Environmental Evaluation: Perception and Public Policy
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To Margaret and Rick
SERIES FOREWORD

The study of environment and behavior has shown a rapid development in recent decades; we expect that interest in this field will continue at a high level in the future. As a young and informative area, it has many exciting qualities. For example, the analysis of the relationship between human behavior and the physical environment has attracted researchers from many fields in the social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, geography, and anthropology, and from the environmental design fields, such as architecture, urban and regional planning, and interior design. The multidisciplinary character of this field has led to an atmosphere of stimulation, cross-fertilization, and, yes, even confusion and difficulty in communication. Furthermore, because of the diversity in intellectual styles and goals of its participants, research on environment and behavior has as often dealt with applied, real-world problems of environmental design as it has treated basic and theoretical issues.

These factors, coupled with the relatively young stage of development of the field, led us to believe that a series of short books on different areas of the environment and behavior field would be useful to students, researchers, and practitioners. Our view was that the study of environment and behavior had not yet firmed up to the point that a single volume would do justice to the wide range of topics now being studied or to the variety of audiences interested in the field. Furthermore, it became clear to us that new topical areas have emerged over the past decade and that some vehicle is necessary to facilitate the evolutionary growth of the field.

For these reasons, Brooks/Cole established the present series of books on environment and behavior with the following goals in mind: first, we endeavored to develop a series of short volumes on areas of research and knowledge that are relatively well established and are characterized by a reasonably substantial body of knowledge. Second, we have recruited authors from a diversity of disciplines who bring to bear a variety of perspectives on various subjects in the field. Third, we asked authors not only to summarize research and knowledge on their topic but also to set forth a "point of view," if not a theoretical orientation, in their book. It was our intention, therefore, that these volumes be more than textbooks in the usual sense of the term—that they not only sum-
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marize existing knowledge in an understandable way but also, we hope, advance the field intellectually. Fourth, we wanted the books in the series to be useful to a broad range of students and readers. We planned for the volumes to be educationally valuable to students and professionals from different fields in the social sciences and environmental-design fields and to be of interest to readers with different levels of formal professional training. As part of our broad and flexible strategy, the series will allow instructors in a variety of fields teaching a variety of courses to select different combinations of volumes to meet their particular course needs. In so doing, an instructor might select several books for a course or use a small number of volumes as supplementary reading material.

Because the series is open-ended and not restricted to a particular body of content, we hope that it will not only serve to summarize knowledge in the field of environment and behavior but also contribute to the growth and development of this exciting area of study.

Irwin Altman
Daniel Stokols
Lawrence S. Wrightsman
PREFACE

This book deals with environmental quality—a topic that captured public attention in the 1960s and is a matter of continuing concern to both public officials and private citizens. Specifically, this book focuses on a qualitative evaluation of the environment based on the perceptions and experiences of the users of the environment. The relationships between users’ perceptions and experiences and the laws, executive orders, and administrative directives issued in the name of environmental quality are explored, along with the relationships between users’ perceptions and experiences and environmental planning, design, and management.

*Environmental Evaluation* is intended for use by students of the social and behavioral sciences and by the planning, design, and management professions. It is an introduction to user-based environmental evaluation—a rapidly developing area in applied behavioral science.

Chapters 1–4 describe the context within which the evaluation process occurs. Chapter 1 introduces major themes and issues. It provides a general introduction to the idea of user-based environmental evaluation, further definitions of terms and concepts used in the book, and an organizational schema for the conduct or analysis of evaluation studies. The schema provides a framework for the presentation and discussion of the case studies in Chapter 5, 6, and 7.

The evolution of environmental policy in the U.S. from resource exploitation to consumer orientation is reviewed in Chapter 2. The current emphasis on consumer orientation in public policy, which provides a more supportive climate for user-based evaluations among government agencies and professionals, is also discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 addresses some of the reasons for the gap between possibilities for user-based evaluations and actual practices. The state of the art in environmental-perception research also is briefly reviewed.

The process of planning, designing, and managing the environment is the topic of Chapter 4. Attention is directed to the iterative nature of the process and to means of accommodating the consumer-orientation or public-participation mandates of current policies. Three stages in the process are identified as particularly important for the inclusion of user-based evaluations. First is the inventory stage—the evaluation of existing environments. Second is the evaluation of
future environments—the alternatives’ stage when, for example, a choice is to be made among several plans, designs, or management strategies for implementation. The third stage, the evaluation of new or modified environments, occurs after implementation—after the plan, design, or management strategy has been implemented and users have had a reasonable opportunity to experience the new or modified environment.

The second half of this book is organized around examples of actual environmental evaluations and employs a case-study approach. Chapter 5 includes evaluation studies of existing environments, or, as indicated in Chapter 4, examples from the inventory stage of the planning, design, and management process. Chapter 6 is concerned with the evaluation of future environments. Cases are presented that involve problems of communicating or simulating the essence of possible alternative futures and of evaluating such simulations. Chapter 7 presents postconstruction evaluation studies, including case studies of single projects, and a comparative evaluation of multiple projects.

Finally, Chapter 8 reviews and summarizes the salient problems and issues raised in the case studies presented in the preceding chapters. Primary emphases are on the design of evaluation studies, methods used, and utility of the information obtained.

Writing a book is both a solitary and a shared activity. Final responsibility for the concepts and issues and for the way in which they are organized and communicated must rest with the author; however, every author is indebted to a host of colleagues, and in my case this includes students who have helped to shape concepts and define issues. Their questions, suggestions, and collaboration in research projects have influenced the way in which I have organized the material in this book.

During twelve years of professional, academic, and research activity in the area of environmental evaluation I have had the good fortune of sharing responsibilities for graduate seminars at the University of Massachusetts with Julius G. Fabos, Arnold Friedmann, D. Geoffrey Hayward, and Stanley Moss, each of whom has had an influence on the ideas presented in this book. There have also been many graduate students from a wide range of disciplines, including art, landscape architecture, interior design, psychology, regional planning, and sociology, who have questioned and debated the topic of environmental evaluation both in and out of the classroom. I owe much to these students.

The case studies used in this book draw on the work of a number of individuals who provided background information, assisted in obtaining access to illustrations, and reviewed drafts of the case studies—my thanks to Donald Appleyard, Clare Cooper, Rachel Kaplan, and Ewing Miller for assistance with the City Streets, Easter Hill Village, City Park, and Building Form studies respectively. I am indebted to Craig Zimring and Christopher Knight, who not only assisted in the securing of materials for the Belchertown State School study but also provided critical reviews of early drafts of several chapters.
I was personally involved in three of the case studies: as a member of the professional seminar that studied the aesthetic enhancement of Niagara Falls; as the principal investigator for the evaluation of National Park Service visitor centers; and as principal consultant to the Virgin Islands Planning Office for Coastal Zone Management and development of the household survey. The contributions of Joseph Crystal and James Palmer, my colleagues on the Visitor Center study, were considerable indeed. My thanks to them. And, to my colleagues in the Virgin Islands Planning Office, Darlan Brin, Ed Lindelof, and in particular, Marsha McLaughlin—thank you.

I want to express my thanks to the editors for this series of books published by Brooks/Cole—Irwin Altman, Dan Stockols, and Larry Wrightsman—and to William Hicks, managing editor. I thank them for their invitation to write this book and for their critical and helpful reviews of early drafts of the manuscript.

Finally, my deep appreciation to Margaret Zube for being my best critic and for providing the essential supportive environment.

Ervin H. Zube
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