ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF MUNICIPAL POLICY OUTPUTS: PLANNING AND GROWTH-RELATED POLICIES*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Research concerning urban growth patterns has demonstrated the influence of public policy instruments on the location of new development.[1] These relationships suggest that policy systems may be designed to "guide" growth in the achievement of planning objectives. This area of research has progressed, but our knowledge of factors which contribute to the existence and application of a "guidance system" approach to land use decision making in local government is not far advanced.[2] In applying this concept to local governmental systems we must be able to not only specify policies which influence development patterns, but also understand the conditions under which they will be utilized.

Patterns of urban development are a product of numerous private and public influences on the market-oriented processes of converting undeveloped land to urban use.[3] The effectiveness of planned intervention in these processes is dependent on the concurrent existence of at least two local governmental policies: (1) support of the planning function; and (2) pursuit of policies with the potential to influence market-oriented location decisions. Most current evidence suggests that this condition is rarely met. Planners have generally been ineffective in changing current patterns of urban growth and development.[4] The present analysis offers some insight into the forces which have contributed to this situation through an analysis of the relationships between the environmental characteristics of local communities and municipal policy outputs.

2. HYPOTHESES

This paper represents a preliminary report based on a larger study of planning policies in American local government. Two aspects of municipal policy related to the effectiveness of a "guidance system" approach are considered here: (1) commitment to the planning function as indicated by the number of personnel allocated to planning in relation to other governmental functions; and (2) commitment to growth-related policies as indicated by trunk water and sewer extensions to peripheral areas and annexation. These policies were chosen for several reasons. Planning personnel levels are indicative not only of the resources the municipality is willing to devote to planning, but also of the capacity of the planning staff to perform technical functions. Support of planning is essentially a procedural matter which reflects a concern for both efficiency in government and the character of community development. It does not, however, reflect the ability of the community to produce policies of a substantive nature which do, in fact, shape future growth. Utility extensions and annexation represent policies of this character which have been shown to have pervasive influences on urban development patterns.

Municipal policy is viewed as a function of two sets of variables: (1) the objective "needs" of the community; and (2) the subjective expectations of the citizenry. The very nature of most municipal outputs suggests that political systems respond to various needs in their environments. At any given point in time, as Wood [35] has noted, where there are children, there will be schools; where there are houses there will be utilities; and where there are things of value there will also be policemen. Further, we expect rather systematic relationships between these environmental characteristics and municipal outputs to endure over time. When children increase, schools should also increase. The problem, however, is whether environmental needs elicit consistent responses over a number of policies from the community political system. Do the effects

of needs facilitate or hinder the coordinate pursuit of policies required to guide urban growth?

In order to investigate this question, previous research on a broad range of municipal policies was analyzed. This investigation suggested fifty indicators of the potential need for municipal planning and growth-related policies. A factor analysis was then performed to reduce these to a set of internally consistent clusters of indicators. The factors which emerged from this analysis are summarized in Table 1. Included are indicators of urbanization, economic and residential development, and several characteristics of the urban periphery.

A guidance system approach will be feasible only if needs which stimulate support for planning stimulate, or at least do not suppress, the pursuit of growth-related policies. Planning's inability to foster beneficial changes in patterns of urban development may be attributable to the inconsistent effects of needs in the community environment on municipal policy outputs. The first exploratory hypothesis examined is that need variables positively associated with planning personnel support will be negatively or not associated with the existence of growth policies.

Needs in the environment tend to define the upper and lower limits of policy outputs; in essence, these represent the "must" and "can't" ingredients of policy decisions. The expectations of the citizenry are viewed as mediating the ability of the political system to respond to needs in its environment. A second factor inhibiting the application of a guidance system approach to land use decision making may stem from the inconsistent effects of these citizen expectations on municipal policy outputs.

Municipal planning has often been characterized as an inherently middle class phenomenon. In part, this probably stems from planning's roots in the Progressive Movement in municipal affairs. The value positions of white Anglo-Saxon Protestants who reacted to excesses of the political machine by attempting to instill "rationality" and "democracy" in local government through the introduction of the city manager plan, nonpartisan and at-large elections were largely coincident with those of planners whose reaction to the chaos created by rapid urbanization was to seek "order" and "beauty" through a master plan for community development based on the interests of the "community as a whole." The continuing alliance between planners and the middle class has been noted in several case studies of municipal politics. Meyerson and Banfield's [21] research in Chicago indicated that planners were supported by middle class interests and opposed by ethnic and working class interests. Altshuler [3] traced numerous incidents of mutual support between planners and business groups in Minneapolis-St. Paul and concluded that "businessmen have been the primary patrons of the urban planning movement since its beginning."

Several recent studies suggest that there is more than historical precedent behind middle class support of local planning. Banfield and Wilson [4] argue that a "middle class ethos" concerned with the "city as a whole" has come to pervade much of municipal politics. The middle class is seen to stand for "public-regarding" virtues rather than for the "private-regarding" virtues of the ethnic and working classes. Public-regarding voters favor proposals which are couched in terms of the public interest such as city planning, metropolitan reorganization, city manager government, fluoridation and the like, while private-regarding voters will oppose them. Somewhat parallel concepts have been developed by Williams [31], Gamberg [11], and Agger, Goldrich, and Swanson [1]. Although there has been considerable controversy over the existence of a "middle class" in American cities,[5] most empirical data gathered to date provide evidence in its support. City manager government, non-partisan and at-large elections have been found to predominate in communities with middle class characteristics.[6] Positive associations have been reported between social rank and support of areawide governmental arrangements,[7] annexation,[8] and intermunicipal cooperation.[9]

An alternative explanation for these findings has been proposed by Minar [20].

Table 1. Summary of Factor Analysis of Indicators Representing the Need for Planning and Growth-Related Policy Outputs

Variable	Cluster of Indicators[a]	Component Loadings After Varimax Rotation
Urbanization	Total Population	.970
	Total Labor Force	.970
	Total Dwelling Units	.953
Industrial Concentration	Per Capita Value Added by Manufacture	.863
	Per Capita Production Workers	.796
Commercial Concentration	Per Capita Retail Trade Payroll	.777
	Per Capita Retail Trade Establishments	.767
	Per Capita Wholesale Trade Establishments	.700
Residential Specialization	Percent of Population Under 18	.745
	Percent Single-Family Housing Units	.726
	Percent Housing Units Constructed 1950-1960	.676
Residential Wealth	Percent Family Income $10,000 and Over	.843
	Median Value Owner-Occupied Housing Units	.838
	Median Gross Rent	.832
	Percent Housing Units "Sound"	.832
	Percent Family Income Under $3,000	-.847
Peripheral Pre-Urbanization[b]	Peripheral Percent Rural Nonfarm	.950
	Peripheral Percent "Crowded" Housing Units	.937
	Peripheral Percent Employed in Manufacturing	.933
	Peripheral Percent Land in Farms	.912
	Peripheral Percent Rural Farm	.855

Table 1. - Continued

Variable	Cluster of Indicators[a]	Component Loadings After Varimax Rotation
Peripheral Growth[b]	Peripheral Population Increase 1950-1960	.855
	Peripheral Percent Urban	.812
Peripheral Urbanization[b]	Peripheral Population	.935
	Peripheral Housing Units	.935
	Peripheral Labor Force	.933

[a] Only indicators which were utilized in the composite measures of need variables are listed, but all those with factor loadings above .5 were considered in naming the factor.

[b] Peripheral indicators were calculated by subtracting city statistics from county statistics.

From his research on school system politics in the Chicago area, he suggests that individuals with "cosmopolitan" life styles tend to predominate in high status communities. Cosmopolitans should be impatient with unresolved problems and would be likely to have the skills in organization, communication and conflict resolution necessary to "get things done." Further, since cosmopolitans tend to be distracted from the local community and are used to dealing with professionals, they should also tend to favor expert solutions to problems. Conversely, in low status communities a predominance of "local" types with more time to devote to conflicts over local problems, less skill in resolving conflicts, and a general distrust of outside "experts" should orient the community away from planning as a means of determining municipal policy.

Historical precedent, political culture, and life style all suggest the hypothesis that municipal support for planning varies directly with community status attributes. Does this same reasoning extend to the substantive as well as procedural concerns of municipal government? Here most current evidence lies in the opposite direction. The more middle class a community, the less likely it is to carry out progressive undertakings.

For instance, Hawley [13] has shown that municipal urban renewal success varies inversely with the proportion of managers, proprietors, and officials in the employed labor force. Similar findings have been reported by Pinard [22] with respect to fluoridation referenda and Fowler [10] with respect to community welfare levels. Crain and Rosenthal [7] suggest that procedural "reforms" are found in high status communities because high status individuals, with high rates of participation in municipal affairs, favor governmental mechanisms which increase access to public officials. As a result, they note that such communities: (1) find it easier to mobilize opposition to existing governmental policies; (2) tend to have more "issue-oriented" campaigns; and (3) enlist more opposition to new proposals. Governmental officials in such jurisdictions are seen to be cautious, oriented to maintaining the status quo, and politically inert. In this situation nothing of a substantive nature gets done.

3. METHOD

Data on municipal policy outputs were secured from a mailed questionaire sent to mayors and planning officials in 423 cities with populations over 10,000 in eleven Southeastern states and the State of California. Usable responses were obtained from 325 (77%) of these cities. The statistics used to measure social rank and need variables were obtained from various U.S. Census series.

Planning personnel support was represented by an ordinal index consisting of four classes measured on the basis of the quartiles of the ratio of full-time planning employees to total full-time municipal employment. Utility extensions and annexation are ordinal variables measured in terms of the existence or non-existence of trunk water and sewer extensions to peripheral areas and annexation during the period 1960-1968.

Need variables were developed from a factor analysis of a number of indicators assumed to represent various aspects of the need for planning and growth-related policies. Each factor (need variable) was measured utilizing the indicators with the highest factor loadings (see Table 1). The statistics utilized to measure social rank were derived from the work of Shevky and Bell [24]. Two indicators of social rank were utilized:

1. Percent of the labor force employed as craftsmen, laborers, and kindred workers, operatives and kindred workers, laborers, and private household workers.

2. Percent of the population 25 years of age and older who completed grade school or less.

Final measures of both need variables and social rank were then formed by

creating composite indices which represent the average contribution of each indicator to the final measurement of the variable. In order to give each indicator equal weight in a composite index, the following basic formula was adapted from Shevky and Bell [24] to standardize the score of individual indicators to a range of 0-100:

$S_{ij} = (m_{ij} - l_j)$, where: S_{ij} = standardized score for indicator j in city i

l_j = lowest observed limit on the indicator, j, in the sample

m_{ij} = value of indicator j for city i

X_j = 100/range of indicator j

Using this formula, all cities have a score on each indicator between 0 (the score of the lowest valued city) and 100 (the score of the highest valued city). Each variable is then measured by adding the standardized score of the component indicators and dividing by the number of indicators to arrive at an average score. The average represents the composite of the contributions of each indicator to the measurement of the variable. In the analyses reported here, ordinal indices created by dividing each variable into quartiles are utilized.

4. RESULTS

The observed associations between needs, citizen expectations (social rank), and municipal policy outputs are presented in Table 2. The relevant hypotheses are supported. High status communities, as expected, tend to support planning but are generally incapable of producing substantive policies through which planning might affect patterns of urban growth and development. The direction of associations between need variables and policy outputs are indeed inconsistent. There is a strong tendency for need variables which induce support for planning to be inversely associated with policies which influence development patterns.

We note from Table 2 that five environmental need variables are strongly and positively associated with a vigorous planning institution: urbanization, residential specialization, residential wealth, peripheral growth, and peripheral urbanization. These associations are not unexpected. It has become almost a truism that increasing urbanization tends to result in increasing segmentation, specialization, and bureaucratization.[10] In municipal government this is reflected in increasingly complex organization forms, specialization of function, and professionalism as both new functions are acquired and the magnitude and complexity of existing ones increase. Professional planning is an obvious concomitant of the these aspects of increasing urbanization as the municiapl system attempts to cope with mounting problems and maintain some semblance of direction. Problems posed by urbanization are not limited by the arbitrary boundaries of the municipal jurisdiction. The associations between peripheral growth and urbanization and municipal support for planning highlight the stimulative effect of external development on the municipality's concern for planning.

Another aspect of planning's close association with the middle class is demonstrated by the association between support of planning and residential specialization and wealth. This is also indicative of the often noted role of planning in the protection and enhancement of property values.

Why these aspects of the municipal environment are either not associated or negatively associated with growth related policies poses a more difficult question. Kaysen [17] notes that democratic governments are primarily organized to respond to external pressures rather than to seek out potential problems and initiate action in relation to them. The policies considered here do not represent an exception to this generalization. Municipalities were asked to indicate the motivations behind their utility extension policies. Table 3 summarizes the responses to this question. In general, growth-related policies stem from pressures exerted on the political system rather than the initiative of the municipa-

Table 2. Kendall's Tau_c Indices of Association Between Municipal Support for Planning and Growth-Related Policies and Selected Environmental Variables

	Planning Personnel Support (1)	Growth Policies: Water Extension (2)	Growth Policies: Sewer Extension (3)	Growth Policies: Annexation (4)	Level of Significance*: (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Social Rank	.29	-.32	-.26	-.07	.001	.001	.001	.05
Residential Wealth	.35	-.36	-.27	-.11	.001	.001	.001	.01
Residential Specialization	.15	-.13	-.02	.13	.001	.001	NS	.001
Urbanization	.36	-.03	-.02	.00	.001	NS	NS	NS
Peripheral Urbanization	.36	-.41	-.31	-.03	.001	.001	.001	.001
Peripheral Growth	.26	-.32	-.26	-.15	.001	.001	.001	.001
Peripheral Pre-urbanization	-.23	.39	.33	.02	.001	.001	.001	NS
Commercial Concentration	-.11	.21	.17	.12	.01	.001	.001	.001
Industrial Concentration	-.04	.13	.08	.04	NS	.001	.05	NS

* $P \leq .001, \leq .01, \leq .05$

NS = not significant at .05 level

Table 3. Municipal Inititative in Water and Sewer Extensions to Peripheral Areas[a]

Policy Characteristic	Water Extensions		Sewer Extensions	
	Number n = 172	Percent	Number n = 155	Percent
Utility Extended due to....[b]				
a. Subdivision Developer Request	144	84	109	70
b. Industry Request	122	71	99	64
c. Homeowner Petition	95	55	74	48
d. Population Density Adequate	76	44	45	29
e. Scheduled in Master Plan	66	38	83	54
f. Environmental Problems	53	31	63	41
Municipal Initiative				
City Initiative Only (d, e, or f above)	20	12	24	15
City and Private Inititative (a, b, or c and d, e, or f above)	84	49	79	51
Private Initiative Only (a, b, or c above)	68	39	52	34

[a]Data for this table were secured from a mailed questionnaire sent to mayors and officials responsible for planning in 423 cities with populations over 10,000 in eleven Southeastern states and the State of California.

[b]Cities could extend water and sewer lines for a number of reasons. Categories are not mutually exclusive and add to more than 100 percent.

lity. While the desire to control growth and development is a factor in the policies of some municipalities, it is overshadowed by the influence of subdivision developer, industry, and fringe resident requests for service. The bureaucratization of municipal government which accompanies urbanization should tend to insulate governmental decision-making from such pressures.[11] This factor may explain the lack of association between urbanization and growth-related policies.

The negative associations between residential characteristics and growth-related policies may be explained on the basis of several considerations. First, communities specializaing in residential land use usually face serious fiscal problems. Heavy reliance on the property tax combined with the absence of tax productive commercial land uses and the cost consciousness of most homeowners should all tend to impinge on the scope of municipal activities.[12] Second, one of the primary service requirements accompanying residential land uses is education which tends to be independently organized. If the limited tax resources and tolerance for public services of the community are drained toward educational purposes, the municipality may be reluctant to expand existing services to newly developing areas.[13] Finally, residential communities, especially wealthier ones, may view local governments more as preservers of a particular life style than as providers of public goods and services. Lacking the "boosterism" implied by a strong business community, residential communities would be expected to look inward rather than display expansionist tendencies.

These conclusions are supported by the fairly strong associations found between commercial and industrial concentrations and growth-related policies. Williams [31] notes that businessmen often view local government as an instrument of community growth. The ultimate goal of municipal politics is seen to be service to the producer. This may be manifested through a number of policies, including utility extensions. Concentrations of business activity also suggest the presence of business property which, per square foot of land, yields assessed valuations higher than any alternative kind of use. This form of wealth can be readily and lucratively tapped through the existing tax system and provides a strong base in financing the expansion of municipal services.[14]

However, commercial concentrations are negatively associated with support of local planning. The concern for civic amenity implied by planning often conflicts with a producer-oriented concept of local government. Planning may be viewed as superfluous to the primary focus of these communities on growth and development. There is also an increasing tendency for commercial and industrial establishments to be absentee-owned. This is often seen to result in a low level of involvement of commercial personnel in the affairs of the community which do not directly involve their interests.

The influence of peripheral characteristics on municipal planning and growth policies provides a further illustration of factors which tend to limit the application of the guidance system concept. The data indicate a strong lag effect between suburbanization and municipal support of planning. Structural characteristics associated with the early stages of peripheral development are negatively associated with planning personnel support. On the other hand, both peripheral growth and peripheral urbanization are strongly and increasingly associated with increases in planning personnel. This raises a serious question of the ability of most municipal systems to cope with their environments. Municipalities appear to be most ready to pursue growth-related policies when the periphery is relatively undeveloped (pre-urbanization). However, when the capacity to shape their surroundings is greatest, municipalities show the least interest in planned community development. Only as opportunities increasingly slip away do they begin to feel the need for planning. When planning is finally given a firm place in the municipal system, the ability of the municipality to control future peripheral development has considerably deteriorated.

The lack of support afforded planning during the early stages of peripheral development may result from the influence of differentials in municipal and fringe

social characteristics. Williams [30] suggests that social distance may be an important factor in the provision of services which affect life styles, but may be unimportant to the provision of "systems maintenance" services. In the early stages of peripheral development there should be strong differences in municipal and peripheral life styles. The data indicate that in this situation the municipality tends to extend systems maintenance services (trunk water and sewer lines) to peripheral areas but does not pursue policies related to life style values, such as planning and annexation. As the periphery develops, this situation changes. Life style differences between the municipality and periphery fade out, and at later stages of peripheral development the city is willing to orient life style policies toward suburban areas. However, several factors combine to limit municipal hegemony over fringe areas through the provision of systems maintenance services at this stage of development. Suburban growth provides a basis for both incorporation of the periphery and the organization of special purpose districts to provide basic services. Thus, increasingly negative associations are found between peripheral growth and urbanization and municipal growth policies.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The tests reported in the previous section indicate that a guidance system approach to land use deicison making may be difficult to establish in municipalities. With increasing community social status the local planning institution receives an increasing level of support, but middle class communities are generally not capable of producing the substantive policies which would provide planners with the means to influence evolving patterns of urban growth and development. This phenomenon is not restricted to the effects of community social status attributes. Municipal and peripheral urbanization, residential specialization, and residential wealth are all associated with high support for municipal planning, but tend to inhibit the pursuit of growth-related policies. Aspects of the environment which facilitate growth policies, such as peripheral pre-urbanization and commercial and industrial concentrations, are associated with a lower level of planning support.

The data also indicate two additional problems which the guidance system planner must overcome. First, the order of causality between public services and land development appears to be extremely complex. Policies which are essential in shaping urban growth appear to represent adaptations to the policy environment rather than conscious efforts to shape the community's future. The availability of public services may stimulate development, but in many cases the opposite relationship would seem to be most appropriate. Land development, or rather its potential in the minds of various agents in the development process, stimulates the provision of public services. Both relationships are probably correct. Developer, homeowner, or industrial pressure will often lead to provision of various services and the existence of these services will facilitate increased development.

A second and related problem is associated with the distinction between "controlled" and "uncontrolled" variables in the conditional predicitons which form the basis of the guidance system approach. In designing a course of action based on conditional predictions of the effects of various policies on locational decisions, the planner must distinguish between aspects of the environment he can manipulate (controlled variables) and aspects which are exogenous to the decision making system. The common practice has been to treat all municipal policies as an aspect of the "controlled" environment. The present data suggest that for all practical purposes the universe of "controlled" policies is probably extremely narrow.

Planners have long recognized, at least intuitively, that variations in community characteristics have important ramifications for the effectiveness of the planning process. The evidence presented here strongly suggests that most communities may be incapable of pursuing a course of action leading to planned growth and development. Further research to delineate the exact character of this

situation will contribute to both the successful adaptation of planning methodology to the community decision making environment and our understanding of the urban community.

FOOTNOTES

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[1]For a review of much of the research on the effects of policy instruments on spatial patterns, see Traffic Research Corporation [26].

[2]The concept of an "urban development guidance system" has been developed in various forms by Chapin [6], Kaiser [14], and Schlager [23].

[3]See Kaiser and Weiss [15].

[4]Wheaton [29] writes, "Little of what is called comprehensive city planning today is effective. In older cities it ratifies what the market did before planning and land use controls were established. In suburban and newly developing areas it sanctions what the market will do anyway." Also see Webber [28] and Bolan [5].

[5]Wolfinger and Field [34] argue that "ethos" is a spurious concept which cannot be supported when one takes into account variations in ethnic experience in different regions of the country: "the salient conclusion to be drawn from these data is that one can do a much better job of predicting a city's political form by knowing what part of the country it is in than by knowing anything about the composition of its population."

[6]An increasing amount of research is being devoted to the environmental characteristics of various municipal institutions. See Alford and Scoble [2], Cutright [8], Liebman [19], and Schnore and Alford [25], and Kessel [18].

[7]See Hawkins [12] and Kaufman and Greer [16].

[8]See Dye [9].

[9]See Williams, Herman, et al. [32].

[10]See Warren [27].

[11]Warren [27] writes that "it is one of the problems of contemporary civilization that delegated governmental authority, through appointed bureaucracies, can become increasingly insensitive to the wishes of the electorate."

[12]See Wood [36] and Wilson and Banfield [33].

[13]This proposition is supported by the research of Williams, Herman, et al. [32] in the Philadelphia metropolitan area and negated by Wright and Van Bruggen's [37] research on Iowa municipalities and school districts.

[14]A discussion of the impact of commercial and industrial land uses on municipal programs and expenditures is presented by Wood [35].

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