Planning and Policy

T hese contributions focus on the methods of planning, policy-making and, by implication, decision-making. They have been separated out from the preceding part because they are essentially re-active. Over the past 25 years these areas—of planning etc.—have been the major challenge to the socio-ecological perspective. The dominant paradigm has remained a commitment to closed system, formalist models of the L_{22}. Rigor and precision are their hall-marks and for this they draw heavily on the formalisms of neo-classical eco-nomics. The gains to be made from precision and rigor in their self-imposed limits far outweigh—in this, rationalistic, view—the losses arising from treat-ing the rest of the (L_{11}, L_{22}) as externalities. To try to deal directly with the full unit of (L_{11}, L_{22}) would, from this point of view, be to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

There now are very few large organizations, private or public, that do not employ planners or policy experts; few that have not incorporated sophisticated decision making models into their management culture. The vast expansion of the MBA schools—an expansion that outstrips the growth of tertiary educa-tion—has been premised on the belief that planning, policy-making and deci-sion-making are now reducible to teachable formulae.

This expansion in the sphere of influence of these rationalistic disciplines has occurred in the face of increasing evidence, over the same 25-year period, that plans and policies founder when they conflict with the values and percep-tions of those whose futures are being planned or shaped. Plans and policies have been seen to founder with increasing frequency. There has been great pressure, even from politicians, for more community and employee participa-tion. The experts have gone through the motions of consultation and partici-pation but have clearly thought that the only real answer was for them to get better at what they do best. To get better meant, for them, more professional journals, more research, more "powerful" models and more postgraduate training. In a word, more academicization. This is what has happened for 25 years; and the cynicism about experts continues to grow.

These papers, taken together, do not just reflect this growing cynicism. They appear to accept that the dominant paradigms were an appropriate and work-able response to Type III environments. However, these papers view these attempts to rationalize, formalize, as worse than useless in Type IV environ-ments. While they are intended to coordinate social efforts, they produce plans, policies and decisions that become new foci of conflicts and social divisions

(Hall, 1982). They contribute to, and highlight, the degree of relevant uncertainty that characterizes Type IV environments. As the last paper in the part points out, it is not just a matter of developing new models that will internalize some of the more striking "externalities," e.g., pollution. That would expand and complicate the chosen unit of study. It would not transform the unit of study into a socio-ecological one; and it would require no change in the logics.

Reference

Hall, P. 1982. *Great Planning Disasters*. Berkeley: University of California Press.