

The Role of Idealization In Long-Range Planning: An Essay On the Logical and Social-Emotional Aspects of Planning

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the ongoing development and evolution of a highly particular and important planning process known as Idealized Planning (IP). IP was originally developed to free planners from self-imposed, psychological constraints in the planning process. Instead of regarding any situation as fixed and hemmed in, no matter how rigid the constraints may appear to be, IP asks the planner to consider relaxing all constraints on an issue or problem by deliberately constructing an ideal image of the situation. The paper shows how IP is vastly more complicated than previously thought and yet how these complexities may be taken advantage of positively.

Dreams are what mankind makes up when it sleeps; reality is what it makes up when it wakes.

Introduction

This paper is predicated on a number of basic assumptions. The first is that the process of long-range planning is governed by both "logical" or structural and social-emotional factors. The second is that both of these factors are of equal importance, if not virtually inseparable in their very existence, let alone operation. We contend that structural and social-emotional concerns interact at every step of the planning process. At a minimum, they *presuppose* one another at every phase.

A third assumption is that while both factors are of equal importance, they have not received equal treatment in the planning literature. Most treatises on planning seem to concentrate on or to emphasize one factor to the exclusion of the other [6]. Indeed, the authors know of no single model or perspective which gives equal weight to both factors, and propose concrete strategies for dealing with each. Our basic contention is that both must be accorded equal and explicit treatment if we are to progress in our knowledge and use of long-range planning.

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In general, we feel that the field of planning has conceived of itself in too narrow terms. Planning is *both* a logical and an emotional process. Further still, both factors are "rational" but in very different senses of the meaning of "rationality". In our opinion, one makes a very serious mistake if one conceives of the structural aspects as rational and the socio-emotional as irrational. We can no longer afford to ignore the deep socio-emotional aspects of planning by either downgrading them or by labelling them as secondary, irrational, etc.

This paper is basically concerned with a particular method for engaging in long-range planning—Idealized Planning (hereafter abbreviated as IP). The successful use of IP illustrates all of the difficulties associated with long-range planning models and techniques is general. For this reason, this paper concentrates almost exclusively on IP. More to the point, a discussion of the proper use of IP illustrates the complex weave of structural and socio-emotional factors which are inherent in the planning process and must be taken into account.

Idealized Planning

IP is a technique designed to create a proactive posture toward planning. It does this by converting managerial orientations from problem solving to systems design. This is done through the following assignment to IP participants. "Redesign the organization and its environment to function in the way you *ideally* would like to see it." The only two constraints to the design are that it be technologically feasible and operationally viable. Such an assignment converts thinking from fixing up problems that now exist to creating targets that are desired to be achieved.

The transformation of orientation through IP generates a number of benefits in addition to the proactive posture. It tends to reduce implicit constraints on the problem solution. It also forces participants to think about the whole system and not just its part as they engage in the process. Perhaps most importantly, it tends to clarify values that the participants collectively and individually operate under because it concentrates on desired ends rather than the means of achieving them.

One of the basic premises of IP, which is borne out by numerous case studies¹ is that it is often easier to bring one's idealized visions to fruition than the participants might have previously thought. This is not to say that one's initial idealized plan will or always should be realized in its entirety, but rather, that by engaging in the process of IP one's operational plans will be stronger in the sense of being better thought out. Another way to put this is the following: It is often easier to design a new system that has the desirable properties one wishes than to improve an already existing, suboptimal system with which one is dissatisfied. IP, in short, reverses the whole causal direction of the planning process. *It starts from an ideal conception and works down to the feasible rather than starting from a constrained current situation and attempting to work upwards.* It says that our ideals should determine or at least strongly influence what is real and feasible rather than one's "reals", so to speak, constraining our ideals.

Churchman has put our point well:

... the planner has to leave off being a precise scientist. *He needs to encourage radical viewpoints* [underscoring ours]. In fact, I would be tempted to say that whenever planning begins to look as though it is following tried and true procedures that have worked in the past, then planning is in danger becoming useless. *Good*

¹The reader is directed to Ackoff's *Redesigning the Future* [1] for a summary exposition of these studies.

planners are continually asking the most searching, radical and ridiculous questions [underscoring ours] (e.g.: should banks be involved in the handling of cash? should the post-office department be involved mainly in the transmittal of letters? Shouldn't the soft-drink companies be selling cheap nutrients to foreign countries? and so on.) Since there is limited technology available in this area, the best way to proceed is to select planners with radical and unreasonable minds. If not, beware of accepting the planner's (or the manager's, or the decision-maker's) version of what you can do and what you cannot do [5 p. 165].

In sum, IP is a planning process which, if it does not seek to find those who already can think radically, actively seeks to encourage those who are potentially capable of doing so. So put, the difficulties associated with IP are not due to the inability to justify the technique on intellectual grounds nor are they concerned with the inability to point to any tangible benefits derived from the process. Rather, the main difficulties stem from the host of other processes which are needed both to support and to drive IP as an ongoing process within the life-history of an individual or an organization. The lesson to be learned is that no matter how good the ultimate virtues or benefits of a technique are—and this pertains to *any* technique—neither the virtues nor the benefits will be realized unless the technique is part of a larger set of ongoing processes.

This paper is based on our experience and reflections with regard to IP. Its basic purpose is to distill out of our collective experience a set of guidelines—*idealized* ones—for effective application of IP. Because of its reflective nature, this paper may be termed an exercise in meta-planning or the “planning of planning.”

Every one of the guidelines to be discussed for the effective use of IP pertains to the set of other “ongoing processes” of which IP is an important part. By now, we should have learned the obvious lesson: Every technique or process for inducing systems thinking is itself only a part of a larger system of other processes and must for effective use be thought of in direct relationship to those other processes [1, 2, 4, 5, 7].

Factors Affecting the Use of IP

One of the most profound discoveries and inventions of this century occurred in the 1940's and 50's. This was the discovery and study of the interpersonal dynamics which take place in small groups. For the purposes of this paper, the results of these discoveries and studies which are most relevant to us here are those which come under the general heading of intervention theory or group process problem solving [3, 18]. The importance of intervention theory to IP is that the factors which make for the success and/or failure of IP are essentially the same as those which make for the success and/or failure of an intervention process. The link is so strong that we would contend that IP can and should be construed as a kind of intervention process, and, that intervention theory can and should be construed as kind of IP process. No matter what form of planning is used, the planner² must be sensitive to and thus attempt to control for (at least) the following factors:

1. The *timing* of the introduction of IP into a set of previously ongoing organizational alternate (possibly conflicting) set of planning processes; i.e., this is the *when* question. When is IP best introduced? IP will not work best at every point in time. The

²We use “planner” here as the equivalent to an interventionist. Planning is the process that is done by participants that is facilitated by the interventionist.

time of introduction must be carefully chosen. It is one of the most critical variables under the planning agent's (or as we prefer to think of this role, the interventionist's) control, or potential control. If the planner has no control over this important variable, he/she should at least be aware of its ramifications.

2. The planner should be sensitive with regard to *who* it is that will introduce IP and conduct the process. Not all planners possess the requisite psychological skills the process requires. As we shall argue later, IP requires an unusual combination of psychological abilities to make it work properly. It requires that the planner not only be able to think logically and "rationally" but also conceptually as well, i.e., that he/she be able to bridge and think across different systems of rationality. As if this were not enough, the planner must also be able to empathize emotionally with the difficulty of the process and the natural human resistance to it, and hence, be able to guide the participants through it by understanding how they *feel*, not merely how they *think* about it.
3. An important variable is the *level* of the organization at which the process is introduced. There is a significant difference if IP is done by top, middle, or lower management. The composition or make-up with regard to *who* it is that will be involved in the process is important.
4. The *rationale* given for the exercise is another important variable. This not only involves the *why* of the process, i.e., why it is important to do and how it should be done, but it also involves the format in which the reasons for the exercise are given, e.g., whether the appeal for the exercise is made on a rational-logical basis, an emotional basis, or some combination of the two.
5. The type of *group process* that is used to acquaint the participants and to get them comfortable with one another should be taken into account.
6. The processes that should precede as well as follow on IP should be given serious consideration. It is not enough to merely introduce IP as a separate exercise. It must be followed up and preceded by other exercises. The nature of IP changes drastically depending upon the other processes of which it is a part. To repeat an earlier point, IP must itself be thought of as a *part of a larger systemic effort*.
7. Finally, one of the most important variables of all concerns is the *subject matter* to which IP is applied. It makes a big difference whether one is idealizing one's immediate work environment, one's organization, one's city, state, country, world, or universe, not to mention one's life.

Figure 1 constitutes *one* representation of the structure of the IP process. The purpose of the figure is to lay the foundation for a systemic discussion of some of the many factors entering into the IP process. For example, one of the most important purposes of Fig. 1 is to show explicitly where both logical or structural and socio-emotional variables enter into IP. This property of the figure makes it possible to address the concerns raised in the preceding paragraph in a systematic fashion. It should be emphasized that the

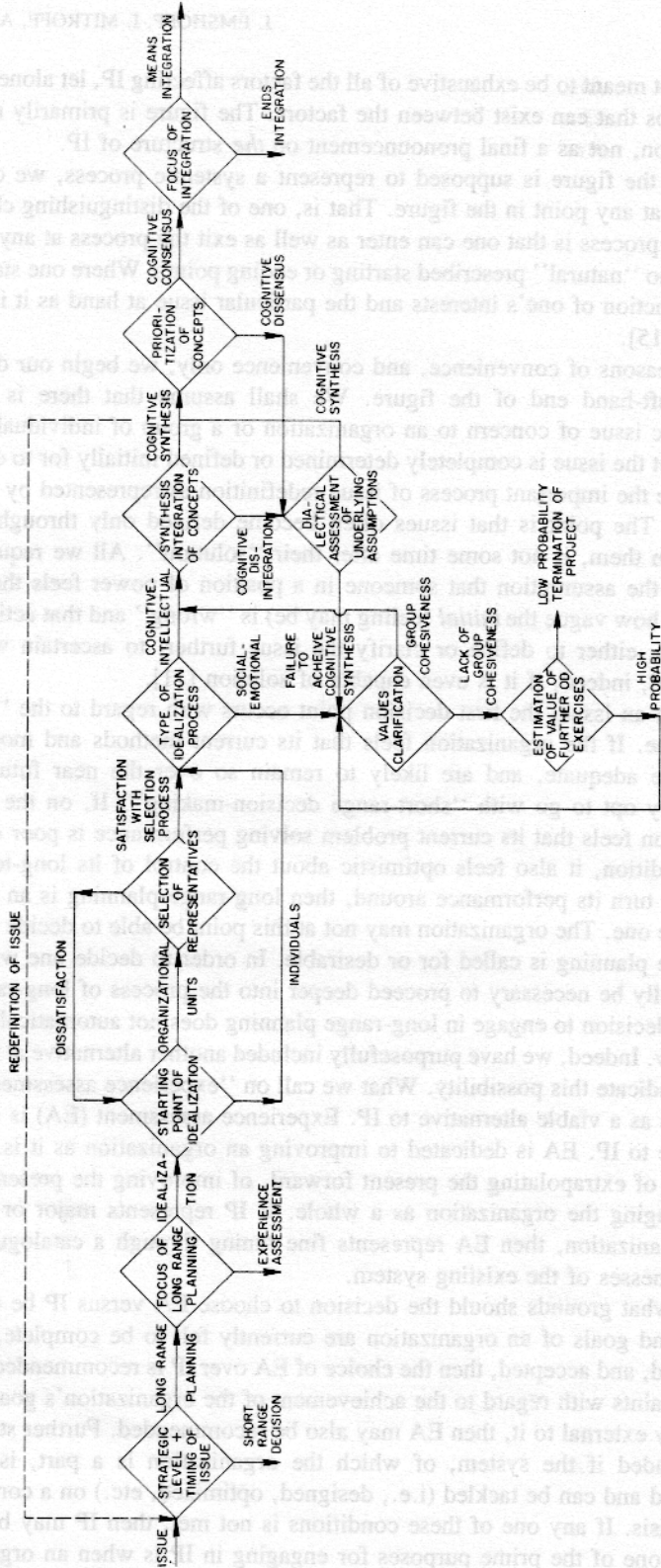


Fig. 1. The Structure of the Idealized planning process.

figure is not meant to be exhaustive of all the factors affecting IP, let alone all the possible relationships that can exist between the factors. The figure is primarily meant as an aid to discussion, not as a final pronouncement on *the* structure of IP.

Since the figure is supposed to represent a systemic process, we could begin our discussion at any point in the figure. That is, one of the distinguishing characteristics of a systemic process is that one can enter as well as exit the process at any point [13, 15]. There are no "natural" prescribed starting or ending points. Where one starts or ends is as much a function of one's interests and the particular issue at hand as it is of the process itself [13, 15].

For reasons of convenience, and convenience only, we begin our discussion at the extreme left-hand end of the figure. We shall assume that there is an unresolved, problematic issue of concern to an organization or a group of individuals. We shall *not* assume that the issue is completely determined or defined initially for to do this would be to preclude the important process of issue redefinition as represented by the dotted feedback line. The point is that issues often become defined only through the process of working on them, if not some time after their "solution". All we require to begin the process is the assumption that someone in a position of power feels that "something" (no matter how vague the *initial* feeling may be) is "wrong" and that action of some kind is required, either to define or clarify the issue further, to ascertain whether it needs solving and, indeed, if it is even capable of solution [11].

Given an issue, the first decision point occurs with regard to the "strategic level" of the issue. If the organization feels that its current methods and models of problem solving are adequate, and are likely to remain so over the near future, then it may legitimately opt to go with "short-range decision-making". If, on the other hand, the organization feels that its current problem solving performance is poor or unacceptable, but, in addition, it also feels optimistic about the control of its long-term future, i.e., that it can turn its performance around, then long-range planning is an option, possibly a desirable one. The organization may not at this point be able to decide for sure whether long-range planning is called for or desirable. In order to decide one way or another, it may actually be necessary to proceed deeper into the process of long-range planning.

The decision to engage in long-range planning does not automatically dictate that IP will follow. Indeed, we have purposefully included another alternative at the next decision point to indicate this possibility. What we call on "experience assessment" must always be viewed as a viable alternative to IP. Experience assessment (EA) is a far less radical alternative to IP. EA is dedicated to improving an organization as it is. It is essentially a strategy of extrapolating the present forward, of improving the present without drastically changing the organization as a whole. If IP represents major or radical surgery, on an organization, then EA represents fine tuning through a cataloguing of strengths and weaknesses of the existing system.

On what grounds should the decision to choose EA versus IP be made? If the objectives and goals of an organization are currently felt to be complete, relatively well-understood, and accepted, then the choice of EA over IP is recommended. If, in addition, the constraints with regard to the achievement of the organization's goals and objectives are largely external to it, then EA may also be recommended. Further still, EA would be recommended if the system, of which the organization is a part, is relatively well-understood and can be tackled (i.e., designed, optimized, etc.) on a component by component basis. If any one of these conditions is not met, then IP may be called for. For instance, one of the prime purposes for engaging in IP is when an organization's goals

are not clearly understood or agreed upon. The purpose of idealization in this case may be precisely to illustrate why different actors in the system have such different views of the objectives of the organization. Idealization can not only help to resolve differences in perceived objectives, but, even more basic, help to surface fundamental differences in perception. There may be no more powerful way of differentiating between individuals than that of comparing and contrasting their ideal images of an issue or problem. That is, we do not assume that different individuals share the same idealized goals. Indeed, the second and third authors have demonstrated that different personality types have very distinct ideals [12, 14].

The next three decision points in Fig. 1—(1) the choice of a starting point of an idealization, (2) the selection of appropriate participants for the exercise, and (3) the type of group process that is used to foster idealization—involve a number of common concerns. Among the questions which these steps raise are the following: Which individuals should be involved in the exercise? Should they be selected to cut across various levels of the organization? If so, which levels? How should they be selected? By which process? Which level of an organization problem or issue should they attempt to idealize? That is, should their idealizations be primarily directed inwards or outwards to their environment? Should their idealization address more than one issue or should they address themselves to a single issue? And finally, under which auspices should they be brought together? That is, how should the rationale for the exercise be presented? Should the appeal be directed mainly on cognitive and intellectual grounds or on social and emotional grounds or some mixture of the two?

It should be abundantly clear that when we come to these questions the interaction between the logic or the structure of IP and the social-emotional or group process side of IP becomes intense. Any attempt to separate these two aspects at this point will have profound effects for the reasons that response to one set of concerns has profound implications and impact on the other. Indeed, the interaction is so strong that the separate questions in the preceding paragraphs are not only related to one another but that the three decision points giving rise to the questions should be seen as three aspects of the same phenomenon and not as three separate phenomena.

The extent to which the preceding questions are related can be seen through a brief discussion of one of the most powerful technologies [7, 8] that the authors are aware of for selecting and motivating individuals for participation in a group problem-solving exercise. This technology is known by the acronym MAPS (*Multivariate, Analysis Participative, Structure*). MAPS essentially does three things. One, it decomposes a large and complicated group structure into relatively small and homogeneous subgroups, i.e. manageable subgroups of eight to ten individuals that are either known to work well together or have similar interests and thus offer the promise of working effectively together. Two, it decomposes a complicated set of tasks or issues into relatively homogeneous subsets of coherent or similar task clusters. Three, it makes the best assignment (in a factor analytic sense) of subgroups to task clusters; i.e., it finds out which particular subgroup of individuals is best suited for working on which particular subset of issues. This is done for all subgroups and all task clusters so that each subgroup is assigned a unique task cluster of issues on which to work.

MAPS performs the preceding assignments by means of two questionnaires. A preliminary listing is made of all those individuals who have a potential contribution to make to a set of issues under discussion or who have an interest in the set. The individuals are brought together and asked to indicate on a seven point Likert scale, depending upon how

much they know one another, either: (1) the degree to which they know one another; (2) are interested in working with one another; or (3) feel they can work well together. Similarly, a tentative listing of as many of the issues involved in a problem are listed and the individuals are also asked to indicate along side each issue, again on a seven point Likert scale: (1) their degree of interest in working on the particular issue; and/or (2) their knowledge and expertise with regard to it. Based on the responses to these two questionnaires, MAPS finds the best assignment of: (1) individuals to subgroups; (2) issues to clusters of subissues; and (3) subgroups of people to clusters of subissues.

It is not a condemnation of this procedure in the least to point out that it becomes circular. In contrast to other techniques, MAPS not only recognizes this explicitly but attempts to take positive advantage of it. The circularity arises as follows: The formal statistical aspects of the MAPS technology are in many ways the smallest parts of the whole procedure. The resulting statistical assignments of individuals to subgroups, etc., are no better than the initial data inputs. Indeed, the validity of the output presupposes the validity of the input. This in turn presupposes that prior to their subgrouping the initial group of individuals have developed enough of an openness and trusting relationship to give *behaviorally* valid information regarding how they feel about working with one another. This in turn presupposes that prior to the formal administration of the initial questionnaires, considerable group process work has been done in order to get the individuals feeling comfortable with one another and their feelings. This is not only necessary so that the individuals will honestly fill out the questionnaires once they are organized, but that they will contribute honestly to the development of the questionnaires themselves. Since everything which follows presupposes the basic meaningfulness and validity of the input, one of the ways of securing this is to involve the individuals right from the very beginning in the development of the instruments to which they will be responding. But such involvement inevitably raises the question of the "representativeness" of the initial group.

The circularity then is this: *We are required to have chosen a group, via some means, in order to start the procedure; but we cannot insure ourselves that we have made a proper choice of individuals with which to begin until we have actually begun the procedure and gotten far enough into it.* The main point is that this procedure reveals very clearly the strong bond and interaction between social-emotional and cognitive or intellectual factors at every step of the IP planning process—indeed, *any* planning process. *The choice of people affects the kinds of ideas that will be produced and ultimately considered, and vice versa: A choice of ideas affects the kinds of people who will be compatible with working on these ideas.* We should have learned at least this much from psychology: Not every psychological type is compatible with every kind of idea, and vice versa [12, 14].

What guidelines then, if any, can be offered for starting the process? It has been our experience that it is best to start with as diverse an initial group as possible to ensure that many viewpoints across all levels and perspectives from within the organization on the issue or problem are represented. This not only helps to offset any potentially damaging charges of lack of representation, which can often kill a planning effort before it is even begun, but also gets at a much more difficult issue—the fact that not all psychological types are naturally receptive to IP. Another way to put this is that if some psychologies are naturally more receptive to the task, then some are naturally more resistant.

The second and third authors have argued in a number of previous papers [12, 14] the relevance of the Jungian personality typology to the planning process. In particular, the second

and third author have shown by means of a previous planning study [12] that Jung's Intuitive-Thinking (NT) and Intuitive-Feeling (NF) types are most receptive to strategic planning because of their preference for thinking in global (N) terms, and that Sensing-Thinking (ST) and Sensing-Feeling (SF) types are most resistant because of their preference for thinking in day-to-day operational (S) terms. NT's and NF's take most naturally to IP; one could just as well say that one of the natural defining qualities of NT's and NF's is their ability to produce spontaneous idealized plans for the future. One could also say that if the problem is to encourage ST's and SF's to engage in idealization because of their natural psychological resistance to the task, then one can equally say that the problem is to restrain the idealization of NT's and NF's.

Mitroff and Kilmann have developed just such a methodology recently which simultaneously encourages ST's and SF's to engage in idealization while tempering the idealizations of NT's and NF's [12, 14]. Known as the Jungian group technology, the process begins with the administration of a short test designed to measure the psychological type of an individual. In order to reveal to the individuals their natural psychological biases and to strengthen individual effects, all those individuals with the same psychological profile or type are put into the same group. In this manner, four Jungian psychological groups are formed—an ST, NT, NF, and SF group. Each group is then asked to write out their idealized view of the problem, issues, or situation. Because of their different psychological orientations, the idealizations of the four groups are typically very different from one another. Having the groups read aloud and share their views is a very dramatic event. Rarely do individuals have the opportunity to learn about themselves in relation to others in a non-threatening environment. The Jungian technology is not merely an example of a new type of learning environment; because of the strong emotions it raises which can be dealt with in an open and constructive manner instead of the repressive way they are so often treated in ordinary life, the Jungian technology develops a rapport and an understanding between the participants.

The recognition of psychological differences is absolutely essential to two important and related issues: Which type of idealization process should different individuals be sent through, and, on which grounds should the appeal for IP be made to different psychological types? Both our experience and Jungian theory establish that the appeal to SF and NF individuals must be made on social-emotional grounds; and to ST and NT types on cognitive and intellectual grounds.

Feeling types need to be reassured that, as a result of engaging in IP, either they personally (SF), or people in general (mankind) (NF), will be made better in a distinctly human sense (F). As a result, Feeling types need to have whatever emotional resistancies they might have to the exercise addressed candidly and openly. This is the function of the decision point labelled "values clarification," in Fig. 1. The purpose of this step is to establish group cohesiveness and commitment to IP through organizational development or term-building exercises [16].

Thinking types, on the other hand, need to be reassured on intellectual grounds that something of value will result from the exercise. In our experience, this is best done by explaining both the structure and purpose of IP on mainly intellectual terms, i.e., that the main purpose of IP is to challenge the intellectual basis (i.e., the prevailing assumptions) for current practice.

Assume for the moment that we are dealing with a group that is predominantly composed of Thinking types and that therefore it is decided for psychological reasons to present the rationale for IP in Fig. 1 primarily on cognitive-intellectual grounds. Assum-

ing that the individuals are able to produce idealizations, the next decision point concerns whether the group is able to synthesize or integrate the idealizations of the separate individuals. If the group is able to find a common intellectual theme that cuts across the separate idealizations, then cognitive synthesis will be achieved. If not, then one will have to find recourse in a technique capable of probing more deeply into the reasons for the failure to arrive at synthesis in an attempt to achieve it. A technique that is especially appropriate here is the Dialectical Inquiring System [10]. Since this system has been described extensively in detail elsewhere, we shall merely note in passing that this system is particularly suited to probing the underlying intellectual and value assumptions of a worldview—in this case, an idealized plan. Since there is no guarantee that this technique will automatically result in a cognitive synthesis between divergent idealized plans, the outcome "failure to achieve cognitive synthesis" as indicated in Fig. 1 must be considered a real possibility.

If the failure to achieve synthesis occurs at this point, then there are good reasons to question whether the difficulty is really cognitive in nature, and that therefore, whether a wholly different task is called for. If after repeated attempts to achieve synthesis on cognitive grounds, one has good reasons to suspect that the problem is one of a social-emotional nature and not a purely intellectual one, then the shift from the cognitive-intellectual sphere to the social-emotional one is recommended. The arrow going from the "failure to achieve cognitive synthesis" to the social-emotional branch indicates this. Notice that here again we witness the strong potential interaction, if not cross-over effect, between intellectual and emotional factors. The label which to us best describes the social-emotional path is "values clarification". The full range of organizational development (OD) or team-building exercises come into play here. Since these are described in numerous places [16], there is no need for us to describe them here. The purpose of these exercises is to achieve "group cohesiveness". If this results, then the group can proceed to the "cognitive-intellectual branch and attempt to supplement its social-emotional synthesis with a cognitive-intellectual one. If group cohesiveness fails to result, then one must seriously estimate the value of further OD exercises. If the probability of the value of further exercises is low, then one would seriously wish to consider termination of the project with the sponsor. Indeed, one of the great virtues of the OD approach is the clear recognition that not only are some projects best terminated but that there is a preferred way of terminating a project so that the client can potentially learn from even this experience. For example, the client can learn what went "wrong" with this consultant and next time what can be done to choose a consultant that is more in tune with the client's desires, aims, and style [3].

OD exercises have a definite purpose when used in the context of IP—namely to develop team-building capabilities or to assess why they cannot be developed. Those familiar with the OD literature will be aware that it is often criticized as being a "touchy-feely" exercise not related to real decision-making processes. Clearly, that is not true in the context in which it is used here.

Instead of assuming termination of the project because of the incompatibility of the personality of the client group with the psychological demands of IP or the inability of the client group to produce a united idealized plan, let us assume that the point of "cognitive synthesis" has been reached in Fig. 1. The following two stages or decision points in the IP process then consist of the refinement of the idealized plan produced thus far.

A powerful technique for refinement has been invented by one of our colleagues, Thomas Saaty [17]. The technique is known as Belief Assessment or Prioritization of

Concepts. Essentially, what the technique does is to allow a decision-maker to derive a ratio scale weighting of the importance of an entire set of objectives, goals, means, etc., from a pair-wise ordinal comparison of each element of the set. Figure 2 illustrates the mathematics of the procedure for the simplest possible case of two objectives of an idealized plan, O_1 and O_2 . The procedure assumes that it is not only easier for a decision-maker to compare each objective's relative importance with regard to each of the other objectives one at a time (W_i/W_j) but that a decision-maker can actually make such comparisons. Under this procedure a decision-maker need only say that O_1 , for instance, when compared to O_2 is nine times more important for the realization of an idealized plan than O_2 . The assumption is that a decision-maker can more easily supply the *relative ratios* of the weights of importance than the *absolute* weights themselves. Starting with the ratios of relative importance W_i/W_j it can easily be shown that the determination of the absolute weights W_i reduces to an eigenvalue-eigenvector problem. Starting with the matrix of relative weights A in Fig. 2, one can derive the vector w of absolute weights.

The significance of this technique lies in more than the ultimate set of numbers (w) that it produces. Its true significance is illustrated in Fig. 3. It is not only instructive but vital to have a group go through the Belief Assessment procedure outlined briefly in Fig. 2 with regard to two basic questions: (1) With respect to the objectives contained in the IP, which objectives are seen as *more important*; and (2) which objectives are they *more certain* with regard to their ability to implement, bring about, or control their occurrence. Going through the Belief Assessment procedure twice, i.e., rating the objectives on both these questions, allows one to determine which objectives fall into which quadrant of Fig. 3. For obvious reasons, we are not interested in, or at least much less interested in, those objectives falling in the extreme left-hand half of Fig. 3. In particular, while the objectives falling in the upper right-hand quadrant are important, the ones falling in the lower right-hand quadrant are most critical. They are precisely the kinds of critical issues one looks to the IP process to identify. Because they are of importance and yet we are uncertain of our ability to control them, they deserve the most discussion with regard to what, if anything, could be done to make them more certain. For us, this is the essence of strategic planning.

Notice that in Fig. 1 there is also a possibility of cognitive dissensus occurring at the

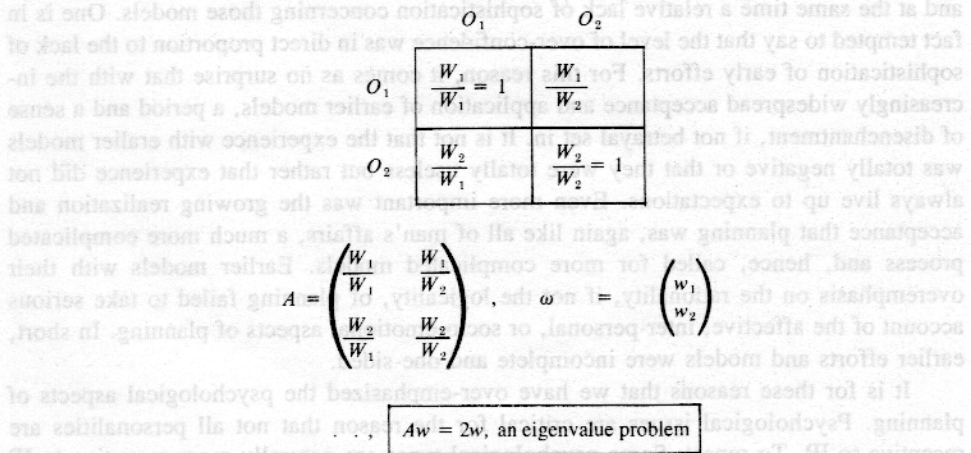


Fig. 2. Prioritization for a two objective case.

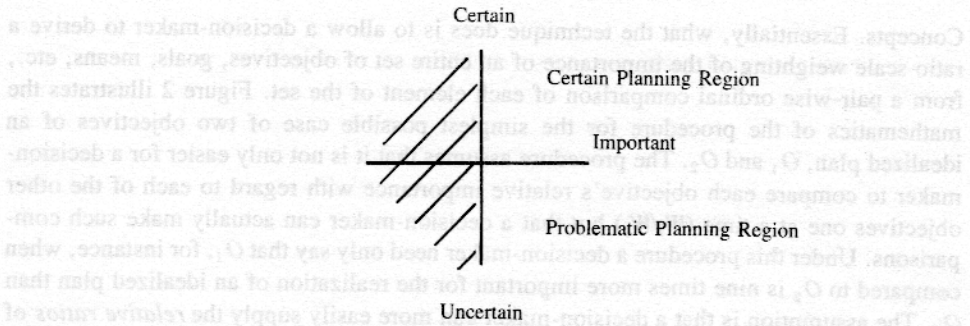


Fig. 3. Belief assessment of the importance versus the certainty of our idealized plan.

Prioritization of Concepts step. Since the assignment of the weights of importance and of control are judgmental and vary from individual to individual, there is no guarantee that a group of individuals will be able to arrive at a group consensus on these judgments. If the dissensus is severe enough at this point, then it can force the process back to earlier stages, e.g., a dialectical assessment of the underlying assumptions regarding why different individuals give different weights to the objectives of the idealized plan.

Finally, the last decision point in Fig. 1 concerns whether further effort will center on refining the means for obtaining the IP or the objectives themselves. If there is relatively high agreement at the end of the process regarding the desirability, importance, and degree of control over the objectives, then the group may wish to move on to "means planning". If not, the group may wish to concentrate further on "ends integration", thereby sending the process back to any one of a number of the previous steps, e.g., prioritization. Again, it must be emphasized that the number of choice points and feedback loops to IP is much larger than the few merely indicated in Figure 1.

Concluding Remarks: Towards a Set of Idealized Guidelines for IP

The history of planning is essentially no different from that of other fields. There is no reason why it should be different. Initial efforts in the field of planning were marked by both overconfidence in the aims and methods of particular planning models (strategies) and at the same time a relative lack of sophistication concerning those models. One is in fact tempted to say that the level of over-confidence was in direct proportion to the lack of sophistication of early efforts. For this reason, it comes as no surprise that with the increasingly widespread acceptance and application of earlier models, a period and a sense of disenchantment, if not betrayal set in. It is not that the experience with earlier models was totally negative or that they were totally useless but rather that experience did not always live up to expectations. Even more important was the growing realization and acceptance that planning was, again like all of man's affairs, a much more complicated process and, hence, called for more complicated models. Earlier models with their overemphasis on the rationality, if not the logicity, of planning failed to take serious account of the affective, inter-personal, or socio-emotional aspects of planning. In short, earlier efforts and models were incomplete and one-sided.

It is for these reasons that we have over-emphasized the psychological aspects of planning. Psychological issues are critical for the reason that not all personalities are receptive to IP. To repeat: Some psychological types are naturally more receptive to IP than others. This finding holds as well for planners as it does for the participants in a

planning process. If anything, this finding applies more to the planner or to the interventionist than it does to the participants. This does not mean that only certain psychologies can lead an IP or participant in it but rather that the IP process will be heavily influenced by the psychology of the planner and must be tailored to take into account the psychology of the participants. This leads us to our first five guidelines concerning IP.

1. Effective use of IP requires that the planner be aware of his/her own psychology and that of the group who will participate in an IP planning effort.
2. Effective use of IP requires that the planner tailor his IP planning effort to the psychology of the participants.
3. Conversely, IP ought not to be presented solely or merely as a logical tool but as an experience whose purpose is to aid psychological growth.
4. IP must be preceded and followed by a set of processes which facilitate individual human growth and group support.
5. Conversely, IP ought not be introduced until ideally some rapport has been built up with the group with whom one is working.

The notion of group rapport cannot be overemphasized. Its ramifications are pervasive. For example, consider the level of the organization or problem to which IP should be applied. Without some contact with the group and understanding of its problems, a real danger is that of applying IP to a level vastly beyond the concerns of the group. For instance, if one is dealing with a US governmental organization such as a service branch of the U.S. Navy (with whom we have dealt) then it may not make sense (as it did not) to have them idealize the future of the armed services; however, it would make sense to have them idealize the future of their immediate organization. The situation may well be equivalent to that found by Kohlberg [9] in regards to levels of moral development, namely, that individuals can understand persons and positions at their own level of moral development and below but cannot understand individuals at two or more levels higher than their own. While we cannot offer concrete evidence for this phenomenon in regards to IP we suspect that something similar operates. We therefore suggest the following:

6. Individuals should not be asked to apply IP to two levels of the organization above which they operate.

The preceding should not be interpreted as a hard and fast rule. There is nothing wrong with working *up to* two levels; we just have severe reservations about *starting* an IP project at two levels above the normal working level of individuals. It's not that idealize plans produced will be unrealistic since realism per se is irrelevant. What we are concerned about is that the exercise may have little meaning for the participants, and, hence, that IP may fail to have the impact it deserves as a vehicle for major organizational change which, after all, is one of the major reasons for its use.

We have not tried in this paper to raise or to deal with every concern which bears on the effective use of IP. We have tried instead to raise some of the more critical issues. All of the issues and guidelines we have suggested derive from a different and newly emerging concept of planning. This newer concept does not see planning primarily as a logical exercise of getting the participants to state clearly their objectives and the

means which are acceptable for accomplishing those ends. It sees planning instead as a group process, one of whose primary goals is not planning per se but self-realization and self-growth. It sees therefore, the notion of participation in very different ways. Participation is not just having a say in or an "input" to the planning process but it means having sense of belonging to a group through a sense of self-discovery.

In the most general sense, the concept of planning which we are talking about implies a very different meaning of scientific methodology. Take, for example, the important questions of who should decide who should participate and which level of organization should be idealized. Both of these questions are obviously related in the sense that the kind of group directly influences what will be idealized. We believe strongly that since it is the group who ultimately has to live with their own idealization it is they, not the planner, who should determine which level is idealized. This does not mean the planner is a passive or co-equal participant for he/she ought to challenge and even provoke the group. But it does mean that the planner's prime obligation is to help the group become their own planners. An effective planner is one who terminates his own planning effort. The best idealized planner is one who teaches others how to idealize for themselves.

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