

RESEARCH DIRECTED TO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ISSUES

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The main thrust of this article is a plea for the effective concentration of research energies on fundamental metropolitan issues. Any diffusion in this respect could ultimately have a negative influence on community welfare. An attempt will be made, in the first instance, to establish broad relationships between research and planning and to pinpoint specific opportunities which might be presented for applied research.

1. RESEARCH FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A distinction can be drawn between the research needs of an organisation concerned with the practical problems where immediate decisions are required and an 'opportunity' research project conceived by a research worker. An example of the first situation might be a planning authority orientated to policy, data collection and methodology and where emphasis would tend to be placed on the solving of crisis situations rather than on the meeting of long-term social and economic goals. Investigations in these circumstances may be dependent on methodologies and results of earlier research elsewhere, and are more appropriately defined as planning studies and development work rather than research. A more extreme example of this approach is the case where transportation planners make theoretical assumptions for projection purposes for vehicle demand. Because of gross errors in this respect, transportation planners in the United States have become wary of extrapolating beyond the short-term.

In research which takes place outside a planning authority, a common pattern is for the researcher to devise research proposals without direct relevance to a development project. Under these circumstances the results may be largely theoretical and inappropriate, although in the long-term likely to usefully add to the body of knowledge.

The resolution of this conflict between theory and practice seems to lie in ensuring adequate and clear lines of communication between researchers and planners. Interchange of ideas and general awareness of mutual aims are required and it is suggested that this can be achieved by establishing the organizational structure for research and by guidance of personal initiative. It is not the intention to delve into specific organisational aspects except to note - as will be stressed later - that metropolitan planning, although dealing with local factors, must now be seen within the broader context of national regional strategy. One may look, in this regard, to the precedent in France of formal discussion between researchers, practitioners and administrators for the specific purpose of devising work-

able programmes for research priorities. This plays an important rôle in the system of sponsorship for urban research operated by the Ministère de L'Équipement et du Logement (Smith, 1972).

It has been suggested that development work (defined as systematically planned innovation and experiment), should be combined with pure research and that the practice of urban and regional planning would benefit substantially thereby. Planning authorities should at the outset commission this type of study rather than pure theoretical research.

2. IN-DEPTH RESEARCH AT METROPOLITAN LEVEL

The present planning framework may be set out as follows :

2.1 The National physical development plan

This is an expression of national strategy in spatial terms consisting of a broad policy statement and a physical plan. Of relevance to the subject under discussion is the classification into Existing Metropolitan Areas; Planned Metropolitan Areas (Saldanha, East London-King William's Town and Richards Bay) and Proposed Development Axes flowing from these (2) .

2.2 The metropolitan level

2.2.1 The guide plan

This is envisaged by the Central Guide Plan Committee simply as an expression of expected directions of growth for the metropolitan area as seen from the viewpoint of the whole country. It should be seen only as a first step in the process of metropolitan planning since this general plan needs to be backed up by adequate research and followed by more detailed plans i.e. it will not in itself provide a true Metropolitan plan.

2.2.2 Transportation studies in terms of the Urban Transportation Act No. 78 of 1977

These are intended to lead to the formulation of land use-transportation plans but must be regarded as merely one facet of metropolitan planning.

2.2.3 Implications for research

Irrespective of the organisational aspects involved (which are considered beyond the scope of this article) and having stressed a need to go beyond the Guide Plan level of involvement, it would appear that particular vigilance needs to be exercised at subsequent planning stages with regard to the effective orientation of research, for two main reasons :

- (a) Firstly, it is at the level of specialization involving components such as housing, employment and 'action plans' for central areas, etc. that essential issues must be

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carefully considered;

- (b) Secondly, the rationale behind a specific guide plan might not be explicitly stated or, in any event, could bear re-examination through hindsight or changing circumstances.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF ISSUES

In clarification of what could be meant by a planning "issue" Dewar (1977) states :

"I believe that all planning, at all scales is founded precisely on the same concerns - that is, the concerns of human development and quality of life. I do not believe this to be arguable - the only valid measurement of any planning action is the degree to which it fosters human development or improves the quality of life. The concerns of planning, then, are constant. However it must be context-related; that is, it must be informed by the fundamental realities of the situation in which it is practised - it is these realities which must guide and inform any development policy, it is these same realities which define the fundamental issues of planning in that context."

The major tasks of the metropolitan planner are thus seen as twofold :

- (a) the integration of various aspects of metropolitan development which moves towards the solution of the most pressing problems of the city and its people; and
- (b) the maximization of opportunities inherent in the situation.

The programming of sophisticated research of a long-term nature is then fairly obvious : ideally, an explicit statement of goals relating to a particular metropolitan planning area to create the framework for such research. It is, however, of critical importance that these goals, when devised for a planning project, should be explicitly of a land use planning nature and not broad generalisations in the form of socio-economic goals. As stated by Dewar, the fundamental goal of all planning is the socio-economic one. All further goal formulation must be context-related and must define the issues of planning in the specific context. The accusation that planning is vague and interfering in other disciplines is the unfortunate consequence of planning goal formulation that is not specific enough. It is of critical importance that planning researchers should constantly be aware of this.

Greater Cape Town might be considered to have been subjected to a vast amount of research, carried out, inter alia, by

- (i) the universities;
- (ii) the Town and Regional Planning Section of the Cape Provincial Administration (mainly in the nature of basic surveys. (See the notes below in this regard);
- (iii) the previous Joint Town Planning Committee, now superseded;
- (iv) the current Cape Metropolitan Directorate;

- (v) several seminars held under the auspices of the Cape Branch of the South African Institute of Town and Regional Planners. These have served an important role in planning synthesis.

Seen within the context of the Western Cape, the following findings in regard to the Greater Cape Town metropolis seem to run through all these seminars, viz.

- (a) the limited natural resources;
- (b) the strong dependence on agriculture as the economic base of the region;
- (c) the declining share of the N.G.D.P.;
- (d) the extremely high population increase with widespread poverty and depression. The welfare problem is seen not so much one of jobs (for unemployment is not that high) but income redistribution;
- (e) the primacy of Cape Town in the Region with its employment attraction at the expense of other centres.

Planning implications are that the employment structure must be analysed and those undertakings that offer the highest potential should be encouraged to settle in the region. The opportunities encompass the following :

Peripheral developments : the accelerated development of the Saldanha Bay area, and the new towns at Atlantis and Mitchell's Plain with the concomitant potential for industrial, commercial and residential expansion.

the resources of the region : the people, unique natural environment; rich and fertile agricultural land.

shortage of agricultural land necessitating a highly responsible attitude to its preservation.

increasing shortage of finance for urban development with the implication that the best possible use will have to be made of the existing and future infrastructure.

the energy shortage which has structural implications on the present low residential densities and the imbalance between the location of residential and non-residential activities. There is an excess of movement in the Metropolitan Area bringing about high travel costs, long travel times, congestion of traffic routes and unnecessary fuel consumption.

4. SUMMARY

In general it would appear that research work undertaken outside a planning agency or authority could, in the long run, more usefully contribute to the body of knowledge. On the other hand this article has laid stress on the direction of research towards explicitly stated goals within particular metropolitan contexts. In addition to informal exchange of ideas, adequate communication of a more formal nature between researchers, practitioners and administrators at a local level, supplementing co-ordination at national level, seems essential. Professional researchers could be attached functionally to planning authorities for specified periods.

Guide plans are seen only as a first step in a process towards a true metropolitan plan. It is considered that it is at the subsequent stages of comprehensive study of city components that particular vigilance needs to be exercised so that a broad

perspective of planning goals is not lost. This approach would therefore have a direct bearing on the structuring of long-term research which could be undertaken more confidently within a clear framework.

REFERENCES

1. Dewar, D. : Structural issues in Metropolitan Cape Town. A paper presented at the conference : Cape Metropolis - Major planning issues, 18th October 1977.
2. National Physical Development Plan. Department of Planning and the Environment, 1975.
3. Smith, D.L. : Research and development in planning. Journal of the Royal Town Planning Institute, November 1972.

ANNEXURE

In the period 1967 to 1972 the Planning Section of the Cape Provincial Administration has been involved in the following surveys within the Greater Cape Town Metropolitan Region. These have been incorporated in several published reports.

(a) The Metropolitan Planning Report

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| 1. Summary | (1967) |
| 2. Population | (1968) |
| 3. Public Transport | (1968) |
| 4. Land Use | (1968) |
| 5. Recreation and tourism | (1968) |
| 6. Economy | (1969) |
| 7. Shopping Survey - Part Two | (1972) |

It should be noted that the Administrator-in-Executive Committee created the Regional Planning Section of the Department of Local Government (responsible for the above-mentioned reports) during 1963. Furthermore, the work was implemented prior to establishment of the Cape Metropolitan Authority. The underlying aim of the survey was to focus attention on the region and major facets of its growth. Much of this work has been utilized in subsequent planning.

(b) Report on geology and occurrence of economic mineral resources in the area of Greater Cape Town

The report assembles basic information considered necessary for the formulation of meaningful planning proposals for Greater Cape Town. The inherent conflict of interest between the demands for urban extension on the one hand, and the need to protect limited mineral resources for the construction industry on the other hand, is brought about.

(c) Series of maps depicting the agricultural soil potential of the Western Cape

The maps have been prepared in consultation with the Cape Metropolitan Authority, based on information supplied by the Department of Agricultural Technical Services and are being utilized for a two-fold purpose :

- (a) As an input to the Guide Plan for the Cape Metropolitan Area; and
- (b) for detailed development-control as it affects township establishment.

It will be realised that particular emphasis is being placed on the Western Cape with regard to agricultural conservation since this is where the most serious conflict between urban expansion and the retention of farmlands appears to lie.

CONCEPTUAL
URBAN GROWTH
PLAN

Derived from Cape Metropolitan Area draft guide plan

- IMPORTANT ACTIVITY CENTRE
- - - SHORT-TERM URBAN LIMIT
- BOUNDARY PLANNING REGION 39
- ▣ SHORT-TERM MAIN THRUSTS
- ▤ LONG-TERM MAIN THRUSTS
- ▨ RURAL LAND USES

