

---

## Editorial—The Limits of Planning

---

This special issue gives something of a cross-section of work in progress by those members of the University of East Anglia's School of Development Studies whose schedules allowed them to accede to the editor's request to make some of their work available in this form. A list of all of the School of Development Studies/Overseas Development Group's research and publications, 1976, is available on request from Lesley Knight, Overseas Development Group, UEA, Norwich, NR4 7TJ, England.

The UEA School of Development Studies is, as yet, the only educational institution in Britain (and elsewhere?) offering a Bachelor's degree in Development Studies. In addition, at the post-graduate level it mounts a one-year taught Master of Arts degree in Development Economics in which the strongest emphasis at the present time is on rural development. There is also a growing body of MPhil and PhD research students. Further and more integrated developments of our postgraduate programmes are now being planned for 1977.

Most Faculty in the School are appointed on terms that permit, indeed require them to spend one-third of their time on research, consultancy or teaching work not financed by the University. This may take the form of individual or team efforts. So, at any one time, the activities inside and outside the School are many and diverse. Mostly these are outside Britain. Although it is by no means envisaged that development studies should necessarily be overseas development studies, and given the present problems and prospects in Britain it would obviously be ludicrous if it were, it continues in practice to be the case that most of the School's research and consultancy is overseas. In this regard, the present selection is a fair, if incomplete and idiosyncratic, representation.

In another regard, however, it is not. If there is a common theme in the work presented here it is planning, and more particularly the limits of planning. Ours is not, however, a School of Planning Studies and some of us would hold that least of all should it be that. At the same time there would be a good deal of agreement among us with the view that planning is many things—calculation, evaluation, communication, bargaining, politics, decentralization, ethics and models being some. Inevitably, therefore, planning be-

comes one of the broadest and most engaging themes for the theists, the atheists and the agnostics alike in development studies.

In the first article in this collection Bill Kinsey probes some of the many meanings of 'evaluation' as in 'project evaluation units'. He then goes on to argue that PEUs should bear the prime responsibility for information management and thus project monitoring in particular. Project—and programme—evaluation is for short-run development studies what evolution was, and perhaps still is, for theorising about those very long-run profiles of change in which we will all be not only dead but perhaps also extinct.

Next Deryke Belshaw addresses himself, with an Eastern African case study, to some general propositions about the ineffectiveness of much rural development research. Finally, he attributes more to the conflict of private and social profitability than to cultural, national, or, as it were evolutionary, factors. 'Action research' or 'R & D' approaches in which the researcher is placed in an operational situation are, it is felt, much more likely to produce socially relevant results which can, and perhaps will, be put to practical use.

Evaluation go heal thyself. This, not by sleight of word only, brings us to Tom Heller on problems of health-care planning. A doctor himself, he argues that some of these problems rest more with doctors than patients, more with those who plan health services than their stated intended beneficiaries. Thus, the limits to health care systems are not only technical and administrative, and international medical aid, like other aid, is, in some of its effects at least, recolonization.

Rhys Jenkins draws his theme—planning as bargaining—from his study of the Chilean motor industry. His conclusion is that there may be considerable scope for bargaining between LDCs and multinationals and that government policy towards foreign investment is not simply a matter of being a good thing or not. His starting point is that it is the rejection of neo-classical theories of foreign investment that brings a special importance to this field, still largely *terra incognita*, of direct foreign investment bargaining.

How little we know about water too. So, next, Linden Vincent draws from her case studies in Europe and elsewhere on water planning and administration, especially at the national level,

For the first time, this issue of the *Bulletin* is written and edited by colleagues from another British institution working on development problems. Similar guest issues will appear from time to time—the next, for example—in March 1977, produced by the Department of Administrative Studies at the University of Manchester. IDS hopes that this innovation will help to broaden knowledge about British development research within the country and overseas, and thus also help to fulfil our function as a national centre of development studies.

Richard Jolly

---

and the importance for this of the central planning impetus.

Two essays on planning techniques follow. Ian Thomas draws from his Tanzanian experience of the use of physical planning indicators for, and in, national and local planning. His data on the extent to which people in the Iringa District were better served geographically by local health services after villagization—possible arguments, *pace* Heller, about their content and form notwithstanding—are particularly interesting. Gilroy Thomas, from his field work on internal migration in Malawi, applies a critique of areal data collection units and shows the extent to which the spatial choice of framework for data analysis may itself affect the answers obtained regardless of the intelligence, and the pertinence, of the questions posed.

Finally, a new perspective. Tony Barnett argues for an 'open' approach to planning and implementation. His essay is a first impression only, based on notes made before he took up his present

assignment in district planning in Papua New Guinea. It will therefore no doubt be followed by a more expanded work, building on the Melanesian experience. It is, however, true of almost all the studies from which this collection has been improvised that they are little more than interim reports on work yet to be completed, and because so many of the contributors are currently overseas they may not have seen—or have had the opportunity to comment on—the versions presented here. Sometimes it is just when an editor's task of meeting an (extended) editorial deadline ends that the possibility of synthesis and comparative appraisal begins.

It remains for me to thank those colleagues, including Randall Baker, David Feldman, Keith Hinchliffe and Mark Holmström, whose contribution to this collection has taken the form of comments on very early drafts of some of the work presented here, and to remind you that further information about SDS/ODG research is available on request.

R.A.