

Viewpoints

SEEING Ackoff's *Quality of Life* paper in the journal (*Opl. Res. Q.* (1976) 27, 2(i) 289–303) reminds me that, when I first read it in 1974, I had some ideas. I have not thought about them since, and I have no measure of their possible value. Briefly, I was worried by the suggestion that the four categories of the pursuits of man were exhaustive. I observed that three *seemed* to deal primarily with mental needs and one (plenty) with physical needs. I also noted that *omnipotence* was mentioned as a desirable meta-ideal, progress towards which implied the ideal of omniscience, not specifically mentioned. I therefore tried to put the concepts which Ackoff used, and their appropriate physical or mental analogues, into a coherent diagrammatic form.

I offer this with only minor comment. Firstly, I have added “relevant” to my original description of the mental ideal for an individual's or a group's possession—total *relevant* truth (what is needed from the ideal set of created ideas). Secondly, I am not at all satisfied with the Goodness ↔ Badness range for the quality of ideas as tested in action. Fred Betz suggested Justness ↔ Unjustness, but I am equally unsure of this.

The merit, if any, of this offering is the attempt to encapsulate the concepts of the process of planning, ideally participative, into a space that enables a lot to be looked at and considered as a whole. Comparison with the scientific loop is not necessarily a valid analogy.

Defence Operational Analysis Establishments

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IN HIS RECENT paper ‘Discussion on Control’¹ Professor Tocher argues that utility theory is based on the naive premiss that people act (or should act) consistently, and as they do not, the theory is useless—or worse. The inconsistency can take the form of (a) not having transitive preferences, (b) not doing in real situations what they say they would do in similar hypothetical situations and/or (c) acting illogically. No doubt Tocher bases his views on his observations of people with whom he comes into contact. I can only wonder what sort of people these are since my own impression is that most of the people I meet, professionally and otherwise, are perfectly consistent *most* of the time, that is to say I can form a pretty good picture of what they like and what they don't like; I can rely on what they say and, unless acting