explanations of the economic, political and legislative climates of the time which had various impacts on professionals. The NZPI has clearly been on a tumultuous journey throughout the 20th Century, from initial optimism about the future in the 1960s and 1970s to the difficult economic circumstances of the 1980s and further instability of the profession in the 1990s. The Unsung Profession provides a logical, comprehensive account of the history of the NZPI that recognises the dedication of a large number of volunteers who have battled throughout the years for recognition and status on both the New Zealand and international stage.

As noted in the preface of the book, The Unsung Profession aims to provide a less critical account of the NZPI and planning than in many texts. It is an opportunity for both members and non-members to reflect on the progress of both the Institute and the planning profession throughout the 20th Century and into the 21st Century. While Miller does not hesitate to outline the Institute's shortfalls over this time, the overall feel of the book is that of pride and accomplishment in turning planning into a recognised career. This history of the NZPI outlines the development of a profession, from its beginnings as a small, informal group to the large self-sustaining body it is today. Many aspects of this development are covered, such as the continuing debates within the Institute's Council on issues of membership and qualification. The Unsung Profession is a book which allows NZPI planners to bask in the success of their predecessors in establishing a recognised, respected professional organisation despite the many obstacles they faced.

The Unsung Profession provides a comprehensive history of the NZPI from 1946 to 2002. The information presented in this book has been gathered from a wide variety of sources; it is invaluable to have this information recorded together in a historical account. Miller's writing style is engaging - because of this, the book takes on a story-like flow which is easy to read and understand. Despite the many positive aspects of this book, it must be noted that Miller's account often projects the issues of the NZPI onto the wider planning community. It is important to remember that there are, and have always been, a number of planners working in the community who are not members of the NZPI. While it may be true that all planners have faced similar issues over time (such as the restructuring of local government, the introduction of new legislation and difficult economic times) I feel it is unwise to generalise the feelings and issues of the NZPI to the entire planning profession. There are also a noticeable number of errors within the book, suggesting a lack of thorough editing.

It is unfortunate, but perhaps unsurprising, that South Island planning is largely ignored by Miller. Auckland has long held a dominant position in the training and employment of professional planners; however it is important to recognise the work done by smaller, less conspicuous areas of the country, particularly in a historical account such as The Unsung Profession. Lincoln University's Ali Memon is barely mentioned, despite his enormous contribution to New Zealand planning. The planning schools at Lincoln and Otago universities are also largely ignored in this history. Miller gained her first qualification through Auckland University and is currently a senior lecturer at Massey University. This bias towards the North Island may be due to the personal background of the author, or it may simply reflect the nationwide imbalance throughout planning history in New Zealand.

The Unsung Profession is a book I would recommend to any person interested in planning, particularly future or existing members of the NZPI. It provides a concise history of the NZPI and explanations for the way the Institute functions today. There is also a significant amount of general information on the challenges the planning profession as a whole has faced since 1946. The Unsung Profession is not a long or arduous read, and is perfectly able to be read over a number of sittings, making it a book that can be easily incorporated into busy lives.

Fuzzy Planning: The Role of Actors in a Fuzzy Governance Environment


Review by Daniel Andre Tulkens

Speaking personally, my short and lively academic career has exposed many planning concepts which appear fraught with uncertainty, paradox, and perpetual semantic conjecture. It is the uncertain nature of planning which the book addresses, with particular regard to doctrines of ‘sustainability’ and ‘compact city’ which are widely accepted yet lacking in clarity. The ‘fuzzy’ nature of contemporary planning tends to result in implementation impotence, and dually serves as an agent of conflict.

In this situation the end result of planning may be minimal or counter productive. The authors of Fuzzy Planning propose a method of ‘actor-consulting’, which is based on assessment and analysis of actor motives, perceptions and contributions, in order to address the differences in understanding of concepts such as ‘sustainability’ and leading to the ability to differentiate between the reality and the rhetoric of planning scenarios. The ultimate aim of an actor-consulting decision-making model is to address the subjective nature of fuzzy notions and concepts in planning, to create a common understanding among actors, and to unravel underlying mechanisms that determine actor behaviour.

The authors posit that the ‘actor-orientated’ approach moves beyond the concepts of participation strategies, collaborative planning and communicative action, by providing information on actors’ motivation, perception and behaviour. This premise is founded upon the notion that the actions of actors are determined by their own beliefs, desires and capabilities, and the institutional setting in which they act. In this sense actor-consulting strategies serve as a means to tackle actor-related fuzziness in planning. The premise of an actor-consulting model focuses on identifying political actors and establishing their ‘desired contributions,’ ‘present contributions’ and ‘potential contributions’ to any given environmental issue. In doing so, policy and plan makers are able to clarify the obligatory level of involvement of each acting group and allow these groups to conceptualise their own environmental goals which exposes how fuzzy planning enigmas such as ‘sustainable development’ can be achieved.

Among the numerous case studies entailed in Fuzzy Planning, those based on the Dutch Province of Drenthe prove the most illuminating in order to illustrate the value of the actor-consulting mode. One such planning issue was creating policy in Drenthe for the reconstruction of post-war neighbourhoods to reverse the trends of decreasing occupancy in urban regions, where the
quality of housing was failing to match expectations. The results of the research show that the actor-consulting methodology was successful in uncovering thoughts, opinions, and expectations about sustainable development in a scenario typified by actor uncertainty. This method also identified shared meanings, identified barriers to sustainable development and gained consensus on opportunities and obligations for action. While the exercise does not clearly define what sustainable development is, it does however illustrate how identifying motives, desires and expectations realistically manifest in action.

In summary, the book is refreshing in its acceptance of the uncertain and equivocal nature of planning. Through acknowledging the existing semantic discord which saturates planning rhetoric the authors admirably embrace fuzzy theories and illustrate how the actor-consulting model is able to find a place alongside existing communicative doctrines. It also offers a more realistic insight to actor motive, and levels of contribution. It is this aspect of the actor-consulting model which appeals to me personally as communicative-deliberative models can be reduced to mere lip-service; where they can identify issues but are unable to expose the likelihood of actors to engage through the implementation steps. At the very least the actor-consulting model attempts to identify what is to be expected of actors at various stages of the policy making cycle which adds a sense of certainty to what will always be a ‘fuzzy’ planning discipline.

Digital Land: Integrating Technology into the Land Planning Process


Review by Shaun Coffey

In recent years the use of new technologies by decision makers in the land planning arena has increased immensely. Applications such as computer-aided design (CAD) and geographical information systems (GIS) now play a fundamental role in the sustainable management of natural and physical resources worldwide. The emergence of a home-user GIS database on most Council websites throughout New Zealand provides clear evidence of its growing importance. Sipes and Lindhult through consultation with numerous professionals and consultancies have documented in Digital Land what tools are being used in practice. Chapter 1 provides a basic introduction to land use planning, concepts of digital data, and the stakeholders commonly involved in land use issues.

To ensure that the use of digital applications produces reliable results, the data must be both appropriate and of high quality. Chapter 2 delves into this idea by exploring the nuts and bolts of what is valid data and how it can be collected. Concepts discussed include metadata, geospatial data, satellite and aerial imagery, adjusting images, searching for data, site surveys and global positioning systems (GPS). A description of common programmes such as Google Earth, NASA’s World Wind, and Microsoft Live’s Map Search explains the complexities behind these simple applications. One thing that readers will find especially helpful (most relevant to those searching for American data) is the large list of sources provided from which data can be obtained. This includes both governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Chapter 3 covers the important aspects of sharing, storing, and managing data. Anyone who has any experience of working with digital data will testify to the importance of ensuring data is managed in a well organised way. Sipes and Lindhult discuss a variety of concepts, ranging from managing data on a single home based computer to managing data in large shared networks that can be accessed and modified from offices throughout the world.

Brief explanations of a range of different data processing applications are given in chapter 4. These range from your simple word processors and spreadsheets, to project management software, and the complex CAD and GIS applications. Ideas of how these relate to planning, landscape architecture, architecture, urban design, and historic preservation are given which gives some basic information to those in the relevant professions.

Like several chapters in the book, chapter 5 takes on a very wide scope aimed at outlining the integration of digital data in the decision making process. Much of the information is based on the outputs that can be produced through the digital applications with an emphasis placed on map making and image production. Methods of integrating the related but fundamentally different components of CAD and GIS (an extremely difficult process), and outlining their differences is the second key theme of the chapter. Following on from this is an overall summary and conclusion of some of the main things to take out of the book.

Without doubt one of the greatest strengths of this book is the use of literally hundreds of images. These images have been predominantly acquired from the work of American professionals and provide useful examples of technology in action. I found that this helped to clarify the concepts being explained and rectify some of the confusion created by the authors’ writing style. As well as this, a large number of case studies (American based also) provided useful examples of where integration of technology and land based decision making had proven successful.

All the information discussed provides a valuable overview of modern technologies. It should be noted however that this text is not suitable for those who are looking to learn in-depth information about specific applications such as GIS, CAD, computer animation, and so on. Those looking for such specifics would be better suited to text books focused solely on the relevant application, or publications released by software developers. I would also warn anyone planning on reading this book that the amount of topics covered and the brevity in which they are explored can at times make the chapters seem shambolic. This has no doubt occurred due to Sipe’s and Lindhult’s desire to cover as much territory as possible in so few pages. While to many this will prove useful, to others the constant sight of sub-headings will become highly frustrating.

Despite the lack of specific information given in Digital Land, Sipes and Lindhult clearly achieve their objective of providing an understanding of the digital data, tools, and processes relevant and beneficial to the land planning process. This text deserves its place on many bookshelves and is best suited to professionals and decision makers at the exploring stage of considering the possible uses and benefits of technological applications, as well as students and members of the public who have a general interest in this field.