

**Table 1.1** Benefits and drawbacks of various planning theories, in relation to different aspects of a strategy for promoting a sustainable development.

|             | <i>Global/national environmental and resource concerns</i> | <i>Local environmental concerns</i> | <i>Fair distribution</i> | <i>Civil and political human rights</i> | <i>Potential for change of societal frame conditions</i> |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|
| Synoptic    | (+)  | (-)                                 | (+)                      | (-)                                     | ?  |
| Incremental | -  | -                                   | -                        | (+)                                     | -  |
| Transactive | (-)  | (+)                                 | (+)                      | +                                       | +  |
| Advocacy    | ?  | +                                   | (-)                      | +                                       | +  |
| Radical     | +  | ?                                   | +                        | -                                       | +  |

+, Usually well suited; (+), may be suited under certain conditions; ?, vague or ambiguous function; (-), may have a negative effect; -, usually has a negative effect.

**Radical planning** has two main trends. The first is an anarchist-inspired approach emphasizing decentralized control and the experimentation with alternative societal organizations. The second main school of radical planning is more structurally oriented. It takes a Marxist direction focusing on the impacts of the economic system on class conditions and the role of planning in the class struggle. The first group of radicalist planning theorists includes the environmentalist movements. The Marxist radical version proposes government control of the means of production and that production, instead of being governed by profit motives, should be directed towards meeting societal needs as defined through the political process.

Naess analysed these five main alternative planning theories with a view to determining their ability to deliver sustainable development.<sup>31</sup> The criteria Naess used to evaluate these theoretical positions were:

(a) To what extent will the planning form be able to contribute to long-term preservation of global and national environmental qualities ... and management of natural resources in a way that does not

reduce the abilities for future generations to meet their needs?

(b) To what extent will the planning form be able to contribute to the preservation of local environmental qualities?

(c) To what extent will the planning form be able to contribute to a distribution of goods which ensures basic rights to welfare for everybody, regardless of nationality or social group?

(d) To what extent will the planning form be able to advance, or be in conflict with civil and political rights, especially minority rights?

(e) To what extent will the planning form be able to contribute to the improvement of the conditions for planning in accordance with the criteria for a sustainable development?<sup>32</sup>

Table 1.1 shows the results of the evaluation conducted by Naess. It indicates that each planning model has certain strengths with regard to achieving sustainable development. Assuming that society has the political will and the power to promote sustainable development, then synoptic planning, which forms the basic philosophical underpinning of the method outlined in this text, is appropriate for the task. It is particularly well suited to the promotion of global and national environmental concerns and

also to the promotion of justice in the distribution of goods. Its weakness lies in the practise of the theory where there is a tendency to neglect local knowledge particularly in the field of conservation. This is evidenced in Britain, where the synoptic model of planning is predominant, by the total disregard for local protests at road and airport development sites. The views of the community activist appear to carry little weight.

Incremental planning appears to be poorly suited to the promotion of collective objectives which address major issues such as global, national or even local environmental concerns. A more just distribution of resources is also not a priority for the incremental planning process and this, of course, is a fundamental requirement of sustainable development. The transactive planning model implies the sacrifice of the important controls needed to attain targets for global environmental protection and the equitable distribution of goods on which such environmental protection are predicated. Both transactive planning and advocacy planning do appear well suited to addressing local environmental problems. Advocacy planning is particularly supportive of civil and political rights together with community involvement in development which is so important in the theory of sustainable development. Having strong parochial concerns to the fore, advocacy planning is a little ambiguous in relation to global concerns and a more just distribution of resources. The attempts to execute Marxist planning theories have revealed serious shortcomings with regard to securing civil and political rights while socialist states of a communist leaning have poor records in achieving environmental quality. The critical perspective of radical planning does, however, form a basis for outlining strategies to overcoming obstacles towards achieving global environmental concerns.<sup>33</sup> In the hands of the radical environmentalists the ideas about a global system of self-sufficient villages is a refreshing contribution to the debate about sustainable development.

It seems that the normative planning theories, to some extent, are complementary and that common sense suggests an eclectic approach where planning style is dictated by the needs of a particular situation. There seems no good reason to believe that compatible features from different planning styles cannot be combined within the same planning or urban design task. Naess seems to be speaking for a wider audience than his Norwegian colleagues when he suggests that: 'Synoptic planning should be used to the greatest possible extent'.<sup>34</sup> He suggests, however, that implementation of plans should take place, where possible, in small steps so that experience can be incorporated in later phases. It seems wise also to include within the framework and objectives of synoptic planning method adequate provision for active public participation. It is not sufficient simply to pay 'lip service' to participation, such tokenism can be counterproductive by raising false expectations or by feeding a public cynicism towards all development. Public participation is a procedure which can illuminate genuine alternative development strategies suggested by people with a specialist local knowledge. With these caveats it appears that the synoptic method of design advocated in this book is an appropriate tool for delivering sustainable development.

Chapter 2 will outline the following ways in which problems in urban design are defined, writing design briefs, developing or negotiating the programme and issues related to design control. Chapter 3 deals with the survey; in particular, it covers techniques of site investigation including site history, townscape analysis, urban legibility, permeability studies, and visual analysis. Chapter 4 covers techniques of problem analysis, including SWOT analysis, constraints and possibility mapping, trends, forecasts and scenario writing. The concern of Chapter 5 is methods of generating alternatives, including a discussion of the nature of design concepts, synectics and the use of analogy, brain storming, lateral thinking and history as a source of ideas. The chapter is particularly concerned with