

PUBLIC POLICY IMPACTS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN¹

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In November of 1975 the Executive Committee of the Ohio Academy of Science created a new section devoted to administrative sciences and planning. The purposes for establishing the section were three-fold: to recognize within the institutional context of the Academy the growing scientific validity of administrative sciences and planning; to establish an organizational focus for the statewide exchange of information about new techniques or methods in administrative sciences and planning; and to give added impetus to the movement for increasing professionalization and methodological rigor in administrative sciences and planning.

In April of 1976 at the 85th Annual Meeting of the Academy, held at Miami University, the first meeting of the new section was held. A symposium theme of "Public Policy Impacts of Urban Development and Design" was selected. The papers which follow were, in most instances, first given at this symposium. Although wide-ranging in their content, these papers possess several important common features. Each is an attempt to apply scientific techniques toward the understanding of urban phenomena, and each attempts to assess the physical and psychological impacts of the built environment or of policy changes geared to achieving a restructuring of the built environment. These papers represent a commitment on the part of both professionals and academicians toward the end of establishing a solid theoretical base for understanding urban phenomena and urban processes and prescribing remedies for the dysfunctional or negative aspects of these phenomena and processes.

Planning and administrative sciences are concerned with change and adaptation of existing environments to new demands. Ozbekhan (1969) hypothesized a relationship between values, change and planning which can be summarized in five statements:

1. Only changes in the overall configuration of values can change the present situation.
2. Only individual will can bring about such value changes.
3. Value changes cannot be predicted. Ozbekhan (1969) explains the meaning of this statement:

"Values, by their very nature, constitute a state of knowledge, hence, when we talk of a future value system we talk of a future state of knowledge. But a future state of knowledge cannot in fact be known for one can only know in the present . . . Another way of saying this would be that if we could predict what theory would come to replace the theory of relativity, we should then not need to wait for that future theory to replace the current theory, because, by being known, the future theory would already have become current."

4. Value changes always occur as individual ideas, or responses, or insights concerning betterment, and when they become socialized over a large part of the system we have progress.
5. Planning is the organization of change.

Ozbekhan asserts that value changes which result in an improved set of circumstances constitute a scale or index by which progress can be measured. He further

¹The Symposium papers were presented at the 85th Annual Meeting of The Ohio Academy of Science (Section P) held at Miami University on April 22-24, 1976.

asserts that individual mental concepts of a better state or condition are the thrusts behind value change. The attempt to communicate and convince others of the need for value change is a socialization process which, if successful, results in progress in the environment within which life must take place. The systematic and logical organization of the value change process can be called planning.

The papers which follow are attempts to analyze existing circumstances or environmental conditions to determine the extent to which they deviate from norms that circumscribe a beneficial state or condition. In essence they constitute a first step in the process of value change or value reinforcement.

Sterne, Kaufman and Rubenstein (pg. 249) review the results of a relocation program in the city of Rochester, NY and find client satisfaction much higher than similar studies would suggest. The importance of this unexpected finding lies in highlighting the need for solidly based empirical research into the outcomes of urban policy decisions rather than applying the outcomes in one setting to another without controlling for different environmental circumstances.

Brantingham, Brantingham and Molumby (pg. 256) attempt to assess the negative psychological impacts of a large-scale housing development or estate upon its residents and their visitors. An especially interesting aspect of their study is the concept of mapping environmental "design areas," or those areas in which residents and visitors feel most constrained by potential violence. Designers and planners can conceivably utilize these maps as the basis for the introduction of "defensible space" elements to insure that areas which are now under-utilized can be made to function as originally intended.

Smith and Young (pg. 262) discuss the results of a comprehensive survey of Ohio residents relative to their outdoor recreation preferences. They also attempt to develop policy guidelines for new park design and development based upon the data they obtained. Their study is an example of how survey research can be used as the basis for more responsive public policy development, in this instance, in the area of parks planning.

Kendrick's paper (pg. 267) emphasizes the continuing impact of planning policy developed at an earlier date. The specific circumstance was the decision to build an inner-belt freeway in Akron, OH. He analyzes the expected impacts of the inner-belt including both the existing section and the planned expansion. The need to continually monitor and evaluate the current validity of past decisions in municipal planning forms the major thrust of his policy recommendations.

Pyle (pg. 286) examines the attitudes of various segments of the population of Summit County, OH toward the police. His paper concludes that variations in attitude can be related to socio-economic variables such as income, race and residential land use intensity. He draws several implications about the relationship of these variables with a need to selectively improve police-community relations.

Hanten (pg. 276) discusses the manifold problems associated with land use and land use change in an urban setting. Specific reference is made to the land conversion process in northeast Ohio, but similar conditions prevail in most urban regions throughout the United States. He proposes a set of policy guidelines and intergovernmental relationships which, conceivably, will result in a conversion process which recognizes land as a finite resource and the need for environmental balance in urban areas.

LITERATURE CITED

- Ozbekhan, Hasan 1969 Toward a general theory of planning. *In:* (Erich Jantsch, ed.) *Perspectives on Planning*. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Paris. pp. 93-95.