POLICY AND PROGRAM PLANNING

A DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

ROBERT R. MAYER

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FOREWORD

Robert Mayer died on November 3, 1983. He became ill the day after completing the final chapter of the final draft of this book. He saw this book as his mature work, the culmination of his intellectual development, the integration of different strands of thought and different periods of his professional life.

His academic studies included theology, social work, social research, and social welfare planning and policy. As a practitioner he worked as a community organizer and social planner. He taught for ten years in a school for urban and regional planning and then came back full circle to social work as both a dean and professor.

Through this intellectual journey he moved from the value-based social work approach to the rational social science approach at Brandeis and then to the developmental approach of city planners at the University of North Carolina. Finally, he made the choice to return to social work, which explicates a value base to planning.

Usually these different approaches to planning operate in different spheres. Academics and practitioners of each approach rarely speak to each other nor are aware of each other's contributions. In this book Mayer lays out the different approaches so that the reader may compare and

contrast them. He then shows how they can be used together synergistically.

Not only does he thread together these heretofore disparate approaches to planning, but he also ties together theory and practice. He believed and taught that theory must inform practice and that practice was important. As one of his colleagues said in his eulogy, "He was both more theoretical and more practice-based than the rest of us." And so in the second section of the book, he moves beyond theoretical discussion, and utilizing all three approaches to planning, guides the reader through the stages of planning. What emerges is that theory alone is not enough, practice techniques are not enough, and using them together is not enough— he believed in using both to help create a more just society.

Although this book is the capstone of his prior work, it also shows glimpses of where his intellectual development was heading. Mayer was constantly growing: testing, absorbing, rejecting, and integrating new ideas. Never content to stay in one place or repeat himself, he was beginning to explore both the Japanese model and the feminist perspective of planning and management. Thus, the reader will find in this book his concern with holism, a developmental approach, a need for broad participation in decision making, and an ethical stance.

Had he more time, he undoubtedly would have moved further in this direction in his next book. Unfortunately, his time on earth was tragically short, and so this book will suffice as his last document.

Although Mayer did finish the last draft, he died before the final revision could be made after the manuscript had been typed. He had planned to rewrite the preface and may have wanted to make other minor revisions. I have submitted the manuscript as he wrote it, not wishing to change any of his words nor impose what I thought he might have wanted to say, although he did share and discuss the various drafts with me. My only changes have been obvious editing and typographical errors, always returning to his earlier drafts when there was any question of his intent.

I would like to thank the Fordham typing pool at Rose Hill Campus for typing the bulk of the manuscript; Dean Mary Ann Quaranta and Colleen Carew for expediting the final typing; and John Riolo, a doctoral student of Mayer, for checking some citations. I am also grateful to Julie Nord and Frank Hubert at Prentice-Hall for their support in seeing this project through to completion.

Ruth A. Brandwein
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PREFACE

The subject of this book is developmental planning as a form of rational decision making used by governmental bodies and large organizations that act in the public interest. Although developmental planning grew up in governmental agencies faced with the problem of selecting and justifying public expenditures to benefit the general welfare, it has also been adopted by large not-for-profit organizations that seek to maximize their efforts to attain collective goals. Rational planning has become useful to advocacy groups as well, such as neighborhood organizations and other public-interest pressure groups, that seek to increase their effectiveness, both in the use of their limited resources and in their impact on public policies.

The objective of this book is to provide a current and coherent discussion of the theory and the method of rational planning and to relate their use to the formulation of social policy. The book is divided into two parts. Part I (Chapters 1–4) deals with the theory that underlies and the issues that surround public-sector planning, with particular reference to the development of social policies and human services. It begins with a discussion of the nature of planning, the characteristics that distinguish it as a form of decision making, its relationship to policy development and policy analysis, and the issues which surround its practice. This discussion is followed by an examination of four alternative models of planning which have charac-

terized planning theory: developmental planning, incrementalism, the eco-
nomic model of choice, and ethical argument. A separate chapter is de-
voted to the concept of the public interest, which is central to any attempt
to achieve consensus on public or collective goals and which has been much
maligned in recent years. Alternative perspectives derived from political
science, economics, and the behavioral sciences are set forth. The discus-
sion then turns to a consideration of the organizational context in which
planning takes place. Alternative locations for the planning function are
examined, with respect to both intraorganizational and interorganizational
dynamics, in terms of their impact on the capacity to influence public
actions. The discussion ends with a review of the legal basis, the ideological
climate, and the roles adopted by planners that enhance the effectiveness
of planning.

Part II (Chapters 5–13) sets forth a detailed discussion of a nine-stage
model of the rational planning process, with a chapter devoted to each
stage: (1) determination of goals, (2) assessment of needs, (3) specification
of objectives, (4) design of alternative programs or policies, (5) estimating
the consequences of alternatives, (6) policy or program selection, (7) imple-
mentation, (8) evaluation, and (9) feedback within a continuous planning
process. Each stage is described in detail, techniques that planners use in
exercising each stage are presented, and examples from the human ser-
vices are provided. The model represents a normative or idealized rather
than a realistic view of planning practice. This discrepancy is intentional.
The limitations of current practice are due only in part to the feasibility of
rationality and intentionality within the American political context. An
equal important source of ineffectivness in planning is a limited under-
standing of its nature and potential. A motivation in writing this book is to
improve on current practice by enhancing that understanding.

This book is written with two audiences in mind: practitioners for
whom human services planning or social policy development is a major
responsibility, and graduate students in professional programs preparing
themselves for careers that will incorporate such responsibility. Part I will
be of particular interest to advanced practitioners trained in direct service
work, who on the basis of experience and personal aptitude, have been
promoted into administrative positions involving planning and policy de-
velopment. Such persons learn the techniques of planning through on-the-
job training or personal experience. They often find that a formal ex-
posure to theory enables them to use more appropriately the techniques
they have learned through experience and to modify or to innovate tech-
nology. Part I will also be of interest to doctoral students for whom the
development and teaching of practice theory is a primary concern. Part II
will be useful as a text for graduate students preparing for professional
practice in planning, policy development or analysis, and administration. It
is also suitable as a text for in-service training of beginning level staffs in

offices of planning, policy development, and evaluation in governmental agencies or other large organizations.

Since the subject of this book is the practice of public decision making, the book can be used in a variety of educational programs that share this interest, such as city and regional planning, public administration, and public policy. Since it is written from the perspective of those who are concerned with the development of programs and policies designed to enhance social equality, social justice, and human welfare, it will be particularly appropriate to educational programs in social welfare, public health and medical care, education, criminal justice, and related fields.

Widespread use of formal methodologies for planning and policy development was fostered by governmental activism of the 1960s and early 1970s. As a consequence, an upsurge of interest in the study and teaching of public policy making occurred in academic circles. Given this fact, one may question the need for another book on planning. However, in spite of these developments, no comprehensive, coherent text on that subject has emerged. A number of critiques of public-sector planning have been written by social scientists (Altshuler, Meyerson and Banfield, Lindblom, Olson, Simon, Rabinowitz). Such works provide important insights for improving planning practice, but they fall short of providing a comprehensive, normative treatment suitable for practitioners. Some readers on planning have been developed (Faludi, Burchell and Sternlieb, Gilbert and Specht). Useful as they may be as compilations of the literature depicting the state of the art, however, they lack the coherence of an integrated text.

In the social welfare field the literature on planning tends to fall into either one of two perspectives. One focuses on the interactional or political aspects of public decision making and grows out of the social work profession's experience with organizing and advocating for social reform (Morris and Binstock, Gurin and Perlman, Lauffer, Warren). Important as this perspective is, it is parallel to rather than integrated with the "rational," analytical perspective that characterizes formal planning in the public sector. The other perspective treats public decision making as a process of choosing among competing values (Titmuss, Rein, Gil). This perspective reflects an essential element of public decision making particularly relevant to welfare policy, but it falls short of providing a comprehensive model of that process. The one exception which comes closest to the orientation of this book is *Theory and Practice of Social Planning* by Alfred Kahn. As a comprehensive attempt to model the planning process in the human service field, Kahn's work is unique. However, in his effort to be comprehensive, he produces a model that is overly elaborate and thus difficult to put into practice. In addition, Kahn gives insufficient attention to the intellectual roots of planning that lie outside the social welfare field.

Beyond its practical value, this work addresses two problems of a theoretical nature. The prevailing literature on public decision making

conveys two separate characterizations of the process, one as plan making and the other as policy making. The distinction is grounded more in the disciplinary origins of the two conceptualizations than in reality. The concept of planning is rooted in professional education for urban and regional development, for public health, and for social welfare, where the provision of public services is a primary focus. The concepts of policy making and policy analysis are closely aligned with the social sciences, particularly political science and economics, where interest centers on the coercive powers and financial incentives of the state. This book provides a conceptualization of public decision making by which planning and policy making can be seen as related aspects of a common process. By so doing, the related literature can be brought together in a more useful manner.

The second theoretical problem which this book addresses is the unfortunate schism between what can be called the *humanistic* and the *technocratic* orientations to planning. From the humanistic perspective any attempt to be rational or comprehensive in planning or policy making is viewed as oppressive at worst and as impractical at best. Humanists argue that the use of technical procedures in public decision making results in the subjugation of one segment of society by another, since control over technology is not equally accessible to all. In a similar vein, humanists argue that rational planning is impractical because public decisions are based on power relationships and not on reason or evidence. Technocrats, on the other hand, favor rationality in planning but discount its appropriateness for dealing with the issues that motivate humanists. Questions of social justice or human impact, they argue, are "fuzzy" and therefore not subject to quantitative analysis. Furthermore, because such questions are value laden they are controversial, and therefore are more appropriately dealt with outside the formal process of planning or policy making. Like so many other conceptual polarities about human behavior, there is an element of truth in both points of view. The conceptualization of planning provided in this book stems from a commitment to both rationality and value choice, and thus offers a basis on which the technical and the humanistic perspective can be brought together into a relationship of complementarity.

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CHAPTER ONE
THE NATURE
OF PLANNING

This book is about planning, a rational process used by governments, organizations, and other social groups in arriving at actions to be taken to achieve some future state of affairs. In a recent discussion of this subject, a colleague expressed shock that I depict planning as a rational process of decision making. "Don't you realize," he argued, "that rationality is not the basis on which public decisions are made?" It is true that social scientists for the past two decades have demonstrated through numerous empirical studies that rational planning does not always work; that is, it frequently is not the means by which public programs are adopted or public resources are allocated (Altshuler, 1964; Meyerson and Banfield, 1955; Wildavsky, 1964). Rather, so argue the social scientists, public decisions represent marginal departures from the present state of affairs based on compromises among the wants of competing interest groups.

In answering this query, we must consider whether the theory of planning is at fault or the conditions under which it is applied. We might just as well ask the question, "What is there about the American political system that inhibits goal-oriented deliberations based on reason rather than on power?" This question is being raised by a new breed of social scientists concerned about the inability of American government to deal effectively with the social, economic, and environmental problems that

beset our society (Lowi, 1969; Schulman, 1975). The difference between the two questions lies in the distinction between empirically based or descriptive theory and value-based or normative theory. The former tells us the way things are; the latter tells us how they ought to be. This distinction underlies the difference between the social sciences and the professions. Although the latter must be informed by empirically based theory, their central direction must come from normative theory if their practitioners are to help individuals and the institutions that serve them to bring about a better quality of life.

This book sets forth a normative approach to public decision making. We call this approach *developmental planning* because it is goal-oriented and seeks to establish a rational relationship between the means and ends of action. It is contrasted with politics, which is more focused on the mobilization of constituent support for action. Both approaches can be said to be rational but about different aspects of decision making. The planner worries about the effects of a given course of action on desired objectives, whereas the politician worries about its effects on the support of constituents, which is necessary to sustain action.

By portraying these two approaches as distinct, we are distorting the nature of public decision making. Planning and politics are inextricably related. Every public decision involves choices among important values which can only be made through a political process. And any political leader who wishes to stay in power must show progress in solving vexing social problems, which requires rationality about substantive issues. However, in this book these two processes are treated as though they were separate because they proceed from different assumptions and utilize different methodologies. Their interdependence can be more accurately depicted as a dialectical process that leads to a higher quality of public decisions. Planning can illuminate the choices, and their implications, that are made through the political process, and politics can provide a grounding in reality for the anticipation of the future created through planning.

To this point we have been discussing the external relationship between the planning process and other political centers in public or collective decision making. However, a relationship also exists internally. Politics enters into the very preparation of a given plan. The choice of issues around which planning is undertaken, the range of solutions that are considered, and the timing of a plan's development all have important political implications. The astute planner will be sensitive to them. Again, it is not the purpose of this book to highlight such implications. It is our belief that an understanding of the planning process from a normative perspective is necessary before intelligent decisions can be made about how to adapt it in actual practice.

This book, then, is an attempt to portray the contribution which plan-

ning can make to the quality of public decisions. In so doing we do not intend to ignore the political process. Rather the intent is to portray decision making from the perspective of planners, highlighting the critical points at which their methods and skills intersect with those of political leaders. The reader looking for a fuller treatment of the latters' role in public decision making will find abundant sources in the literature. Thus the fundamental principles of planning are reaffirmed at a time when American society is searching for new ways of dealing with old problems. The assumption is that important questions of social policy can be more effectively dealt with through a process that includes a confrontation with "first" principles or "ultimate" objectives and the judicious commitment of limited resources to their attainment.

In this chapter we will discuss the generic aspects of planning and examine the nature of rationality, which is its most prominent feature. We shall also set forth the relationship between planning and the processes of policy and program development. However, before proceeding, a word is in order about the context in which the discussion will take place.

When we speak of planning or policy making, we are referring to a formal activity engaged in by some organized group, by which that group determines the purposes to which its resources will be devoted and the means by which those purposes are to be fulfilled. When we think of such activity we most frequently think of some agency of government, either at the federal, state, or local level. However planning is also engaged in by private or nongovernmental organizations which have to decide how their resources, whether they be staff, money, or membership activity, are to be expended. Planning even occurs in constituent or task-oriented groups which are trying to establish a public service in their community or to defeat a particular piece of legislation.

The principal actors in this process are called *decision makers*, because they have the ultimate authority to approve the plan or policy as it develops, as well as in its final form. Such decision makers are usually the formal leaders of the group. In the case of government, they may be the members of the legislature (federal, state, or city) or the elected executive (president, governor, or mayor). In nongovernmental organizations the decision maker may be the chief executive officer or the board of directors. In some situations planning may be engaged in by the organization collectively, as when it acts as a committee of the whole. This situation is particularly true of membership-based voluntary organizations and constituency groups. In such cases the decision maker is the organization or group as a collective.

In governmental agencies or large organizations, the responsibility for conceptualizing and managing the planning process is often delegated to someone else, even though the ultimate approval of the plan or policy at various stages of its development remains the prerogative of the decision