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New Principles in Planning Evaluation

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Chapter 1

Introduction: New Principles in Planning Evaluation

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Planning and evaluation have been described as inseparable concepts both from a theoretical and a practical point of view (Lichfield 2001; Khakee 1998). In fact there has been a growing appreciation of this interrelationship owing to the increased integration of democratic concerns in planning and a convergence of ecology with urban planning. In the following pages we trace this development with the help of a brief retrospect of the recent evolution of planning evaluation research and with reference to the institutional realities of planning evaluation practice.

Planning Evaluation in Retrospect

Planning evaluation has been an established field of research for a considerable number of years. Its development had been closely associated with changes in planning theory and practice as well as in policy analysis and programme evaluation. Planning evaluation most obviously refers to the making of normative judgements about the success (or otherwise) of the intervention outcomes of planning or assessing the success of the process of planning. As such, planning evaluation acquires knowledge from a vast number of disciplinary sources. It is difficult to track down all the changes that have taken place in the field of planning evaluation during these years. Very roughly, however, we can discern the development of planning evaluation research along three lines: the fundamentals and purpose of planning evaluation, the scope of planning evaluation, and the methodological innovations and improvements.

Fundamentals and Purpose of Planning Evaluation

Two distinct paradigms, consisting of clear and well-defined theoretical and empirical propositions, have determined planning theoretical research. These paradigms are rational planning and communicative (also referred to as 'deliberative') planning respectively. The two planning theories are both descriptive and normative. They not only explain the nature of planning and the process this involves but also guide various phases of the process including evaluation (Lichfield et al. 1975).

Rational planning is based on instrumental rationality and has dominated planning research for more than half a century. Instrumental rationality implies that the most favourable relationship between goal achievement and resource use is obtained. This requires that goals are carefully specified and that goal achievement implies the minimization of expenditure or the most effective use of resources. In policy programme evaluation the rational paradigm has found its expression in various measurement methods and goal achievement models. These have been characterized as the 'first' and the 'second' generation of evaluation methods (Guba and Lincoln 1989).

Several theoretical phenomena e.g. incrementalism, advocacy, implementation and strategic planning were developed to redress shortcomings in the rational planning model. They showed that in reality problems are poorly defined, many goals can only be formulated qualitatively, relationships between goals and means are poor on account of value uncertainty and scarcity of knowledge, only privileged groups can participate in policy formulation and goal formulation is not exclusively an analytical process – it contains a great deal of politics. The proponents of these alternative approaches were nevertheless in agreement with the advocates of the rational planning approach that despite limitations, evaluation should try to emulate an optimization procedure as far as possible (Faludi 1987). However as a result of these alternative approaches, optimization has given way to such concepts as 'satisficing' 'second-best solutions', 'political accord', etc. (Faludi and Voogd 1985; Khakee 1998).

The communicative or deliberative (sometimes even called collaborative planning) model not only brought to the fore the already existing recognition of the political nature of planning but also alternative objectives concerning the democratic principles for preparing and implementing planned interventions, mediating conflicts and organizational (or community) learning (Healey, 1997). Since communicative planning emphasizes both interaction and iteration, which takes place in an extensive institutional context, and where the aim is to obtain commitment and consensus among all the stakeholders, the principal aspects of evaluation centre around how best to organize an inclusionary discourse, to promote a learning process which is emancipatory and expedites progress, and to emulate political, social and intellectual capital (Khakee 2002; Davoudi 2005). A central aspect of evaluation is to focus on both the quality of the planning process and the programme of actions. Evaluation thus becomes a question not only of effectiveness and legitimacy but also of integrity and mutual understanding. Evaluation itself becomes a form of interactive discourse where all participants get involved in:

- 1) the opportunity presented for deciding on goals;
- 2) deciding on what the community or the planning organization's primary objectives should be;
- 3) the realization of the existence of important conflicts;
- 4) forging consensus or exposing existing conflicts;
- 5) providing information for market participants or government organizations;
- 6) developing bids for scarce resources;

- 7) helping to identify competing aims for the process of planning (Healey, 1993).

Communicative planning evaluation corresponds to what Guba and Lincoln (1989) describe as the 'fourth generation evaluation' that includes several approaches including Guba and Lincoln's own 'naturalistic responsive approach', the multiplist model (Cook 1985) and the design approach (Bobrow and Dryzek 1987). These approaches take up the post-positivist challenge of interactive participatory evaluation.

Whether communicative planning replaces the rational model or not is a controversial issue. Some researchers feel that it does so (Healey 1993; Innes 1995; Khakee 1998). Others maintain that the rational model at least in planning and evaluation practice is a robust and flexible instrument (Alexander 1998; Lichfield 2001). According to the latter, what is needed is an open and value related discourse in order to make the consequences of a plan or a policy measure as clear as possible. In practice there is however, a strong adherence to the rational approach and to the quantification of consequences, which has led to an emerging gap between research and practice (Henkel 1991; Khakee 2003).

The communicative logic has nevertheless compelled the advocates of the rational approach to recognize the need for making the evaluation process and evaluation results more transparent and to improve the communication between the evaluators and those who make use of or have a concern with evaluation studies. Since planning is a systematic attempt to construct frames for the justification of decisions, it may be that planning seems to perform to sufficient levels of plausibility despite poor planning methodology. This is a question of conformance rather than performance. The evaluation of performance therefore needs a new design that focuses on the arguments advanced during the justification of decisions (Faludi and Korthals Altes 1997).

The communicative model has also implied an extension of the purpose of planning evaluation to problem generation and definition. The evaluation of complex decision-making processes needs a broader policy analysis framework in order to have a description of the problems, their causes, the use of current policy, the preconditions for achieving desired scenarios and goal structures (Yewlett 1993; Rosenhead 2005). Planning can be viewed from several angles: as consensus building it can be analysed as a persuasive process in dealing with sensitive issues, as a learning process it can deal with 'wicked' problems and as a negotiation process for administrating distributional problems (Woltjer 2001).

Extending the Scope of Planning Evaluation

Some of the major factors that have led to the extension of the scope of planning evaluation include the idea of incorporating various ecological factors into the evaluation process through the integration of risk analysis and non-market values (Miller and Patassini 2005). The integration of ecological aspects in socio-economic planning and evaluation poses conceptual challenges with regard to interpreting concepts like 'sustainable development', 'biodiversity', and 'ecology'

that are interpreted in a wide variety of ways. Evaluation research has contributed to the exposure of contradictions in these different interpretations and in the provision of guidelines when using 'environmental quality' as a yardstick to measure development (Barbanente et al. 1998).

The ecological dimension also reveals problems involved in challenging the conventional growth perspectives, especially the neo-classical economic growth paradigm. In assessing individual as well as community values for environmental quality and natural goods, it is necessary to go beyond the neo-classical social choice theory with its linear addition of individual utility. It is necessary to examine conflicts and complementarities between growth and nature conservation with particular attention to such issues as 'limits to growth', 'inter-generational rights and preferences' and 'time-horizon for more balanced development' (Macchi and Scandura 1997). In an empirical context, evaluation models need to consider biospheric quality and capacities and thresholds that limit the exploitation of natural resources (Davoudi 1997). Moreover it is necessary to pay attention to the role of externalities hiding the real value of resources, the lack of consideration given to the irreversibility of damage done to the environment, conflicting environmental resource values held by different social interests and the use of 'thematic maps' and other similar methods for assessing risk associated with natural disasters (Gentile et al. 1997).

Relevant in this context are the techniques for measuring and for estimating non-market values including land use and development performance indicators used by national planning departments, the incidence and degree of environmental impacts on various social groups, and survey opinion data concerning the nuisance and desirability effects of alternative designs for public facilities (Miller 2005). Throughout, the problems of complexity and resulting uncertainty are important. There is a strong tendency for decision makers to be more attentive to those aspects of options that are measured; making it important that valid metrics can be found or designed for all the objectives the decisions should address (Barbanente et al. 1998).

Incorporating questions of value into an account of justice has been a major issue in evaluation research dealing with the distributional impact of plans and policy measures. Social justice has always had to navigate between the individual and the collective. The inclusion of environment in evaluation implies not only intra-generational environmental equity but also between current and future generations as well as obligations human beings have to nature per se (Campbell 2006). So far evaluation research and practice have focussed on environmental equity within a community or a nation (Miller 2005). Hardly any environmental impact assessments have extended to the entire planet or across current and future generations; even less so when it comes to the human-nature relationship. The extension of the scope of environmental justice poses a tremendous challenge (O'Neill 1993).

Methodological Innovations and Improvements

The decreasing importance of conventional evaluation methods in spatial planning has resulted in methodological innovation according to several perspectives such as:

- 1) the use of an evaluation matrix in dialogue with stakeholders to account for values (Fusco Girard 1998);
- 2) the replacement of a narrow welfare perspective by an interactive 'positional' analysis integrating organizational and individual values, politics and ideology (Söderbaum 1998);
- 3) the replacement of instrumental rationality, with its quantitative and utilitarian grounds, by a radical generic approach for acknowledging differences in values (Barbanente et al. 1998); and
- 4) the application of social constructivist ontology for bringing in new perspectives and values (Barbanente et al. 2001).

A major aim of these innovative methods is to overcome the mechanistic and reductionist approaches to evaluation, to combine the issues of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity, to surmount the disciplinary barriers and integrate the different forms of knowledge within the evaluation process. Specific models that have been developed in this context include:

- a multi-model system of sustainability indicators classification (Lombardi and Curwell 2005);
- a meta-analytic approach for analysing and comparing sustainable development policies, in terms of their common and divergent components, success factors as well as impediments (Bizzaro and Nijkamp 1998);
- Community Impact Analysis for identifying 'actual use' values and 'passive use' or 'altruistic' values for people who may not actually use natural goods but nevertheless gain satisfaction from the possibility of potential use (Lichfield 1998);
- the extension of impact assessment to evaluate social distributional effects, especially the environmental justice implications of development projects by integrating the technical analysis of the environmental spillovers of a project, and their impact on specific population groups, with the analysis of information from affected parties (Miller 2001);
- improvements to environmental impact analysis (EIA) through making ex post evaluation an intrinsic part of EIA practice, in order not only to improve individual EIA activities but also improve EIA practice more generally (Arts 2001);
- the introduction of a creative, conscious and interactive discussion of goals in community impact assessment in order not only to prepare the ground for the planning analysis but also for intelligent stakeholder participation (D. Lichfield 2001; N. Lichfield 2001);

- the integration of guidelines for substantive, procedural and policy integration in impact assessment and planning, specifically emphasizing the complementary and subsidiary nature of impact assessment and planning (Fusco Girard et al. 2005);
- the use of a retrospective sociological analysis of community-relevant environmental conflicts to complement the traditional community impact assessment (Selicato et al. 2001).

The shift from a rational to a communicative style of planning has raised the fear that such a development would mean throwing out ‘the baby with the bathwater’. The fear is that rational choice and instrumental rationality would be subsumed to all manner of legitimizing decisions with fuzzy notions about interactive practices (Alexander 1998). Notwithstanding these fears, several approaches have been put forward to combine rational choice with interactive practice:

- Planning and Management Learning System as a continuous evaluation approach integrating methods and resource organization, taking into account value pluralism and enhancing participation (Lichfield and Prat 1998);
- Multi Criteria Analysis, making explicit evaluation assumptions, integrating empirical and experiential knowledge but at the same time exposing rhetorical expedients about classical and communicative rationalities respectively (Alexander 1998);
- Integrated Multi Criteria and Benefit Cost Analysis in order to take into account disaggregated and weighted analysis of the preferences of the people as well as equity considerations (Levent and Nijkamp 2005);
- ‘will-shaping’ in planning evaluation whereby attitudes and preferences are synchronized towards certain goals using either a ‘strategic model’ whereby a strategic plan is made the subject of public and political debate provided that it appeals to the public or an ‘elaboration model’ that illustrates operational alternatives to start public discussion (Voogd 1997);
- modifying benefit-cost analysis with the help of multi-objective decision-making (MODM). The model replaces a priori goal and criteria setting with sensitivity testing of a systematic set of goal-criteria weights reflecting alternative value orientations (Alexander 2001).

This brief exposé shows the tremendous importance of two factors on the planning evaluation research namely the shift in the theoretical perspective from the rational to the communicative or deliberative logic, and the environmental concern. However there are other changes that have also had an impact on this research. Notable among these are the emergence of the network society, market liberalism and its subsequent impact on public management (often described as a shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’) and increasing ethical concerns owing to rapid changes in genetic engineering, diagnostics, information technology, etc. All these have had an impact on planning and evaluation research as well as practice. However, the shift in the theoretical approach and the increasing concern about

the deterioration of the natural environment, have meant significant changes in the purpose, scope and methodology of planning evaluation theory and practice.

It is against this background that we now turn to the chapters that are included in this volume. We see as a crucial challenge here the need to understand how planning proposals are linked to their social and environmental context. Planning evaluation is concentrated increasingly on the influence of institutional contexts, on processes of plan making and implementation. This book tries to find out how new principles make reference to this awareness, and what principles have been developed in recent research in planning evaluation.

Evaluation and the Institutional Realities of Planning Practice

The chapters in this book illustrate, in a variety of ways, the importance and possibilities of taking institutional principles into consideration. The institutional context of planning initiatives consists of both formal and informal social characteristics, including legal frames of reference, but also values, norms, interests, perceptions and beliefs. These institutions influence the success and failure of planning decisions. The book tries to highlight the nature and role of evaluation in the context of the institutional realities of planning practice. It raises the issue of socio-environmental and socio-institutional principles for effective evaluation. It also shows how these issues shed a new light on the importance of interaction between key actors in specific planning situations. The main difference with the rational approach is that effectiveness is a matter of the extent to which planning proposals match the situated social and political processes of which these proposals are a part, not the extent to which they match given objectives.

The emphasis given here has a series of implications. First the integration of more socially orientated environmental considerations in planning. Planning proposals related to issues such as infrastructure projects, housing areas, and impact assessment studies have been increasingly embedded in broader policy settings including environmental, economic, and social sustainability at the same time. Part I of the book discusses related socio-environmental principles such as environmental justice, equity, and hedonic pricing. There is an emphasis on new linkages between social, economic and environmental issues. Planning evaluation then becomes an activity aimed at a multi-dimensional understanding of planning. The chapters in this part of the book show that the evaluation methods required for such an understanding imply triangulation, and carefully balanced assessment.

A second implication is that planning efforts can only be evaluated effectively if they make reference to their specific institutional context. Part II of the book deals with the importance of socio-institutional principles such as plausibility, capacity building, institutional anticipation, performance, and environmental integration. A key point for these chapters is that planning evaluation should help recognize and appreciate the influence of strategic contextual factors such as market development, regional change, and culture. Evaluation must handle the 'embeddedness' of planning within its wider range of social and economic

processes. Accordingly, planning evaluation becomes an activity focused on methods to monitor these kinds of processes. At the same time, evaluation makes reference to the contextually specific positions and assumptions of those actors upon which the development and implementation of policies are based.

A third implication is the increased reliance on evaluation approaches able to capture interactive processes between actors. Part III of the book shows, in a multiplicity of ways, how interaction principles related to citizenship, provider-recipient communication, policy networks, and dialogue, accentuate the necessity of including all relevant stakeholders within the evaluation. Planning evaluation, thus, recognizes the pertinence of stakeholder and citizen interests in plans, policies and projects, and seeks to interpret their perspectives, arguments and actions. Qualitative approaches like participatory evaluation, and communication and performance audits are crucial for making clear their influence on certain plans, projects or policies. Planning evaluation then produces forms of socially relevant knowledge, which informs action to improve plan effectiveness.

Socio-environmental Principles

One distinctive issue emphasizing the integration of socio-environmental considerations in planning is environmental justice. Environmental justice explicitly focuses on the adverse environmental impacts of a development project on low-income and minority population. The chapter by Don Miller proposes an innovative approach to the assessment of social justice in environmental planning. A key problem has been the separation between quantitative evaluation and impacts perceived, qualitatively, by citizens themselves. Miller combines quantitative estimations of population size with a qualitative assessment of perceived negative impacts derived from a community-based dialogue. His model is used to evaluate environmental justice in the case of the replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and the seawall in the city of Seattle. His approach has some major advantages, including the fact that dialogue can help a more socially embedded assessment of likely impacts. Moreover, the dialogue provides a learning process for all the concerned parties, aimed at avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating negative impacts of a development project.

Jenny Stenberg highlights in her chapter the importance of social and institutional dimensions to sustainable development in Swedish housing. Like many other countries, Sweden has struggled with segregation and an unequal distribution of poverty concentrated in vulnerable housing areas. Also, environmental policy measures such as household waste separation have become more clearly dependent on the social attitudes, and ethnic and economic integration of the individuals involved. Stenberg proposes, therefore, that planning efforts based on sustainable development need multidimensional evaluation. The chapter follows an integrated socio-environmental conception in planning evaluation, using a specific model entitled Main^{TETRA}, illustrated by Swedish housing projects. A specific focus is on understanding impeding institutional conditions to implementation.

Tom Bauler, Alessandro Bonifazi, and Carmelo Torre analyse how the European Commission addresses equity issues in their impact assessments. Planning evaluation here refers to 'ex ante' judgements to inform European decision-makers on the positive and negative impacts of selected alternatives. The chapter considers the incorporation of inequality issues considered imperative for European policy making. It also calls attention to the increased coherence between policy fields such as transport, economy, and environment. The evidence presented suggests that the impact-assessment reports conform poorly to accepted guidelines on equity. The authors seek an explanation for this finding in the complexity of the supra-national scale (covering the EU as a whole), the integrated focus (on social, economic and environmental impacts) and the wide diversity of policy proposals. A more 'limited mandate' for establishing equity in European planning evaluation would help.

The chapter by Sylvia Dovlén and Tuija Hilding-Rydevik is also concerned with socially-oriented environmental planning, and new linkages between social, economic, and environmental issues. The main focus in their chapter, however, is on the integration of national directives on sustainable development in regional planning. Ecological sustainability, inter-generational responsibility, and North-South equality are presented as some of the major elements for sustainable development. Dovlén and Hilding-Rydevik identify a set of four specific discourses as a yardstick to their evaluation of the implementation of sustainable development policies, including 'an intellectual challenge', 'the goals are accepted', 'a negative stance towards the national directive', and 'the national task is uninteresting or impossible'. An evaluation based on these kinds of discourses can help make clear the organizational, cultural and social problems that arise as a result from implementing national policy goals.

A major issue in the evaluation of a large-scale development project is how to estimate prospective net benefits of such a project for the entire local community. A multi-dimensional understanding of planning is also key here. Roberto Camagni and Roberta Capello in their chapter present such an understanding via an improved usage of the principle of hedonic pricing. A proposal for undergrounding a railway in the central business district of the City of Trento shows their attempt to specify as many variables of the possible parameters covering hedonic pricing as possible. The authors opt for flexibility in the choice of the hedonic function, avoid distortion arising from spatial inter-dependence and extend the geographical boundary of their survey in order to cover as many cases and conditions as possible. Planning evaluation studies like this one show how the linkages between overall communal benefits of urban projects and environmental, engineering and other costs, can be made clear.

Socio-institutional Principles

The key conclusion of the chapters in this section is the notion that an understanding of the cultural environment in which planning initiatives are operating is essential to their effectiveness. Increasingly, planning evaluators are seeking to understand the socio-institutional context including both the formal

and informal social characteristics which structure the context within which the agency of actors takes place (Hull, 2006; Vigar et al. 2000). The 'structuring rules' include the legal frames of reference, the authority and position of different stakeholders, the distribution of responsibilities and resources, and the negotiation of possible outcomes. The values, norms, interests, perceptions and beliefs of actors also influence the success and failure of decision making through influencing capacity building, institutional anticipation, performance, and environmental integration in planning decisions.

Maurizio d'Amato and Tom Kauko use their evaluation of the real estate market in Bari, Italy to highlight the interaction between land use regulation and the real estate rental market. The liberalization and deregulation of the development market in Italy has set up a sequence of events in different districts of Bari to which both market and planning actors are responding. They use hedonic prices to understand and evaluate this behaviour and the increase and decline in rental values. They contend that there is yet little mutual understanding between urban planners and real estate agents or realtors in the use of performance indicators of the real estate market to predict likely urban development in different districts of a city.

Domenico Patassini offers plausibility as a promising principle for planning evaluation. Taking the experience of urban planning in Ethiopia between donors and recipients as a foundation for his argumentation, Patassini emphasizes that the way that contact is established between key actors will directly determine the chance that effective partnerships and policy success will emerge. If processes of co-operation and programming disregard culture, then rejection, unwillingness, or mere passive acceptance could easily result. It is important, therefore, for evaluation to determine the plausibility of plans or programmes. A programme is plausible if it tries to understand and anticipate cultural factors such as differences in attitudes to state intervention, property, democracy or quality of life, and base the assessment of alternative options for action on some shared cultural attitudes or common language.

Planning evaluation, then, is about understanding and anticipating the cultural roots of partnership. Planning evaluation thus becomes a highly contingent, i.e. situation-specific, activity. Patassini uses a metaphor of the 'searcher' to explain the role of planners here. Searchers treat planning as a discovery process for plausible, that is socially or culturally valid, proposals. Using plausibility as a key principle, planning evaluation becomes a practical exercise of finding answers to questions such as why and to what extent actors agree on certain proposals, and how their cultural backgrounds have encouraged, or discouraged, mutual contact.

Angela Hull reflects on the challenge of undertaking an evaluation of the holistic regeneration of multiple deprived districts in five English cities. She draws attention to the quality of the evidence available, the steering role by the government client, and the ontological questions of understanding, and isolating, the mechanisms, which produce the 'additional' anticipated impacts from the interaction embedded within a complex web of socio-political structures existent in the area. Despite these problems the government client required measurement of the cost effectiveness or value-for-money of the public sector spend. The local

regeneration agencies developed their own alternative quantitative and qualitative measures of performance, which were more meaningful and closely related to local objectives. These included long run measures to track the performance of residents through training and into employment and movement to better jobs. Hull's evaluation focuses on how the residents felt they had influenced the agenda, their own criteria to evaluate programme success and how the programme evolved in response to their views and the lessons learned.

Johan Woltjer, in his chapter, explores what he refers to as an entrepreneurial urban strategy for the Province of South-Holland, which attempts to anticipate societal change, opportunities and market trends. His interviews with key private and public actors highlights the importance of these criteria in evaluating strategic options, and the importance in their view of entrepreneurial approaches to stimulating actions and investments in partnership with parties other than the lead agency in preparing the plan. The strategic planning tasks involve measuring the strength of the regional development options to mobilize the capabilities of stakeholders, institutions, and their networks for decision making. The South-Holland case points up how evaluation should address the public-private sector partnership generation and delivery of strategic development issues at this spatial scale, and important interregional issues that need to be accounted for as well.

The interplay between national and local planning is the subject of Willem Korthals Altes's chapter. In his evaluation of Dutch national urbanization policies he addresses two questions: Did the national plan result in the desired changes? And did the plan result in better decision-making processes? He found that the answer to the *conformance* question was that developments over this period were largely in the designated concentration areas. However, it was less clear, on the *performance* question that the plan resulted in better decision making. Principally, the national plan was not effective in dealing with uncertainty. Contracts between the national government and local agencies did not respond to changes in demand in location for housing and housing sizes, and in fact he found that housing production stagnated in most urban areas in the Netherlands. Both the design of this evaluation and its application can provide useful guidance for undertaking other efforts to assess national plans that are necessarily implemented at the local level.

Angela Barbanente, Dino Borri and Valeria Monno evaluate how planning argumentation could be improved to integrate environmental issues more fully in policy development. They examine the micro-narratives of actors involved in the allocation of EU Structural Funds in Southern Italy and find that proposals are evaluated on the basis of rational management and efficient and effective procedures. Barbanente et al. conclude that, in circumstances where local practice and routines discourage new approaches, evaluation becomes a symbolic gesture in which authoritative actors close off dialogue and the development of learning processes. They suggest that with the move towards multi-agent interaction in policy development and delivery, we need new tools to evaluate the discursive argumentation of different actors and understand the different norms and values these contain.

Interactiveness/Communication Principles

The chapter by Luigi Fusco Girard poses some of the major issues concerning democratic interaction in decision-making. Specifically, Fusco Girard seeks to reconcile several uncertainties that emerge from trying some new forms of urban governance, and the pressures for effective action.

One of these uncertainties occurs when national interests have precedence over local interests, and as a consequence democratic participation may well lead to opposition to a project. Realistic planning evaluation then needs to account for both the larger-scale objectives, and localized impacts and concerns. 'Participatory evaluation' is explored as a means of developing broad understanding of the project, confronting the distribution of costs and benefits, and discovering ways to make the project locally acceptable.

A second uncertainty is how best to reflect institutional and cultural factors in planning evaluation. Frequently, short-term impacts of alternatives being assessed are seen as most important, because too little attention is paid to institutional history and past experience. To counteract this, Fusco Girard proposes 'deliberative forums' that build from citizenship principles and seek social cohesion in the decision-making process. Instruments with promise for accomplishing this include a 'participatory budget' that focuses on indicators for quality of life, an 'ecobudget' that makes explicit the environmental and social costs of choices regarding economy and land use, and the 'Local Agenda 21 for Culture' initiative to stimulate cultural awareness among citizens.

Too often, programme evaluation has failed to give adequate attention to communication between the providers and the recipients of public services. In the chapter by Roger Ellis and Elaine Hogard, the authors make the case for evaluating the communication processes between these actors, and whether the participants deem this communication effective. The technique of a communication audit is assessed as a means of accomplishing this, and its application is illustrated using two cases. The first case involves introducing a clinical facilitator to improve communication in college-based and ward-based learning for nursing students. In the second case, a communication audit is used as part of the evaluation of two Sure Start educational programmes, especially the interaction among members of the multi-professional team working in this innovative environment.

The contribution by Shinji Tsubohara and Henk Voogd explores applying Policy Network Theory (PNT) to evaluate decisions taken by the ruling party in Groningen, the Netherlands in introducing a traffic circulation plan. It focuses on the processes of collaboration and communication between officials of the Labour Party.

The authors conclude that PNT is difficult to apply successfully in ex-post planning evaluation, and needs to be adapted to show how personal linkages can affect policy outcomes as well as the transfer of policy ideas in society. Doing so could account for how planning is a continually changing deliberative act characterized by negotiations between stakeholders.

In the chapter by Abdul Khakee and Anders Hanberger, the authors point out the growing use of performance audits in local government as a means of

holding public officials accountable to the electorate. Their critique of the 'public review' of environmental policies in Sweden highlights both the variability in how these are carried out in practice, and at the same time the emphasis on efficient management and monitoring processes. They conclude that these reviews need to be enhanced to provide stronger emphasis on environmental goals, and to include broader and more accessible dialogue with ordinary citizens. A principle issue that Khakee and Hanberger raise is the possibility of including accountability in planning evaluation.

Each of the chapters in this book illustrate in one way or another a stronger awareness for including institutional principles in planning evaluation. While a rational approach has tended to analytically separate planning actions from their institutional and social context, these chapters emphasize how some key social realities of planning practice need to be taken into account. These social realities include citizens' sensitivity on planning impacts, attitudes, perceived inequality, mutual understanding, trust, and accepted norms. Another set of principles that has come to the fore includes a multi-dimensional understanding of planning, emphasizing in evaluation new coherences between social, economic and environmental issues. A third new set of principles makes the point that planning evaluation should address the institutional 'embeddedness' of planning, emphasizing principles such as plausibility, accountability, capacity building, and the understanding of stakeholders' perspectives, arguments and actions. Clearly, these principles are still somewhat indeterminate, and the stronger institutional awareness mentioned earlier is wide-ranging. The chapters presented here do reveal, however, an increasing awareness and a shared conviction that institutional principles can help planning evaluation to establish more adequately informed decision making, help legitimize plans or projects politically, and make possible more effective planning intervention.

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