

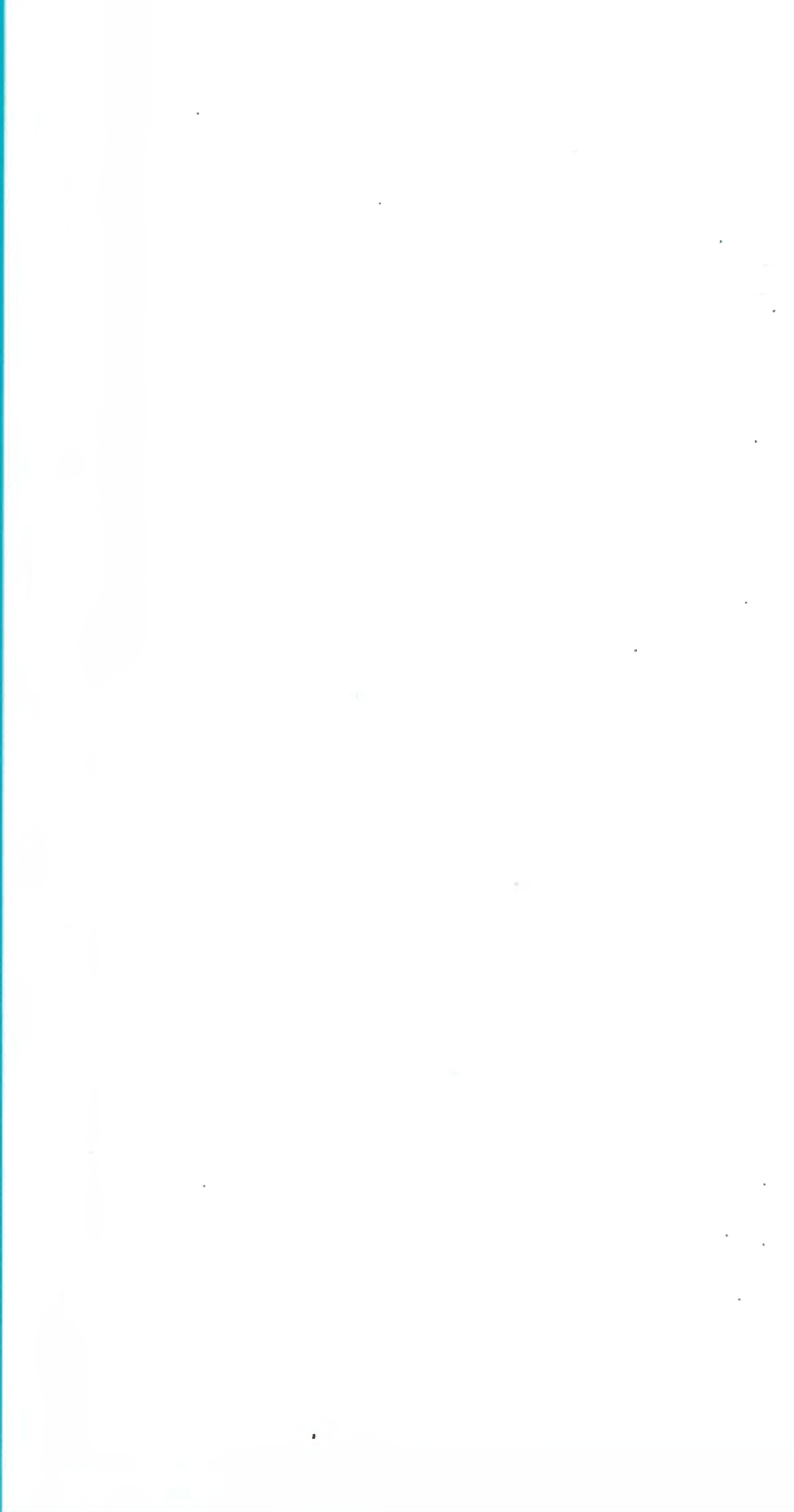
**POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

**STRATEGIC  
REGIONAL  
POLICY**

**A. STRASZAK AND J.W.OWSIŃSKI  
EDITORS**

**PART II**

**WARSAW 1985**



SYSTEMS RESEARCH INSTITUTE  
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STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY

Paradigms, Methods, Issues and Case Studies

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editors

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PART II

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MONITORING STRATEGIC REGIONAL PLANS -  
SOME GUIDELINES FROM BRITISH AND DUTCH EXPERIENCE

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1. INTRODUCTION

The findings of cross national research on planning experience highlight the extent to which the tools and procedures that have been developed for this purpose reflect particular national and local circumstances. The main message of this research is that there is no one best way of carrying out planning tasks and the nature of planning practice in each country depends on the institutional framework within which planning operates and the degree to which sectoral and spatial planning decisions are co-ordinated by central Government. At the same time the development of national and regional planning systems is strongly influenced by a wide range of historical and cultural factors that vary considerably from country to country. The discussion on monitoring with reference to strategic regional planning must be set within this general context. To illustrate its implications it is useful to consider two contrasting regional planning scenarios. The first of these concerns countries with centralised planning systems in which there is a relatively high degree of integration between spatial and sectoral planning activities at the regional level. In situations of this kind, there are typically well established regional institutions with clearly defined powers to carry out policy. The second scenario concerns countries where planning decisions are relatively decentralised and there is little or no co-ordination between sectoral and spatial planning activities at the regional level. In situations of this kind, such regional institutions as exist are likely to have only very limited executive powers and they will operate largely in an advisory capacity.

These two planning scenarios are reflected in two contrasting control scenarios and the monitoring and evaluation activities that stem from them. In a relatively centralised system, monitoring tasks are likely to be viewed largely in terms of performance monitoring systems which are designed to facilitate the

feedback of information on the progress that has been achieved towards policy implementation at the regional level to central bodies. In cases such as this the systems that are developed for this purpose are likely to make considerable use of performance indicators, and pre-specified targets in order to enable short-falls between expected and observed performance levels to be identified as quickly as possible, so that corrective action can be taken to remedy them. On the other hand, monitoring activities in connection with a relatively decentralised planning system are likely to be very different in character. There will be an emphasis on data collection and intelligence gathering in this case, in that the main task of monitoring is likely to be concerned as much with testing whether the assumptions upon which policies are based are still valid as with identifying short form or deviations from expected performance. The aim of strategic monitoring will be to promote a greater awareness of the issues and problems involved among those responsible for making decisions that are likely to affect regional development.

Although the need for strategic monitoring at the regional level is widely recognised at the present time, there is a general lack of experience in this field. In contrast, considerable steps have been made to improve the quality of performance monitoring particularly at the project management level (see, for example, United Nations, 1978, World Bank, 1981). Despite this strategic monitoring is well established in Countries such as Britain and the Netherlands as part of the statutory planning system. With these considerations in mind, this paper considers the experience of strategic monitoring that has been built up in these two countries, and, on the basis of this experience puts forward a number of guidelines for further consideration by those involved in regional planning.

## 2. STRATEGIC PLAN MONITORING IN BRITAIN AND THE NETHERLANDS

In Britain and the Netherlands urban and regional planning practice has developed in the context of a well established two-tier local government system. Under the respective Town and Country Acts in the two countries strategic matters are dealt with essentially by the county (Britain) or province (Netherlands) at the upper tier level. These authorities are charged by central government with the duty of preparing structure plans (Britain) or

streekplannen (Netherlands) which set out land use policies in broad terms and indicate the expected overall distribution of population and employment within their areas. At the lower tier a variety of local matters including most of the detailed work related to the granting of building permits and the control of development is dealt with by districts (Britain) and municipalities (Netherlands) operating within the general guidelines set out in the strategic plans.

In both countries strategic planning policy is implemented in most cases indirectly through other agencies rather than by the county or province itself. These include not only the lower tier of local government but also the large number of statutory undertakings and private interests who are concerned with land development processes. Most of the agencies outside local government are concerned with particular facets of planning rather than questions relating to spatial policies. There are clear parallels between strategic planning as practiced by the counties and provinces in Britain and the Netherlands and the tasks facing regional planners in many other parts of the world. However, there are also likely to be important differences between them because of the degree to which planning has become institutionalised in Britain and the Netherlands.

In Britain and the Netherlands the planning system involves an exhaustive process of plan preparation leading up to the formal adoption of the structure plan or streekplan. After adoption the progress achieved is continuously monitored and major reviews are also carried out at regular intervals. In both cases, the monitoring function is interpreted in broad rather than narrow terms to include an evaluation of the assumptions lying behind the plans as well as an assessment of progress towards the implementation of specific policies. Because of this it is generally recognised that a "mixed scanning" approach is needed for this purpose which enables a general assessment to be made of all issues that potentially effect the structure plan at the same time as providing for the collection of the detailed data that is needed to assess progress towards detailed policy implementation (see, for example, Wedgewood Oppenheim et al (1975)).

The central government planning agencies in both Britain and the Netherlands have gone to considerable efforts to set out general principles for the development of strategic monitoring systems. The British Department of the



Environment has issued a number of practice advice notes to planning authorities and commissioned major studies by the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) (Wedgewood Oppenheim et al 1975) and the Institute for Operational Research (IOR)(Floyd et al 1977). The first of these studies examined the operational requirements of the mixed scanning approach that would enable the co-ordination of performance and strategic monitoring activities. It put forward a series of recommendations in connection with the establishment of an independent policy evaluation and performance review unit to monitor events in the light of the policies suggested by the Strategic Plan for the North West. The second concentrated on the need to develop strategic monitoring capabilities to enable planning authorities to deal more effectively with different kinds of uncertainty. On the basis of case study evidence derived from existing practice it argued that the conventional management control models of monitoring are of limited value for strategic monitoring purposes and that a more selective approach to monitoring is required which facilitates the identification of emerging issues and areas for future choice. In Scotland the Scottish Development Department (1979) set up a joint working party of local authorities to consider the requirements of structure plan monitoring. The recommendations of this working party contain some valuable practical advice on the managerial, technical and organisational aspects of strategic monitoring.

In the Netherlands, a parallel study to those carried out by INLOGOV and IOR was carried out for the National Physical Planning Agency by the Planning Studies Centre (Postma van Dijk et al 1977). The National Physical Planning Agency has also adopted an explicit process planning approach in its Third Report on Spatial Planning (RPD 1979) and a horizontal project group structure has been created within the Agency itself to carry out the task of strategic monitoring. The activities of these groups are governed by an annual cycle of events that is directed to the preparation of the statement on national planning strategy that is contained in the Queen's speech to the Dutch Parliament at the beginning of the parliamentary year each autumn. To facilitate the work of these groups a custom built information analysis system has been established within the agency (Scheurwater and Masser 1983).

By the late 1970s strategic monitoring had become an important activity in both the English counties and the Dutch provinces as the emphasis switched from plan preparation and approval to policy review and implementation. The diversity of

experience in practice is highlighted by the contrasting case studies of Hertfordshire and East Sussex that were undertaken by van Meyel (1979). The approach that has been adopted towards strategic monitoring in Hertfordshire can be characterised by the view that monitoring activities should be separated from policy making as far as possible so that the validity of existing policies can be questioned if necessary. In contrast strategic monitoring in East Sussex was closely integrated with the other activities of the planning department, in what was regarded as a constant process of policy evolution.

The findings of a recent survey of county planning authorities in England and Wales (Masser and Wilson 1984) enable the evidence that is brought together in case studies of this kind to be set against a broader perspective and highlight the wide range of approaches that have been developed to satisfy what is essentially a uniform statutory requirement. Nevertheless two broad stereotypes can be identified for further consideration. Authorities giving the highest priority to traditional land use planning considerations such as the the control of new development and the maintenance of the environmental quality are more likely to regard monitoring as a high status activity which follows an established pattern and tends to be devoted primarily towards the task of evaluating progress towards plan implementation. Alternatively, authorities that gave first or equal first priority to the promotion of economic growth and/or assisting under-privileged groups tend to regard monitoring as a medium to low status activity that is likely to change substantially during the next two to three years. These authorities are more likely to see the main function of monitoring in broader terms as being directed towards the identification of new problems and choices rather than the review of progress towards plan implementation.

- **MANAGERIAL REQUIREMENTS**

Timeliness  
Relevance

- **TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

a. Problem Definition

Clarity of objectives  
Specification of performance indicators

b. Data Collection

Availability of standard statistical sources  
Relevance of operation data  
Integration of diverse sources

c. Information Management

Data set reduction  
Information storage and retrieval  
Treatment of qualitative data

d. Reporting Procedures

Internal issues reports  
General position statements

- **ORGANISATION IMPLICATIONS**

Integration of detachment of monitoring  
and implementation activities  
Consequences for staffing

**Fig. 1 Main issues involved in the development of monitoring systems**

### 3. SOME GUIDELINES FOR STRATEGIC REGIONAL PLANNING

On the basis of this experience a number of guidelines can be formulated for the consideration by those involved in the development of monitoring systems for strategic regional planning. These are grouped into three broad categories, relating to managerial requirements, technical considerations, and organisational implications respectively. The main issues involved in each of these categories are summarised in figure 1. From this it can be seen that, for presentation purposes, the discussion of technical matters will be dealt with under the headings of problem definition, data collection, information management and reporting procedures.

#### 3.1 Managerial Requirements

It is axiomatic that monitoring systems must be decision oriented and highly disciplined in terms of their organisation. Their essential task is to provide the right information at the right time for decision makers in that their findings are judged essentially in terms of their timeliness and their relevance to current issues. Given these needs it may be preferable to develop independent systems for monitoring purposes where there are conflicting priorities for information between users rather than to attempt to build multi-purpose systems. Between these two extremes a number of hybrid solutions can be considered. The most common of these is a multipurpose data collection and information management system combined with independent problem definition and reporting routines.

In any event it is essential that the capabilities of the users to process and analyse the information that is supplied by monitoring systems should not be over-estimated. It is important to take account not only of the constraints that are placed on users by the pressures of their other work, but the extent to which they are able to specify their requirements in advance. British and Dutch experience generally supports the conclusion reached by Waller et al (1976, p. 19) in their review of monitoring practices in U.S. Government Agencies that the basic problem is "to design and supply information to a management structure which may not know what information it wants or how it would act if it received particular types of information."

With these considerations in mind, it may be best to adopt a step by step approach to system design that enables the experience acquired in earlier stages to be incorporated into subsequent discussions. A good example of the use of this strategy in practice can be found in the information analysis system developed by Scheurwater and Masser (1983) for monitoring strategic planning at the national level in the Netherlands. They decided to develop a "quick and dirty" prototype system because of the problems encountered in finding motivated future users within the organisation who could adequately specify in advance what they required. In this case the problems were exacerbated by the organisation's limited experience with monitoring activities and the potentially broad and complex range of subject matter involved.

### 3.2 Problem Definition

The first task of those involved in the monitoring process is to identify operational needs. This requires a careful analysis of the agency's policies and programmes in which special attention must be given to defining the objectives that are being sought and the ways in which these have been translated into policies and programmes. In cases where the objectives cannot be defined clearly and unambiguously from existing sources it will be worthwhile investing time and effort into clarifying them to avoid unnecessary work in the future. At this stage it is also essential that the main assumptions underlying these objectives are identified and taken account of in the design of the monitoring process. This is particularly important in the case of strategic monitoring in that failures to implement policy arise at least as much out of changes in the assumptions upon planning efforts are based as from inadequacies in the system itself. For example, unexpected pressures to develop sites for residential purposes are more likely to be due to changes in construction costs or personal housing finance factors rather than indicate weaknesses in planning policy. If this is the case, modifications can be made to existing policies only if adequate information is available on the factors that underlie them.

There are obvious limits in strategic monitoring to the use that can be made of targets and performance indicators of the kind set out in most management texts. The work of Wedgewood Oppenheim et al (1975, pp. 10-14) draws attention to the difficulties of expressing policies in operational terms that enable them to be effectively monitored. As a result there is a lack of precision which makes it difficult to determine deviations from policy to the extent that in one case, "significant deviations from the strategy were rarely detected by the monitoring unit before they were pointed out by one of the local authorities in the sub-region". The use of performance indicators in strategic monitoring can also be criticised on the grounds of their narrowness of outlook. This is because, in many cases it is often the indirect rather than the direct consequences of policy that need attention and these are not measured by performance indicators.

### 3.3 Data Collection

Strategic monitoring is heavily dependent on the secondary data sources that are available. Basic survey research is ruled out in all but the most exceptional cases, not only by questions of cost but also because of the long lead time needed to prepare a survey, carry it out and make its findings available to those involved in the monitoring process.

It is useful to make a general distinction between standard secondary statistical sources such as the population census, and the operational data that is assembled by planning agencies in the course of their work. In Britain, in particular, one of the most important sources of information for strategic monitoring purposes is the data that is collected by the district authorities regarding the number and type of planning applications that they have processed (Francis, 1981).

Given that data collection for strategic monitoring is limited largely to secondary sources, questions relating to consistency and comparability are likely to occupy a central place in view of the diversity of sources from which information is obtained. These are likely to be particularly important in the case of operational information because of the extent to which this reflects the working practices of the organisations involved.

A considerable amount of work will be needed particularly in developing countries before questions relating to the comparability and consistency or even some standard sources are adequately resolved from the point of view of the requirements of strategic monitoring. These problems are likely to be less serious in cases such as population forecasting where comparative experience can be drawn upon to provide a benchmark for evaluation purposes (see, for example, Al-Aukyli and Masser 1984). On the other hand, they are likely to be much more serious in cases where information that can be used for benchmark purposes is either lacking or where there is no way of estimating with any degree of precision the bounds within which the expected values might fall. This is particularly the case with respect to operational information such as building permits in countries where the majority of construction work is undertaken without reference to formal procedures (see for example, Qadeer 1983).

From the data collection standpoint, access to the information collected by other agencies is also a crucial factor. Although usually discussed in terms of the degree to which matter of confidentiality and privacy are involved, the question of access raises much more general issues in the context of strategic monitoring. It is only relatively recently, for example, that planning agencies in Britain and the Netherlands have been able to obtain population census data in machine readable form that give them the necessary flexibility to manipulate this data base. Prior to this their capacity to make use of census data was considerably restricted by a dependency on standard printouts, and access to the data base itself involved costly and time-consuming negotiations. Problems of this kind are exacerbated in some countries by the sensitivity on the part of politicians to the release of even basic statistical information as well as by inter-departmental and inter-agency conflicts.

Data collection should not, however, be associated solely with the acquisition of statistical information. Intelligence gathering from published and unpublished reports, committee papers, the press, personal contacts and consultations with other agencies is an essential part of the data collection process. A key task for those involved in strategic monitoring, therefore, is to establish formal and informal networks that facilitate intelligence gathering. The success of their efforts is likely to depend on the extent to which these

lead to exchanges of information that benefit all the participants. Because of this, those involved must not only consider what intelligence they require but also what intelligence they are able to offer in return for that provided by other agencies (see, for example, Floyd et al 1977, p. 13).

### 3.4 Information Management

Two criteria must be satisfied in the development of information management systems for strategic monitoring. In the first place they should be designed in such a way that incoming information is processed as quickly as possible to give users the maximum amount of time in which to take corrective action. Secondly, this information must be stored in the system in such a way that it can easily be retrieved by users at a later stage. In the first case, the most important design criteria concern the need for data set reduction to transform raw data into the information that is required for monitoring purposes. With this in mind a wide range of summary variables, performance indicators and comparative measures must be devised and incorporated into data processing routines to signal deviations from expected values that may require more detailed investigation. In the second case the most important design criteria are the need to store information in such a way that it can easily be assessed by users in a form which is flexible enough to be manipulated by them to meet their own requirements. For this purpose it is necessary in most cases to develop specialised forms of data base management system.

The relative weight that is attached to these criteria in particular cases depends to a large extent on the style of monitoring itself and the degree to which information management issues are formalised within the agency. In Hertfordshire for example, a great deal of effort has been invested in developing information management systems to build up the general intelligence capabilities of the agency with a view to strengthening its position when bargaining with other agencies. East Sussex, on the other hand, has developed a much more pragmatic approach to information management on the grounds that the issues under consideration are constantly changing and that, consequently a strong accent on soft information is needed to get to grips with prevailing climates of opinion (Masser, 1983, pp. 219-220).



There has been a great deal of discussion in both Britain and the Netherlands as to the relative advantages or disadvantages of different type of computer based information management systems for strategic monitoring purposes. The findings of Masser and Wilson's (1984) survey indicate that there is general agreement amongst British county planning authorities that some kind of computer based system is essential for all but the most rudimentary monitoring activities. Because of the special requirements imposed by strategic monitoring, a very strong preference is also expressed for systems that are specially designed for this purpose rather than agency wide management information systems. There is also a preference amongst these authorities for the development of main frame computer based systems because of the size of the data sets involved. There is a general feeling that microprocessors should be utilised only in cases where networks exist that make it possible for them to access data sets that are held in a mainframe system. Nevertheless despite these views, there is an increasing tendency in both Britain and the Netherlands for stand-alone micros to be utilised particularly for small scale management control problems where spread sheet software packages can be easily applied as well as for particular aspects of information management such as qualitative data handling.

As a result of the development of information technology there is a considerable diversity of possible approaches. For example, micros can be used not only as stand-alone computers but also as terminals in connection with main frame based systems. When considering possible system configurations it is also necessary to take account of the importance that is attached by many users to the graphical presentation of information held in computer based systems. Schuerwater and Masser (1983) found that users in the National Physical Planning Agency in the Netherlands demanded graphical output in preference to statistical output during the initial stages of their analysis as well as for the presentation of their findings to outside bodies. Because of this a great deal of attention in the development of the information analysis system had to be given to the design of simple pictorial and mapping techniques for analytical purposes. The advent of stand-alone micros is likely to stimulate major advances in the application of computer graphics and image handling techniques for strategic monitoring purposes (see, for example, Bracken 1984).

Although there are only a limited number of applications in British and Dutch planning authorities at the present time, in principle the treatment of qualitative information presents few problems. Standard data base management packages such as Data Base 2 are readily available in a wide variety of forms for both mainframe and micro computers. In addition, some custom made systems have been developed for this purpose. For example, Scheele's (1983) KISS system enables regular output users to interrogate the system by initiating searches to retrieve information on the basis of predetermined levels and codes. A central part of this system is the thesaurus of key words which incorporates the provisional Utrecht planning classification developed by the author with the help of a working party of officials from the Provincial Planning Department.

### 3.5 Reporting procedures

The importance of the reporting procedures that are used for monitoring purposes should not be underestimated, given that the basic objective is to enable decision makers to take corrective action as speedily as possible. The degree to which this can be achieved is likely to depend as much upon the channels of communication that have been established between those involved in monitoring and decision makers as on the inherent quality of the evaluation itself.

Several kinds of information flow are involved in strategic monitoring. Firstly, there is a need for decision makers to be provided with short memoranda or briefing notes on matters that require immediate attention. Reports of this kind are produced for particular clients and their circulation is usually restricted to these clients. In some cases special steps must be taken to ensure confidentiality so that existing policies and programmes are not jeopardised. For many decision makers "the data themselves are less worrisome than the possibility that they may be published" (United Nations, 1978 p. 42).

The second kind of information flow is concerned with the dissemination of information regarding the progress of plans and programmes to those interested in developments in the region as a whole. In this context strategic monitoring is largely concerned with building up a climate of informed opinion about what is happening within the region amongst those interests whose actions are likely

to influence the course of future events. This involves the publication of position statements giving an overview of current developments and the release of statistical information so that time series data can be built up in connection with key performance indicators. Position statements of this kind are often produced in relatively large amounts and circulated widely throughout the region at regular intervals, usually on an annual basis.

Many planning agencies in Britain and the Netherlands do not regard the task of strategic monitoring as ending with the production of position statements and their circulation. The statements themselves are often used as a tool for consultation purposes with interested parties to stimulate feedback regarding the general thrust of strategic policies and programmes. In Hertfordshire for example, the county planning department organises a series of technical seminars each year with commercial and business interests to discuss topics raised in the course of strategic monitoring.

When evaluating this experience, it should be noted that the style of reporting closely reflects the nature of the agencies involved. Formally approved structure plans and streekplannen provide the benchmarks in Britain and the Netherlands for strategic monitoring purposes and reporting procedures are conceived largely in terms of comparisons with these documents. The position regarding reporting procedures is likely to be much more complex in cases where benchmarks of this kind do not exist or where plans have only an advisory status. Under these circumstances strategic monitoring may be particularly concerned with the advocacy of policies reflecting the need to be "a few steps ahead of the game" so that "the planners themselves will often be responsible for getting a new issue 'on the agenda' of the authority or other authorities" (Floyd, 1978, p.480).

### 3.6 Organisational implications

British and Dutch experience makes it very clear that there is no one best organisational structure that can be recommended for strategic monitoring purposes. In each case, structures must be designed to take account of a wide range of circumstances including the managerial requirements that are imposed by the specific tasks involved, the overall structure and functions of the planning agency, the bureaucratic culture and working practices of the agency and the nature of the agency's relations with politicians and the leaders of business and community interests in the region.

Nevertheless some general criteria can be identified from this experience that need to be taken account of in the design of organisational structures. It is clear that the basic objective is to create organisational structures that reinforce the technical aspects of the work and create links with the other activities of the agency. This may involve the development of organisational structures that cut across the traditional sectional divisions to ensure that the monitoring groups have direct access to the information that is available in every part of the planning agency.

The extent to which the work of those involved in monitoring and evaluation should be integrated with that of those responsible for policy implementation depends very much on circumstances. There is a strong case for a high degree of integration where there is a strong corporate identity within the agency. Where monitoring and implementation activities are closely integrated the task of problem definition is made much easier by the familiarity and involvement of monitoring staff with the underlying aims and intentions of planning policy. Furthermore, the findings from monitoring are likely to be more acceptable to those involved with implementation because they come directly from within the groups involved. In contrast the findings of independent studies may be treated with some hostility.

In many cases, however, the benefits of close integration of monitoring and implementation activities are offset by the extent to which this constrains the evaluation process in that many interdepartmental working groups are concerned as much with justifying their previous actions as with identifying deviations that require changes to existing policies. For this reason, it can be argued that some measure of detachment in monitoring activities is needed to promote a more critical and questioning attitude towards implementation. In the words of one English County Planning Officer,

"(Monitoring) has an on going role of striving to understand current changes, anticipating future decisions by investigating the impact of actual or potential decisions, to the need to consider existing, or create new policies as necessary. The monitoring activity is separate from policy making in order to have the power and capability to "rock the boat" by continuously questioning the validity of County Planning Policies". (Steeley, 1976, p. 11)

Such a position can lead to a number of operational problems, particularly when there is no high level backing for monitoring activities, and it may also give rise to internal conflicts that reduce their overall effectiveness. As many organisational theorists have pointed out (see, for example, Argyris and Schon, 1978), there is a strong reciprocal exchange involved in these activities. Those concerned with implementation often supply vital information that is needed for evaluation purposes and consequently they are able to exert an influence on them by withholding or doctoring the information that is provided. Equally, those concerned with implementation are likely to occupy an important position when it comes to interpreting the findings of monitoring. Where relations between the two sides are strained, the implementers have a whole battery of arguments at their disposal that can be used to delay any decision to change existing policies.

From the staffing standpoint, however, there are considerable advantages in establishing a separate unit for strategic monitoring purposes. This makes it possible to hire staff with specialist skills in the fields of data collection and information management that are otherwise often lacking in planning agencies. The development of in house skills of this kind is generally preferred, because of the continuous nature of monitoring activities, to the use of outside consultants.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

From the above analysis it will be clear that each agency must design a monitoring system which suits its own purposes. However, there are two main prerequisites for the successful implementation of monitoring systems. The first of these prerequisites is a high measure of commitment to monitoring at all levels of the organisation. From the discussion of managerial requirements and technical matters it will be clear that a wide range of staff must be directly involved in the development of the system. Furthermore the monitoring system must closely reflect the internal structure of the planning agency and the needs of each of its sections. Because of the potentialities that are being opened up by current developments in the field of information technology it is particularly important that senior staff are made aware of these developments so that they can take them into account in developing future management strategies in the monitoring field.

The second prerequisite for successful implementation is that monitoring systems must embody prevailing attitudes towards planning in both the planning agency and the country as a whole. Where managerial requirements are often poorly specified in nature and constantly changing in response to external circumstances it is essential that an evolutionary rather than a once and for all approach should be adopted to monitoring system development which enables those concerned to take account of previous experience when planning future work. This is particularly important in connection with the development of computer based information systems. The implementation of such systems must be seen as a two way learning process which both enables the users to increase their awareness of the potentialities of the system and also allows systems managers to develop a better understanding on the potential requirements of users. If this is the case, more effective use will be made of information systems and there will be an improvement in the quality of monitoring and evaluation of planning policies at the regional level.

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## DISCUSSIONS

### Paper by I. Masser

Discussion participants: R. Espejo, A. Straszak, I. Masser.

Discussion focussed on functions which should be performed by local government and on proper balancing of these functions. This regards e.g. the strategic monitoring function and the evaluation and appreciation functions. A lack of such a balance may lead to impairment of planning and implementation capacities in local governments. It turns out crucial to set up a mechanism for getting a feedback, through reporting, hearings - seemingly - redundant information, related to own plans and actions. Modern computing equipment may greatly help in carrying out this task, but it must be used in a very delicate manner.

### Paper by D. Boekemann and R. Kulikowski

Discussion participants: I. Masser, S. Dresch, S. Ikeda,  
R. Kulikowski, D. Boekemann.

The discussion concentrated first of all on the institutional side of the systems model, with particular attention paid to the differences between Austria and Poland in that domain. The authors acknowledged existence of such differences, but pointed out that they can be reduced to the question of proportions, since e.g. there is in Poland an important, although not very large, share of market-oriented tourism operations. When the international tourism market is considered, differences get even smaller. In case of Poland the main problem is adequate cooperation between various operators in the tourism and recreation field\*, be it specialized enterprises, trade unions, institutions owning facilities for their employees etc. This applies as well, to investment policies and regional promotion, made on the basis of investments and other approaches.

Utility functions of local authority decisions were said to be assessed primarily on the basis of monetary value of decisions made.

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\* Most of these operators enlarge recently the market-oriented share of their activities (eds.).

Paper by M. Steiner and U. Posch

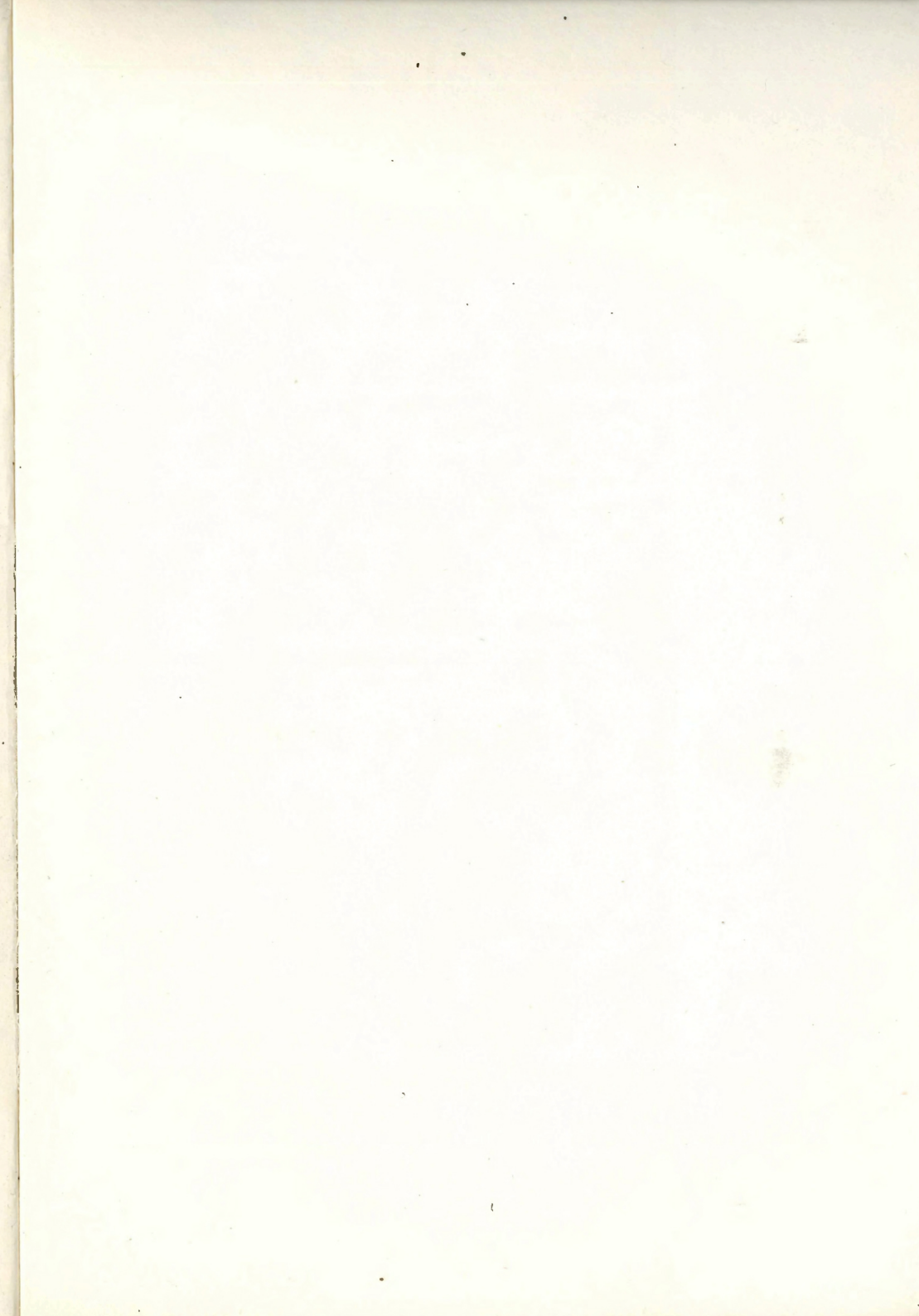
Discussion participants: A. Mouwen, S. Ikeda, M. Steiner.

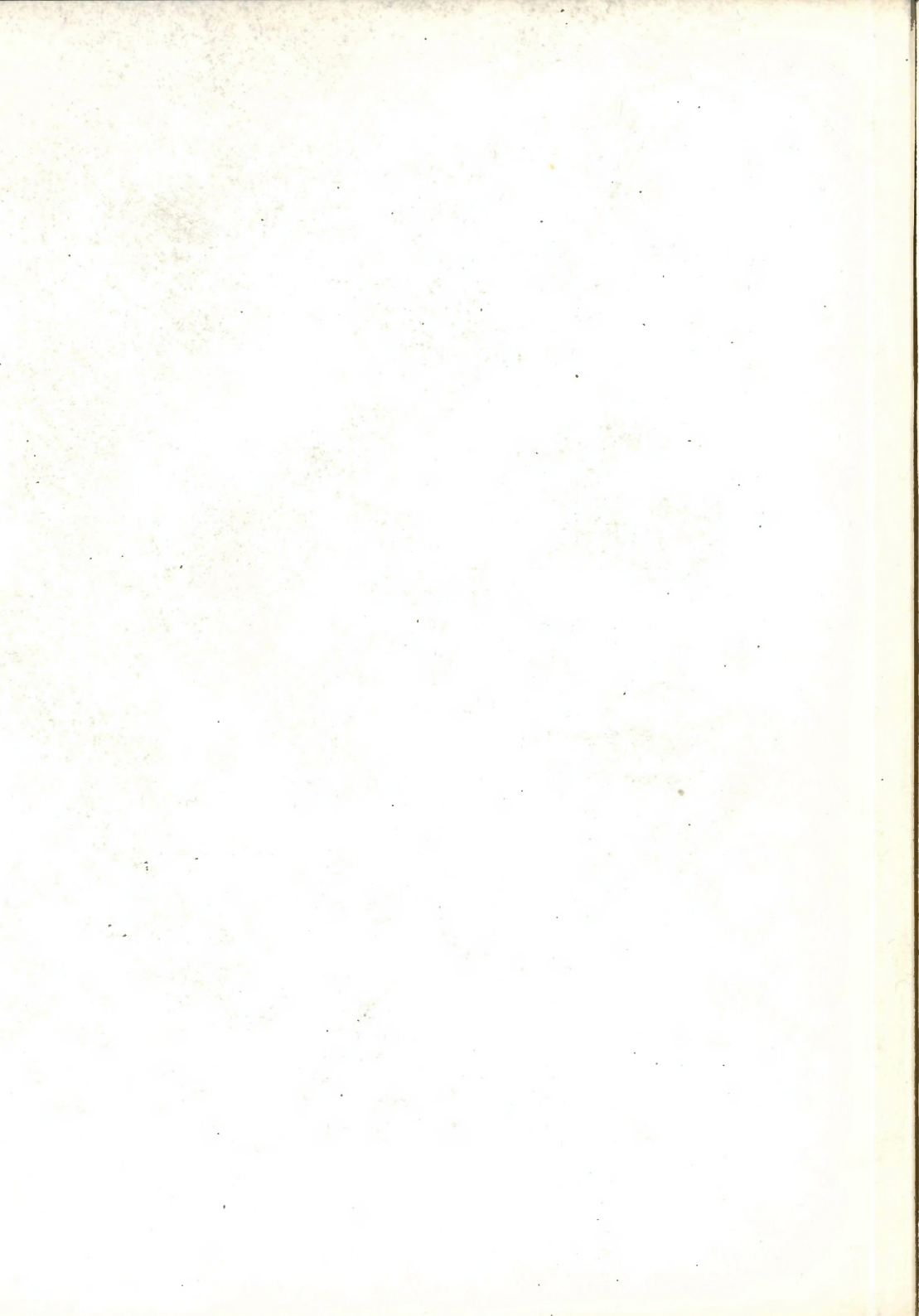
First, in answering the question on possibilities of a forecasting use of the results obtained it was indicated that factor analysis by itself does not reveal the causal structure, which would be necessary for any sort of forecasting application. Thus, only a comparative study could be undertaken. On the other hand, the available time series of the data did not go beyond the period 1971-1981, and for some items only 1971-1979, and therefore the comparative study could not encompass the dynamics of processes in question, but only the static aspects.

Paper by J. Kacprzyk and A. Straszak

Discussion participants: R. Espejo, I. Masser, J. Kacprzyk.

Discussion centered around the need of implementing computer-based information systems using approaches which would not lose much of the information available and still present it in a simple and legible way. Besides the fuzzy-set-theoretic constructs other approaches were cited, such as Bayesian inference rules. Within this context the questions related to extensions of such applications were raised, pertaining namely to knowledge-based expert systems. These systems, nowadays in the development stage, may contain information in terms of "if... then..." statements, where both conditions and events are fuzzy defined. When developed and tested, such systems may have a great impact on observation and analysis of socio-economic processes.







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