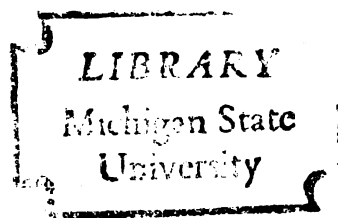HUMAN ADVANCEMENT INDICATORS:
A NEW APPROACH TO MEASURING
THE QUALITY OF LIFE
IN LANSING, MICHIGAN

Thesis for the Degree of M. U. P.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
MICHAEL J. HARROLD
1971

ABSTRACT

HUMAN ADVANCEMENT INDICATORS: A NEW APPROACH
TO MEASURING THE QUALITY OF LIFE
IN LANSING, MICHIGAN

By

Michael J. Harrold

Urban planning and municipal government operation
are activities which rely heavily upon the gathering of
information and statistical data which describe the char-
acteristics, nature and resources of the city. In the
past, this data gathering has largely encompassed physical
things in quantitative terms and has generally reflected
this nation's traditional interest in measuring tangible
items, such as fiscal expenditures, doctors graduated,
housing units built, teacher/pupil ratios and the like.

This quantitative orientation in our record-
keeping, however, has obscured our view of the results of
our efforts in terms of improving the quality of life
enjoyed by the people of the city. Our statistical indi-
cators are almost entirely restricted to measuring what
we have done about meeting our needs and problems but not
how effective these efforts have been. For example, we

have measures of the money spent for public education, but we do not know if the quality of that education is improving.

The term "human advancement indicators" designates those measures which attempt to describe the living conditions of people in a qualitative sense and which reveal the end result of public and private efforts. This term is used in place of the better known term "social indicators," a recently emerged wording which pretends to serve as a parallel to the "economic indicators" published by the federal government and various economic institutions. The term social indicators is not used here since "social" refers more properly to group or institutional interactions than individuals.

This thesis, then, postulates that measures of individual human progress are needed in order to accurately assess the degree of success or failure of public and private endeavors to meet human needs. The recent years of unrest and confrontation have forcefully demonstrated that measures of economic and physical factors are inadequate for understanding and knowing the state of the complex organism that is the city. Additional and more relevant information is needed. Human advancement indicators will attempt to provide this information.

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In preparing this thesis, the nature of existing data-gathering activities has been examined, and federal and State of Michigan proposals for new types of reporting have been described. The new types of data herein proposed for the City of Lansing have been organized with respect to a framework of goals and policies which needs to be developed in order to properly administer an indicators program. Examples of goals and their related indicators are then set forth in two areas of interest, housing and health, along with commentary on the gathering of the needed data and the intended benefits to be derived from such inquiry. Finally, the application and feasibility of an indicators program in Lansing is discussed.

This thesis finds that there is presently a significant lack of organized and readily usable information relating to the quality of life in Lansing. While a great amount and variety of information is gathered, this information is widely scattered throughout public and private agencies in many different forms and with no coherence in definition, a real reference, periodicity or interpretation. In addition, there are gaps in data gathered within and between the specific areas of interest investigated by these agencies.

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The development of an indicators program would draw together some of this diverse information--and seek new information as well--within a framework of goals and enable the users to draw conclusions as to the extent of goal achievement and improvement in the quality of human life. Such a program was found to be feasible and potentially of major significance to the direction of urban development, the establishing of priorities and problem-solving in Lansing.

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CHAPTER I

ON "PROGRESS" AND ITS MEASUREMENT

The Atmosphere of Social Dysfunction

The United States enters the decade of the 1970's faced with a strange and pervasive paradox. As a nation, the United States has progressed at a tremendous rate in its relatively short history. Americans have landed men on the Moon, built a trillion-dollar economy, forged magnificent communications systems, conquered many dreaded diseases, harnessed atomic power and otherwise provided themselves with the highest standard of living in the world.

Yet for all this, a deepening sense of social crisis has characterized this country over the past few years. Newsweek, in its 1970 Fourth of July issue, wrote, "This Independence Day finds the nation in a recession of the spirit--a psychic downturn so pronounced that the mood may in itself constitute a kind of American crisis."[1] After years of dedication, determination, hard work and unbounded

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[1]Peter Goldman, "The Spirit of '70," Newsweek, LXXVI (July 6, 1970), p. 19.

confidence, Americans have of late been called upon to face the serious moral problems presented by an "unpopular" war, racial turmoil, campus uprisings and political assassination.

While these are not new situations, they seem to be magnified and made more urgent through the dramatic impact of mass communications and the increasing free time each individual has to contemplate the world around him. The American people are being forced to examine themselves and their cherished way of life with an unaccustomed critical eye. This awakening has been a painful and unsought chore. Compounding the problems is the growing feeling of frustration as to what can be done. In reference to America's tradition of inventiveness and ingenuity, Time magazine wrote, "Despite the triumph of the moon voyages, that spirit now seems suddenly unequal to mundane problems: they are beyond the powers of technological or scientific tinkering."[2]

The steady urbanization of America has led to a concentration of dysfunction, these "mundane problems," in the cities. Air and water pollution, crime, traffic snarls, power failures and physical deterioration and blight are all facts of life in every major city. Ill

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[2]Henry Greenwald, "Thoughts on a Troubled El Dorado," Time, VC (June 22, 1970), p. 18.

health, poverty, unemployment and racial discrimination
are also major problems in the city, though they are not
its exclusive province.

One response to these problems has been to run away
from them. The explosive growth of the suburbs in recent
years has in large measure been in response to the syner-
gistic multiplication of the city's problems. As the
quality of city life deteriorated, many people who had the
financial capability to move to more pleasant surroundings
did so. Those left behind were predominately the poor,
the marginally subsisting, the elderly with meager resources
and the minorities. As a result, those best equipped to
help solve the city's problems removed themselves to new
areas so as to enjoy the "good life."

Another response, this on the part of city govern-
ment has been the evolution of two parallel attempts to cope
with the problems. The first has been a marked increase in
the number and variety of governmental activities. These
have involved both the intensified regulation of private
development and the direct provision of public facilities
and services. The second has been a new level of partici-
pation in the developmental processes previously left
almost entirely to the private sector of the economy, such
as public housing and urban renewal.

This increasing governmental activity in directing urban development has severly strained our traditional mechanisms for handling urban problems. In addition to being overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the urban system, we have been bewildered by its complexities, unable to see clearly just what has been occuring or how to unravel the mysteries of cause and effect. Urban planners have found it difficult to pin down the context for planning, particularly because the urban system has been changing so rapidly even as they have been immersed in it.

The Role of Planning

Professional city planners have been on the job for over fifty years, yet the cities are still lambasted for their ills. Certainly, this is due in part to the American cultural trait of impatience with imperfect situations. Cities are, in general, better places to live today than they were at the turn of the century. Air pollution, blight, crime, congestion and poverty are not recent arrivals on the city scene; they have been there for a long, long time. What makes the city seem to be regressing is our increasing awareness that these problems, whether improved or further deteriorated, continue to exist. The modern news media with their skilled newsmen and photo-journalists

are able to show us our problems with much greater impact than ever before.

The Introduction to Toward a Social Report helps bring our paradoxical situation into finer focus:

> It is not misery, but advance, that fosters hope and raises expectations. It has been wisely said that the conservatism of the destitute is as profound as that of the privileged. If the Negro American did not protest as much in earlier periods of history as today, it was not for lack of cause, but for lack of hope. If in earlier periods of history we had fewer programs to help the poor, it was not for lack of poverty, but because society did not care and was not under pressure to help the poor. If the college students of the fifties did not protest as often as those of today, it was not for lack of evils to condemn, but probably because hope and idealism were weaker then.[3]

The very fact that progress has been made gives rise to hopes and demands that more be made. The aspects of our society that have been ignored or overlooked have suddenly come rushing to the forefront now that the money and the knowledge to meet the needs seem to be in our grasp.

Thus, the fact remains that whatever our progress at improving the cities, we still have very great problems to face. If planning is to be criticized for its lack of success, i.e., complete resolution of problems--an unreasonable expectation, this criticism should rest on the fact that the profession has too long equated physical planning

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[3]U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Toward a Social Report (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, January, 1969), p. xii.

with city planning. This concept is acceptable as an early stage in its maturation process, but today's urban disharmony clearly shows the limited utility of purely physical planning.

The scope and complexity of the urban system dictates a need for a triadic approach involving physical planning, economic planning and social (including human development) planning. Such an approach would constitute true comprehensive planning. Unfortunately, the term "comprehensive planning" as it is commonly used today relates only to physical planning and thus misleads many people. Kent defines the comprehensive plan as one which (1) deals with all essential physical elements of the urban environment, (2) takes into account the larger geographical setting, and (3) consciously relates to the social and economic forces that it proposes to accommodate.[4] Most of the present comprehensive plans reflect this concept and would more appropriately be called comprehensive physical plans.

While physical planning has been a positive force in most instances, it has provided only partial treatment. In an attempt to fill in some of the gaps, a confusing pattern of related but autonomous programs has proliferated. Many of these programs crisscross the domains of already established agencies and programs and frustrate effective

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[4] T. J. Kent, The Urban General Plan (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1964), p. 98.

coordination. In discussing this situation, Holleb
writes that,

> The growth and complexity of these new pro-
> grams has raised difficult questions relating
> to the scope and role of comprehensive planning
> in municipalities. The degree to which the tra-
> ditional urban planning agencies can and should
> attempt to embrace all of these burgeoning activ-
> ities in cities is still problematic.[5]

Regardless of the degree of involvement on the part
of planners, however, there remains the larger question of
the responsiveness of municipal governments to the needs
of the people. If government wishes to be responsive to
these needs, it then follows that it must be aware of the
needs. This means more than simply knowing that there are
problems. It involves differentiating and specifying prob-
lems, understanding their scope and extent, relating causes
and effects, and devising and selecting alternative approaches
to amelioration and, if possible, solution.

The contribution of urban planning in modern govern-
ment is described by Fagin as "the deliberate coordination
of the activities of many individuals through disciplined
research and creative invention."[6] He states further that

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[5]Doris B. Holleb, Social and Economic Information
for Urban Planning (Chicago: The Center for Urban Studies,
1969), p. 11.

[6]Henry Fagin, "Organizing and Carrying Out Planning
Activities within Urban Government," Journal of the American
Institute of Planners, XXV (August, 1959), p. 109.

"the purpose of organizing and carrying out planning activities within the framework of urban government is to enable the urban community to make intelligent and coherent decisions about its own physical, social and economic evolution."[7]

The role of planning thus can be conceived of as contributing to the formulation of urban developmental and operational policy throughout the broad spectrum of governmental interest, responsibility and activity. In this capacity, planning is comprised of five functions: research and information gathering, general goal formulation, specific plan making, coordination and the furnishing of assistance and advice.[8]

In both physical and economic planning, these five functions have been well-developed and widely implemented. The same cannot be said for social or human development planning. It has been only recently that social planning and extensive social welfare programs have become accepted governmental concerns. Public policy long tacitly assumed that the automatic process of the free market, reinforced by thrift and the acquisitive instinct, would insure economic growth

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid. pp. 110-111.

and increasing prosperity.[9] Thus, social or human develop-
ment planning was deemed unnecessary at best and downright
un-American at worst. Only now are the forces of reality
beginning to erode this concept.

Postulating a Need for Indicators

As urban planners enter--or are pulled--into the
comprehensive planning arena, they find a dichotomy between
their aims and their policy instruments. The former are
social and economic and aesthetic while the latter are
largely advisory and regulatory. As a result, there are
dilemmas and ambiguities in the implementation of complex
programs of broad scope.

It has become painfully obvious, however, that the
outcome of physical development projects for cities is
closely linked with the incomes, education, values, health
and expectations of the people. Likewise, it should be
clear that physical planning depends for its success upon
supporting social and economic policies and programs which
reinforce rather than contradict the aims of physical plan-
ning.

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[9]Lyle C. Fitch, "Social Planning in the Urban Cosmos,"
Urban Research and Policy Planning, ed. Leo F. Schnore and
Henry Fagin (Beverly Hills, California: Saga Publications,
Inc., 1967), p. 335.

These policies and programs, in turn, depend upon
information gathering, its synthesis and analysis and its
interpretation. The process of physical planning has long
emphasized this data-oriented approach, and planning agencies
devote a great deal of time and resources to this task.
Most of the data gathered, however, relates to physical
planning, and there has been very little serious effort
made toward systematically accumulating information which
is descriptive of the condition of people within the city.

As planners, we know of population counts, retail
sales, capital improvements budgets, street traffic volumes,
school attendance, racial composition, community facilities
needs and many other measures of the functioning city. Yet
for all this information, we know relatively little about
the quality of the life of the individual in this country.
For all the effort and the money being expended, we still
lack a clear understanding of the human condition. Bauer
writes that, "For many of the important topics on which
social critics blithely pass judgement, and on which policies
are made, there are no yardsticks by which to know if things
are getting better or worse."[10]

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[10]Raymond A. Bauer, "Detection and Anticipation of
Impact: The Nature of the Task," Social Indicators, ed.
Raymond A. Bauer (Cambridge, Mass.: The M. I. T. Press,
1966), p. 20.

There is a need for such yardsticks if we are to
be able to understand the workings of the human settlement
and to plan rationally and effectively for its improvement.
In recent writings, these yardsticks have been referred to
as "social indicators," i.e., measurements which indicate
the quality of life within our social system and the changes
one way or the other.

There are two basic reasons for being concerned
with the development of these indicators. First, they
could give more visibility to human problems and thus bring
about better informed judgments about priorities. Second,
this increased awareness might ultimately make possible
better evaluation of the public programs which are, osten-
sibley, aimed at solving our problems.

The existing situation in areas with which public
policies must deal is often unclear, not only to the man
in the street, but to public officials as well. In the
routine processes of daily life it is impossible to gain
a complete and balanced view of the condition of the indi-
vidual within society. Different problems have different
degrees of visibility. This visibility often depends, for
example, upon the newsworthiness or potential drama of the
problem.

In addition, some segments of our society are well
organized while others are not. The result is that the

problems of some groups are forcefully articulated and publicized, while the problems of other groups are not.

Problems also differ in the extent to which they are immediately evident to the casual viewer. A killing smog over New York City or a 100-car smash-up on a crowded freeway are immediately obvious, but an inadequate school system or the alienation of a minority group may go undetected for many years.

Along with measuring living conditions, we must also determine how these measurements are changing in response to public programs. If we mount a major public safety program, does the rate of violent crime go down? If we enact new anti-pollution ordinances, does the pollution level decline?

Changes in conditions cannot, of course, be definitely attributed to public programs. Major problems are influenced by many things besides governmental action, and the effects of different causal factors stubbornly resist a sorting out. But one way of getting the needed information is by developing these indicators of existing conditions.

When we have measures of the conditions we care about, we can try to see how our situation changes in response to changes and innovations in public programs and to the increased public awareness and comprehension of problems. In the long

run, evaluation of the effectiveness of public programs
will be improved if we have the indicators to tell us how
and to what degree conditions are changing.

The Chapters Ahead

In the remaining chapters, the need for these
indicators and the task of developing them for the City of
Lansing is explored. The aim of this work is to demonstrate
the value of an indicators program and outline an approach
to establishing and operating such a program.

Basically, the research involves four areas. Chap-
ters II and III examine the present state of the art in this
field of inquiry and the events which have led us this far.
Chapters IV and V survey the existing conditions in Lansing
relative to the development of these indicators and set
forth a need for official goals and policies as a valuable
framework for a measurement program.

Chapter VI then explores the areas of housing and
health in presenting sample goals and indicators as a dem-
onstration of the concept. The final chapter outlines the
application of an indicators program and comments on its
feasibility.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION, DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Definition

The term "social indicators" is being used with increasing frequency as governments and educational institutions find more and more need to examine the quality of life our citizens enjoy. As with most phrases drawn into common usage, however, the definition has tended to broaden into generality. Thus a basic definition is necessitated for the purpose of this writing.

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in its initial publication on social reporting, Toward a Social Report, defines a social indicator as "a statistic of direct normative interest which facilitates concise, comprehensive and balanced judgments about the condition of major aspects of a society."[1] The report further states that,

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[1]U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Toward a Social Report (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, January, 1969), p. 97.

> It is in all cases a direct measure of welfare and
> is subject to the interpretation that, if it changes
> in the 'right' direction, while other things remain
> equal, things have gotten better, or people are 'better
> off.' Thus, statistics on the number of doctors or
> policemen could not be social indicators whereas fig-
> ures on health or crime rates could be.[2]

It is, then, important to remember that it is the condition of the people rather than the activities of public and private organizations which are the subject of measurement.

In order to use these indicators as a measurement and management tool, three major steps or implementation processes are required:

(1) Regular trend series of indicators, which facilitate comparison from time to time, need to be established. If possible, they should be designed for further comparison with indicator systems of other governmental units so as to provide an outside frame of reference.

(2) Mechanisms for gathering the raw data must be organized and established.

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[2]Ibid.

(3) The means of reporting the information

with appropriate speed, in usable form,

to interested agencies must be worked out.

Thus, the term "social indicators" denotes, for
practical application, not only the indicators themselves
but the implementational framework as well. The develop-
ment of a system for gathering and reporting these indica-
tors is similar in process to the building of urban data
banks which is being accomplished in many larger cities.
These data banks, however, are largely concerned with the
physical artifacts comprising the city and the basic popu-
lation characteristics, while the indicators of social con-
ditions focus on the qualitative aspects of life as carried
on within that physical setting.

The Definition of "Social"

It is unfortunate that the literature in the field
of social indicators has not evolved a more precise term
for the subject. The word "social" is commonly used in a
broad general sense in referring to man's activities in all
situations. More specifically, however, it refers to his
group activities, i.e., within the set of institutions
which form the relationships between and among men. This

social system is superimposed over the individual human being and structures and guides his daily life.

The word "social" is defined as "of or pertaining to society as an organism or as a group of interrelated, interdependent persons."[3] Here also, the term is used as referring to men in the aggregate form, interrelated by their institutions, e.g., family, religion, law, education, government, economic, etc. Indeed, the social system is totally comprised of the set of institutions which exist.

Use of the term "social indicators" evidently emerged as a phrase to supplement and parallel the widely used "economic indicators" developed for the measurement of economic activities. What the term fails to recognize, however, is that economic activities are social activities, and therefore social activities are not the opposite or human counterparts, of economic activities. "Social" refers to the institutional activities and relationships of people, of which the economic are only one aspect.

Put another way, there is nothing "social" about one person alone because there must be more than one individual involved for the word "social" to have any meaning. The word depends upon the existence of interpersonal relationships and exchange as a basis for definition.

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[3]_Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary_ (Springfield, Mass., G. C. Merriam Co., 1958), p. 803.

The term "social indicators," then, would be more appropriate for describing the qualitative aspects of institutional behavior and effectiveness and would best be reserved for use in their study and evaluation. Other terms, such as "human welfare indicators," "human advancement indicators," or "human development indicators" would be more appropriate for evaluating the well-being of the individual.

It is for these reasons that the term "human advancement indicators" is used in this work rather than the less definitive "social indicators."

Human Advancement Indicators

Human advancement indicators are those measures which refer to and describe the living conditions of people, such as housing quality, freedom of choice in housing location, adequacy of health care, etc. Some of these indicators will indirectly reflect how well the social institutions are meeting human needs, but they are not designed specifically for that purpose. When they are teamed with indicators of institutional activity and effectiveness, we will then be provided with a revealing picture of how well our society is functioning and where modifications and improvements are needed in order to avoid further harmful or violent dysfunctions within the society.

Human advancement indicators will be a necessity
if "social planning" is to be a meaningful endeavor. If
we conceive of social planning as planning for changes and
adaptations of various institutions within society--which
are already rapidly undergoing profound and confusing
changes, then all urban planners are involved in social
planning. In fact, they have no choice. The very purpose
of physical and financial planning is to benefit the indi-
vidual, but unless these narrow confines are discarded by
planners, including all public policy makers, individual
human advancement will be needlessly slow and disjointed.

The implementation of a human advancement indica-
tors system would allow governmental units to have a much
more precise and usuable picture of their constituents' way
of life and thus enable them to increase the relevancy of
their programs and efforts. If the indicators point out
failures of the market place, then governments must have the
courage to try to fill in the gaps. The federal and state
governments have recently made significant progress in this
area, but further efforts must be made at the local level.
It is at this level that human progress is most readily and
realistically observable--and most difficult to achieve.

Federal and state governments set the stage for
human progress through social policy legislation, but the
major burden of improving conditions falls upon local

governments. Therefore, local evaluation of existing conditions is mandatory for the proper design and carrying out of programs for human advancement.

It is foolish to say that local government has no concern with social or human advancement because this is the primary reason for having government in the first place. Schools, police and fire protection, libraries, streets and all facilities and services provided by local government are aimed at the advancement of the people. The only question is where do we draw the line in fostering advancement, or should we draw a line? The traditional concepts of this question and its answers are now hotly debated.

Regardless of line-drawing, however, human advancement indicators will be extremely beneficial tools of government, if not in solving problems then at least in understanding and anticipating them in terms of planning and establishing priorities.

The Difference Between Data and Indicators

Statistics are gathered not out of a general sense of curiosity, but rather because it is presumed that they will be guides and monitors for planning and action. Unfortunately, many of the statistics gathered by urban agencies only presume to describe the quality of life enjoyed

by the citizenry. In addition, the simple availability
of statistics regarding the society (in the general sense)
does not ensure that they will be used and studied as indi-
cators in any attempt to sum up the state of the city.

In parallel with this situation, there appears to
be a high degree of interaction between judgments of the
importance of a phenomenon and the existence of measure-
ments of it. Biderman notes that "we attempt to observe
and comprehend those aspects of reality that are important
to us, but, at the same time, the aspects that we are best
able to observe and comprehend seem to be those that become
important."[4]

In developing human advancement indicators, there
is a need to distinguish and seek out those measures which
specifically relate to the human condition while using sur-
rogates[5] as little as possible. For example, the teacher-
pupil ratio is not a reliable indicator of the quality of
education because it does not tell us if today's students

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[4]Albert D. Biderman, "Social Indicators and Goals,"
Social Indicators, ed. Raymond A. Bauer (Cambridge, Mass.:
The M.I.T. Press, 1966), p. 97.

[5]Gross defines a "surrogate" as an indirect indi-
cator that serves as a quantitative substitute for, or
representative of, a phenomenon we want to measure. For
example, the price one pays for something is a surrogate
measure of the human satisfaction derived from that object.
Bertram Gross, "Social Systems Accounting," Social Indicators,
ed. Raymond A. Bauer (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press,
1966), p. 267.

with a low ratio are learning more than their predecessors
who had a higher ratio.

The difference between data and indicators, then,
is the difference between the descriptive facts or the
resources being expended in a given situation and the
measureable results of the efforts, i.e., empirical evidence
of changing conditions. There are literally mountains of
data concerning our educational institutions but very little
on the extent to which they have achieved their purpose.
The teacher-pupil ratio is only a weak surrogate in this
situation.

This does not mean that surrogates can be even gen-
erally avoided. Many phenomena cannot be directly quantified,
such as human aspirations and satisfactions. In such cases,
surrogates will be the best we can do. They can perform
valuable service for us, but they can also be misused when
they are taken too seriously. Users of surrogates must be
fully aware of the relationship of the surrogate to the
phenomenon being investigated in order that the data may
be suitably weighted in interpretation.

Categories of Indicators

If the project of developing human advancement
indicators is to be pursued, the basic question to be

answered is, "What is to be measured?" Out of necessity
dictated by time and resources, planners and evaluators
concentrate their attention in specific areas of activity
instead of dispersing their attention to all aspects of
human activity. However, they must also have a comprehen-
sive view as a background for their strategic selection of
activities and programs. In other words, we must know our
universe before establishing priorities.

The great value of human advancement indicators is
that they can provide legislators and planners a conceptual
and informational basis for economically scanning the universe
and selecting those problem areas that are most relevant and
pressing given the particular circumstances.

It is also true that a completely comprehensive set
of indicators is far beyond our present capabilities and
probably always will be. The task, then, is to ascertain
which aspects of human life are most important and realis-
tically within our capabilities to affect and improve.

To this end, the U. S. Department of Health, Educa-
tion and Welfare identified seven categories or areas where
it feels indicators can and should be developed:

    1) Health and Illness

    2) Social Mobility

    3) Physical Environment

    4)   Income and Poverty

    5)   Public Order and Safety

    6)   Learning, Science and Art

    7)   Participation and Alienation[6]

At the state level, Michigan has identified six categories for study and evaluation in a similar manner:

    1)   Demographic Indicators

    2)   Health Indicators

    3)   Economic Indicators

    4)   Lawful Behavior Indicators

    5)   Education Indicators

    6)   Environmental Indicators[7]

These two sets of indicator areas provide a good example of the kinds of subjects which are thought at high government levels to be the most important aspects of human life and those which can be positively affected by governmental action. The items of the two separate lists closely correspond, and it is not mere coincidence that these are

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[6]U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, op. cit.

[7]Center for Urban Studies, Wayne State University, Social Reporting in Michigan: Problems and Issues, Technical Report A-37, State of Michigan, Office of Planning Coordination, Bureau of Policies and Programs (Lansing, February, 1970).

the subjects which lie at the heart of the national crisis
atmosphere.

It will be the task of the local governments to
follow the examples set by higher governments by establishing
appropriate categories of indicators which reflect local
problems and areas of conern as well as those which con-
tribute to a better overall understanding of local issues.
Just how broad this array of categories should be will depend
at first on the resources and skills available to the agencies
involved. As experience increases and serious gaps become
evident, additional categories can be added.

Examples of Indicators
within Categories

The types of indicators derived for each category
may come from two sources. First, some indicators will be
readily available in the established regular series of
statistics used by local agencies, both public and private.
Health departments, school boards, law enforcement offices,
insurance companies, industrial firms and planning agencies
themselves are examples of record-keeping organizations
which could be much more usefully linked through the estab-
lishment of an indicator system. The routinization of the
exchange of information would benefit all agencies involved.

Typical of this type of indicator are health data,
such as births (total and illegitimate), mortality (by
causes), morbidity, mental illness and disability, and
employment and poverty data, such as incomes, employment
and job vacancy. This type of data is already well-
developed; however, breakdowns by age, race, sex and marital
status are not necessarily available in all cases. The
effectiveness and utility of the indicator system will
depend to a large extent upon the degree of specificity of
this data and how well it facilitates analysis by geograph-
ical area.

The second source of indicators will be the minds
of those people devising the system. New indicators series
will have to be identified, developed and implemented. In
addition, new research techniques may be required in some
cases.

For example, if we are concerned with measuring
environmental quality, we may want to develop indicators
of noise and odor pollution, space utilization, accessi-
bility and physical aesthetics in addition to air and water
pollution. Scientific measuring devices may be needed in
some cases to investigate pollution levels, while perform-
ance standards may have to be established for judging space
utilization. The human advancement indicators developed
in this category may then be contamination, noise and odor

levels (by area), space utilization ratios, physical blight identifications and other similar findings.

The existing scattered statistical indicator data brought together with newly devised indicators will begin to form a coherent framework for the monitoring and evaluation of human conditions within the geographical unit. The extent of this framework will depend upon the needs of the unit, the resources which can be devoted to it and the political atmosphere encompassing the development of the entire indicator project.

Rationale and Need

The unprecedented prosperity which has been witnessed by the twentieth century Americans has led to the birth of a widely held legend of national techno-economic omnipotence. With only seven per cent of the world's land area and six per cent of its population, our nation's output accounts for about one third of the world's total industrial production.[8] A record of dramatically expanding production on short notice for two world wars, the absence of a major depression since the thirties and the emergence of stunning scientific achievements such as atomic energy, computers, practical use

[8]Leonard A. Lecht, Goals, Priorities and Dollars (New York: The Free Press, 1966), p. 19.

of orbiting satellites and manned space travel have helped
create this notion of omnipotence. Our progress is appar-
ently spectacular.

Or is it? Do we really know? Are we so enamored
of GNP statistics, space achievements and the splendid
luxury of television and the private automobile that we
fail to stop for a moment and take orderly stock of our
situation? Do we mistake the success of the "thing-oriented"
aspects of our society for a sound indication of the overall
advancement of the individual? This is certainly the case
in some measure and probably inevitable, for we are cultur-
ally attuned to the pervasive philosophy of attaining the
new and improved product.

Yet what represents progress for the individual?
The weight of the evidence supporting the legend is in many
ways offset by the rising pressures of unmet needs and the
calls for an examination of our way of life and the curious
goals and priorities it has unsystematically evolved.
Indeed, our entire value system is being called into question,
and the role of values is central to the question of progress.

It is impossible to know progress without the orienta-
tion provided by values. In the introduction to The
Dimensions of Values, Mukerjee states that, "Man's mind is
the locus of hierarchical dimensions and polarities," and
that due to this capacity to comprehend polarities, "he always

moves to and fro between the sensory-existential and the ideal-transcendent dimension and derives values from both."[9] Thus, he experiences tensions between survival and perfection, impulse and reason, id and conscience, egoism and altruism, self-expression and self-regulation. In the process, he becomes conscious of the polarities between actualities and possibilities, and "as he choses the dimension of possibilities rather than actualities, he creates values and realizes human _eidos_, essence or being. Values are concomitants of self-actualization and self-transcendence."[10]

C. J. Herrick, as Mukerjee quotes, observes that, "The thing that is most distinctive about man is the pattern of his growth and the instrumentation of it by a rationally directed desire for improvement."[11] Mukerjee follows by stating:

> Such a directive quality of adjustment of organism to the environment at the dimension of human social evolution is called 'values' which influence the course of evolution towards greater individuality and openness of self and purposive direction of self and environment. The qualitative improvement of man may be defined as increase in the range and variety of values as a means of better control of both self and environmental resources for a freer, richer and more harmonious living.[12]

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[9]Radhakamal Mukerjee, The Dimensions of Values (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964), p. 10.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., p. 15.

[12]Ibid.

Mukerjee sees the human system of values as not only shaping and transforming man's biological nature but also enabling him to control his environment and direct his evolution and progress according to his own conceptions of all-around freedom and wholeness as revealed by his intelligence, imagination and intuition. Thus, our concept of potentialities is a model of value-creation and value-orientation.

The concept of progress, then, depends upon the implicit or explicit recognition of values and is facilitated by the embodiment of these values in some sort of functional framework which serves as a standard for measuring the results of activities and efforts. The problem facing America is the need to critically examine our values as a society and as individuals in an attempt to re-orient ourselves toward working together for overall human advancement.

Of course, we have a general notion that progress is being made even without a codification of values--our nation's poor, for example, would hardly qualify for sympathy in the world's underdeveloped countries. We just "know" that progress is being made because in America, the quality of life is supposed to be good, good for everyone. We ascribe special powers to the artificial political boundaries which outline our shores. We don't stop to evaluate how the progress is distributed. Our faith in the market place assures

us that it is here for everyone to enjoy if each individual
will do his share. Only very belatedly are we being jarred
into awareness of the differing rates of progress at the
various levels of our society.

The national crisis atmosphere has revealed this to
us. We are now beginning to understand that progress toward
achieving a full and rewarding life is uneven, that it will
take an organized and coordinated approach to our problems
if they are to be solved in time to prevent the total break-
down of our society which looms before us. This will require
a thorough examination of our values, our methods of estab-
lishing priorities and our expenditure of available resources,
as well as a perhaps painful self-analysis and recognition
of the nature and scope of the local urban problems.

In recent years, this organized approach has begun
to take form in the rise of policy planning and the establish-
ment of goals and objectives programs for entire governmental
units. By systematically formulating goals, we face up to
the fact that there will be competing claims on our resources.
We know that we can make substantial progress in some areas
and probably some progress in most others, but that we can-
not accomplish all of our aspirations at the same time.
Confronted with the need to make sense of the diverse claims
on our system, we face the options of increasing our resources
or utilizing them more effectively and setting feasible

targets for our objectives. In addition to the question
of which goals to pursue, we must at the same time decide
the questions of how much, in what quantitative combinations
and how soon.

Now, as the formulation of goals, objectives and
policies more and more becomes an accepted process of
government, human advancement indicators need to be developed,
both to facilitate the goal-priority-policy evolution and
to measure subsequent progress toward goal achievement once
the course has been selected.

Our indicators need to be those which continually
focus our attention on the extent of human progress being
derived from our efforts and which fully reflect and take
into account the basic underlying issues facing the com-
munity. In the process, we may well discover some things
about ourselves we hadn't realized before.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPT

Introduction

During the middle third of this century, the United
States made major advances in developing regular, well-
ordered and increasingly reliable economic data. These
advances provided some help to public and private decision-
making in meeting the challenges of the Depression and
World War II. They have been of increasingly greater help
since the end of the War when the passage of the Employment
Act of 1946 created the Council of Economic Advisors and
provided for the President's annual Economic Report and
the Council's monthly publication, Economic Indicators.[1]

Now, as we enter the last third of this century, a
significant shift is beginning to occur in the informational
aspects of decision-making. This shift is associated with
a variety of attempts to outline and map out almost every
aspect of our political, social and economic life. Acquiring
the social intelligence required to accurately detail these
maps may prove to be the most challenging and important
tasks facing us.

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[1]Bertram M. Gross and Michael Springer, "Developing
Social Intelligence," Social Intelligence for America's
Future (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1969), p. 3.

Interest in such programs has long been building and is now widespread. Among the historical sources of this interest are such factors as:

1) The increasing maturation of the social sciences during the first two-thirds of this century, with increasing attention to quantitative methods;

2) The emergence of corporate executives with information-oriented styles of management and broader social perspectives;

3) The entry into public positions of a broadening array of intellectuals, professionals, modern-style managers, technologists and natural and social scientists;

4) The acceptance of the "new economics" by both conservatives and liberals, with increasing attention by both to social as well as economic objectives; and,

5) Continuing efforts to provide more rational bases for political decision making.[2]

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[2]Ibid., p. 17.

As a result of these occurances, social indicators
and human advancement indicators have gained legitimacy in
government and academic circles and have led to research
and inquiry in disciplines ranging from statistics and
mathematics to sociology and political science. Many uni-
versity research institutes, government agencies and non-
profit service organizations have contributed to the growth
of the still-emerging field. Acting as a spur to the
academic and private research efforts, government interest
at all levels has led to the first attempts at practical
application and stimulated expanded research.

Since human advancement indicators can describe
all the basic aspects of human life, they have begun to
generate interest in many areas of government beyond the
legislative and executive offices. Line agencies can benefit
not only from improved policy-making and legislation by
superiors but from the availability of new and better infor-
mation as well. Where in the past economic data and routine
record-keeping have been primary bases for government decision-
making, human advancement indicators can provide much more
additional relevant data.

As a recent innovation, human advancement indicators
come as the latest step in a long history of data gathering
by governing bodies and have evolved from the continuing
search for new ways to understand and therefore improve our

society. Only a few years ago, such a program would not
have been feasible due to the political atmosphere of the
country and to technological limitations. But today, com-
ments Michael Springer, they are ideas "whose time has come,
because they are needed."[3]

The Rise of Economic
Indicators

The history of the measurement of human concern
reaches back even to Biblical times. Joseph's forecast
of seven fat years and seven lean years, based on his inter-
pretation of the Pharaoh's dream, led to the measurement of
all Egypt's land so that during the seven fat years the corn
harvested from one-fifth of the land could be stored in
preparation for the famine to come.[4] The Book of Numbers
also tells of the first census taken, its primary purposes
being to count the number of warriors and to determine a
basis for taxation.[5] We also know that Mary and Joseph
happened to be in Bethlehem for the purpose of being counted
in the census.

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[3]Michael Springer, Social Indicators, Reports and
Accounts," The Annals of The American Academy of Political
and Social Science, Vol. 388 (March, 1970), p. 13.

[4]Genesis, XLI.

[5]Numbers, I.

The term "statistics" comes from the Latin ratio status and the Italian ragiono di stato, terms which came into use during the Middle Ages to designate the study of practical politics, as distinguished from historical and philosophical views of state activity.[6] The use of numbers and measurement flourished during the Renaissance, and in 1770 the term "statistic" first appeared in English, translated from the German statistik.[7]

It is only recently that quantification has become an essential element in the definition of statistics. Biderman states that the "rise of numerical study of society is said to stem from the gradual growth of the influence of the seventeenth-century school of thought known as 'political arithmetic,'" but that now a reversal has occured in that treating numbers as relevant to the "condition of the state" no longer has definitional relevance for statistics.[8]

The U. S. Constitution called for statistics in requiring a decennial census and a periodic Presidential

[6]Albert D. Biderman, "Social Indicator and Goals," Social Indicators, ed. Raymond A. Bauer (Cambridge, Mass.: The M. I. T. Press, 1966), p. 75.

[7]W. F. Wilcox, "Statistics, History," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1934), Vol. 14, p. 356.

[8]Biderman, loc. cit.

report to Congress on the "State of the Nation." Thus, the framers of the Constitution recognized the information function of government and the need for significant data. Statistics presented in the State of the Union address have been predominantly oriented to economics,[9] and now two additional messages supplement it, the Budget Messages begun under the Budget and Accounting Act of 1921 and the Economic Report established by the Employment Act of 1946.

National economic accounting is of course one of our government's major tasks today. The evolution of these indicators dates back to the 1600's when governments were greatly influenced by the use of business accounting in the great trading companies and by Jean Colbert's historic work in developing accounting methods for governmental use.[10] The preparation of statistical tables for tallying the total output and income of a nation was further developed by the "classical" economists, including most recently John Maynard Keynes.

In the United States, a great surge in national economic analysis occured at an accelerating pace during the Depression, World War II and the postwar period of

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[9]Ibid., p. 92.

[10]Bertram M. Gross, "Social Systems Accounting," Social Indicators, ed. Raymond A. Bauer (Cambridge, Mass.: The M. I. T. Press, 1966), p. 162.

reconstruction and expansion. During each of these periods, national economic indicators were seen as instruments of national economic planning, and the sophistication involved went far beyond its immediate practical usefulness.

Today, the pervasive domination of the economic rationale is slowly beginning to give way to the notion that economic indicators are inadequate for assisting in the formulation of new and innovative social policy and indeed can be misleading in this area.

The Emergence of Social Indicators

Our society, like most modern societies, has become future-oriented. We have become increasingly aware of the multiple impacts of social change and in so doing have accepted the fact that our complicated society demands care-ful and soundly-based planning. As part of this planning, we have to anticipate social change, assess its consequences and decide what policies are necessary to facilitate desir-able changes and inhibit the undesirable.

The idea of developing indicators to help bring about this type of planning has a relatively long history and originally arose in the earliest reflection on the con-sequences of private economic activities. These principally involved the recognition of the divergence between the

private costs borne by a firm as an individual entrepreneur and the costs to others as a result of the activity, i.e., the concept of social cost.

In his New Principles of Political Economics (1819), the socialist writer Sismondi first made the idea explicit. He argued that man, not wealth, is the true object of economics and advanced his own concept of a social security program supported by employers. It remained until 1920 for A. C. Pigou, in Economics and Welfare, to integrate the idea of social costs into the conceptual systems of equilibrium economics. He distinguished between "marginal social product" and "marginal private net product" and pointed out that the investment of additional resources may place costs upon people not directly concerned, e.g., pollution of the air and water due to industrial processes. Thus, the marginal net social product of a given unit of investment may be considerably smaller than the marginal private net product.[11]

Later exploration into welfare economics has tended to play down the idea of social costs by conceiving of the welfare of the community in terms of the sum total of utilities of individuals. Nevertheless, the idea of measuring social costs (also referred to as "externalities" or

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[11]Daniel Bell, "The Idea of a Social Report," The Public Interest, 15 (Spring, 1969), pp. 73-75.

diseconomies") is an important aspect of the trend toward
creating social indicators and human advancement indicators.

Another pioneering figure in this area was William
F. Ogburn who produced a vast amount of work on the measure-
ment of social change. He promulgated the development of
statistical series which could be correlated and projected
into the future and viewed such series as necessary for
effective social planning.

His major contribution, however, was made while
serving as the Director of Research for the President's
Research Committee on Social Trends, created by Herbert
Hoover in 1929 to study "where social stresses are occuring
and where major efforts should be undertaken to deal with
them constructively."[12] Ogburn was the key man behind the
Committee's massive (29 chapters) publication of 1933,
Recent Social Trends, which was the major precursor to any
contemporary social report. This volume was the outgrowth
of five volumes edited by Ogburn, as annual reports, entitled
Social Changes in 1928, in 1929, in 1930, in 1931, in 1932.
The intention was to continue this annual reporting, but
the project fell victim to the pressures of the depression.[13]

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[12]Springer, op. cit., p. 7.

[13]Ibid., pp. 75-76. See also: Michael Springer,
op. cit., p. 7.

Later in that decade, The National Resource Plan-

ning Board developed substantial monographic studies on

technology, population and the cities which were intended

to be guides for the preparation of public policy. These

were published as World War II unfolded and were ignored

in the resulting tumult. The effort was not resumed after-

wards.

In view of these early projects, it is surprising

how long a re-emergence of interest has taken. During the

1940's and 1950's, sociologists neglected social-trend

analysis, and the federal government was chiefly involved

with the shaping of macro-economic data and the formulation

of the economic advisory process in the Council of Economic

Advisers.

Since the late 1950's, however, interest in human

social conditions has begun to grow once again. As a part

of the national introspection precipitated by Russia's

Sputnik in 1957, President Eisenhower created the Commis-

sion on National Goals to study and report on what our goals

should be and to recommend appropriate policies to achieve

them. The Commission's report, Goals for Americans,[14] was

published in 1960 and received widespread notice. While

this effort has been called conservative and backward

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[14]American Assembly, ed., Goals for Americans
(Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1960).

looking,[15] it nonetheless called attention to the need for major new efforts in self-analysis.

During the Kennedy Administration, with the rising concern with domestic social problems, the interest in social measurement and trend-analysis truly reawakened. Economists using cost-benefit analysis methods became aware of the difficulty in measuring social costs and social benefits. Planning-Programming-Budgeting Systems (PPBS) were formulated by political scientists and economists as a means of rationalizing diverse governmental programs and guaging the effectiveness of alternative approaches. Sociologists became interested in long-range forecasting for purposes of social planning. Today's interest in social indicators has been one result of the confluence of all these concerns.

It remained until Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society" programs for the idea of measuring the quality of life to take on an operational form. Richard N. Goodwin, in a Washington, D. C., address on July 20, 1965, set the stage:

> The Great Society looks beyond the prospects of abundance to the problems of abundance. . . . Everywhere there is growth and movement, activity and change. But where is the place for man? . . . The task of the Great Society is to ensure our people the environment, the capacities, and the social structures which will give them a meaningful chance to pursue their individual happiness. . . . Thus the

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[15]Michael Springer, op. cit., p. 8.

Great Society is concerned not with how much,
but how good--not with the quantity of our
goods but the quality of our lives.[16]

The idea and the hope were there, and considerable

research on social reporting was accomplished. Yet, even

the Johnson Administration found the process difficult to

put into action. It was not until the last day of his term

of office, January 20, 1969, that the book, Toward a Social

Report was published. The book represented the first federal

effort to try to devise a system of human advancement indi-

cators at the national level and spurred interest in the

concept at state and city government levels.

The idea has had serious consideration in Congress.

Through the efforts of Senators Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.)

and Fred B. Harris (D-Okla.), "The Full Opportunity and

Social Accounting Act" was introduced in two consecutive

sessions of Congress. This bill called for the creation

of a council of social advisors, an annual social report

of the President, and a joint committee on the social report.

On July 13, 1969, the Nixon administration committed

itself to the idea of annual social reports.[17] However,

no further federal work on indicators and reporting has

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[16]Quoted from Gross, "Preface," op. cit., p. xii.

[17]Springer, op. cit., p. 3.

been published. Judging from the Republican administrator's approach to dealing with social problems, it appears that the continuation of meaningful research and the implementation of social reporting will have to await a new Democratic administration or the reintroduction and passage of the Full Opportunity Bill.

Recent Developmental Progress

The field of applied social or human advancement indicators is of such recent origin that very little in the way of research or basic program outlines for specific units of government has been published. In fact, only the above-mentioned federal document and the State of Michigan's Social Reporting in Michigan are readily available for study.

Springer reports that the states of New York and Missouri (in addition to Michigan) and the cities of New York, Boston, and Detroit have "explored the possibility of social reporting."[18] Correspondence with each of these governmental bodies, however, revealed that none has proceeded far enough to provide any material useful here. Apparently, these "explorations" either have not progressed to any significant degree or have not reached the point where material for public inquiry has been prepared.

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[18] Ibid.

The federal and State of Michigan programs on
social reporting are discussed in the remainder of this
chapter in order that the reader may have some understanding
of the approach of these pioneering efforts in developing
indicator systems.

The Federal Effort

The document Toward A Social Report does not pur-
port to be a social report. As the title implies, it is
an attempt on the part of social scientists to look at
several important areas of social concern and digest what
is known about progress toward generally accepted goals.
The document treats six areas: health, social mobility,
the condition of the physical environment, income and pov-
erty, public order and safety, and learning, science and
art. A seventh area, participation and alienation, is
examined, but the authors state that little more than "asking
the right questions" can be attempted with this subject.

In each of the six areas, the study discusses the
status of our nation and cites general sub-areas for which
indicators should be devised. Basically, it outlines the
types of data which are already available to start the
continuing assessment of the society and sets forth the
needs for new types of data to round out our picture of

ourselves. A principal aim of the study appears to be to draw attention to the biases and weaknesses of present statistics and indicators and to demonstrate how and why we should go about correcting these deficiencies.

While this study accomplishes these rather general aims, it makes no attempt to present a basic set of indicators for each major area. However, the document was actually prepared to provide a point of beginning for a major federal commitment to development of a social reporting program on a scale approaching that of the economic reporting establishment. As such, it serves as an introduction to the field and opens the door to a vast new area of inquiry into the true nature of the state of human welfare in this country.

The Michigan Approach

The State of Michigan published its first document in this field in February 1970, approximately one year after the federal study was published. This document, Social Reporting in Michigan: Problems and Issues,[19] was prepared by the Center for Urban Studies at Wayne State

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[19]Center for Urban Studies, Wayne State University, Social Reporting in Michigan: Problems and Issues, State of Michigan Office of Planning Coordination, Bureau of Policies and Programs, Technical Report A-37, (Lansing, February, 1970). This document was prepared for and is available from the Office of Planning Coordination.

University of Detroit under the coordination of Dr. Eugene
D. Perle.

The Michigan study differs greatly from the federal
study. While the Michigan document also outlines the need
for reporting and the problems involved, it goes on to dis-
cuss present reporting activities, the varieties of data
available and a method for organizing the data. Most
importantly, however, this document suggests and attempts
to operationalize actual indicators within six substantive
areas: demography, health, the economy, lawful behavior,
education and environment.

The emphasis in each area is upon the assessment
of conditions of life for individuals or households. The
report focuses on the outcome or presumed results of public
and private programs rather than on inputs or measures of
the programs themselves. It also evaluates the range of
existing information, data inconsistencies and data incom-
parabilities and pinpoints data gaps.

In spite of the problems acknowledged in the report,
the authors believe that indicator programs should begin
now since we cannot wait for "better information" to become
available. Their view of the situation is clearly spelled
out:

> . . . it is naive to believe that all of the infor-
> mation required for a comprehensive information
> system of socio-economic indicators could be specified

a priori either now or in the foreseeable future.
Thus there appears to be no justification for
waiting for 'better information.' In fact, starting
a regular program of public reporting will do more
towards accelerating efforts to get and use better
information than will be the rhetoric associated
with avoiding such a commitment. Not enough infor-
mation exists for all pertinent indicator categories
to be covered in any reporting system begun at this
time, nor is information available from as small
geographic units as would be optimal. These defic-
iencies can be corrected as the annual reporting
system is developed.[20]

Indicators for Lansing?

The Michigan report forcefully articulates the

State's needs while admitting that initial efforts will,

by necessity, be relatively modest. In the case of cities,

and particularly smaller cities, the needs are at least as

great, and the problems to be encountered in developing

suitable programs are probably greater. In the City of

Lansing, for example, quality of life indicators could be

extremely useful to policy-makers and planners. Yet such

a program would be a major undertaking, making major demands

for funds, staff time and specialized expertise. Political

and public acceptance of such a program could also be dif-

ficult to achieve.

The following chapters attempt to explore the

feasibility of a human advancement indicators program for

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[20]Ibid., p. 277.

the City of Lansing and to devise an approach to estab-
lishing an initial set of indicators. The emphasis is
on the problems of establishing a suitable program design
rather than on the technical and mechanical aspects of
operating such a program.

CHAPTER IV

THE LOCAL CONTEXT FOR INDICATORS:

OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS

Introduction

Lansing exists today as a city with great potential

for organized growth and a steadily increasing quality of

life for all its residents. This potential is based on

several major factors. The city is prosperous, having a

relatively stable and diversified employment pattern as a

basic support. It has a central location within the most

heavily urbanized area of the state and serves as the

State Capital. It is well served by a regional transpor-

tation network.

The average household income for the city is high,[1]

and the average school years completed by residents exceeds

12 years.[2] Skill levels of the labor force are steadily

[1]In 1968, the Lansing area ranked 52nd in the
country. Lansing, Planning Department, Community Renewal
Division, Community Needs: A Program for the Future
(Lansing, 1969), p. 7.

[2]Ibid., p. 8.

being upgraded to higher and medium skilled occupations,[3]
and job opportunities are expanding. Moreover, regional
studies project significant continued increase in all of
these areas.[4]

All these factors augur well for the future of
Lansing. Yet the problems which confront the nation as
a whole also threaten to seriously endanger the well-
ordered progress of the city. The same growth which has
brought prosperity and advancement to most of the city's
residents has also brought frustration and disillusionment
to others in the community.

Unemployment and underemployment still plague less
fortunate citizens. Many of the vital industrial firms
have sites that are now hemmed in and exert a blighting
influence on some older neighborhoods. The railroads and
trucks which tie the industries to their markets now snarl
traffic and degrade residential areas. Lansing's pleasant
inner-city neighborhoods of earlier years have been allowed
to deteriorate and are now increasingly becoming a dumping

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[3]Lansing, Planning Department, Community Renewal
Division, Employment Analysis, Working Paper No. 4 (Lansing,
1966), p. 2.

[4]Ibid., pp. 5-7. See also: Tri-County Regional
Planning Commission, The House We Live In, An Introduction
to the Comprehensive Regional Development Plan (Lansing:
The Commission, 1968).

place for the poor and the minority groups who find it
virtually impossible to escape.

As in many other cities, the opportunities of
growth and progress have also provided the city with a
challenge. Yet, the response has been inadequate in many
cases. The Lansing master plan of 1921 cited problems
which sadly remain after half a century:

> The present city shows evidence of haphazard-
> ness, carelessness, uncoordinated effort. The best
> city that could have been built upon the site has
> not realized. A large part of the natural beauty
> of river and woodland, undoubtedly impressive in the
> early days of the community, has been permitted to
> disappear. The fact of its being the capital is but
> very slightly reflected in the appearance of the city.
> The regularity and order of the street layout of the
> early "Town of Michigan" has not even been continued.
> Streets end abruptly, make jogs and vary in width
> without reason in the areas outside the original town.
> There is consequent disruption of traffic flow and
> loss to industry, commerce and eventually to the resi-
> dents of the city. All the railroads operate through
> the city at grade, their crossings being both dangerous
> and wasteful. Separate rights-of-way are used and no
> effort is made to simplify operation or combine for
> efficiency and better service. A belt line railroad
> has been built . . . but its location was ill-advised
> with reference to tendencies of growth and an orderly
> residential expansion. Already the constrictive effect
> of the belt is being felt. . . . Parks and play areas,
> furthermore, have not kept pace with other growth.
> The pronounced industrial character which Lansing has
> lately assumed should dictate a more thorough interest
> on the part of the city in such facilities. Too great
> dependence has heretofore been placed on the generosity
> of individual citizens. As a consequence Lansing is
> missing the beneficial effect of a well-rounded system
> of recreational facilities. In housing the city is
> more fortunate, but still the standards and safeguards
> are imperfect. There are no substantial guarantees
> that present conditions will continue. . . . In its
> present state Lansing is a strange mixture of factories,

stores and homes with certain individual units of each type preempting space properly belonging to another use. Conflict of interest has resulted and incidentally property values have suffered unnecessary derangement.[5]

Only a cursory examination of the state of the city today is needed to find that most of these comments remain appropriate even after 50 years of trying to cope with the problems.

In the mid-1960's, the Lansing City Council recognized the continuation of serious problem situations within the city and on June 25, 1965, directed that a thorough study of the city's problems and needs and a program to resolve them be undertaken. The Lansing Community Renewal Program (CRP) was the response to this order. Since that time, the CRP analysis has shed a great deal of light on the conditions of the city.

A thorough housing conditions survey in 1966 revealed that approximately 50% of the housing supply, over 20,000 units, was substandard, and that nearly 6,000 units, or 15% of the total supply, had deteriorated to the point where it is doubtful that they could even be rehabilitated.[6] This serious deterioration of housing units has

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[5]Harland Bartholomew, The Lansing Plan (St. Louis, Mo., 1921), pp. 13-14.

[6]Lansing, Planning Department, Community Renewal Division, Community Needs: A Program for the Future (Lansing, 1969), p. 10.

been accompanied by an out-migration of middle-income families to the suburbs and a corresponding in-migration of lower-income and minority groups families, primarily in the inner city.

Major factory expansion, Interstate Highway construction and expansion of the State Capitol complex resulted in a loss of nearly 2,000 housing units, mostly low-value homes, during the six-year 1963-1968 period.[7] While the city gained an additional 4,500 units during this period,[8] most of the units were designed primarily for upper middle-income groups. The nearly 1,200 units of moderate-income and low-income public housing[9] which were built helped ease the situation, but demand continues to be far in excess of supply.

While substandard housing conditions are found in the greatest number around the older inner city area which developed prior to 1920, there are also pockets of deterioration in more recently developed areas, particularly low-income areas which were carelessly developed in the township and then later were annexed to the city. The environment

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[7]Ibid., p. 12.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Lansing, Planning Department, Community Renewal Division, Lansing's Community Renewal Program (Lansing, 1970), p. 6.

in these substandard areas is characterized by traffic
volumes which exceed street capacity and which result
in noise and air pollution. Land uses are intermixed
with no single identity discernible. School and park
facilities are also inadequate. Furthermore, these con-
ditions are having a detrimental effect on adjacent areas,
and these blighting influences are gradually spreading,
threatening stable neighborhoods and property values.

The CRP studies also indicated a strong relation-
ship between the physical deterioration of the city and
its social problems. Areas with a high incidence of social
problems (e.g., crime, juvenile delinquency, unemployment,
welfare cases, etc.) were generally found to correspond
with the areas which were physically blighted.[10] The
Community Renewal Program directly addressed itself to this
relationship:

> There are individuals, families and neighbor-
> hoods with serious social problems, sometimes
> overwhelming ones. Just renewing and upgrading
> the physical plant will not make the city a sig-
> nificantly better community unless something is
> also done to eliminate or alleviate social and
> personal problems. This suggests the importance
> of locating social blight as well as physical
> blight. It also indicates the need for dealing
> with social blight at the same time that efforts
> are made to correct physical blight.[11]

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[10]Lansing, Planning Department, Community Renewal
Division, Community Needs: A Program for the Future
(Lansing, 1969), p. 30.

[11]Ibid.

Thus, the local context for developing a human advancement indicators program is a mixture of positive and negative factors which make up the physical, social and human character of the city. The call for locating those negative factors which the report labels as "social blight" perceptively provides for a direct entry into an indicator program at the city level. The human advancement indicator program should serve as both an investigative tool and a diagnostic process which operates in conjunction with continuing physical evaluation programs. A meaningful measurement of human advancement in selected areas of interest could assist in the physical renewal process as well as enabling the decision-making hierarchy to recognize successes and short-comings in public programming and identify new areas where treatment programs are needed.

Lansing, then, has reached a point in its history where both strengths and weaknesses are publicly recognized, and more importantly, where there are individuals who are willing to take the steps to counteract the negative factors before the advantages of the positive factors are hopelessly outweighed.

The Community Renewal Program has also pointed up this situation:

> The problems that we face in Lansing, in terms
> of magnitude, are perhaps smaller than some major
> cities, but many of these cities have also reached
> the point where they simply cannot solve their
> problems. They are beyond their ability to do so.
> Fortunately, we have not yet reached this point.
> Whether we proceed with solving our problems, or
> do nothing, will depend upon effective leadership
> at the local level. The federal and state govern-
> ment will provide tools, but it is we at the local
> level who must carry out the programs. We are the
> ones who will determine success or failure in
> Lansing.[12]

In attempting to come to grips with the problems

facing the city, the stage has been set for broad scale

improvement programs which will embrace many facets of

urban life. At present, however, no formal commitment

has been made to establishing a human advancement indica-

tors program. This is not surprising since the concept

is only in its earliest stages of development even in

much larger cities and higher levels of government. There

is little previous experience to draw upon, and the problems

involved in such a project are only partially understood.

Nevertheless, such a program promises the city fresh in-

sight and understanding of the nature of the lives of

individuals in the city and offers the chance to explore

new territories of urban research which are largely un-

charted.

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[12]Lansing, Planning Department, Community Renewal
Division, Lansing's Community Renewal Program (Lansing,
1970), pp. 14-15.

The institutional array in Lansing presents both opportunities for and barriers to establishment of a human advancement indicator program. The remainder of this chapter attempts to identify these opportunities and barriers and relate them to the feasibility of such a program.

Opportunities

The most unique opportunity open to Lansing is represented by the proximity of the state government establishment. As Michigan is the only state government which has made significant progress toward a system of social reporting (in the sense of assessing living conditions of individuals or households), assistance in developing a local indicator program is close at hand. Even Wayne State University, which provided the state with the basic research and concept formulation for the project, lies within easy driving distance for consultation if necessary. These agencies represent valuable expertise available in the local area, and hopefully they will continue to attempt to operationalize a statewide indicator system.

In the state document discussed earlier,[13] the point is made that a great deal of local data reporting

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[13]Center for Urban Studies, Wayne State University, Social Reporting in Michigan: Problems in Issues, Technical

is done, but that "it is difficult to assess the infor-
mation that has been developed and the extent to which
it is unused. Sponsorship of improvement in local reporting
efforts would appear to merit state attention."[14] This
type of commitment by the state, if it materializes, could
help forge a state-local partnership in developing compat-
ible systems. And what better place for the state to begin
than the capital city itself? Perhaps Lansing could even
serve as a pilot project area with state funding assistance.
The city could only benefit from participating in such a
program from its inception, and few, if any, cities have
such an obvious locational advantage.

Lansing also has a good opportunity to develop an
indicator program by virtue of its participation in a wide
range of federally-assisted urban development projects
offered by the U. S. Departments of Housing and Urban Devel-
opment and Health, Education and Welfare. Many such pro-
grams provide enough flexibility to include funds for the
development of an indicator system, and this type of en-
deavor could be easily justified in view of its potential
value to the city. Such federal grant projects as the 701B

Report A-37, State of Michigan, Office of Planning Co-
ordination, Bureau of Policies and Programs (Lansing,
February, 1970).

[14]Ibid., p. 14.

Comprehensive Planning Assistance Renewal Programs could be structured so as to include development of components of an indicator system.

The existence of a strong Model Cities organization in Lansing represents another opportunity. A human advancement indicators program could provide information extremely valuable to the Model Cities operation, and a joint funding/ staff assistance arrangement should be possible between this agency and the City Planning Department (or other designated program sponsor).

In the federal document Improving the Quality of Urban Life: A Program Guide to Model Neighborhoods in Demonstration Cities, two important basic program guidelines are included which are particularly relevant here. First, it states that programs "should coordinate federal, state and local efforts" to overcome fragmentation of effort.[15] The development of an indicator program should meet this criterion.

The second states that programs should "demonstrate new and imaginative proposals, . . . designed to develop new approaches to solving long-standing problems."[16]

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[15] U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Improving the Quality of Urban Life: A Program Guide to Model Neighborhoods in Demonstration Cities, HUD PG-47, (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, December 1967), p. 4.

[16] Ibid.

The indicator program should qualify under this criterion as well.

While Model Cities is an action-oriented program, basic research into the quality of life should be a primary interest of the organization. Moreover, the program achievement standards discussed in this document cite several areas of concern which could coincide with the indicator program, e.g., education, health, housing, income, employment, crime and delinquency and physical environment.[17] The indicators would serve to provide valuable measurement tools needed to assess the effectiveness of Model Cities programs and enable the program participants to thoroughly investigate living conditions in the Model Cities area.

The existence of an established city planning department with motivated personnel and adequate funding also represents an opportunity for operationalizing an indicator program. While this department would not necessarily have to be the sponsoring agency, it would appear to be the best suited in terms of work orientation, expertise, philosophic background, and staff training.

The department's experience in operating federal grant programs for complex projects which involve broadly based data-gathering segments and large-scale reporting

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[17]<u>Ibid</u>., pp. 6-15.

efforts provide a basic foundation which probably would
not be sufficiently developed in other city agencies.
While others could provide extremely beneficial staff
assistance with specialized expertise and links to outside
resources, the Planning Department would appear to be the
logical program sponsor.

Another opportunity, related to the above discus-
sion, centers on the City's entry into data processing
activities for the various municipal operations (e.g., pay-
roll, tax statements, assessor's records, etc.). The Plan-
ning Department has already spent two years working toward
developing an urban data information center which will con-
tain basic information pertaining to physical characteris-
tics of the city (e.g., parcel description, land use, land
values, zoning, CRP data, etc.). Experience in working
with this data system will serve to familiarize the staff
with this type of operation and help establish procedure
for designing and implementing the human advancement indi-
cator data system.

Furthermore, the ready availability of the physical
data (and related fiscal data) will allow for the compar-
ison of various types of information so as to assist in
correlation of findings and eventually to identify causal
relationships among the prevailing forces and conditions.
This type of research activity is presently being accomplished

manually, and the use of computers will greatly facilitate the entire data use and analysis process.

A final major opportunity, at least potentially, is represented by the proposed revision of the City Charter to create an Office of Urban Development. The purpose of this office would be to coordinate the services, activities and information related to urban development, to provide financial and technical assistance to the various urban development activities of the city, and to assist in the effectuation of programs and projects meeting the urban development needs of the city.[18] It is initially proposed that this office would be created within the executive branch of the city government and headed by an administrator appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the mayor. This administrator would be a person prepared by professional training and experience in urban management and development.[19]

United within this office would be the present Planning Department, Model Cities, Urban Redevelopment, Housing Office and Human Relations Office, plus the Federal Programs Coordinator. The combined power and resources of these agencies would facilitate the inauguration of an indicator program by placing under unified leadership all activities

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[18]Adley Associates, Inc., The Development Process/ Lansing (Lansing, 1968), p. 47.

[19]Ibid., p. 48.

which have a major stake in such a program. This closer coordination of offices could bring together a wider range of knowledge and expertise, a variety of outlooks and expectations and more broadly based support for implementation and operation. Wider acceptance and use is also more likely due to the size and prestige of this agency.

The opportunities for developing a human advancement indicators program for Lansing appear to be extensive. In fact, it is surprising that more thought has not been given to measuring the improvement of the condition of the individual resident in light of the major programs which have been and continue to be mounted for the purpose of improving the community. Failure to pursue these opportunities would be to abdicate a responsibility to all tax payers and citizens and to ignore the problem of measuring the success or failure and the service or disservice of public and private activities within the community.

Barriers

While the opportunities for an indicators system are significant, there are also barriers and limitations to be faced. The primary obstacle would appear to be the prevailing conservative philosophy in governmental and political affairs within the community. While Lansing is

the capital of what can be regarded as a progressive state, the city is perceived as "small and conservative" by many residents.[20]

A study of community leaders in Lansing found that four-fifths of these leaders were businessmen,[21] and that they felt that the most influential and powerful organizations were the Chamber of Commerce, labor unions, the local newspaper and the Board of Realtors.[22] In specifying major community achievements with which they were involved, this group cited the Community Chest, Civic Center, hospital drives, Chamber of Commerce programs, traffic and parking improvements and others.[23] While they were in almost complete agreement that metropolitan planning was the most important issue facing the area, this was largely envisioned as a physical problem. There was little or no expressed concern about social problems, such as full employment, race relations, housing, education, etc.[24]

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[20]William H. Form and Warren L. Sauer, Community Influentials In A Middle-Sized City, General Bulletin No. 5, The Institute for Community Development and Services, Michigan State University (East Lansing: The Institute, 1960), p. 2.

[21]Ibid., p. 3.

[22]Ibid., p. 13.

[23]Ibid., p. 12.

[24]Ibid.

A more outspoken approach to viewing the local

power structure was taken in a 1966 report.[25] It found

that, in general, politics in Lansing has been completely

dominated by whomever dominated the business community.

> Until World War I, this control was open, but
> since then, top management has receded from public
> view, with second echelon men tending more and more
> to be visible representatives of corporations, and
> with small businesmen and second-rate lawyers tending
> to hold public office. Little practical control
> seems to have been relinquished, though power does
> not need to be exercised often. Policy decisions
> are made without their consent only if they are unin-
> terested, for since they have paid the tab (in taxes
> and in large donations to public causes) they call
> the tune, as always. Power is exercised through con-
> trol of the organizational structure and through repu-
> tations for power--this has been true since the turn
> of the century industrial expansion placed the vital
> interests of corporations in the national economy.
> Failure to hold public office has had twin advantages:
> since business is not publicly accountable for policy
> decisions it can pose as a community benefactor and
> polish its public relations image, and non-political
> controls are less time-consuming than public office.
> The policy discussion arena seems to be the privacy
> of civic associations such as the Chamber of Commerce
> or even in private clubs.
> Historically Lansing has had--a) homogeneous and
> concentrated power structure, b) a lack of significant
> conflict or cleavage within the community, c) little
> initiative from government agencies, in keeping with
> business domination, and d) a consistent conservative
> bias to both electoral politics and political decisions.
> So long as the historical socio-economic pattern is
> maintained, the above political characteristics will

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[25]Paul H. Ray, Saghir Almad, William Ice, and Leon
Shilton, A Political Profile of Lansing, Michigan, Internal
Report #11 of the Urban Regional Research Institute, Michigan
State University (unpublished report, East Lansing, August
18, 1966).

be stable, unchanged both from structural inertia
and from active resistance by community influen-
tials.[26]

This profile of "community influentials" is hardly

surprising or unusual. It does represent, however, a tra-

ditional and conservative approach to community action

which does not go unnoticed by local government. City govern-

ment in Lansing generally reflects these traditional inter-

ests, and often views with a skeptical--and defensive--eye

any official program that tinkers with the social mechanisms

in the community which have historically been the exclusive

domain of our free enterprise system. Indeed, even the

findings of Community Renewal Program studies have been met

with varying degrees of disbelief, cynicism and hostility.

In a situation where social inquiry is to some degree

held in low esteem, and even feared, the proposal of a human

advancement indicator program is certain to draw opposition.

Its utility and cost are likely to be questions, and perhaps

the motives behind it will be challenged. Nevertheless, a

sound program with adequate backing should be able to with-

stand such pressures. The problem will be to gain the con-

fidence, or at least the tolerance, of the political oppo-

sition. This may not be a simple task, but it stands as

probably the major barrier to instituting an indicator program.

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[26]Ibid., pp. 4-5.

A barrier which has some relationship to the one above is the dual problem of fund limitations and lack of proper expertise. The development of an indicator system will require a significant, though probably not major, expenditure of funds beyond the existing budget. This cost relates to four basic needs: designing the program, gathering the data, processing and manipulating the data, and evaluating and disseminating the data. Thus, the additional costs will be a function of increased demands for staff time (or consultant or subcontractor time), increased computer operations and the potential need for a staff specialist to properly administer the indicator program. If these costs must be borne "in house," then fund limitation is a major barrier. If federal or state funds can be obtained (as all or part of a grant), then the importance of this barrier may be greatly reduced.

Another barrier is presented by the availability of the needed data and the form of the data which is available. The problem here will lie in the discovery of the many various sources of data and the determination of the relevance, soundness, and limitations of the data which they collect. A significant amount of time will be needed to investigate all of federal, state and local public agencies and the private organizations in the area which are potential sources.

While these sources are being identified and
evaluated, the form and degree of availability of their
data will have to be taken into account. Certain questions
will have to be asked. Does the information lend itself
to breakdown by geographic area? By sex, age, race or
nationality, marital status, income group, etc.? How con-
fidential is it? How is it stored and how can it be ex-
tracted? How is it updated or how often is it gathered?
How accurate is it? Can the gathering process be modified
to gain additional valuable information? Must the infor-
mation be paid for?

The answers to these and other questions represent
a barrier more to the utility of an indicator program than
its feasibility. But if the problems encountered here are
severe, then data-gathering projects will have to be
initiated within the program itself and costs may be multi-
plied. It would appear that the best approach would be to
initiate an indicator program with the best data currently
available and then build toward a comprehensive and inte-
grated data-gathering function on a city or regional basis,
with public and private cooperation.

A final barrier centers around the city's lack of
a formalized statement of goals, policies and objectives.
This problem ties in closely with the development of an
indicator program, and the subject is discussed in detail

in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that this
lack does present a problem, not only in terms of pro-
viding guidance to an indicator program but also in terms
of providing guidance to the entire governmental effort.

The Outlook

On the whole, the local context for developing a
human advancement indicators program for Lansing appears
to be promising. There is a growing need for the data which
the program could provide, and the opportunities which can
be utilized are numerous. The barriers, while formidable,
do not seem insurmountable. The development demands of
this dynamic and growing city call for a clear understanding
of the condition of individual and family life on the part
of all public and private policy makers.

Since the city has the need and the tools are at
hand, the outlook should be bright. The danger, however,
lies in the political forces and establishment interests
which may perceive a threat in a program that inherently
seeks out information which will not always be pleasant to
learn.

There would, however, seem to be more threat
inherent in a society in which human dissatisfaction is
significant and growing. These forces must be convinced

that the era of hiding or ignoring human problems is over and that the only answer to today's disillusionment and social unrest is getting problems into the open and devising solutions. If this point can be made, an indicator program for Lansing can be achieved.

CHAPTER V

INDICATORS AND GOALS

Questions at the Starting Point

In initiating work on a human advancement indicators program, we first need to ask very basic questions as to the nature of the task as it fits into the overall scheme of municipal acitivity. The answers to these questions will set the stage for gaining a clearer understanding of the problems involved and will establish the framework of an orderly process for arriving at a useful program.

The initial question we must answer is "what are we trying to learn?" We already know a great deal about the institutional establishment in Lansing, about the money spent, about the operating programs and their intended benefits. What we really need to know, however, is the condition of life for the people living in and affected by this complex system. What is the range of these conditions? Where and for whom are conditions improving or deteriorating?

What must we do then to attempt to ascertain these
conditions? The answer is to develop indicators which pro-
vide quantitative data that serve as indices to socially
important issues within the city. We must try to gather
data which in some measure reveal the details of living
conditions. The indicators need not necessarily be new
types of data. They could, for example, be formed by the
combinations of existing but scattered and heretofore un-
related data. New types of data may be needed in some
cases of course, and here the task will be to structure the
indicators program so as to point the way to these new
areas of concern.

We also need to understand clearly why we are under-
taking this type of program. The answer to this question
has been discussed at some length in Chapters One and Two.
But basically it is because the effective planning and guid-
ing of municipal activities demands a sensitivity to a wide
range of conditions which reflect the impacts of program
or the lack of programs. Devising an indicator system is
one way of establishing this sensitivity. It is an extremely
valuable management tool which has always been needed but
which only recently has become possible in terms of tech-
nical expertise and popular acceptance. If government has
the courage to face the possibility of finding failures,
then the first step toward rectification has been taken.

In effect, the indicator program is an attempt to learn the good and the bad about life in the city. To govern and administer wisely, we must learn both. Many of the major problems of the nation are a result of our proudly pointing at the good while avoiding or failing to perceive the bad. This era of one-sided viewing ended with the 1960's.

If a commitment to this type of thinking is made, what then is entailed? Carrying on an indicator program involves a systematic effort toward achieving a coherent grasp of the broad spectrum of human problems with full regard for their interdependence. To accomplish this it aims to provide pragmatic, empirical measures of key aspects of human life and social processes which can allow us to observe change and to direct or adapt to these changes. Thus, the indicator program would enable us to prepare, i.e., plan, for the future and attempt to organize our efforts in such a way as to minimize the negative aspects of change and maximize the positive aspects.

Once such a program is instituted, how do we employ it? That is to say, how do we use the information so as to identify change? The task here is to develop standards and goals in the substantive areas of concern. By so doing we can guage movement in the indicators according to established criteria for evaluation, and over a period of time

we will be able to draw conclusions as to the direction the city is moving in relation to efforts made.

Thus, in order for the city to derive maximum benefit from an indicator program, it would be necessary to formulate a statement of community goals, objectives and policies related to human advancement. This statement, hopefully, would illuminate some problem areas and therefore help identify areas of interest to which the indicator program could be addressed. The goals-policies statement would also assist operating departments in structuring their activities and have a stabilizing influence on the decision-making environment of the city by providing a common definition of the public interest.

Even without an indicators program, Lansing has a very real need for a goals-policies statement. With the program, such a statement becomes almost mandatory.

The Problem of Goal
Establishment

At present, Lansing suffers from a lack of a formally devised and popularly accepted statement of goals, objectives and policies. This is not an uncommon problem for cities, but it is a problem which is being faced by more and more cities across the country, including major cities such as Chicago, Minneapolis and Dallas.

The need for goals, however, cannot be considered self-evident. In some cases, goals may arise from facing a major problem that calls for more than a simple pro-grammed decision, but in these instances, goals are likely to be devised on the spur of the moment. These "ad hoc" situations can create problems, however, in as much as they are not necessarily designed to be compatible with other goals and policies which may be developed for other situations. Consequently, goals should be a product of some orderly and rational administrative process.

In 1968, Adley Associates, an Atlanta consulting firm, evaluated the urban development process in Lansing and found no comprehensive statement of goals, objectives and policies relating to this subject. This lack of a formal, fully documented position regarding the appropriate goals and role of the City of Lansing has had several con-sequences according to their report:

> It has resulted in "de facto" delegation of basic
> policy decisions to subordinate boards and depart-
> ments and has placed this function beyond the reach
> of those directly responsible to the people, i.e.,
> their elected representatives;

> It has led to decisions being made in Council and
> by the various boards without reference to basic
> guidelines and has resulted in conflicting "ad hoc"
> policies and programs that create a public image of
> internal inconsistency and inefficiency (as, for
> example, the commitment to strengthen the central
> business district versus the proposed major commer-
> cial development at the Kahres Farm site);

It has deprived the city of a central focus and
direction that could assist coordinating the
activities of diverse boards and departments;
moreover, it contributes to the tendency of various
departments to look exclusively to their boards
for policy guidance rather than to bodies with
broader perspectives and wider interests;

It has contributed to the random pressures con-
stantly being placed on the Mayor and members
of the Council for statements of City goals and
clarification of policy relating to urban develop-
ment;

It inhibits effective administrative practice by
impeding the evolution of staffing, budgeting,
reporting, etc. out of a rational pattern of purposes
and preferences that must be based on foreknowledge
of basic goals and priorities.[1]

It was the consultant's recommendation that the

city should formulate and adopt public policies which

specify long-range goals and prescribe priorities for the

urban development processes of the city and that this state-

ment should be communicated to all boards and departments.[2]

By doing so, all agencies would have the same guiding

principles, and all levels of decision-making would be able

to act in a more coordinated fashion.

Relative to the decision-making activity, the con-

sultant also found that the lack of goals and policies has

contributed to the development of unstable management pat-

terns as outlined below.

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[1]Adley Associates, Inc., The Development Process/
Lansing (Lansing, 1968), p. 27.

[2]Ibid., p. 28.

It has led to overlapping of function and authority
between departments engaged in related activities
. . . ;

It has contributed to the bypassing of prescribed
channels within city government . . . ;

It has created uncertainty as to which of several
possible criteria is to be applied in a given
decision-making situation, and uncertainty as to
the respective authorities and responsibilities of
various departments . . . ;

It divides responsibility for making decisions
among several units of government with consequent
delay in reaching a solution and creates additional
opportunity for friction between the units . . . ;

It forces up to higher echelons many decisions that
should be precisely programmed and handled routinely
at a lower level, depriving ranking officials of
time and energy that could more profitably be spent
in dealing with unprogrammed decision areas.[3]

From the consultant's evaluation of these problems

which arise due to the lack of a statement of goals and

objectives, it is easy to see that these are problems which

could be ameliorated through a sincere and determined

effort to develop such a statement. Given the ever-present

difficulties caused by municipal financial limitations, it

would appear that the management improvements and operational

efficiency increases to be gained from a goals statement

would be sufficient reasons to develop and adopt one.

There are other less tangible benefits which might

also accrue to the city as a whole. A goals statement that

is developed with a broad base of community support and

adopted with suitable fanfare could engender some "team

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[3]Ibid., pp. 31-32.

spirit" on the part of city agencies and induce more
harmonious working relationships. References to the
goals statement in public documents and news coverage
would help keep it in the public eye.

This type of statement could also spur more com-
munity involvement and participation in municipal activ-
ities as well as promote introspection on the part of all
members of the community.

Coordination with other non-governmental agencies
might also be improved with the help of a goals statement,
and perhaps it might even lead to a more effective align-
ment of these agency's activities relative to city efforts.

While the Adley report made many recommendations
for improved municipal operation, the suggested establish-
ment of a goals statement is of major importance. The
reasons why goals are important have been briefly touched
upon above, but Altshuler has quoted four advantages which
clearly spell out their usefullness:

> 1. Goals help to avoid confusion of basic issues
> with secondary questions of details and thus help
> to achieve clearer and more pointed discussions of
> each.
>
> 2. They can create a common ground of agreement
> which is so necessary when many individuals and
> groups are actually involved in preparing and
> achieving plans.
>
> 3. They can prepare the way for achievement by
> warding off unwarranted, johnny-come-lately
> criticism when the time comes to put a plan into
> effect.

   4. Goals give direction to those reponsible
for planning . . . , enabling them to prepare
plans in closer accord with community desires.[4]

Obviously, goal formulation is a difficult task.

It requires that a large group of people define what they

want their future to be. Since, goals are an expression

of values and a city represents a vast multiplicity of

values held by its residents, it becomes an extremely com-

plicated process to evolve agreement on any issue. While

there may be broad consensus on general goal areas (e.g.,

full employment, equal opportunity, crime prevention,

etc.), there tends to be less and less agreement among

participants as goals reach a higher level of specificity.

The task, therefore, is to attain the highest level of

specificity of goals as can be formulated without the col-

lapse of the project.

In discussing social processes for rational calcu-

lation, Dahl and Lindblom recognize the problems involved

but maintain that goals are "of enormous importance both

to rational individual action and to rational social

action."[5] They further emphasize that "without them,

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   [4]Alan A. Altshuler, The City Planning Process
(Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1965),
pp. 236-237.

   [5]Robert A. Dahl and Charles E. Lindblom, Politics,
Economics and Welfare (New York: Harper and Row, 1953),
p. 89.

effective planning in politico-economic affairs would be impossible."[6] Few would argue that municipal operation is not a politico-economic affair.

Basically, the development of goals involves a process of interaction among three groups: (1) the public and its voluntary organizations, (2) government, embodied in both elected representatives and appointed administrative officials and bodies, and (3) the professional urban planning staff.[7] While other line departments may take issue with this singular inclusion of the Planning Department, it would appear that the nature of the training of the staff and the broad scope of their work uniquely qualifies them for inclusion in this group. This is not to imply, however, that they would act as a major influence in goal formulation.

The amount of participation by each of these segments can vary greatly according to method used to develop goals. The Adley report described three ways to approach the problem.[8] The first is the Study Commission or Community Goals Committee. This is an effective and widely employed method which involves a board or panel of competent,

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[6]Ibid.

[7]Henry Fagin, "Organizing and Carrying Out Planning Activities within Urban Government," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXV (August, 1959), p. 110.

[8]Adley Associates, Inc., op. cit., pp. 25-26.

representative citizens that is assigned the task of developing long-range goals which, when ratified by the political leadership, become a statement of policy.

The second method is called a Mixed-Scan Survey. This is a recently developed approach which is essentially a series of unstructured interviews with formal and informal community leaders from which a designated government body derives a pattern of consensus and priority regarding goals for the community.[9]

The third method is called the Program Planning and Analysis Unit. This technique institutionalizes the process by placing it in a specialized individual or unit attached to the office of the mayor and assigning it the duty of determining needs and developing goals.

Any one of these methods, a combination, or even a different type method could be employed by the city in the attempt to formulate a goals statement. The method employed should be based upon the City Council's opinion relative to the range of participation which would be most desirable and effective. While the first method would be the most difficult to carry out, it would in return offer a maximum of community support of the product. The third

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[9]It is assumed that these "informal community leaders" would include members of minority groups, neighborhood associations and other similar entities in addition to the "Chamber of Commerce" variety of leaders.

method would be the easiest to carry out but would lack public exposure and probably be less representative of the community as a whole. The second suggestion is something of a middle ground which to some degree combines the attributes of the other two. If the decision to formulate goals can be reached, choosing the method will not be a particularly difficult task.

The possibility also exists that there will be political opposition to the development of goals. The attributes of goals which make them desirable for planning (i.e., as guides for action) are at the same time potential barriers to the traditional political process. Since goals are a method of channeling and coordinating efforts, freedom of political action may be reduced to a certain degree by the structure of the goals statement. Bargaining, as a form of reciprocal control among leaders,[10] is inherent in our political system, and new outside influences on this process (i.e., goals) may be viewed as an obstruction.

Even when there is consensus about planning objectives, the true nature of the problems involved is often not dimensioned for fear that this may be interpreted as derogation of the abilities or the motivation of political officials. Holleb comments,

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[10]An excellent discussion of this subject may be found in Dahl and Lindblom, op. cit., chapter 12, pp. 324-348.

> It is reasonable that officials should be wary of
> the political fuses that social information may
> ignite. The policy instruments over which they
> have authority at the local levels are often totally
> inadequate to the problems that must be confronted,
> problems which may have regional or national roots.
> Their policy options are often narrow and limited
> by fiscal constraints, by statutory regulations, by
> the requirements of federal assistance programs, or
> by the political climate. It is much easier to build
> roads and drainage systems than to build educational
> systems or communities.[11]

This may be true to some extent; however, the benefits to the community as a whole of having a meaningful goals statement should be seriously considered. Indeed, perhaps even the reverse would prove true in some cases. The existence of the goals statement might make an otherwise unpopular political stand seem much more acceptable and provide political leaders the opportunity to avoid positions which they might otherwise find themselves forced into against their better judgement. Thus, the goals statement might provide "a way out" in certain political situations.

Regardless of the public view of the goals program, political support is mandatory for success. Strong political support will do a great deal for constructing a meaningful goals statement and implementing actions toward achieving the goals.

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[11]Doris B. Holleb, Social and Economic Information for Urban Planning (Chicago: Center for Urban Studies, University of Chicago, 1969), p. 52.

The Relationship of Goals
and Indicators

While it has been mentioned earlier, it is worth
re-emphasizing here that no serious preparation for the
future can be undertaken without correctly identifying the
issues which municipal efforts and plans must address. Even
in small municipalities where adverse trends may be readily
observed, master plans are often prepared which fail to
take cognizance of fundamental social realities and of major
social changes that are occuring.[12]

Much of what happens in municipal planning and
policy-making stems from a "reading" of the issues facing
the community at a particular moment. Yet without a stable,
established framework of goals and policies and the issues
which they represent, it is difficult to firmly pinpoint
problems, diagnose causes and then act rationally to develop
programs and make decisions regarding the future. A basic
aim of the indicators program is to facilitate this diag-
nostic process.

The existing lack of goals for the City of Lansing
in large measure account for the lack of definitive indica-
tors of conditions and trends relating to the quality of
life in Lansing. Thus we are back to the question of what

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[12]Ibid.

we want to know and why? Only if the goals for which
evidence is sought are known can the right indicators
be found.

Biderman's statement that there is a high degree
of interaction between judgements of the importance of a
phenomenon and the existence of measurements of it and
that we attempt to observe and comprehend those aspects of
reality that are important to us,[13] should tell us something
about our past perceptions of the function and purpose of
city government. We have been very interested in retail
sales, attraction and retention of industry, traffic move-
ment, public facilities and the like. There is, of course,
nothing wrong with this, particularly since this has been
the traditional interest of cities in this country.

It is rather the lack of interest in really seriously
studying human conditions that has today been recognized as
a glaring omission in municipal activity. As we become
more candid, or are forced to become more candid, about the
problems of the city, we almost automatically need informa-
tion (indicators) relating to these problems. At the same
time, we must also begin to get some idea as to what is
desirable for the future of the city (goals). Thus, we

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[13]Albert D. Biderman, "Social Indicators and Goals,"
Social Indicators, ed. Raymond A. Bauer (Cambridge, Mass.:
The M. I. T. Press, 1965), pp. 95-97.

can see that use of goals and indicators together offers the city an extremely useful and valuable device for influencing urban growth and improvement, and each needs the other so that we may gain the maximum utility from both.

In the past, due largely to heavy demands upon local government, municipal activity has been forced to strain to keep up with growth and change within the city. Much of the planning and decision-making has been remedial in nature. There has been relatively little opportunity in terms of time and resources to engage in anticipatory planning and decision-making, and municipal operation has lacked a widespread future orientation. Goals will help provide this future orientation, and through this future orientation indicators may allow for some "trouble-shooting" and preventive maintenance by revealing the human conditions which lie within the physical and economic framework of the city. Once in operation, the indicators program can illuminate opportunities for both remedial and anticipatory strategy.

But basically, the goals-indicators relationship demands that goals be established first. Since these goals imply an interest in achievement, then it follows that there should be some indicators established to monitor and measure progress toward the achievement of these goals. In this

way, we also have the chance to evaluate public and private programs which aim at helping reach these goals. In short, goals tell us where we want to go, and indicators tell us if we are getting there.

CHAPTER VI

TOWARD AN INITIAL SET OF INDICATORS

Selecting Sample Areas
of Interest

The federal and State of Michigan indicator docu-
ments discussed in the previous chapters each identified
several substantive areas of interest for which indicators
should be developed, the former naming seven and the latter
naming six (see Chapter Two). While an indicator program
of similar dimension should be anticipated for the City
of Lansing by some future date, an undertaking of such
proportions is not within the scope of this work.

Since it is a purpose of this thesis to evaluate
the feasibility of this type of program for the city, the
areas of interest have been significantly reduced so as to
facilitate the process of exploring the nature of the task
and devising operating procedures and guidelines. The
development of a full range of indicators will be a project
which will probably take at least two years and implementa-
tion might take a good deal longer.

For the purpose of this work, two areas have been chosen as subjects for inquiry: housing and health. These have been chosen for several reasons. First, both are of critical importance to the individual and may have impacts on other stated areas of interest, such as employment, education and crime. Second, the problems in these two areas are relatively better understood than some other areas, and thus they represent safer ground upon which to begin an indicators program.

Third, surveys by the Community Renewal Program and Model Cities have indicated that these subjects are among the most important to Lansing residents. Finally, there is already a considerable amount of data available on these subjects in various quarters which will lend itself to inclusion in the program. This, in turn, will make it easier to derive the initial indicator sets which will be the prototypes for the eventual expansion of the program.

Both of these areas are included in the federal and state studies, and should programs be implemented at these levels, the city will almost certainly have two indicator areas which will correspond with their programs. The indicators themselves will probably not be exactly the same, but realignment could then be accomplished with limited effort to gain the capability for aggregation and disaggregation for comparison and study purposes.

It should also be pointed out here that a full range of indicators for these two areas will not be attempted. It is not possible at this point in time to judge what would be needed for a full range. Therefore, a representative sample set of goals and indicators is presented in each area.

It would appear that a program for Lansing should begin with a relatively narrow range of indicators for whatever areas are selected, with the aim of expanding the coverage as the ability and resources become available.

Housing

The National Housing Act of 1949 and subsequent Acts have had the goal of "a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family." The State of Michigan demonstrated interest in meeting this goal when it created the State Housing Development Authority in 1966. The City of Lansing, however, has not made any commitment in this area with exception of creating a Housing Commission to carry out the development of public housing.

While city goals in the area of housing could be far-ranging, three general problem areas are addressed here for illustrative purposes. Three sample goals are set forth and briefly discussed, and then indicators relating

to each are presented and described. No attempt is made
to suggest all of the possible indicators relating to
each goal. The aim here is to demonstrate and clarify the
type of goal-indicator arrangement which this thesis advo-
cates.

GOAL: To ensure an adequate
supply and variety of
housing units

At first glance, the supply of available housing
units may not appear to reveal the living conditions of
people. However, the lack of units of various types and
costs has real significance, particularly for individuals
with relatively low incomes. Overcrowding and doubling-up
often result, and freedom of choice of location may be
severely limited. Hopefully, the indicators will identify
any short-comings in the housing supply and point out any
deficiencies in the housing market which may have previously
gone unnoticed or unattended. Five indicators follow.

Indicator #1: Total number of housing units
in stock.--This data represents the basic statistic for
gauging housing supply and would be broken down by type,
such as single-family detached, single-family attached
(e.g., townhouse), two-family, multiple-family, mobile
homes, rooming house units, dormitories, etc. The data

should be further differentiated to show owner/renter-occupied status and the spatial distribution within the city by census tract and/or CRP area and block.

The data are available from the Assessors and Building Departments and can be kept current by tabulating building, conversion, moving, demolition and occupancy permits. (Note: Much of this data is presently being prepared under CRP for data processing equipment.)

Indicator #2: Vacancy Rate.--Vacancy data, broken down by type and location, will provide information as to the relative plenty or scarcity of the different types of units. Low vacancy rates could indicate lack of production and limited choice for consumers, while high rates could indicate over-production or declining population. While a high rate would not necessarily mean better housing is available, it would indicate more freedom of choice for the consumer and a higher probability of finding adequate quarters.

Vacancy data is available from FHA, the Post Office, electric utilities, rental management offices and the Lansing Board of Realtors. The gathering of this data could be accomplished over any convenient time period from monthly to annually, depending upon availability of resources.

Indicator #3: Purchase or rental costs.--The cost
of dwelling units will reveal the range of price choice
open to consumers and help identify the amount of units
available in the various price categories. For example,
a lack of units available for under $150 per month would
indicate difficulties for low-income renters. The same
would be true if there were few homes for sale for less
than $12,000. The task here would be to attempt to estab-
lish cost categories for sale and rental properties and
tabulate the number of available units by size (e.g.,
number of bedrooms) and location within the city. It would
also be desirable to estimate condition of the unit, but
this appears to be too time-consuming for the present.
Some measure of goal achievement could be made if the avail-
able units become more evenly distributed throughout the
price range over a period of time.

Sales data, not differentiated by location, is
available monthly from the Lansing Board of Realtors for
homes that are listed with them. Rental data can be
acquired through management offices and newspaper adver-
tisements. Since this type of data could be very useful
to realtors, some cooperative arrangement might be worked
out for mutual benefit.

Indicator #4: Housing supply satisfaction.--This
indicator would attempt to reveal the individual's percep-
tion of the range of choice in available housing. This
information would have to be gathered through the sample
survey technique, probably annually. Basically, a person
who has recently changed his place of residence would be
asked to comment on the degree of difficulty in finding
suitable quarters and to characterize the choices available
to him. Generally, fewer complaints or problems over time
should indicate that some progress is being made toward
goal achievement.

These questions should be part of a larger housing
survey investigating a wide range of housing data which
would be related to other indicators as well. For best
results, the job of carrying out the survey should be con-
tracted to a research firm which specializes in this type
of work. Data should be gathered with sufficient detail
so as to allow breakdown by age and racial/ethnic group.

Indicator #5: Overcrowding.--This area of interest
is difficult to measure because it is in these neighbor-
hoods where the highest incidence of overcrowding occurs
that the gathering of data is most difficult. To measure
overcrowding, the use of some type of room-per-person ratio
is probably the best tool. The problem is not learning

the number of bedrooms or total rooms in a dwelling unit
(this is available in city records), but rather in deter-
mining the number of residents in the unit. In some cases,
families which are overcrowding their quarters fear that
they will be forced to vacate by the city if they are dis-
covered. In other cases, families who have "doubled-up"
may report only one family out of fear of eviction. In
addition, groups of students and other young people are
suspicisous of "head counts" by city representatives and
may report fewer occupants than is really the case.

Regardless of the problems involved, however, such
a measure should be devised eventually. The first major
problem to overcome is establishing a standard ratio for
evaluating overcrowding. A room-per-person or persons-per-
bedroom ratio can be used, but room sizes may be important
as well. Perhaps the number of square feet of bedroom
space per person would be better. At any rate, some stand-
ard must be established.

The second major problem is obtaining an accurate
population count. In many areas, data gathered by the
R. L. Polk Co.[1] may be safely used. The Model Cities pro-
gram may be able to gather sound data in Model Neighborhoods,

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[1]R. L. Polk & Co. of Detroit offers a data service
called "Profiles of Change" which surveys many areas of
interest to the city, including population and vacancy
information.

and problem areas may be canvassed by representatives of
the predominant racial or ethnic group in an attempt to
gain rapport with the resident population of the area.

If these two problems can be overcome, a much
better picture of housing problems will result. If
evidence of overcrowding diminishes over time, then it
would again appear that progress to goal achievement is
being made. The major consideration at this time is the
amount of resources needed to establish this indicator.

GOAL: To achieve equal
opportunity in housing

The goal of equal opportunity in housing represents
an attempt to eliminate discrimination in housing on the
basis of race or ethnic background. This is a very sensi-
tive issue since both action and lack of action in this
area are highly controversial. However, if such a goal
were officially adopted, then three basic indicators would
be needed: structural condition of housing by race or
ethnic group of occupant; spatial distribution of house-
holds within the city by all such groups; and the degree
of housing satisfaction on the part of these groups. These
three indicators are discussed below. It should also be
noted that by making this data age-specific, we could also
get an indication of the housing problem of the elderly.

Indicator #1: Housing condition by race or ethnic
group.--This indicator would be based on evaluation of the
structural condition of housing units using an established
set of criteria such as set forth in the Community Renewal
Program or the U. S. Census. Then by breaking down this
information by race or ethnic group (e.g., white, Negro,
Spanish-speaking, and "other") of the occupants, relatively
precise data on the housing conditions of each group could
be obtained.

At present it is widely assumed that whites gen-
erally enjoy a relatively high quality of housing while
minorities do not. But is this in fact the case? Is this
situation changing? Are we aware of any trends toward
achieving this goal? These questions can be better decided
if information on the distribution of housing structural
conditions is made available.

An annual tabulation of this data for the entire
city would be a major undertaking. Therefore, this type of
investigation would best be geared to coordination with the
city's Code Enforcement Program with perhaps some sample
study being done in areas outside the area being inspected
during a given year. Here again, Model Cities may be able
to assist in data-gathering in their neighborhoods on a
more thorough basis.

Indicator #2: Household distribution by race or
ethnic group.--The aim here is to determine the spatial
distribution of the city's population by race or ethnic
group. By doing so, we can learn the extent of racial
integration of neighborhoods and more precisely define
areas of minority concentrations.

If minorities are concentrated in specific areas,
particularly in areas of poor housing conditions, it may
be fairly assumed that housing opportunities are greatly
limited for these people. The rate of progress toward
achieving the goal can eventually be partially related to
the rate of change in this indicator in that a wider spread
of minority households throughout the city should signify
a better opportunity for housing for these groups.

Indicator #3: Housing satisfaction by race or
ethnic group.--This indicator is similar to the earlier
indicator which discussed housing supply satisfaction.
Here, again, the indicator would attempt to reveal the
individual's perception (via sample survey) of the avail-
ability of housing, but in this case not as a result of
physical supply but rather as a result of willingness to
rent or sell to the particular individual on the part of
an owner or proprietor.

Similar inquiries have been made in the past;[2] however, a recurring sample survey would be very useful in estimating progress toward this goal. Along with measuring any change in attitudes, changes in techniques of discrimination may be revealed as well. An additional information source may be the Lansing Human Relations Office which could provide data on the number and type of complaints received that relate to housing opportunity. Similar state agencies may also provide some assistance.

GOAL: To eliminate substandard housing

While every resident of Lansing has some type of shelter, the quality of this shelter varies greatly. In 1966, the Community Renewal Program found that 15% of the city's housing supply was in poor condition (by CRP criteria)[3] and that 37% was in fair condition. Thus, less than half (48%) were rated as good.[4] Since housing is one of man's basic needs, the existence of substandard dwellings demonstrates a deficiency in the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of these dwellings.

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[2]For an interesting narrative, see: Lansing, Planning Department, Community Renewal Division, Community Needs: A Program for the Future (Lansing, 1969), pp. 42-45.

[3]Ibid., p. 21.

[4]Ibid., p. 10.

While it is probably impossible ever to eliminate all substandard units (due to the aging process and our ability to increase minimum standards), the establishment of such a goal is nevertheless reasonable if Lansing is to attempt to do its share in meeting the national housing goal. By monitoring housing structural quality and the change of the related indicators over time, we will gain valuable insight into this important aspect of the quality of life of city residents.

Four indicators are presented.

Indicator #1: Condition rating.--This indicator would be based on the rating of the structural condition of dwelling units using an established set of criteria as discussed previously (see Indicator #1 under the equal opportunity in housing goal). The task will be to devise a rating procedure that will not be prohibitively expensive but will still retain the capability to provide meaningful data.

Annual compilation of this information is not feasible at this time due to limited resources, so a partial canvass of the city in conjunction with the Code Enforcement Program would seem the most logical approach. The findings from year to year could not be directly compared for trend purposes; however, comparisons with the 1966 CRP findings

would be useful in estimating progress toward goal achieve-
ment. Additional spot checks could be made in neighborhoods
outside the code program area to provide some geographical
distribution to the annual data.

As long as a code enforcement program is in operation
and areas are periodically rechecked, comparison figures
will be available. Since housing condition does not change
rapidly in most cases, comparison of data gathered several
years apart on the same structure would be sufficient to
help assess progress in eliminating substandard housing.

Indicator #2: Unit value.--The appraised value of
a housing unit is also a useful indicator of housing quality.
While it is not an absolute measure of the quality, it can
provide a significant surrogate measure when it is corre-
lated with floor area and/or number of bedrooms. This
correlation would be necessary since it is not reasonable
to simply compare values house to house regardless of size.
By establishing a minimum value for each given house size,
based on empirical study of value versus condition and
periodically adjusted for inflation, substandard housing
could be fairly reliably estimated. This data could also
be cross-checked and calibrated by comparison with the code
enforcement findings.

This data is readily available in the assessor's records, and value information is already being computerized. It thus remains only to include data on size categories. Spatial distribution of units by CRP area is also being computerized and will aid in determining clustering of low-value dwellings.

Indicator #3: Condemnations and Demolitions.--The number of condemnations and demolitions occurring within the city provides an opportunity for direct measurement of the elimination of substandard housing units from the total supply. However, it is important to identify which of these eliminated units actually are substandard since "good" or "fair" units may be demolished in the process of clearing an area for public or private redevelopment.

Unfortunately, this information will not provide a total picture of the elimination of these units since some may be restored to standard condition through rehabilitation. While research of building permits can identify some rehabilitation, much work goes on without a permit and only upon inspection of a unit would these situations be uncovered. Assistance might be available here if city appraisers could report major improvements to housing units to the Building Department and/or the indicator program manager who could recheck the condition rating.

Data on condemnations and demolitions is available
in the Building Department and Assessor's Office, and the
condition of individual units can be checked against the
1966 CRP data or later ratings. Since a full city-wide
count of substandard units will not be made each year, a
precise number of remaining substandard units will not be
available to use as a benchmark. However, since a relatively
small number of these units is upgraded annually, demolitions
will provide a useful--though imprecise--measure in the more
recently rated areas.

Indicator #4: Rat infestation.--Since rat infesta-
tion of dwellings is often a result of inadequate maintenance
and housekeeping, identification of infested units may prove
to be an accurate and dramatic indicator of substandard dwell-
ings, not to mention health problems. By identifying such
units and observing any change in incidence over time, a
valuable picture of actual living conditions could be formu-
lated and particular problem areas could be pinpointed.

In Lansing, Project ECHO (Evidence for Community
Health Organization), operated by the Ingham County Health
Department, is surveying the incidence of rat infestation
and data would be available from this source. In addition,
the Vector Control Division of the City Parks and Recrea-
tion Department handles complaints in this area, and

information regarding these complaints could be used in conjunction with the ECHO data. The proposed housing survey could also request information relating to this problem.

The general aim here would be to gain a measure of dwelling units experiencing problems with rats and the monitoring of change of incidence. Though a reduction of rat problems would not necessarily indicate a reduction in the number of substandard units, it would definitely represent a change in this very significant factor affecting the quality of housing.

Health

Good health is among the most elementary requirements for human achievement and enjoyment of life, and a healthy population is one of the greatest natural resources. Because of this, the gathering of information and data on the subject has been a government task for a very long time. However, in Lansing this has been carried out by Ingham County agencies, and the city government operation has had little involvement with the activity.

Even in view of this, it is surprising that relatively little use has been made of health information in the guiding of municipal operation and decision-making.

The development of health indicators will aim, in part, to increase the awareness on the part of governmental bodies of the value of considering health information in the course of their activities.

Most health indicators today deal with the incidence of disease, i.e., the absence of health. While this method has been criticized for its onesidedness, the fact remains that the degree of health enjoyed by an individual is presently almost impossible to measure any other way without major expenditures in resources. It is for this reason that the goals and indicators outlined in this section attempt to avoid the complexity that the federal and Michigan indicator documents deem desirable, e.g., measures of individual vigor, digestion or endurance. While these complex measures of healthfulness may appear worthwhile and reasonable at higher levels of government, they are just not feasible at the local level at this time.

The sample health goals and indicators presented here are aimed at meeting basic problems and gaining information relevant to the scale of local government activity. Certainly a wide variety of goals relating to health is possible. The four utilized here are meant only to be representative for illustrative purposes.

GOAL: To reduce the incidence
of disease and harmful body
conditions

This reduction of the incidence of disease is

probably the central theme of health activity. As a result,

there is a large amount of information available on this

subject which can be utilized in the indicator program.

The goal itself represents the basic human value placed on

leading a healthy life, and though the term "to reduce" is

not very specific, the elimination of disease is clearly

beyond our ability at this point in time. The two indicators

below view this concern from different angles, the incidence

of disease and causes of death, the latter going somewhat

beyond the basic intent of the goal.

Indicator #1: Incidence of disease.--This indicator

would necessitate the establishment of a list of significant

(in terms of incidence) diseases and body conditions for

which records of incidence are or could be kept. The list

would then be monitored periodically, and changes in rates

of incidence would become the measurement of progress toward

goal achievement.

Project ECHO presently gathers this type of informa-

tion on a sample survey basis, and the data could be used

as the basis for establishing the diseases which are to be

monitored. Other information of the County Health Department

could also be used, as well as information from societies
dealing with specific diseases, such as cancer, muscular
distrophy and tuberculosis.

It would be desirable to make the data as specific
as possible in regard to age, race and neighborhood (or
even block) in order to make the indicators as relevant to
planning and policy-making as possible. The ECHO data is
available in this specificity, but other sources may not
be so precise. Whether or not this type of breakdown is
possible to begin with, it should be implemented as soon as
possible.

Indicator #2: Mortality rates (age--race--cause
specific).--This indicator actually attempts to provide
information about two different aspects of the health problem.
First, it measures the number of deaths attributable to the
diseases which have been included in the list for the previous
indicator. (This does not mean, of course, that only killing
diseases and conditions are to be measured there.)

Second, it will provide a picture of the threats
to life and the number of deaths caused by each threat. In
this case, the data will go beyond death due to illness to
include such things as vehicle accidents, non-vehicle
accidents, drownings, suicides, homicides, etc. Thus,
in addition to measuring health problems, there is the

opportunity to evaluate all threats to public safety, some
of which may be particularly relevant to planning activities
and training and information programs.

This data is available in public death-recording
offices; however, some accuracy problems may be encountered.
Multiple causes of death will require some arbitrariness in
tabulation of data. Also, death by gunshot wound, for
example, could be a result of an accident, a homicide or
a suicide attempt. Cross-checking of information (with the
Police Department, for example) may be necessary in some
cases, and accuracy of findings may be reduced until suit-
able counting procedures are devised. Fortunately, the
Michigan Department of Public Health compiles this type of
information,[5] and data as well as assistance in establishing
proper counting procedures is close at hand.

GOAL: To reduce the
infant mortality rate

The infant mortality rate is generally considered
to be a reliable indicator of the level of health care
available to a given population unit, be it a nation, a
state or even smaller unit. In fact, in a worldwide review
of potential social indicators, Russett et al went so far

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[5]See, for example, Michigan, Department of Public
Health, Center for Health Statistics, Michigan Health
Statistics (Lansing, annual publication).

as to say that the infant mortality rate "gives the best overall measure of national health that we have."[6] This may not be quite the case for a municipality, but neverthe-less the monitoring of this data would appear to be well warranted.

Here again, the goal "to reduce" is not specific, but the reduction of the rate to zero is not possible and the establishment of a fixed acceptable rate is likewise impractical. The intention here is rather to set a general goal so as to maintain a surveillance of an important aspect of community's health.

Indicator: Infant mortality rate.--For this goal there is only one indicator, i.e., the infant mortality rate itself. This data is maintained by the Ingham County Health Department and is available by race and location for the city. By monitoring the city rate over time and noting any increase or decrease, we can gain some insight into whether or not progress is being made toward the goal. Since the population base is relatively small, the long-term trend will be more important than year-to-year fluctuations.

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[6]Bruce M. Russett, Hayward R. Alker, Jr., Karl W. Deutsch, and Harold D. Lasswell, World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 199.

Differences in rates between various areas of the city will also help to identify neighborhoods where health care or living conditions are deficient and where special attention by a variety of city and county agencies may be necessary. Comparison with other cities in Michigan will be directly possible through use of the records of the State Department of Public Health.

GOAL: To make adequate
health care available
to all residents

The problems of making adequate health care available to everyone in Lansing is a difficult one which revolves around many factors. But since health care is a basic necessity, certain measures of its availability need to be made. This, however, is easier said than done. Many things may influence the degree to which care is available to or utilized by an individual, and the term "adequate health care" will require some definition. In some cases, the care may be available but the user may not feel he can afford it, may not know where to go for care, or may not have a way of getting to it.

On the other hand, certain types of care may have limited access even for persons who can afford and know where to go. For example, in Lansing it is at present difficult to find a general practioner who will take on new

patients. As a result, some families are forced to put
off routine check-ups and to utilize hospital emergency
rooms when even minor illnesses occur.

While a great number of institutional indicators
could be developed to analyze this situation, the focus
here is on the status of the individual. Thus two indicators
relating to the potential patient rather than the medical
facilities themselves are presented.

Indicator #1: Health insurance coverage.--Since the
cost of medical care is a major barrier to many individuals,
the extent of health insurance coverage among the city's
residents relates directly to this problem. Most middle
and upper-income individuals are covered by insurance through
plans offered by employers or by being able to afford to
purchase such insurance as an individual. Older persons are
covered by Medicare. Yet there remains a sizable portion of
the population which is not covered and which may suffer
most from inadequate care.

This indicator would attempt to measure the extent
of health insurance coverage as a percentage of the total
population. Ideally this data would be race-specific and
be broken down by geographic location; however, this may
not be possible initially. Gathering this data also pre-
sents a challenge. Project ECHO is ascertaining this type

of information in their surveys, and this could serve as
a starting point. In addition, federal, state and local
government and other employers keep records on coverage
which could be utilized, and insurance companies also have
the information.

Two basic problems arise. First, will employers
and insurance companies be willing or even able to provide
the data in usable form? Special effort may be required to
determine place of residence of the insured and other infor-
mation, and the number of man-hours necessary for this com-
pilation may be out of scale with the results. Second, the
adequacy of the insurance plan itself may be questionable.
Some definition of the term "health insurance" may prove
necessary after experience in investigation. The adoption
of federal or state health insurance programs for all
citizens would, of course, eliminate the need for this
indicator.

Indicator #2: Health care satisfaction.--Since the
reasons people suffer from inadequate health care are quite
varied, it would be most useful to survey a group of indi-
viduals so as to gain a picture of the practical problems
being faced. Such a survey could be taken in addition to
or together with the housing survey discussed previously.
The survey would attempt to identify the individual's

problems with health care and to learn how residents perceive their opportunities for this care. The present ECHO surveys do not directly address this subject, and perhaps their survey could be expanded to include this type of information.

The evaluation of the results of this survey could be quite revealing over a period of time. Changes in responses could indicate improving or deteriorating conditions, thus perhaps demonstrating the results of public or private efforts or the lack thereof. Generally, if the problems reported decline in importance over time, then some measure of progress could be claimed, though the definition of "adequate health care" can be revised to become more stringent.

GOAL: To eliminate the
illegal use of drugs

The extent of illegal drug use is not only a health problem but a "crime" problem as well and could be examined within that area of interest. However, since the primary concern over drug abuse revolves around its effects on health, this subject has been selected as more relevant to health than to law.

It has also been included here because it gives an opportunity to examine a special problem in data-gathering.

As an illegal activity, use of such drugs as marijuana, LSD, heroin and others proscribed by law cannot be measured directly with any useful degree of accuracy or specificity. Persons engaged in illegal activity simply do not provide information on their own law-breaking. As a result, surrogate measures must be used in dealing with this subject. The three surrogates utilized here may or may not prove meaningful, but it is probable that only experience will decide that.

Indicator #1: Hospital treatment for misuse of illegal drugs.--While not all cases of severe reaction to illegal drugs result in hospitalization or emergency treatment, many do. The local hospitals keep records on those persons admitted or treated for use of illegal drugs, and these records could be utilized to count periodically the number of people involved. The monitoring of these numbers then would provide a surrogate indicator of expanding or contracting drug use. These numbers could be used in raw form or could be refined into a rate per hundred or thousand to compensate for population changes.

Due to the nature of hospital record-keeping, this data would be specific as to age, race and geographic location. However, it is unclear as to whether or not this type of information could be made available for use.

Indicator #2:   Deaths from misuse of illegal

drugs.--This indicator aligns quite closely with the

preceeding one in that medical evaluation is required.

This type of information would be collected through death-

recording agencies as discussed under the first health

goal presented. The monitoring of this data would provide

the same kind of information as discussed under Indicator

#1 above, and increases and decreases in numbers could be

used to establish a trend for estimating progress.

Indicator #3:   Arrests related to illegal drug

activities.--Quantitative data on drug usage is also main-

tained by the Police Department in the form of arrest records.

Categories can be established according to the type of arrest,

and each could be monitored for change over a time period to

identify trends. This information is specific as to age,

race and geographic location which would facilitate correla-

tion with the hospital and death data above.

It must be recognized that these three indicators

offer a relatively small window through which to observe

the illegal drug problem. There is some consolation to be

drawn, however, from the rather precise nature of the poten-

tially available data and the specificity which this provides.

Hopefully, these three indicators will accurately reflect

the extent of illegal drug use. As further meaningful

measurements become available, of course, they can be
used to supplement those discussed here.

Notes on Operation and
Maintenance

The two interest areas of Housing and Health have
been discussed at length with possible goals and indicators
in order to demonstrate the concept of a human advancement
indicators program. A full program would have indicators
for all areas which have goals specified, or, in the absence
of any goals-policy statement, in areas deemed most impor-
tant by planners and decision-makers. Overall, the indi-
cators should be developed in areas which generally corres-
pond to the areas under evaluation by the federal and state
studies. The best approach would appear to be to begin
with a very small scale program, such as set forth above,
with the aim of enlarging the program as rapidly as resources
permit.

Since the Lansing Planning Department is presently
involved in developing an urban information data processing
system, the mechanical operations of the indicators program
should be merged into this present system. In fact, some
of the housing and health information described here are
already being gathered. This basic understanding of data

storage and retrieval will be of significant assistance

in the design and operation of the indicators program.

Of major concern in implementation is the accuracy

of the data. The demands of accuracy are particularly

great when data are to be used to indicate short-term

fluctuations in some social condition, given a relatively

small universe.[6] Since there are bound to be errors in

measurement, sampling, enumeration and coding, the drawing

of precise and detailed conclusions should be done very

carefully with adequate respect for the possibility of

incorrect interpretation. As experience in dealing with

the indicators grows and as observation time-spans stretch

out, reliability and ease of interpretation should increase.

Also of major concern is the safeguarding of privacy

of individuals. Along with the city's need for accurate

information concerning living conditions and problems for

planning purposes, the people have a basic right to privacy,

both in their daily lives and in the private records which

accrue in various agencies from the many activities and

transactions of our society. For this reason, care should

be taken in data gathering not to utilize names or other

personal identifiers in any permanent files of sensitive

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[6]Albert D. Biderman, "Social Indicators and Goals," Social Indicators, Raymond A. Bauer, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: The M. I. T. Press, 1966), p. 82.

information. Data obtained from outside agencies should be coded for storage without retention of names, and data which is address-specific should be used only in such ways that it will not come into public view.

Potentially a greater danger than embarrassment or annoyance is the risk of invasion of privacy by government agencies interested in more than mere descriptive statistics. Recent exposure of government "snooping" and spying activities indicates that very real threats to our basic civil liberties do exist. Therefore, great pains will have to be taken to ensure against unintended or repressive use of data gathered or the data-gathering process itself. No specter of threat or intimidation can be allowed to haunt the project. If people are to be expected to cooperate with the aims of the indicators program, then stringent safeguards for individual privacy will be a necessity.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS: THE APPLICATION AND FEASIBILITY
OF INDICATORS FOR LANSING

Application

In the past, local planning has been largely con-
fined to questions of physical development, in terms of
both objectives and recommendations. While "comprehensive"
physical plans are a necessity, they often fail to address
themselves to broad social issues and individual human
problems even when such problems have been evident. The
planning process must, however, be viewed as a flexible
instrument to assist our policy-makers and the public in
systematically investigating long-range development alter-
natives and in resolving actual human and social problems.
As such, it should lead to a deeper perception of current
issues and generate fresh approaches.[1]

In order to do this, the local information sources
must be greatly improved, and the human advancement

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[1]Doris B. Holleb, Social and Economic Information
for Urban Planning (Chicago: Center for Urban Studies,
University of Chicago, 1969), p. 42.

indicators program constitutes an effective vehicle in this regard. By addressing the issues and problems of the community through the goal-policy formulation process, an extremely important step toward relevant and rational planning will have been made. But needed along with this is an indicators program to reflect the degree of our success in attaining the goals.

Once this indicators program has been instituted, the city government and many other public and private agencies and individuals will have a very valuable tool to draw upon in making decisions and planning operational activities. It is a valuable tool because it attempts to monitor changing conditions in terms of the achievement of explicit goals, something which is not done now. The present array of statistics and indicators produced by public and private agencies is vast, but it is not organized purposefully, particularly for use at the local level of government.

Much information is available, but how well is it used? Holleb believes that our social statistics for urban areas are now in a chaotic and disorganized state which seriously reduces their usefulness.[2] She states that this,

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[2]Doris B. Holleb, "Social Statistics for Social Policy," Planning 1968 (Chicago: American Society of Planning Officials, 1968), p. 81.

. . . largely results from the fact that most of them are generated as a by-product, as a spin-off, from the regular activities of oper- ating agencies. Statistical activities and responsibilities are dispersed among a multi- plicity of agencies. Each issues specialized data in the form it judges most useful to its purposes. While there is surprisingly little duplication of effort, there are instead a host of other problems.[3]

Among the problems she cites are lack of uniformity

in definition, periodicity and area reference; gaps within

and between data areas; the dearth of measures relating to

quality factors; and the inability to sufficiently disaggre-

gate data.[4] She then summarizes the problem and the job

at hand:

Thus, from the standpoint of the consumer, the problem appears at first glance to be largely a question of indigestion rather than starvation. And, consequently, a primary task would appear to be the recasting of the social statistics that we presently have into a form that can be assimil- ated. Most of all, there is a widely felt need that they be reorganized, aggregated, and classified so that the information they reveal will shed light upon major policy objectives.[5]

The indicators program for Lansing would be a step

toward this type of reorganization, though nothing so com-

plete or wide-ranging as this "recasting" can be contem-

plated in the near future. What would be gained, however,

is the tying together of heretofore independent data into

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

a more coordinated and usable form, organized along the lines of important issues and problems within the community.

The indicator program itself would not solve any problems, but it will allow us to identify them and clarify any misunderstandings we may have of the conditions of life in Lansing. The gathering of this information in organized form will facilitate use of all data collected. Basically, there are four ways of using information that is applicable to the planning function: (1) to describe the state or pattern of events or conditions, (2) to examine the relationship and systematic structure of these events or conditions, (3) to forecast future changes, and (4) to formulate ways to influence events (i.e., to plan).[6]

The first use listed represents the primary use of the indicators program, and its importance is in turn verified by the fact that the remaining three uses depend for their precision and validity on the proper job being done in the gathering and organizing of data. Once the process of describing events and conditions is well advanced, then the results of the last three uses will be greatly enhanced. Thus the gathering of data becomes the foundation for

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[6]Doris B. Holleb, Social and Economic Information for Urban Planning (Chicago: Center for Urban Studies, University of Chicago, 1969), p. 47.

planning. Since planning is basic to sound decision-making, then this data gathering is of critical importance to decision-making itself, which, in effect, is the fifth way to use information.

The wise and efficient operation of government depends on the fourth use, formulating ways to influence events. There may be some temptation to view this as attempting to control the dynamics of the free enterprise system; however, this is not the implication to be drawn. Planning is a basic government responsibility in that the legislative body, in Lansing the City Council, must make decisions regarding the future. Every Council meeting and Council Committee meeting involves a number of such decisions, and every decision--of major or minor import--influences events. The object is to make the "right" decisions in view of community goals and desires, that is, to influence events which have a bearing on achieving these goals and fulfilling these desires. If no goals and desires are officially stated, then the Councilmen's interpretation of them must be the guiding factor. Regardless of this, however, future events are a result of present activity. Therefore, planning to influence the future is inescapable, and only the quality of the planning and decision-making can later be questioned.

Due to the continuous operational use of the indicators program, a long-range orientation to goals and issues can be maintained and predictive skills can be improved through validation (or invalidation) by new data. This continued feedback process will also facilitate the study of causal relationships (listed as use number two above) which is largely lacking in Lansing's planning activities. This, in fact, could become one of the most valuable contributions of the program by providing recurring measures of problem areas and thus providing for analysis of cause and effect relationships relative to governmental and private project activities. The benefits to be gained from being able to effectively evaluate various programs for their success or failure is clearly a great incentive in itself for the development of an indicators program.

While the internal uses of the indicator program are of considerable value, public or external use also holds much promise. The data gathered will be of great help to the State as its indicator program gets under way and as the various indicators themselves become aligned between the two programs to promote aggregation. Mutual assistance in development here will help smooth the way. Other public and private agencies, as well as individuals doing research, will also be able to draw upon the program for information, and their use of the data may further benefit the city by

providing independent commentary and findings concerning
the data. In addition, feedback from these users may
help to refine the program or illuminate new areas of interest
for future inquiry.

The indicators program will also serve as an educa-
tional tool for the citizens by providing a new visibility
to the activities of the city and to the good and the bad
aspects of life in Lansing. Coupled with an adopted goals
statement, the indicators will bring a sense of scale,
meaning and relationship to otherwise rather esoteric and
diverse information which might previously have gone unnoticed
or misunderstood. Hopefully, such a program will foster a
better appreciation by citizens of the aims of government
efforts and the true nature of the urban problems facing
Lansing and other cities across the country. Should this
alone be the only accomplishment of the indicators program,
it would appear to be worth the effort.

The need for an indicators program is also evidenced
by the character of the annual report of the Mayor to the
City Council on the "affairs of the City" as required by
Section 7.1 of the City Charter. Sometimes called the "State
of the City" Report[7] and patterned after similarly titled
state and federal reports, this document contains a wealth

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[7]Available in limited quantity from the Office of
the Mayor.

of information pertaining to the city as a physical and social entity. Its discussion of the people of the city and the quality of life enjoyed by them, however, is almost totally ignored. In this respect it is similar to the Presidents' State of the Union Reports through the mid-1950s.[8]

While these federal reports are now broadening to include more quality-of-life oriented data,[9] the city report continue to dwell on the statistics of operation by the City's departments and offices. As a result, the 1971 report tells us such things as how many new street lights were installed, how many police officers are enrolled in university programs, the total number of catach basins in the city, how many trees were trimmed by the Forestry Division, and how many loads of trash were hauled to the city's sanitary land fill site during the Spring trash pick up.

It is interesting to note that discussion of Planning Department activities amounted to ten lines (in 24 pages) and dealt exclusively with the need for exercising

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[8]For an analysis of these reports, see Albert D. Biderman, "Social Indicator and Goals," Social Indicators, Raymond A. Bauer, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: The M. I. T. Press, 1966, pp. 86-92.

[9]Ibid., pp. 92-95.

great care in revising the Zoning Ordinance.[10] No mention
was made of the Community Renewal Program, Master Plan
revisions, or other activities which involve several hun-
dred thousand dollars worth of federal grant monies.

While the State of the City Report provides a
great amount of information about city government opera-
tion, the adoption of formal goals and the development of
a human advancement indicators program would enable the
Mayor to prepare an annual report which would be much
more meaningful to both the City Council and the residents
of the city by including quality as well as quantity infor-
mation. To go even further, it would allow the Mayor to
prepare an annual goals achievement report, in addition
to the State of the City Report, which would discuss the
progress being made and cite the findings of the indicators
program. This type of report would be more relevant to the
interest of the citizens and would lend prestige to the
goals-indicators program and to the Mayor and Councilmen
as well.

A similar onesidedness in reviewing the local scene
was evident in the "Progress '71" edition of The State
Journal published on Sunday, February 7, 1971. The follow-
ing remarks were made in introducing the eight special

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[10]Gerald W. Graves, Second Annual State of the City
Message, January 4, 1971, p. 16.

sections dealing with the greater Lansing area:

> The several special sections that follow
> review the achievements and the problem of
> industry, business, government and education
> during the past year. It also puts into focus
> the goals of 1971 and beyond.
> The past year generally was one travail,
> complicated by strikes, economic adversity
> and inflation.
> But there was progress, too. The many
> articles in this edition, and the advertise-
> ments as well, describe these achievements
> . . . and the hopes for the future.[11]

The reference to "the goals of 1971" is curious

in that no goals are set out in the 72 pages. The "hopes

for the future" are likewise unclear since most of the

articles (and advertisements!) address only what the future

prospects are predicted to be, not what they should be in

terms of community needs and the travail cited. In addition,

this travail appears to be primarily an economic problem.

Generally the articles are very informative as to the var-

ious institutions in the Lansing area, and their related

activity reports are highlighted with broad statistical

data. The emphasis, however, is basically on the organiza-

tions themselves.

Clearly, here is a situation where a community goals-

indicators program would be very useful by providing a cen-

tral theme and a point of reference for evaluating progress.

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[11]The State Journal (Lansing), February 7, 1971,
Section C, p. 1.

By viewing progress in terms of human advancement as well
as institutional growth and activity, a well-rounded and
less biased picture of community life and progress could
be drawn. The use of human advancement indicators here
would provide the needed parallel measures for the mass of
physical and economic data presented, and a keynote article
on the achievement of community goals would supply valuable
perspective for the special issue as a whole.

Throughout this thesis, the development of an
indicators program has been viewed as a good and necessary
project. At this point, a word of caution relative to their
influence is in order. Biderman sees a problem in the abun-
dance of statistical indicators used today in that individ-
uals and institutions can find support for any side of an
issue depending on their motivation. While some people are
merely attempting to describe a particular subject, others
are trying to justify a position relative to the subject.
He calls this a conflict between "indicators" and "vindi-
cators."[12]

This problem is also touched on obliquely by
Katzman:

> A good social indicator permits us to trace
> trends or compare urban areas with respect to
> some social value, just as we can with per capita
> income. Such comparisons are not made idly, but

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[12]Biderman, op. cit., p. 78.

> serve to exhort the public to action and to
> evaluate the effectiveness of its policies.[13]

Both writers acknowledge the existence of decidedly
contradictory interpretations of indicators and recognize
the potential for outside attack upon a program to develop
them. In discussing the interests involved, Gross adds to
the commentary by saying that development of indicators will
inevitably stir up growing interest among users and that
"activists in all fields are interested in new information
that will help vindicate their position or indict the oppo-
sition."[14] Such activities, he adds, include the leaders
of huge organizations, public and private, whose activities
are inextricably linked with the fortunes of the community
as a whole.

On the other hand, however, Gross cites a fear on
the part of many groups that innovations along this line
(i.e., indicators) would impair their relative power position.
"Knowledge is one of the greatest forms of power, and new
forms of knowledge always suggest a threat to the existing
power structure."[15]

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[13]Marvin T. Katzman, "Social Indicators and Urban
Public Policy," Planning 1968 (Chicago: American Society
of Planning Officials, 1968), p. 87.

[14]Bertram M. Gross, "Social Systems Accounting,"
Social Indicators, Raymond A. Bauer, ed. (Cambridge, Mass.:
The M. I. T. Press, 1966), p. 257.

[15]Ibid., p. 258.

Thus, we can readily see two problems inherent in the development and use of indicators. The first is a possibility that indicators will be used improperly or incorrectly as support for a given position or that counter-programs will spring up as a defense against unwanted or embarassing findings. It should be noted here that such counter-programs may be viewed positively if they are properly designed and executed.

The second problem, touched upon in previous chapters, is the fear and distrust which may arise in some quarters relative to the use to which the indicators may be put. In this case, it is to be hoped that the program can be presented in such a way that suspicions can be allayed, the theme being that no blame for failure of past efforts is to be fixed or even suggested but rather that new and more effective avenues of approach to urban problem-solving may be opened.

Feasibility

The very fact that indicators programs are in their infancy may lead to some question of their feasibility for Lansing, particularly in view of the relatively small size of the city. There is no apparent reason, however, to assume simply that since they have not been started in other

cities that they can not be gotten under way here. Indeed,
it is likely that Lansing has an opportunity to make a name
for itself in municipal government by developing a program
since it appears that not one city in the United States has
as yet done so. Statistical data-gathering abounds every-
where, of course, but recurring measurements of the type
advocated here constitute virgin territory. This is one
reason why federal grant money may well be available for
such a project. While a full-range indicators program could
not be attempted at the outset due to the complex nature of
the task, a narrow, small-scale start such as presented here
would be enough to iron out many basic problems and decide
on the direction and rate of future expansion. More indi-
cators and more complex indicators in the areas of interest
used here may be the next step, or perhaps it will be the
development of similar basic indicators in other areas such
as health, public safety or environment. At any rate, as
experience increases, more complex measures may then be
attempted.

The opportunities and barriers outlined in Chapter
Four seem to demonstrate a net balance favorable to the
undertaking of an indicators program. The only remaining
question is do we have the capability at this time to begin.
The critical factor is money since money translates into
the resources of time and manpower. Therefore, it appears

that if the money were made available, through local or
federal funds, there would be no reason why work could
not begin very shortly. This money would be needed to
hire a planner or other qualified person (or persons) to
begin the initial design of the program and to contract
for outside assistance as necessary.

The question of the development and formal adop-
tion of a goals-policies statement is one not easily
answered since it lies within the political realm of city
operation. Whether or not such a statement is devised in
the near future, however, the indicators program should be
undertaken. The results and findings of the program will
still be of significant use to planners and decision-makers,
and the development of goals may come eventually if not
right away. The lack of a goals statement will likely result
in a less public or well known program, but valuable data
will still be made available.

The need for goals and indicators has been set forth
at some length in this thesis. If these needs are recog-
nized and accepted, then steps should be taken to meet them.
To this end the following recommendations are made:

1. The City of Lansing, through the Planning
    Department, should initiate contact with
    the Federal Government with the aim of

securing financial assistance for the development of a human advancement indicators program.

2. The City Council should authorize by resolution the formation of a citizen committee charged with the development of a statement of goals and policies relative to community development and improvement for the City of Lansing and to report back to the Council within a specified time period.

3. The City Council should direct department heads to prepare background materials for the citizen committee to use in their deliberations, including problem areas, major policy issues, and other information deemed useful in goal formulation.

4. The Planning Department should be designed as the office of primary responsibility for the development of the human advancement indicators program with the overall responsibility for program management.

The carrying out of these recommendations will
signify the taking of a major step by the City of Lansing
in meeting the urgent development needs of its citizens.
The program is feasible--what remains to be decided is only
the question of having the will and the foresight to embark
upon a new course toward better understanding of the quality
of life in Lansing and the doors to improvement which that
understanding will open.

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