideration when identifying four phases of transformation and development in the case study Fanja since 1970.


The top-hill houses in Fanja were closely stuck together not only because of drastic reasons but as well as the limited ground area. As the area was not large enough to accommodate the farmers and the small air-strips, farm fields were situated along the area. Water. Estuaries of such type of a top-hill settle-ment was no longer possible as soon as the area was built up. In addition the arable land was no longer possible to be used for small houses. The area was not ideal to be divided by the farmers according to farming standards, still shanty up here and Fanja opened a new road and transformed the development process using all available area for develop-ment.

DISOSSOLUuish of Clusters TOWARDS RURAL SPRAWL (1980-2000)

The area is characterized by a lack popula-tion growth. The newly opened highway Muscat- Fanja marked a new era in rural settlement develop-ment. Alternatives found from the urban houses type that found all over areas of expansion in MCA. New houses are recorded at the fringes of the former settlement clusters first and since 2000 gradually along the Muscat-Nizwa high-way. The reason for this change is very dynamic, as it is to be proved by the maps. More and more younger farmers decided to buy a plot along the highway considerably cheaper than the one in MCA. Though not all families are interested in the new development in Fanja. The new settlement structure is given up totally and urbaniza-tion follows the classical pattern along the highway. Residents are no longer only Fanja- nized because now some of the newest parts of the highway.

SCATTERED STRUCTURES ALONGSIDE HIGHWAY AND THE VERY OUTSKIRTS

The freeways in the new residential clusters are the new and unique in their extension. The new and unique in their extension. The new residential clusters also developed from urban houses type that found all over areas of expansion in MCA. New houses are recorded at the fringes of the former settlement clusters first and since 2000 gradually along the Muscat-Nizwa highway. The reason for this change is very dynamic, as it is to be proved by the maps. More and more younger farmers decided to buy a plot along the highway considerably cheaper than the one in MCA. Though not all families are interested in the new development in Fanja. The new settlement structure is given up totally and urbaniza-tion follows the classical pattern along the highway. Residents are no longer only Fanja- nized because now some of the newest parts of the highway.

CASE-STUDY FANJA: RURAL-INTERFACED DEVELOPMENT

According to traditional concepts, the transformation process for rural to urban transition was not so well documented or visible. This study tries to show the process of rural to urban transition in the area of Fanja. The transforma-tion process was measured through the period of setting up new settlements along the highway. The study tries to show the process of transformation in the area of Fanja. The transforma-tion process was measured through the period of setting up new settlements along the highway.