

REVIEWS/COMPTES RENDUS

Evaluating Urban Planning Efforts. Ian Masser, editor. Gower Publishing Company. Aldershot, Hampshire, England, 1983.

I had some difficulty at the outset with this book because the title had led me to expect a work on the evaluation phase of the planning process; i.e., the stage of assessing the implications of alternative courses of action prior to decision. The subtitle - Approaches to Policy Analysis - is better. In fact the question addressed is "Why isn't planning more effective and how can we understand it better and thus improve it?", and there is a strong emphasis on implementation and on evaluative research on the process itself. It should also be said immediately that "urban planning" refers not narrowly to the traditional production of area plans but to planning applied broadly to urban programs. As such the book should appeal to regional and policy scientists as well as to urban and regional planners.

This volume contains fourteen papers presented at a workshop at the University of Sheffield in 1982. Very broadly, it contains two kinds of papers: those dealing with the *purposes* of planning; and those dealing with the *methods* of urban planning, especially with implementation processes. Thus they range in substance from abstract and general theories to narrow empiricism. Three of the authors are American - none of them, apparently, from urban planning as such (although Golan's contributions to that field are well known); all but three of the others are teachers of urban and regional planning in English universities.

The case studies draw on a limited range of local or national sources; the broader, theoretical studies draw largely on the literature of "policy science", and in the references names such as Wildavsky, Argyris and Schon, Lindblom, Friend, Vickers, Popper, and Beer speak for themselves. Altogether, the book "presents a graphic picture of the current state of the art in urban policy analysis." The following comments follow the structure of the book itself.

Theoretical Perspectives

Boland kicks off by advocating a normative view of planning (i.e., one that is prescriptive and value-based rather than descriptive and value-neutral) and sets out some very important implications of this stance for planners. A succeeding paper takes issue with the interactional approach identified with Argyris and Schon, arguing that its assumptions have no empirical foundations. Despite their well-argued positions the authors are happily undogmatic, and the editor is properly able to sum up by saying ". . . neither of these approaches in isolation (the phenomenological or the structural) can be regarded as providing an adequate basis for research in the planning field at the present time."

Perspectives from Implementation Research

In this section central government initiatives in two widely different settings - one stemming from the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (1973) in the U.S.A., the other from the Housing Act (1980) in Britain - are first used to make several important assertions about situations where a senior government sets policy and looks to a lower level to carry it out. "Policy making and policy implementation are dynamic, developmental, circular and interdependent", and "policy implementation is first and foremost a political process". Further, 1) the usual gap between policy and performance typically reflects differences in objectives between the two levels of government; 2) two central questions are therefore the extent to which central agencies can persuade local officials to carry out national objectives, and the capacity of local agencies to handle the assigned tasks; 3) if as time goes on central government's prime objectives keep changing to reflect economic and political circumstances, what tends to emerge at the local level is "no-risk management" which ignores program goals in favour of safe, internal objectives such as accountability.

In considering the impact of planning strategy on implementation, a third paper by Hambleton singles out five factors which shape the implementation process: the policy message (often unclear and ambiguous), the multiplicity of agencies, the perspectives and ideologies concerned, the resources available for implementation, and the politics of planning (which he views "not so much as a technical, problem-solving exercise as a process of informed bargaining and negotiation between actors").

The Analysis of Interaction

In this section three case studies are analyzed in the light of the interactions involved between two levels of planning authority in England, one dealing with transportation policy, one with housing

for old people, and the third with the preparation of area plans in Holland. The degree of discretion available to the participants is seen as an important element in a productive dialogue between them. A fourth study examines the potential of game theory for understanding the interaction between two interlocked planning agencies.

The Dynamics of Interaction

The two studies in this section deal with the monitoring of plans. One suggests that *where* (in the organization) and *how* the task is performed are important, a detached function being more responsive to external changes and forces than one in which monitoring and policy-making tasks are closely integrated; in fact, the whole monitoring *modus operandi* is likely to be different in two such situations. The second study - of planners' interpretation of the meaning of monitoring - suggests that the urban planning profession as a whole attaches a very restricted meaning to the term. To them monitoring signifies not objective investigation of the impacts of plans and policies but "review"; that is, examination of external circumstances only in order to decide whether existing policies need to be revised.

Strategies for Further (Evaluative) Research

The last, very stimulating paper argues that there is now little point in spending time and effort in elaborating general theories of planning, and that instead more research should be focused on examining, empirically, what works and what does not in different planning contexts. Such research, the author (Bryson) maintains, should be "action research", in which the researcher is part of the action being studied. At this point the author vivifies the somewhat depressing earnestness of the whole book with some of his observations. "Standard research is a lot like going to a butcher shop to learn about cows. Action research is more like going to a farm to study cows." "Being a part of what one is studying would appear to have some salutary influences on understanding." And more. Vive Bryson!

Bryson describes three field studies carried out on planning processes, one a simulation study, one of municipal planning in Minneapolis-St. Paul and one of the planning of child care programs in Texas. His descriptions and the conclusions he draws for effective planning programs and research into planning strategies are most illuminating.

This is a valuable collection of views and experiences, especially for those who see virtue in the question "Who are we planners in the broader scene, just what are we trying to achieve and how

best can we carry out effective planning?" It is sometimes infuriating (for abstract writing) and disturbing (for revealing one's ignorance), but it is also informative, provocative and stimulating. Whatever his disciplinary label, no one making any claim on "the planning process" - urban planner, policy scientist or regional scientist - should fail to read this book. And just in case any of these should imagine they have a corner on planning, the last word from Bryson: "... some of the very best research on procedural planning methodology is taking place in schools of business administration." Touché!

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Multi-Criteria Evaluation for Urban and Regional Planning. H. Voogd. Pion Ltd., London, 1983. 376 pp. \$34.50.

Voogd's interest in regional planning began in the early seventies when, as a student, he first encountered the work of practising planners in the Netherlands. He was frustrated by the quality of their work. In an effort to rectify the situation he has been attempting over the last decade to develop and apply some formal procedures to assist in the process of evaluating alternate plans with a view to selecting a best one for implementation. In his recent book he offers a comprehensive survey of the state of the art of multi-criteria evaluation and suggests a number of applications to urban and regional planning problems. Little attention is paid to the generation of alternatives, and a systematic assessment of the way the techniques could fit into the planning process is excluded. Voogd notes that, "There are only a few empirical applications known in urban and regional planning which bear some resemblance to the ideas elaborated in this book" (p. 237). It would be charitable to suggest that when Voogd's book is read widely by planners, the situation will change. Innovations in planning technology will likely be very slow, and unless the current practices can be clearly compared to the benefits of the new procedures we are in for a continuation of the two solitudes - theoreticians and practitioners.

A brave attempt is made by Voogd to devote one of the six parts of this book to *Empirical Illustrations*. Exclusively Dutch examples are used, albeit covering a very wide range of topics. Multi-criteria evaluation techniques are generally not incorporated into decision-theory and stand apart from the processes of social choice, politics, and power. Voogd notes that "the techniques must be

primarily seen as the tools of experts to perform conditional classification . . . with the principal aim of structuring a problem and not for providing the solution to a problem" (p. 347). While the criticism of Chadwick is acknowledged about the *reductio ad absurdum* of the quality of an alternate plan into one single number, the techniques explicitly need data, and numbers are manipulated. Scores, totals, ranks, differences, and so forth are the very heart of the matter. At this point let us note the author's definitions of "three different measurement situations" (p. 43): *purely quantitative*, which he defines as ratio or interval; *purely qualitative*, ordinal or binary; and finally, a mixture of both. Great care is needed to ensure that the properties of ordinal scales are not confused with those of interval or ratio scales. Let us consider Figure 13.4 (p. 255): a graph is drawn and the two axes offer ranked data; further, it is suggested that distances between the points on the graph give information about relative attractiveness.

Perhaps if the two scales used standardized data this claim has some justification. There is a very useful review of standardization procedures in Part II, and one of the technical appendices (5 - A) is devoted to the topic.

In Part I we have a quick brush with policy-making, then turn to three types of matrix which are prerequisites to formal multi-criteria evaluation. These matrices are pair-wise comparisons of the three critical dimensions, namely a) the criteria, b) the choice possibilities (the plans, scenarios, locations), and c) the points of view; (a x b) is the evaluation matrix, (a x c) the priority matrix, and (b x c) the appraisal matrix. Scores for the cells are needed prior to the application of a technique. Part II continues the discussion of these matrices and offers useful comments on disaggregation by time, spatial unit, and group. This breakdown is vital if the techniques are to contribute to discussions on social welfare. The major components of multi-criteria evaluation - the criteria, the criteria scores, and the criteria priorities (weights) - are examined in some detail in Part II. Part III is devoted to *Arithmetic Techniques for Multi-criteria Evaluation*. The selection of the appropriate technique for condensing information in a matrix depends upon the measurement scale. Following the earlier comments on data, three classes of technique are identified. Under the cardinal class (using interval or ratio data) we have weighted summation, concordance analysis, a double index, and a rescoring technique. The latter two are essentially extensions of concordance analysis.

The scaling models, which can be used to test qualitative data, allow metric properties to be derived from ordinal information. The interpretation of the graphical results depends to a large

extent on the use of "ideal points". A discussion on scaling and ideal point models is introduced in Chapter 9. More research is called for on the nature of the assumptions that are explicit or implicit when a scaling approach is used. Voogd whets our appetite.

Part IV is given over to *Application Issues*, and by this Voogd is referring to uncertainty. Three ways of dealing with uncertainty regarding the choice of method appear to be: first, "apply more than one evaluation technique" (more about this later); second, use not more than about seven or eight criteria; and third, delimit the number of choice possibilities to not more than about seven or eight. Appendix 11-A offers a Monte Carlo analysis of some twenty-three cardinal techniques and nine qualitative techniques. To quote Voogd: "In general it can be concluded that there is a minimum of 40% chance that a technique results in a different ranking from any other technique" (p. 209). A sobering thought indeed! The reader should examine closely the context of this quotation. Such comparisons of techniques using simulation or analysis are needed. Theoreticians should probably spend more energy in this direction, and we should be grateful to Voogd for his contribution.

Among the wide variety of empirical examples treated in Part V are regional planning exercises involving land use competition between housing and industry, regional development plans, studies of accessibility to industrial parks as well as energy studies and environmental monitoring exercises. Planners in those societies in which central and local governments come into contact with the private sector and citizens groups, with a view to planning economic and social development, will recognize many of the issues Voogd identifies. I continue to wonder how the techniques can be incorporated in a meaningful way into the debates among the interest groups. Perhaps we should await more complete theoretical work. Some tentative highly simplistic schematic diagrams involving *the problem, the solution and the decision maker, the analyst and other actors* are part of Chapter 18 in Part VI, *Appraisal*. The sweeping breadth of the material in Chapter 18 contrasts sharply with the detail of a series of experiments, using interview data on preferences, reported in Chapter 19. This final part is a rather unsatisfactory finish to an exciting topic.

It is timely that planners have a text which brings them up to date on multi-criteria evaluation techniques. Voogd has made a good start at offering us such a text, though on not a few occasions I have the impression that this book draws very heavily on the many papers he and his Dutch colleagues have written, without clearly identifying the audience for whom the book is intended.

The style of presentation tends at times to be loose, and at times excessively detailed.

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Agricultural Land in an Urban Society. Owen J. Furuseth and John T. Pierce. Association of American Geographers, Washington, D.C., 1982. vi + 89 pp. \$5 U.S.

This tidy little book provides a surprisingly comprehensive review of the issues surrounding the expansion of urban areas onto agricultural land. Farmland loss is often a topic of contentious debate, with protagonists advancing their perspectives with almost religious fervour. This publication provides a balanced and reasoned critique of the issues and associated evidence in the context of the United States and Canada.

The authors acknowledge a certain bias, stating at the outset their contention that agricultural land resources are "enormously important to the social well-being of North Americans". But this is more a rationale for the study than an axiom upon which all that follows is based. The primary concern of the authors is to provide "an overview of conceptual and empirical underpinnings central to a critical understanding of the societal significance and implications of farmland loss". This is achieved by drawing upon a large body of literature to describe the processes and implications of the conversion of land from agricultural use, and to characterize the main policy responses in North America.

The first chapter sets the tenor of the book by establishing the relationships between urbanization and agriculture and by addressing the questions of resource scarcity, the market allocation of resources, and the philosophical bases for government intervention. The authors favour the view that public involvement in land allocation is warranted because of imperfections in the market, traced to uncertainty, lack of information, externalities, and the presence of collective goods. This theme is explored further in Chapter 2, following an exposition of several models of the process by which land is converted from rural to urban uses.

Chapter 3 describes the land resource inventories which have been used in Canada and the United States to identify and classify agricultural lands. These inventories provide the data the authors employ to portray the distribution of these farmlands across the two nations. Evidence on the rate and nature of conversion of these lands to non-farm use is presented in Chapter 4. This chap-

ter also addresses the complex question of what these adjustments in farmland supply mean for future food demands.

Chapter 5 surveys the variety of programs and strategies which have been implemented in North America to protect farmland. Policies are grouped into three main types: financial compensation, police power, and comprehensive mechanisms. Within each of these types, several schemes are described, examples of their application are noted, and their effectiveness is assessed. Four case studies of farmland protection are examined in more detail in Chapter 6: Niagara in Ontario, Maryland, King County in Washington, and British Columbia. The book concludes with a summary and some speculations about future policy regarding agricultural land.

The book offers little that is new, and for many of the items addressed in the book more detailed discourses are available elsewhere; for example, the exhaustive review of farmland protection strategies provided by the National Agricultural Land Study. But the purpose of this book is not so much to break new ground as to provide a general review of the state of the art. It does this wonderfully, providing a very concise, well balanced, well documented, and clearly expressed critique of the basic issues pertaining to the urbanization of rural land. Of course, some might quibble with the authors' emphasis here, or their interpretation there, but the book represents a very useful addition to many undergraduate and graduate reading lists. Its readability and its modest price and length add to its appeal.

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