



The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

Papers downloaded from AgEcon Search may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.

No endorsement of AgEcon Search or its fundraising activities by the author(s) of the following work or their employer(s) is intended or implied.

BOOK REVIEWS

Sydney at the Census: 1971. A social atlas, J. R. Davis and P. Spearritt. Canberra: Urban Research Unit, Australian National University, 1974. Pp. vi, 117 plus separate overlay map. No recommended price (about \$8).

For well over a century advanced nations have been compiling and developing a wide range of social and economic statistics. The original purpose of these mounting hoards of data was simple: to provide governments with relevant information for planning and decision-making.

With the passage of time, the division of labour in the task of Australia's census collections appears to have obscured the reason for their inception, and the job seems almost to have become an end in itself. Each year, the agencies responsible for the compilation of statistics, have harnessed their questionnaires and computers to the task of producing mounting piles of data, yet they appear to have been given neither the encouragement nor the facilities to analyse, or to present, the data they gather in forms more readily assimilated.

Publication of *Sydney at the Census: 1971* (and its planned companion volumes) is therefore to be heartily welcomed. What better way to present location-related data for easy assimilation than in the form of maps? And how easy it is to get computers to compile such maps from the underlying masses of data available in the census.

The authors are well suited to produce such a work—Richard Davis from his involvement with the application of computer techniques to urban research, and Peter Spearritt from his thesis research into the urban history of Sydney and its changing form. Working from the Australian National University's Urban Research Unit, they have been able to draw on the skilled assistance of several other specialists in their production of the atlas.

The atlas contains fifty maps, each illustrating an item from the social census of 1971. The maps are printed on the right hand pages and are each faced by an accompanying commentary designed to help the reader's interpretation of the map. All the maps are at the same scale, (approximately 1 to 225 000) and a loose plastic overlay map is provided to help identify individual suburbs.

Ten pages of introductory text help to interrelate the maps, showing how topography and transport patterns have helped to shape the developing pattern of social statistics. The technical basis of the maps is outlined in the introduction, and supporting technical details for the factor analysis of socioeconomic data are given in appendices.

Of necessity, the atlas is only a sample of the data to be found in the social census. Given the need to contain the atlas within a reasonable size, the choice of what to include is a difficult one which the authors have done most satisfactorily. A dozen maps describe major parameters of the Sydney work force. Education is more briefly covered by only three maps. Age, religion, migration, demography, dwellings and population factor analysis form the themes of the remaining thirty-five maps.

Statistics of these variables are of value to a wide range of workers in many disciplines, and this pioneering work in Australian social census mapping will undoubtedly be used by many. In any pioneering, however, some false trails are likely to be taken. Perhaps the most obvious of the atlas' few failings is the choice of so indistinctive a range of characters for the shadings of the maps. Thirty-two maps use six levels of shading, and in most of these it is well nigh impossible to differentiate the top two or three, making it difficult to fully appreciate the intricacies which the atlas is undoubtedly the first to reveal.

The user of the atlas might also question the authors' interpretation of map 15, that because there are few university students resident in the Campbelltown area, there is no demand for a university in that area. This contention can hardly be supported by census data, which shows only where students are resident, not their origins. Map 15 might equally well be used to support the case that transport is so bad from Campbelltown to Sydney's three existing universities, that few students attending them are willing to live in the Campbelltown area and commute, the majority preferring instead to take lodgings closer to existing universities.

Each map in the atlas uses data from 3 677 census collectors' districts in the study area, resulting in greater detail than has been possible in any previous social data maps of Sydney. The volume of work associated with so large a number of districts has forced the authors to use an isopleth mapping programme (where the value for each district is attributed to a single point, and points of equal value are joined by lines, as with a contour map). The alternative, choropleth mapping, (where the map is shaded by districts, according to the value for each district) required far more programming work and huge computer capacity, as details of all boundaries must be fed into the computer, not just co-ordinates for a single centroid in each district.

The disadvantages of isopleth mapping are perhaps not sufficiently stressed in the introduction to the atlas. The major disadvantage is that the accuracy of location of the isolines is not high in areas where population is sparse. In such areas the programme may even develop spurious detail. The overlay provided with the atlas does indicate the areas of low population density.

The atlas commentaries point how the history of Sydney's development has affected its present social structure. Although the inner-city areas are changing under pressure of economic circumstances, many suburbs

still exhibit a social pattern laid down years ago, as the consequence of circumstances which then existed. Thus, the more dynamic features of the social pattern are therefore at the centre and at the urban-rural transition interface. Many users of the atlas will therefore regret the need to use isopleth mapping, as it has forced the authors to limit the coverage of the atlas to census districts with population densities above 193 persons per square kilometre (500 per square mile), thereby limiting the portrayal of the urban fringes.

The greatest value of this atlas will undoubtedly be to specialists, social scientists, geographers, planners and historians. Nevertheless it would hold undoubted interest for any layman or student wishing to obtain a better insight into the divergence of Sydney's social pattern.

CYRIL B. J. CATT

Department of Agriculture, East Maitland

Models for Spatial Agricultural Development Planning, Fahmi K. Bishay. Rotterdam: Rotterdam University Press, 1973. (Vol. 3 in the series Studies in Development and Planning.) Pp. xv, 172. Author/subject indexes, reference list. Dfl 35.00.

Economists make good doubting Thomases and this reviewer is no exception. It's so easy to say "The theory is good, but . . ."—except of course, in econometrics where often the only theory seems to be mathematical pragmatism. It is as a doubting Thomas that I review this book by Bishay.

There is no doubt that the author has produced a work of elegance and erudition. Chapters 2 and 3 are an excellent review of the interlocking nature of growth and development in any economy. These chapters also emphasize the particular difficulties of poor countries. Further, the mathematical sophistication of later chapters is beyond reproach.

Bishay establishes very quickly his thesis that the facts of economic growth are not as simple as Harrod-Domar growth models might suggest. He thoughtfully presents the case for distinguishing regional agricultures in development planning because of different regional production functions and transportation costs. Bishay also briefly reviews an ideal framework of development planning—Tinbergen's "planning-in-stages" system. This system distinguishes three stages of planning—(i) macroplanning, or the performance of major strategic economic variables; (ii) the middle stage which considers homogeneous production sectors, and hence the spatial considerations which are the dominant theme of this book; and (iii) the microstage, in which individual projects in particular sectors are planned.

Bishay also reviews development objectives for agriculture—contributing to GNP and employment, spreading the income distribution, and contributing to foreign trade. The author also shows how the considerations of planning in stages and spatial aspects lead naturally into the spatial development planning models with a linear programming framework developed by Mennes, Tinbergen and Waardenburg.

Chapters 4 and 5 are concerned with short run models of agricultural development planning. Beginning with a highly restrictive set of assumptions, for example, no transport costs, perfect elasticity of international demand curves, etc.—Bishay develops programming formulations of agricultural production within the context of planned development. By successively easing the restrictive assumptions, he develops a further three similar models. Chapter 5 illustrates a numerical solution of one of the short run models from chapter 4.

In chapter 6, the author considers the problem of investment, and the resulting complications that arise in agricultural planning. By this stage, a programming model requires three pages of text for its description and a further three-and-a-half pages for description of the variables. Again, by progressively altering assumptions, this time as to the nature of the investment process, Bishay develops a further seven models. The final chapter discusses a numerical example of long run planning.

Even from this brief outline of the study, fellow doubting Thomases will perhaps begin to share this reviewer's doubts about the practical value of this approach to development planning. Models such as those Bishay describes require "the collection and digestion of a vast amount of information" (p. 31). Are undeveloped countries capable of amassing the wide range of technical and economic data required? Can poor countries afford this data collection? If the development models presented are as useful as Bishay claims them to be, would the best use of aid personnel be in the collection of this data?

Although Bishay presents numerical analyses of some of the models he discusses, the data he uses is always notional. Why? Could it be that such models have never been successfully applied!

As the author admits, even the models he presents are considerable simplifications of the real world. Despite such simplifications, the relaxing of one very restrictive assumption—viz. perfectly elastic foreign demand curves—requires a shift into quadratic programming. Whether this increased sophistication requiring more sophisticated data and more sophisticated output interpretation is useful is a point Bishay noticeably avoids.

In looking for, and failing to find, a cost-benefit analysis of the procedures Bishay discusses, the reader is forcibly reminded of agricultural economists' criticisms of much technical research in agriculture—many techniques are feasible, but their costs frequently exceed their returns.

At a more fundamental methodological level, two final questions cast doubts on the usefulness of Bishay's approach. Firstly, are poor countries interested in the optimization which lies at the core of the mathematical programming techniques the author presents? The present state of poor countries is so abysmally dismal, that optimization seems a goal of doubtful significance. To a comfortably-off, middle-class, Australian observer, betterment—any growth whatsoever—is what appears to be desirable. The optimization approach seems to result in what Schlaiffer has called a type III error: carefully computed solutions to the wrong problem.

Secondly, it is doubtful whether detailed long run planning could materially assist undeveloped countries. Many poor countries seem to be plagued with natural and social disasters of terrifying proportions—earthquakes, floods, cyclones, droughts, wars and violent fluctuations in international markets and prices. The available economic resources of most undeveloped countries are so pitiful that it is difficult to mitigate the effects of disasters without large-scale resource diversion away from development projects. Long-run planning, except in a very general sense, becomes therefore meaningless.

In summary therefore *Models for Spatial Agricultural Development Planning* is an elegant exposition of techniques useful to developed countries. The economic value of Bishay's models to undeveloped countries is ignored in the book, and is hence highly suspect.

DAVID GODDEN

Agricultural Research Centre, Wollongbar

Economic Systems and Society: Capitalism, Communism and the Third World, George Dalton. Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1974. Pp. 250, combined author/subject index, reference list. \$2.55.

Despite the obvious gains from "more relevant" university courses, it remains a sad fact that much fundamental economic theory is irreconcilably divorced from reality. This lamentable fact makes books like *Economic Systems and Society* invaluable. Dalton has produced a background reader which makes intelligible, movements like capitalism, socialism and the welfare state as parts of a continuous process of western economic thought and organization.

This book is not a text so much as a background reader. Its style is less ponderous than most economic texts, its exposition more lucid, its rigour considerably less pedantic, its ideas provocative and creative. It is also a background reader in the sense that undergraduates could, almost, be expected to read it as an adjunct to examinable material.

The author begins with a review of nineteenth century capitalism—its origins, its benefits and attendant problems. Dalton sees the rise of socialism as a reaction against the damaging consequences of nineteenth century capitalism: despite a rise in material wealth, the later phases of the industrial revolution brought a concomitant material insecurity for the working classes and severe social dislocation.

Dalton distinguishes four broad types of reaction to the evils of nineteenth century capitalism. The socialist responses—Utopian, Marxian and Democratic—were the programme-oriented responses. All three embodied a critique of nineteenth century capitalism, of its inequities, rampant commercialism, social conflict and economic instability. "Each sought a new economy materially improved in organisation and performance which would create a new society, humane, just and harmonious". None had a direct effect until the twentieth century, when democratic socialists headed governments in Western Europe, and disciples of Marx seized power in Russia. Dalton's fourth type of reaction to the iniquities of nineteenth century capitalism—viz. government regulation—was in part socialist inspired, and partly inspired by humanitarian liberalism. "Governmental intervention was the *combined* result of the new urban-commercial industrialism: total market dependence for livelihood, machines and factories, and massive populations in the cities".

In the conclusion of his review of capitalism in the period 1750–1950, Dalton considers the two important consequences of nineteenth century socialism in the first half of the twentieth century. The first consequence was an amalgam of the traditions of humanitarian liberalism, utopian and democratic socialism which expressed themselves through the rise to power of governments such as Labour governments in Great Britain. Dalton labels the resulting economic organization "Welfare State Capitalism" which is fundamentally different from "capitalism" prior to 1939. In economics, the prime mover in this change was Keynes: "The outstanding faults of the economic society in which we live are its failure to provide for full employment and its arbitrary and inequitable distribution of wealth and incomes" (Keynes, *General Theory*). After Keynes, Welfare State Capitalism retained the fundamental capitalist philosophy of private ownership of production and market determination of output and income, but the State intervened to mitigate the harsh effects of an unfettered economy. Dalton claims that the leading idea of the *General Theory* is that capitalism is inherently unstable because it cannot ensure that all the goods produced at full employment will be bought. This, in a nut shell, is the Keynesian revolution and the essence of Welfare State Capitalism.

Dalton's review of Welfare State Capitalism places Keynes and his successors in a perspective seldom emphasized in undergraduate economics. The idea of the Keynesian revolution as a socialist plot, is a charge frequently hurled at much modern economics by the economic right wing. According to Dalton this proposition is correct: "Finally, in a special sense, we are all socialists now"!

The second great twentieth century reaction to nineteenth century socialism is typified by the Russian revolution. Keynes claimed that, while unfettered capitalism failed to provide for full employment and equitable distribution, the authoritarian states (notably the U.S.S.R.) "solved the problem of unemployment at the expense of efficiency and of freedom" (*General Theory*).

Dalton examines the aftermath of the Russian revolution to draw out how a "Communist" State solved the problems of unfettered capitalism. Because his treatment is sympathetic he plays down, but does not ignore, the economic and social price the Soviet Union paid in avoiding the evils of capitalism.

Dalton concludes his survey with a sketchy analysis of the reformed capitalist economies, the new communist economies and the developing economies of the third world since 1950. While not as perceptive as his pre-1950 analyses Dalton provides a thumb-nail sketch of developments since 1950. His implied conclusions relating to the new communism and the reformed capitalist economies parallel Lindbeck's apt comment: "it is ironic that in Eastern Europe it is considered progressive and even radical to advocate greater reliance on markets, at the same time that in the West radicals regard their opposition to the market system as an important part of their ideology, *in principle*". The survey of the "Third World" is disappointing. It is unfortunate that Dalton decided to include it in an analysis that is fundamentally European. The problems of developing countries (which although European-dominated in the past are emphatically not of a European culture) are important enough to warrant a separate treatment. The problems of the "Third World" are not, and cannot be treated, solely as an appendage and consequence of nineteenth century European capitalism.

Dalton's achievement in *Economic Systems and Society* is his coherent and eminently readable account of a continuum of social, economic and political change as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. To weave Owen, Marx and Keynes, their ideas and followers, into an undergraduate drama is no mean success. It is a book for undergraduate economists, (not historians), economic historians, sociologists or political scientists. It is not the last word in analysis and was not intended to be so. The student should be warned that it is an introductory survey and is intended only to provide a background for his undergraduate studies. He should also take seriously Dalton's warning that it was written against the background of the author's preference for democratic socialism.

DAVID GODDEN

Agricultural Research Centre, Wollongbar