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Authors

Dickert, Thomas

Sorensen, Jens

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THOMAS DICKERT AND JENS SORENSEN



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Social Equity in Coastal Zone Planning*

THOMAS DICKERT** and JENS SORENSEN***

Abstract The present emphasis of coastal planning programs on environmental protection and economic development fails to give broader consideration to social equity and social values. Because of this inadequate consideration of social values, many policies developed for environmental protection or economic development of coastal resources may be socially regressive. The intent of this paper is to present a listing of social-economic impacts that coastal zone decision-makers should consider either in developing environmental or economic policies or when reviewing projects proposing to locate in the coastal zone. A checklist is developed to relate the socio-economic impacts identified to information and methods necessary for impact assessment.

A review of the content of state and regional coastal planning programs suggests that most, if not all programs are directed to: protection of environmental resources, economic development of coastal resources (oil, fisheries, shipping), or a combination of these two objectives.¹ Few coastal zone planning programs specifically relate the environmental and economic programs to the sectors of society which use coastal resources and experience coastal environments. The few coastal planning or case studies that deal with socio-economic

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**Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and City Planning, University of California, Berkeley.

***Post-graduate Researcher, Institute of Urban and Regional Development, University of California, Berkeley.

¹Earl Bradley Jr. and John Armstrong, *A Description and Analysis of Coastal Zone and Shoreland Management Programs in the United States*, University of Michigan Sea Grant Program, March 1972.

U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Coastal Zone Management Task Force, *Status of State Coastal Zone Management Efforts*, U.S. Dept. of Commerce Publication, May 1973.

Jens Sorensen and Marie Demers, *Coastal Zone Bibliography: Citations to Documents on Planning, Resources Management and Impact Assessment*, University of California Institute of Marine Resources, August 1973.

issues are limited in scope, usually concentrating on traditional factors such as demographic characteristics, employment, and per capita regional income.² Questions of social equity (the distributional effects of coastal land use policies on social groups) are seldom raised; and if raised at all, remain unanswered.

The primary objective of most of the current coastal planning programs appears to be environmental protection.³ (The guidelines of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 may reinforce this environmental emphasis.)⁴ It is well recognized that concern for environmental protection arose (in part) from environmental degradation produced by past emphasis on economic development of coastal areas and resources. Past emphasis on economic objectives resulted in degradation of environmental quality, which has, in turn, led to the new emphasis on environmental protection and restoration objectives. The question now appears to be to what extent will the present emphasis on environmental quality produce socially regressive effects and possibly generate a political backlash.

The California Comprehensive Ocean Area Plan (COAP) was criticized by the California Advisory Commission on Marine and Coastal Resources on the basis that the plan, while emphasizing environmental policies, failed to include any policies pertaining to social equity.

The questions of who bears the costs and who receives the benefits of coastal resource policies should be taken into account in all resource allocation decisions. Unless such concern with the question of social equity is introduced into decision making, it is possible that the ultimate effect, both market pressures and environmental policies, could produce a situation in

² Joel Goodman, *Economic and Social Aspects of Delaware's Coastal Zone*, College of Marine Studies, University of Delaware, Spring 1973.

A. H. Keil *et al.*, *Economic Factors in the Development of a Coastal Zone*, Natural Technical Information Service (PB 195 224), September 1970.

Rorholm Neils *et al.*, *Economic Impact of Marine Oriented Activities—A Study of the Southern New England Marine Region*, University of Rhode Island, 1967.

Battelle Memorial Institute, Columbus Laboratories, *The Economic and Social Importance of Estuaries*, Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, 1968.

Gruen and Gruen Associates, *Approaches Towards a Land Use Allocation System for California's Coastal Zone*, California Department of Navigation and Ocean Development, October 1971.

Sea Grant Program Texas A & M University, *Economic Development in the Texas Coastal Zone*, Coastal Resources Management Program (Texas), March 1973.

³ Notable examples are: Maine's Coastal Planning Program (*Penobscot Bay Resources Plan-Pilot Study*); Regional Marine Resources Council Planning Program for Long Island; Florida Coastal Coordinating Council's Zoning, Policies and Criteria, *California Comprehensive Ocean Area Plan*; and Washington's Shoreline Management Program.

⁴ U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Coastal Zone Management Program Development Grants—Notice of Proposed Rulemaking" *Federal Register*, June 13, 1973.

which opportunities to recreate and reside along the coast are limited to a small percentage of the state's population.⁵

During the 1972 campaign surrounding the voter initiated California Coastal Zone Conservation Act (the major intent of the Act is clearly environmental protection) the interest groups for economic development of the coast (real estate, construction trades, petroleum industry, tourist commercial developers, port developers) repeatedly raised the issue that the act would produce socially regressive effects. The Act was drafted and included on the California ballot as an initiative (Proposition 20).

The beach belongs to you—don't lock it up—vote no on proposition 20.

Message on 500 billboards paid for by Citizens
Against the Coastal Initiative

Loss of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs in needed development projects, jobs especially important to racial and economic minorities in the construction industry. . . . Will the elitists who would grab our coastline for their own purposes then be after our mountains, our lakes and streams, our farm lands?

Brochure signed by: the president of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California; a former Mayor of San Francisco; Executive Secretary and Treasurer Fisherman's and Allied Workers Union, ILWU.

Only a favored few would benefit from the coastal "deep freeze" [the Act], those with the physical and monetary resources to enjoy the beaches by back-packing and horseback riding and who would "lock up" the beaches from the general public; and those owners of established beach homes in exclusive areas whose property values would increase when people of moderate means are prohibited from sharing amenities.

Brochure—Citizens Against the Coastal Initiative

Proponents for economic development of the coast may obviously raise concerns for social equity as a smokescreen to conceal their real motivations of self-interest. Whether the motivation to raise questions of social equity is genuine or only a political strategy, the act of posing such questions is a very real and effective means of arguing against coastal planning policies (either environmental or economic in nature). The use of social equity questions as a political strategy strongly suggests that research will be needed to determine the actual type and incidence of social impact that may be generated by environmental and economic policies of a coastal management plan.

⁵California Advisory Commission on Marine and Coastal Resources, *The Review of the California Comprehensive Ocean Area Plan*, December 1972, pp. 35-36.

Based on a review of the California coastal planning literature⁶ and social equity and social indicators literature,⁷ some of the major socio-economic issues to consider in coastal planning will include: the mix of employment or industry within coastal zone communities, the mix of permanent vs. visitor oriented population and related land uses, the mix of recreational opportunities provided by the public sector, and the incidence of costs for provision of public services provided by a policy or project.

One recent example where social equity was expressly considered is the state Coastal Commission's approval of a recreation and vehicle campground project, based in large part on the following policy:

Uses of land in the coastal zone that can benefit many people should have preference over uses that benefit a few. Or more precisely, when a piece of land is not proposed for public acquisition and is thus almost certain to be developed, should it be used for housing—of benefit primarily to the residents of the housing—or should encouragement be given to vacation or similarly temporary uses, such as resorts, hotels, rental units, and recreational vehicle parks, that will allow many more people to enjoy the amenities of the coastal zone.⁸

Problems of Considering Social Equity

Numerous difficulties will be encountered in the attempt to include social equity considerations in coastal planning programs. In order to make the social

⁶California Department of Navigation and Ocean Development, *California Comprehensive Ocean Area Plan*, May 1972.

Sedway-Cooke et al., *Tri County Coastline: Policies for Conservation and Development*, September 1972. *Tri County Coastline Study: Stage II A Policy Plan for Conservation and Development*, August 1973.

Planning Departments of Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties.

Duncan and Jones, *Summary of Findings and Recommendations on Coastal Area Planning and Management Policies*, Comprehensive Planning Organization, San Diego Region, June 1973.

Sedway-Cooke et al., *Regional Coastline Plan for San Francisco Bay Area Phase II*, July 1972; *Regional Ocean Coastline Plan for the San Francisco Bay Area*, June 1973, Association of Bay Area governments.

Southern California Association of Governments, *Interim Regional Coastline Planning Program: Progress Report No. 2*, July 1972. *Regional Coastline Planning Program Final Report*, July 1973.

⁷See for example comments concerning the socio-economic composition of users on land based rural recreation by A. Myrick Freeman III, "Distribution of Environmental Quality," in Allen V. Kneese and Blair T. Bower (eds.), *Environmental Quality Analysis*, Johns Hopkins Press, 1972. Also, Martin H. Krieger, "Six Propositions on the Poor and Pollution," *Policy Sciences*, 1, 1970.

⁸Reported in Robert Rooney, "Economic Impact of the California Coastal Zone Conservation Act," paper presented at the Sixth Annual Seminar on Condemnation sponsored by the Southern California Chapter of the American Institute of Real Estate Appraisers, December 7, 1963.

equity concept an operative analytical tool society may be viewed as a composition of interest groups (e.g., recreation, industrial, home owner interest groups) and socio-economic groups (e.g., ethnic, income, education groups).⁹ An initial problem will be to define the composition and geographic distribution of interest and socio-economic groups within the coastal zone.¹⁰

A second problem will be motivating the minority groups, particularly unorganized groups that will be affected by a coastal policy or project. Many socially affected groups may perceive other related problems (e.g., poverty) as their major concern and not be willing to participate in the resolution of problems which seem more remote. For example, in recent meetings concerning the Golden Gate National Recreation Area near San Francisco, inner city residents were actively encouraged to participate—the response was negligible.

The transactions costs arising from the inclusion of social equity considerations could be a considerable expense, particularly if equity concerns are expressed through hearings and public meetings. Hearings and public meetings may produce considerable delays and generate counterproductive arguments, possibly alienating and frustrating various minority groups or setting one population or user group against another.

This problem will be especially acute in coastal zone planning programs that operate under legislatively defined deadlines (such as California Coastal Zone Conservation Act). Public participation in discussion of social equity may tend to prolong debate and make such deadlines impossible to meet. A secondary result of the time delay by public participation may be the diffusion of commitment by interest groups and alteration of their membership.

⁹ Several approaches for determining the composition and geographical distribution of socio-economic and interest groups include: the use of secondary data sources (e.g., census and others), surveys of user and resident population groups, and direct participation of user and community groups in public forums concerning a project or planning program.

¹⁰ In compiling an index of coastal zone interest groups (one of our present research projects) the following categories of interest have been defined:

- I. Organized Groups
 - A. Public Organizations
 - 1. Local (recreation, conservation, ad hoc, development)
 - 2. State Wide (recreation, conservation, ad hoc, development, historic)
 - B. Local Property and Homeowners Associations
 - C. Industry and Commerce Organizations
 - D. Labor Organizations
 - E. Professional Organizations
 - F. Governmental Organizations
 - G. Educational and Research Institutions
- II. Unorganized Groups
 - A. Beach Recreationalists
 - B. Out of State Tourists
 - C. Ethnic Groups

Due to these problems, most successful environmental planning programs have tended to avoid the evaluation of social issues for political expediency. For example, the result of the recent Lake Tahoe Planning Agency environmental protection policies is that housing for service workers cannot be provided within the basin and service workers must commute from areas outside the basin, often from the Nevada side of the Sierra Mountains.¹¹ Similarly, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission in formulating its plan for San Francisco Bay did not consider the social impact of excluding relatively cheap housing and industrial sites which could be provided on bay fill.¹²

Process for Inclusion of Social Equity

It is the opinion of the authors that the following process can provide for the consideration of social impacts in a coastal planning program and resolution of some of the problems outlined above. The four steps in this process include:

- identify the social impacts that may be occurring (based on case studies, literature review, professional judgment);
- determine the extent to which the impacts identified are actually occurring and the incidence of effects on specific social groups (many impacts identified by conservation or development interests appear to be more hypothetical than real);
- compare the social impacts to environmental and economic factors in a manner that will allow the explication of tradeoffs between social, economic, and environmental values for a given coastal planning policy. (The final guidelines issued by the Water Resources Council recommend this approach.)¹³
- develop strategies to implement the mix of social, economic, and environmental values that have been determined. (Strategies for increasing the regard for social values could include property tax readjustment, land use regulations, differential user tax.)

Recently the planning staff of the State (California) Coastal Zone Conservation Commission expressed concern that social equity was not being considered in the review of projects by the Coastal Commission.¹⁴ Based upon an analysis

¹¹ U.S. Senate on Air and Water Pollution, *Environmental Problems of Lake Tahoe Basin*, Hearings, August 21, 1972, Government Printing Office.

¹² San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, *The San Francisco Bay Plan*, January 1969 and *San Francisco Bay Plan Supplement*. See particularly Karl V. Steinbrugge, "Seismic Risk to Buildings and Structures on Filled Lands in San Francisco Bay," in *Fill, Three Reports on Aspects of Fill in San Francisco Bay*, San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, 1967.

¹³ U.S. Water Resources Council "Water and Related Land Resources—Establishment of Principles and Standards for Planning," *Federal Register*, September 10, 1973.

¹⁴ The California Coastal Zone Conservation Commission was created by passage of a public initiative on November 7, 1972. The Commission exercises development controls over that

of the content of California coastal planning studies¹⁵ the authors prepared a checklist of socio-economic impacts that could be produced by proposed projects, (the first step in the process, outlined above). It should be noted that the impacts identified do not comprise a definitive listing. Step two of the process, determining the actual occurrence of impact, should indicate modifications in the scope and definitions of the present listing of socio-economic considerations.

Determining the actual occurrence of socio-economic impacts will require considerable new research. Few empirical studies on socio-economic impacts in coastal zone situations have been conducted. An exception to the lack of relevant case studies is the research being conducted on the socio-economic impacts of developing Marina del Rey (Los Angeles County). One study examines land use changes generated by the development of the marina. The analysis relates the change in use surrounding the marina to alterations in the types of user groups and the socio-economic composition of the community.¹⁶ Another study traces the history of policy development concerning Marina del Rey, and shows how the stated policies are benefitting a limited set of socio-economic groups.¹⁷ Presently research is in process to determine the actual effects the California Coastal Zone Conservation Act has had on assessed valuation of property, building trades employment, and local community identity.

The checklist of socio-economic considerations (Table 1) relates the listing of potential impacts (left column) to information and methods required for determining the degree and extent of impact (center column). We have purposely limited the scope of impact assessment information and methods to those types which could be applied to most situations on the California coast.

The information identified in the checklist might be compiled in the environmental impact report (as required by the California Environmental Quality Act) or project staff report, either by the commission staff, the responsible local agency in which the project is located, or requested of the project proponent. The considerations are not specified by project type (residential housing, highways, etc.), thus only some of the impacts may be relevant to any particular project.

portion of the Coastal Zone lying between the Seaward limit of the Jurisdiction of the State (usually three miles) and 1,000 yards landward from the mean high tide line, subject to various exceptions. The Commission must also develop a "Coastal Zone Conservation Plan" to submit to the State Legislature by December 1, 1975.

¹⁵ See listing of Coastal Planning Studies in footnote 6.

¹⁶ Mitchell Moss "Socio-Economic Spill-over Effects of Marina del Rey" in-progress publication, Center for Urban Affairs, University of Southern California.

¹⁷ Marsha Rood *et al.*, "Management and Policy Development in Marina del Rey" in-progress publication, Center for Urban Affairs, University of Southern California.

Table 1

<i>Socio-economic considerations</i>	<i>Criteria/information which may be included in checklist for permit review or plan development</i>	<i>Example areas of occurrence in California coastal zone</i>
1. Will the project cause a change in the existing temporary or permanent employment base?	Mix of local industrial employment:	Communities dependent on single industry or economic sector
Effect on permanent employment for residents of coastal community (particularly for coastal communities with high annual or seasonal unemployment):	Percent of total employment for each industrial sector within the community.	North Coast
Increase employment opportunities in service sector (commercial).	Percent resident local employment by industrial sector	Eureka (timber, fishing) Crescent City (timber, fishing) Point Arena Bodega (fishing) Trinidad (fishing)
Decrease seasonal fluctuation in employment.	Percent non-resident employment by industrial sector.	
Decrease annual employment.	Seasonal fluctuation of employment by industrial sector (by quarter year).	
Effect on diversity of employment opportunities in coastal community:		
Reduce dependence of community on single industry or economic sector.		
Increase dependence of community on single industry or economic sector.		
Effect on temporary (construction) employment for residents of coastal community (particularly communities with high annual unemployment):		Seasonal employment
Decrease seasonal fluctuation in employment.		Watsonville/Castroville (migrant farm workers) Guadalupe/Arroyo Grande Carpenteria
Increase seasonal fluctuation in employment.		
Decrease annual employment.		
Effect of providing temporary employment (construction, seasonal help) for non-residents of coastal community (workers attracted or brought in from outside coastal community):	Existing housing vacancy rate (by type):	Temporary employment
Increase demand for housing (particularly rental, temporary mobile home).	Percent unused capacity of existing community service facilities and systems.	Point Reyes Station (construction of Coast Guard housing/treatment plant) San Luis Obispo (Avala) Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant
Increased use of public services (particularly schools, health, etc.).		
Integration of workers from outside community with community residents.		
2. Will the project cause a change in the existing tax base and thus the ability of jurisdiction to provide public services?		
Effect on assessed valuation of surrounding properties:	Estimated change in value (assessed values-rental rates) of properties surrounding site.	Areas surrounding Marina Del Rey (Santa Monica, Venice) Redondo Beach Mission Beach Point Reyes Station Dillon Beach Mendocino Coast
Displacement of low and middle income groups from coastal community. (Increased property taxes, increased property values, increased rents, increased cost of living.)	Mix of housing types and rental structure.	
Limit or prevent acquisition of coastal properties by individuals with low and middle incomes. (Increased cost of property, increased taxes).		
Effect on net tax revenue to local community and/or to taxing jurisdictions:	Revenue expected to be provided to taxing jurisdiction from project.	
Increase in net tax revenue.		
Decrease in net tax revenue.		
Effect on existing public services/systems:	Public costs required to provide services for project:	Southern Mendocino County (medical service) Point Reyes Station (medical service) Bodega (sewer service) Davenport (sewer service) Morro Bay-Cayucas (sewer service) Bolinas-Stinson Beach (water/sewer)
Upgrade quality of health care services, particularly in communities with inadequate health care services.	Percent unused capacity of existing service systems (water, fire, waste, sewer, police).	
Increase educational quality and opportunities, particularly in communities with substandard educational systems.	Estimated increase in public service required by the project.	
Increase quality of public safety services (police, fire, rescue), particularly in communities with substandard public safety services.		
Overburden capacity of existing public services (decrease quality and scope of services delivered) and/or require the expansion of public service systems (cost to residents of local community greater).		

Table 1 (continued)

Socio-economic considerations	Criteria/information which may be included in checklist for permit review or plan development	Example areas of occurrence in California coastal zone
3. Will the project cause a significant change in existing community social structure by excluding or encouraging immigration of income or population groups?		
Change in distribution of various income groups within coastal community (socio-economic mix):		
Increase income of lower income groups disproportionately more than upper and middle income groups.	Number of lower income groups which will be displaced or forced to move by the project.	Areas surrounding Marina Del Ray (Santa Monica, Venice) Redondo Beach Mission Beach Point Reyes Station Dillon Beach Mendocino Coast
Increase income of upper and middle income groups disproportionately more than lower income groups.		
Increase rental rates for housing or cost of tourist commercial services to level where low and middle groups could not afford rental housing or tourist commercial services in the coastal community.	Comparison of average rental rates or sales price for project and average rental rates or appraised market value for existing properties.	
Decrease rental housing and tourist commercial rates to level low and middle income groups can afford to move into coastal community (integration with existing residents).		
4. Will the project produce a significant change in the identity of the local community?		
Loss of small town identity.	Series of public hearings and meetings of community residents; photographic presentation describing visual character of the community; attitude survey concerning community goals and alternative futures.	Venice Jenner Bolinas Moss Landing Coronado Bodega Bay Mendocino Half Moon Bay Malibu Del Mar
Decrease in social interaction within the community.		
Change in well-being of the inhabitants.		
5. Will the project alter existing public access to the shoreline?		
Direct access to shore (or beaches by non-residents of coastal community or neighborhood).	Existing use (visitor days) of shoreline by local permanent residents and non-resident visitors (estimate increase or decrease in use from project).	Bolinas, Muir Beach (nude beaches) Santa Barbara (university students) La Jolla, Santa Cruz, Lighthouse Point, Four-Mile Beach (surfers) Big Sur, Mendocino (illegal entries) Sea Ranch, Pajaro Dunes, Sea Drift, Aptos, Sea Cliff (beach users on private access roads)
Decrease use of shore by individuals or groups who are socially incompatible with local residents (displacement impacts).		
Increase use of shore by individuals or groups who are socially incompatible with local residents.	Existing per capita recreation space (persons/100 feet of shoreline); persons/square feet of beach. Estimate change in per capita recreation produced by the project.	
Decrease use of shore (allow community or neighborhood residents more recreation per capita).		
Increase use of shore to levels of crowding and congestion (crowd out or discourage use by neighborhood or community residents).		
Invasion of privacy of local residents.		
Decrease convenience of private residents for use of community facilities (congestion).		
Transportational access to coast (automobile/transit):		
Decrease use of shore by groups with limited mobility (those dependent on public transportation and/or those who cannot afford transportation costs).	Estimated number of vehicle trips produced by the project. Estimated increase in congestion.	
Same as effect on direct access (see above).		
6. Will the choice of recreational use preempt or exclude other recreational users?		
Effect of providing recreational facilities or areas (by public funding).	Specify the socio-economic groups (organized, unorganized) that participate in each type of recreation activity. Inventory sites providing opportunity for activity preempted or not provided. Specify present unused capacity of these sites (percent) for recreational activity preempted or not provided.	Dana Point (marina vs public beach use) Capitola (marina precluding public beach use) Marina Del Ray (public launching areas inadequately provided in favor of private berths and docking facilities)
Displace or preclude recreational activity participated in by one or more socio-economic groups (particularly low income groups with limited recreational opportunities).		

The left column of the checklist gives possible locations on the California coast where the socio-economic impacts would be most relevant. It should be noted that the list is organized in the question format which has been adopted by the California Coastal Zone Commission for project review.¹⁸

Conclusion

Adequate consideration of the social impacts we have identified (Figure 1) should at least reduce the more extreme cases of inequitable distribution of costs and benefits among social groups. However, the consideration of these impacts on a project by project or functional planning (i.e., sewer, water, highways) basis has inherent limitations for resolving social equity issues. In this respect consideration of social equity is similar to environmental impact assessment, in that environmental qualities and values can not be protected from cumulative impact if reviewed on an incremental basis.

Significant redistribution of costs and benefits may only occur through basic modifications of social and political institutions (e.g., changes in property tax procedures, redefinition of electoral districts, etc.). Whether this is possible to achieve through coastal zone planning is open to question. At the least, coastal planners and decision makers should be aware and concerned that projects permitted or policies implemented do not further increase unequal distribution of costs and benefits among social groups.

¹⁸ These questions follow directly from the required findings to be made by the Coastal Zone Commission prior to issuance of a permit. The guidelines used by the North Central Coastal Commission are structured in a question format, for example:

QUESTION 2:

Does the development maintain, restore and enhance the overall quality of the coastal zone environment?

1. Does it create substantial interference with or detract from scenic vistas to or along the coast from the state highway nearest the shoreline or publicly accessible outlooks?
2. Does it locate structures on promontories, heretofore undisturbed hillcrests, or other natural features of visual prominence?
3. Is it compatible with existing surrounding development, or constitute an infilling of a partially completed subdivision or urbanized area?