

CHAPTER 6

THE LOCAL PLANNER'S PERSONAL ROLE DEFINITION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a detailed account of how New South Wales local government planners view their role in the process of public participation. An assessment of planners' attitudes is made largely from their verbal responses to open-ended interview questions. First, the perceived objectives of public participation are outlined; and secondly, the perceived problems of participation on the planning process are discussed.

6.2 The Perceived Value of Public Participation

Overall, local planners had a view of public participation that closely corresponded to the new democratic elitism model outlined in Section 3.2.2. Thus, the new elitist emphasis on public participation as an information exchange mechanism (Hague and McCourt 1974,153) was supported virtually unanimously by N.S.W. local planners. They saw the dissemination of information as having the general educative aim of creating a public awareness about the importance of local planning. Thus, according to one young assistant planner from the Hunter Region:

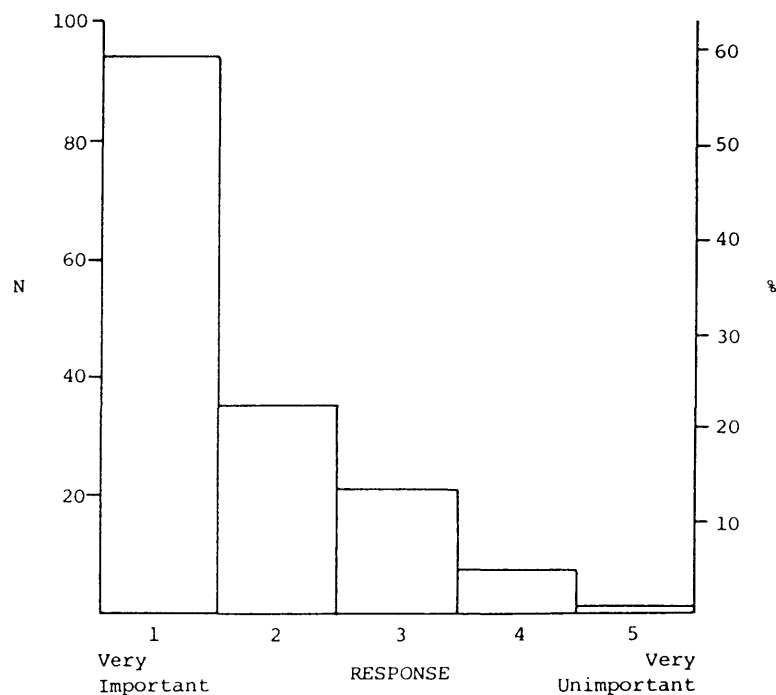
Participation involves informing the community of planning generally - creating an awareness that planning in fact exists and that many development proposals may have a significant effect on the community, and therefore should be of interest to them.³⁷

Another reason for 'going out and spreading the word' was to 'foster the idea in the community that planning is beneficial'. Respondents considered that the public were inclined 'to see planning as an

encroachment on their rights'. It was hoped that participation could 'achieve correct public attitudes', 'conditioning the people for change' by combating narrow parochial views and helping to develop 'a broadening of ideals' as the public came to see more clearly the general public interest. Information dissemination was also regarded as helping to make the community appreciate the complexity of planning, - that 'there is more to planning than just colouring a map'. Consequently, it was felt that once the public became aware of the difficulties facing the local planner they would also develop an increased respect for the planning profession.

The perceived importance of a knowledgeable public was also illustrated by the planners' responses on being asked how important they thought it was that the general public be as knowledgeable as possible about planning issues and procedures. Figure 6.1 shows that nearly three-fifths of the total sample felt that it was 'very important', whilst only 5 per cent thought that it was an unimportant factor.

Figure 6.1 Local planners: perceived importance of a knowledgeable public (N=158)



Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Similarly, when asked about their most direct educative role - that of giving talks to groups of school students - virtually all planners used adjectives such as 'excellent', 'useful', 'tremendous' 'important' and 'worthwhile' to describe their school links. For example one planner from an outer metropolitan shire commented:

We need to educate people before they leave school - I had no idea what land use planning was before I started in local government. We should make sure that all students in their last year or two have a good grasp of planning laws. Contacts with the planner are therefore essential - we certainly don't do enough of it at the moment. It is high time the schools were more involved

Only a handful of planners considered such contact to be not very fruitful, the older students being described as seeing the visit simply in terms of 'time off from lessons', and the younger children being considered not mature enough to appreciate the planner's talk.

In the short term, the school contacts were seen as a valuable information giving exercise. At the very least, students became aware that the local council existed and that it had a town planning function. In addition, the contacts allowed planners to begin to outline the complexity of their task. What little knowledge students had about local government planners was seen to be based largely on misconceptions which, in turn, were based on information from their parents, the news media and, in the case of tertiary students particularly, their teachers. The planner's role was viewed as one of 'putting the students on the right track', by 'clearing up the myths and establishing the reputations of local planners'. For example, one assistant planner from the Illawarra Region commented (with a certain amount of relish): 'I enjoy debunking some of the high-flown impressions about planning given to students by their academic masters!'. However, the impact of the planners' teaching was seen to extend beyond the students to their parents. Thus, another Illawarra assistant planner made the following observation:

I can see two distinct benefits. Firstly, kids readily accept new ideas and concepts. And, secondly, they can relate them to their parents. I'm convinced that the kids have more

influence on their parents than all our advertising.

In addition to the immediate benefits, the school contacts were also regarded as a vital part of a longer term strategy, with planners referring to teaching 'the citizens of the future' and, more specifically, 'up and coming councillors'.

Virtually all respondents considered that participation had the potential to provide valuable additional data for use by the professional planner. Residents were regarded as a source of detailed information about their neighbourhood. At the simplest level the public was seen as providing a check on the accuracy of the planners' data. According to one engineer-planner from the Northern Region:

No one is infallible. The public could pick up any mistakes that might have slipped through.

So, for example, one rural planner who had worked in the shire for only two years, was hoping to check the accuracy of his flood maps by comparing them with the recollections of local landowners. In addition, participation was thought to encourage both developers and planners to take more care when drawing up proposals, knowing that they would be subject to close public scrutiny. More generally, the community was seen as being able to provide the planner with different perspectives of the local situation - those of people experiencing problems first-hand. Thus, it was pointed out that, unlike the inhabitants, a non-resident planner tends to see an area only in office hours, and even then, often only in a superficial way. Thus, one assistant planner from the Illawarra Region observed that: 'As a planner you are dealing with human activity and there is a certain local knowledge about understanding how an area works that has to come from the locals'. Such information was seen to be especially useful when provided by 'the intelligensia rather than the ratbags'.

Similar arguments were used by planners to support the idea of local government planners doing advocacy work - a practice about which 42 per cent were unreservedly in favour, whilst only 13 per cent of respondents were completely against. Thus, advocacy was usually regarded as helping both to educate the planner by assisting him to 'familiarise himself with all facets of planning', and to improve the

quality of public submissions by, for example, 'helping get people away from emotional arguments'.

Local feedback was also regarded as having the potential to provide the planner with a much wider cross-section of views. Thus, 8 per cent of respondents specifically mentioned public participation as a means of ensuring that planners did not get out of touch with the aspirations of the community:

Participation helps get planners out of their ivory towers. Without it we would tend to lose touch terribly. (Sydney Region assistant planner)

It prevents inexperienced, idealistic planners forcing their ideas on the community. (South-East Region engineer-planner)

Moreover, 7 per cent of respondents were directly critical of the ability of their councils' elected representatives to represent effectively the full range of community views about planning. Councillors were portrayed as knowing very little about planning, discussing the implications of planning proposals simply in terms of how they would affect them or their friends. When councillors did try to take a wider perspective, they were seen to be advocates of the more vociferous members of the community. Thus, one assistant planner from an affluent metropolitan local authority suggested that:

In local government elected representatives are supposed to reflect the views of the public, but I don't think that aldermen do that. Instead they reflect stirrers and minorities. So we've got to get out there and find out. Public participation allows the total community to express their views to the professional planners.

The majority of the planners thus referred to the collection of residents' views, opinions, attitudes, feelings, expectations, values, likes or desires. For example:

People doing the planning job should be in a position to know the public's views on planning matters. (Sydney Region assistant planner)

It helps us obtain a general feeling of what people would like to see happening in their area, rather than using arbitrary standards. (Sydney Region assistant planner)

Another perceived advantage of an information-exchange programme, cited by 41 per cent of respondents, was that it helped stimulate a feeling among the public that the final plan was worthy of their support - social stability being one of the major objectives of public participation in the new democratic elitist model (Section 3.2.2.). As already indicated, the information-giving process was seen to have an important role in consensus building. Indeed, 8 per cent of respondents viewed information dissemination as virtually the only necessary requirement of public participation: According to one Northern Region planner: 'Each time we've been informative, we've satisfied the public, even though they might not all agree with what is being done'. In other words, these planners placed little stress on public feedback, believing that 'an informed public doesn't raise issues'. The supportive influence of correct information from the planner was strongly contrasted with the damaging effect of misinformation supplied by some members of the public. One metropolitan deputy engineer-planner cited the following illustration:

At an on-site meeting to discuss the question of tennis courts in a public park, the 100 members of the public who were there were up in arms, having been stirred up by one or two people. However, once things were explained to them, they saw that the proposals were OK.

Most planners did not see the results of information giving as being quite as influential, but nevertheless regarded it as

a lubricant in the machinery. Without the slightest doubt we would be bogged down without it. It is invaluable for getting ideas accepted. (Sydney Region planner)

Participation by the public, in terms of providing information to the professional planner, was thus regarded as being useful in the development of a public acceptance of the final planning scheme as 'the public is less likely to criticise decisions which it has been instrumental in making'. Respondents stressed the importance of involving the public from the very early stages, rather than after the plan had been produced or, even later, when it began to be implemented. This was seen to 'remove the stigma of backroom

planning', and to cast the public 'in the positive role of contributor rather than the negative role of objector'. This was regarded as 'helping to save money in the long run' as

It provides a faster way of getting the job done as there are no reactions when people begin to actually carry out the work. All argument is finished before the pouring of the first concrete. (Hunter Region engineer-planner)

In addition, the relationship between the community and the local government administration was seen to be improved as the participation helped develop a rapport between the two groups:

As long as people know what's happening and have had their say and seen that notice was taken, the participation programme will generate considerable goodwill. (Sydney Region assistant planner)

However, participation was viewed primarily as a professional technique for providing the planner with some valuable and interesting information. According to one assistant planner working in the Hunter Region:

Citizens' attitudes and goals provide an interesting and useful data base from which to develop land use strategy. They should not be mindlessly accepted as being sacrosanct.

Surprisingly, only 4 per cent of respondents extended the argument by suggesting that participation could be used to strengthen the planner's position, either technically or politically.³⁸ For example, the planner's technical expertise was called on in the drawing up of the various planning options placed before the public, and also during the analysis of the public's submissions. One assistant planner in the Hunter Region described the political importance of participation in the following terms:

It enables planners, who are usually in a very weak political position, to gain allies and strength in battles against entrenched conservatism.

There was an explicit rejection of the fundamental element of participatory democracy, that there be a decentralisation of decision

making to the most local level possible. Indeed, only 16 per cent of respondents made any direct reference to 'decision making' or 'decision makers' when discussing the aims of participation, indicating the majority's lack of association of the two subjects. Planners' remarks about the role of the public often ended with the caution that 'of course final decision making should remain Council's responsibility'. Only 4 per cent made any firm link between the views expressed by the public during the plan preparation stage, and the actual policies embodied in the final scheme: 'If you have a decision which is in line with their thinking then you'll have no hassles' (Sydney Region assistant planner). Just one respondent, an assistant planner working for an outer metropolitan council, considered that a local community might, in some circumstances, have a direct decision-making role:

Take the example of rezoning. No matter how unobjectionable it may be, I'm prepared to accept that if people in the area are against it, then we must bow to them.

The general reaction against the public's having any decision-making role was also reflected in the planners' responses on being asked to give a specific Australian name which they immediately associated with the implementation of public participation in planning (Table 6.1). The interviews were conducted only three years after the removal of the Munday-Pringle-Owens leadership of the N.S.W. branch of the Builders' Labourers' Federation and the subsequent scaling down of the green bans. National and international awareness of the green ban movement remained high throughout the 1970s leading, for example, to the inclusion of an Australian entry in an international survey of public participation in the Town Planning Review (Garner 1981a,257). However, 28 per cent of N.S.W. local planners were unable to provide any response to the question, and only 6 per cent directly cited green bans. Even the inclusion of specific areas such as The Rocks and Woolloomooloo, where green bans were imposed before more conventional participation exercises were implemented, increased the figure to only 18 per cent. It is inconceivable that local planners were not aware of the activities of resident action groups and unionists during the

green bans period. Therefore, it must be concluded that the reason why green bans were not cited more frequently was because most local planners did not regard the conflicts associated with green bans as public participation, the intention of the bans going beyond the standard definition of participation as information exchange. Although Leichhardt was the most often cited individual example of public participation in operation, one-tenth of planners mentioning the Municipality's name, half of these respondents added an unsolicited rider that the area was an excellent example of how not to implement planning participation, with the former Leichhardt planner being castigated for becoming too politically involved.

Table 6.1 Local planners: Australian names associated with public participation in planning.

Response category	N	%
Specific responses cited by at least 10 respondents		
None	44	27.8
Leichhardt	16	10.1
Woolloomooloo	11	7.0
Green Bans	10	6.3
Other responses (grouped by type)		
Other State and Federal initiatives ¹	35	22.2
Named planners ²	20	12.7
Other N.S.W. local government initiatives ³	14	8.9
Other public initiatives ⁴	8	5.1
	158	

1 Includes activities in growth centres, Canberra and Glebe

2 Includes Ritter, Colman and Clarke

3 Includes City of Sydney, Lake Macquarie and North Sydney

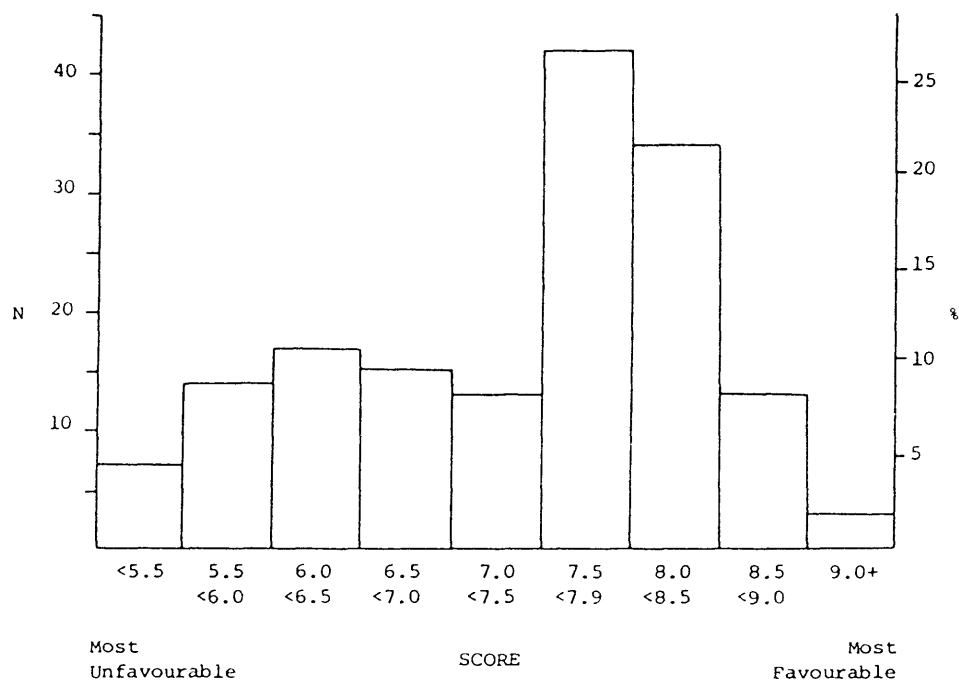
4 Includes The Rocks, Coalcliffe and freeways

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Overall, the general impression from the interviews was that planners perceived public participation to be an excellent theoretical concept. This conclusion is also supported by the results from a series of quantitative scales (Figures 6.2 - 6.4). Figure 6.2 relates to a 19-item instrument constructed according to Thurstone's equal appearing intervals method of attitude scaling (Appendix E). The scale had a range of possible scores from 1.0 to 10.7, a higher score

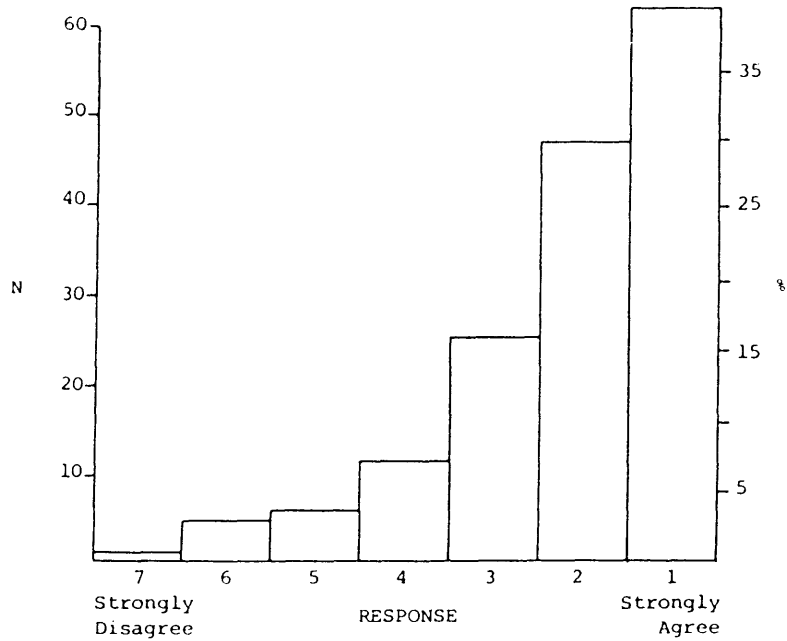
indicating a more positive attitude. The median was 7.7 and the mean 7.3, with only 15 respondents scoring less than the scale's neutral value of 5.8. A one-item question asked how respondents reacted to the statement that 'Public participation should be seen as a very important part of the local planning process'. Nearly two-fifths of planners strongly agreed (score 1), and less than 8 per cent disagreed (scores 5,6,7), the mean being 2.1 on a 7-point scale (Figure 6.3). A third question asked how satisfied planners were with the current level of planning participation in their own area. Nearly three-fifths of respondents felt that there was too little, compared to just over one-third who were satisfied with the level of participation, and only 6 per cent who thought that there was too much (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.2 Local planners: median scores from Thurstone attitude scale (N=158)



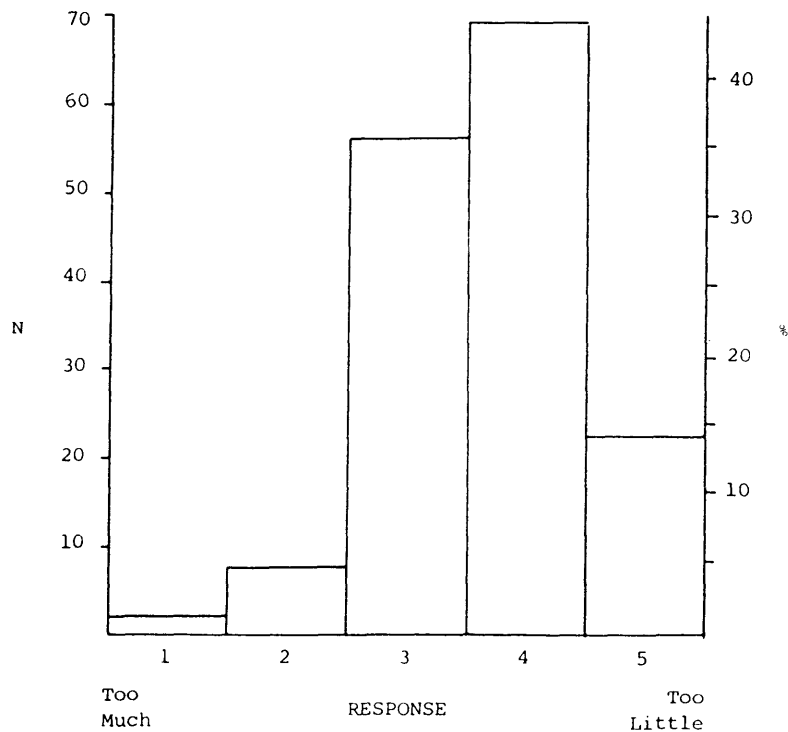
Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Figure 6.3 Local planners: response to the statement that 'Public participation should be seen as a very important part of the local planning process'
(N=157)



Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Figure 6.4 Local planners: perception of the current level of public participation in the planning of their administrative area
(N=156)



Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

However, although regarded as an excellent theoretical concept, public participation was seen to be beset by many problems which inhibited its effective implementation. The following section outlines these perceived difficulties. They closely match the arguments used by opponents of participatory democracy (Section 3.7).

6.3 The Perceived Problems with Public Participation

There was support from planners for the idea of public participation, at least as an information-exchange strategy, but this support was tempered by strong reservations about its implementation. During the interviews, only 16 per cent of planners gave a wholeheartedly favourable reply when asked to outline their attitude, using adjectives such as 'essential', 'fundamental', or 'invaluable' to describe participation. Even fewer, 11 per cent, of respondents gave a generally unfavourable reply, declaring themselves to be 'disillusioned', 'unimpressed' or 'sceptical' about participation, which was, in turn, described as 'impractical' or 'a waste of time'. The remaining three-quarters (73%) of the interviewed planners responded in the following way:

Very generally, I am in favour of public participation in principle, but have reservations about how it is achieved. (Sydney Region assistant planner)

Informed public participation is invaluable. But how do you get informed public participation? (Sydney Region engineer-planner)

It's great if you can find a way to make it work. (South-East Region engineer-planner)

The difficulties associated with public participation, as outlined by the respondents, were similar to those discussed earlier in the critique of participatory democracy. Two main types of problem were raised: those concerned with the quality and quantity of the public response; and those related to the effect of participation on the overall planning system.

6.3.1 Quality and quantity of the public response

A major difficulty, expressed by 55 per cent of the respondents, concerned the unrepresentative nature of the comments received through public participation. In particular, local planners considered most participation to be motivated by self-interest rather than the public interest. People were portrayed as being interested only in 'filling their own pockets'. Thus, virtually the only submissions received in response to one exhibition of plans was the query 'Can I subdivide?'. Similarly, one northern suburbs' planner characterised participants saying:

People are primarily interested in increasing their own property values. They then grab their money and go.

More often, planners expressed the view that 'personal experience has shown that the only time a person will participate is when he is adversely affected by a proposal'. The typical public response is 'Don't zone my land open space - do it up the road'; or 'I object to the development next door because I would then have to pay half the cost of a new boundary fence'. Planners' responses often showed considerable bitterness about what they saw as the unmitigated selfishness of most of the community. According to one planner working for a metropolitan shire council: 'The amount of genuine community concern I've come across here over a period of twenty years wouldn't fill a matchbox'. Thus, one of the major perceived attractions of talking to school groups was that, compared to their parents, the students were much more honest and showed much more genuine concern for the well-being of the community as a whole. This was seen to be because they had no vested interests in the outcome of the planning process:

They have nothing at stake. They aren't yet part of the economic rat race. (Sydney Region assistant planner)

Of particular concern was the existence of pressure groups which were thought to combine the self-centred attitude of the general

community with the political effectiveness of an articulate lobby group. Participation programmes were seen as often helping to create 'a rod for the local planner's back' as they stimulated the creation of 'radical groups' led by 'agitators', 'rebel-rousers', 'stirrers', 'ratbags', 'crackpots' and 'cranks'. Public participation was seen as providing yet another avenue to enable these groups to influence the decision-making process as councillors thought that the groups were reflecting general community opinion. Such groups were portrayed as basically middle-class in character, the result being that the wealthier areas tended to benefit most from participation. According to one assistant planner from an affluent metropolitan area: 'The wealthy get up and protest; the poor people get thrown around'. The dominance of these groups was felt to be especially evident in public meetings where their articulate members could possibly form a majority of the audience, and probably contribute the majority of the responses from the floor.

There was thus a general distinction made between pressure groups and the rest of the community: 'We must try to get the general public opinion, not pressure groups'. In an attempt to 'get to Mr Smith', the average man in the street, many planners opted for the social survey approach. Thus, one assistant planner working in a rapidly redeveloping inner metropolitan area commented:

My attitude has changed over time. I used to regard public participation as actively involving community groups in the decision-making process. Now I feel that community needs and aspirations are not represented by community groups, and that we need surveys for a true reflection of the real aspirations of the community.

However, other respondents also regarded 'responsible' community groups as having a crucial role:

You can do a lot by contacting groups with the welfare of the total community at heart - Rotary, Apex and the like. You've a better chance of keeping the ratbags out then. (Northern Region planner)

A few planners extended this idea, advocating the establishment of community groups specifically to handle planning issues. These groups

were seen either as additional to council committees, or 'joint committees' comprising both residents and councillors.

Implicit in the pressure group criticism is the idea that planners must attempt to discover the public interest by concentrating their efforts on the more disadvantaged sections of the community. However, no planner explicitly rejected his or her public interest stance in favour of this more restricted role. One planner did attempt to reconcile the two positions by advocating that the local authority's social workers should organise the poor sections of the community to ensure them a voice in the planning process.

Implicit in the criticism that the public response is unrepresentative is the notion that the majority of the community is apathetic towards planning - though only 16 per cent of the respondents directly stressed apathy as a major problem of participation. One example was given by a planner who reported that an attempt to stage a public meeting to discuss the development of the main shopping centre resulted in only 'three men and a dog' turning up. Interest in the development was shown only by shopkeepers in the redevelopment area, 'and even they needed some prodding before they would respond'. Planners particularly emphasised the lack of interest shown by working-class groups. According to one inner metropolitan assistant planner:

The working-class population are really lethargic and simply let things ride. I suppose that they've got enough problems of their own.

Consequently, there was seen to be considerable differences in public participation practices between local government areas, particularly in the more socially stratified metropolitan area. For example, one assistant planner contrasted Bankstown, a working-class outer western suburb, with the middle-class northern suburb where he was employed:

In Bankstown you would just about have to blow up people's TV sets before they would show any interest in what you were doing! Here, all you need do is put a small advertisement in the local paper and you find that you're inundated with calls about the proposal.

Generally, it was felt that participation encouraged the development in working-class areas of public facilities which, although generally acknowledged to be necessary, nevertheless were also regarded locally as unwelcome intrusions. Planners suggested that this was seen by politicians as the easiest path to follow. For example, one respondent outlined how an application to set up an Aboriginal Alcoholics' Rehabilitation Centre in an area of 'high quality homes' was notified to residents adjoining the proposed development. A petition was very quickly drawn up. Signatures included those of people whose homes were a kilometre away from the entrance of the proposed centre. A large number of residents were present in the public gallery when the matter was discussed by the Council. The application was rejected and other potential sites were listed by the Planning Department. The respondent felt that the area eventually selected would simply be that which offered the least resistance, and thus was likely to be in a working-class area of the city.

The reasons for the community's apathy were only rarely mentioned, though the underlying sentiment of most of the 'unrepresentative' and 'apathy' responses was not related to the anti-elitist idea of public apathy as a result of perceived powerlessness. Rather, respondents felt that participation was seen by the public primarily as a protest activity, and not as a means of expressing support for a proposal. For example, one assistant planner from the western suburbs of Sydney commented:

There are two groups in the community: the vocal interest groups who don't accept the plans, and the silent majority who are generally satisfied with things.

Consequently, the public reaction to proposals was seen to be biased towards a conservative viewpoint. One engineer-planner from the Western Region observed that:

Public participation is usually negative. Rarely is there anything positive. Comments come from those directly affected. Very, very rarely do you get any favourable comments. Participation is always biased against development.

This was seen to be professionally frustrating as 'a good scheme could

be stopped or spoiled'. Consequently, 'you have to be sure that public participation does not disadvantage the plan'.

Twenty per cent of respondents commented on the public's limited ability to participate in planning, though few went so far as one planner who declared that '10 per cent of the public are simply idiots!'. Of particular concern was the perceived incapacity of the public to take part in an extensive ongoing process:

How many people have the ability for ongoing discussion over an initially non-emotional topic? 'Very few' would be my reply. (Sydney Region assistant planner)

Thus, encouraging people to develop original ideas was seen to be 'non-productive'. For example, one assistant planner from the western suburbs of Sydney commented:

We ask them: 'What do you want?'. They reply: 'We really don't know!'.

Another respondent told how, during the period of the Green, Blue and White Book discussions, he decided to try and establish citizen advisory committees to help plan various areas of the shire. Initially the committees were intended to be a representative cross-section of the relevant communities, but the idea was confounded by the lack of suitable respondents to the invitations to participate. The workings of the committees which were established were described as 'a complete shambles', despite the planner's attempts to 'feed them data to make rational decisions'. Confidential issues became generally known as the members 'ran around telling the rest of the community what was going on'. The planner concluded that 'we have made a rod for our own backs'. A similar situation was reported by another planner in a metropolitan municipality where a citizens advisory committee was operating:

As far as ideas are concerned, the committee is a waste of time. Essentially what happens is that we tell them what we would like to do and they give us their imprimatur.

One assistant planner from a rapidly expanding metropolitan area used the following analogy:

If I was asked to participate in defence policy I simply wouldn't be able to do it. You need to give alternatives. Confronting the public with a blank sheet of paper is virtually useless.

But even choosing among several alternatives was often regarded as being beyond the scope of many people as they 'see only pink blobs and blue blobs, and don't really appreciate the problems'. Thus responses from the public often showed that they had not looked at the alternatives provided; or they indicated a complete misinterpretation of the alternative schemes; or suggested that they had been misinformed by a resident action group; or showed that respondents were confused, irrational or bigoted. According to one engineer-planner from the Illawarra Region:

You must realise that public submissions will include a lot of rubbish such as the comment that 'People who live in flats are often dirty', or 'I object to the proposed town house development as it will end up as a slum area with rubbish being tossed over the fence'.

Moreover, there was no guarantee that the public would not change its mind about a particular planning issue after a participation programme had been conducted. For example, one assistant planner from a northern metropolitan suburb gave the following illustration:

I remember one time recently when we did a survey of residents to find out their views on a proposed new police station in the area. Judging from the survey results, everyone appeared happy with the idea and so we went ahead. But for some inexplicable reason the public mood changed and we ended up with one helluva row on our hands. It makes you wonder whether it's worth our while bothering when the public is so fickle.

6.3.2 Impact of participation on the planning process

A second group of perceived problems related to the impact of participation on the planning process. A major difficulty, directly expressed by one-third of the respondents, related to the delay caused by participation. Local government in general, and planning in

particular was seen to be already bogged down in too much red tape. It was thought that more participation must inevitably increase the amount of paper work and bureaucracy. The example of the limited appeals provision of s.342ZA of the Local Government Act was used by one planner from the Western Region to indicate the potential problems of third party appeals:

The major problem is the delay before Council grants its approval. Should legislation be introduced allowing the right of third party appeals, I believe that it would be a major retrogression.

One potential consequence of this delay was thought to be a stifling of worthwhile development in N.S.W. Thus, one assistant planner from a northern Sydney suburb commented:

Late objections, for example that flats will block the view, are unfair to developers. If we have third party appeals we will finish up in a bun fight that will kill off development - shove it off to another state. It was the same with industrial democracy in South Australia. Now there's no business coming near the place. Schemes like this have got to be drawn up with the co-operation of the people in the field.

Another respondent from the Northern Division of the Sydney Region referred scathingly to the 'People's Republic of North Sydney', where plans were changed by so many committees that 'in the end, a person doesn't want to build'. Similarly, Leichhardt's 'Campaign for Better Council' administration was thought to demonstrate 'how the system can get bogged down - Leichhardt ended up a shambles'.

The delay in the decision-making process was also felt to increase administration costs in local government. Participation was seen to be 'enormously time consuming'. Thus, one assistant planner in Sydney calculated that

The cost of extensive participation has got to be staggering. We would need a staff four times as large as we have now as we would need teams of workers out on surveys, analysing results or drawing up alternative plans.

So, for example, one of the most ambitious participation programmes ended up with many of the questionnaire returns, which had been collected by community groups under the direction of the department,

not being analysed as the planners found that they simply did not have the time to do the required work.

Many planners considered that 'councils have never shown the necessary financial commitment to participation'. Indeed, it was thought that planners already had to 'hide the true cost of public participation in their other work'. Planners were thus suspicious that more participation would simply mean more work for an already overworked staff. Thus, one planner working for an affluent northern suburbs metropolitan council reported that during one participation exercise:

I was never home before midnight, five nights a week for a whole month. We just can't afford such a lavish expenditure of time on one specific issue.

Similarly, the planner from an adjacent local authority area made the following, more general, comment:

Time is so critical. I'm working here 50 or 60 hours a week. Aldermen don't realise how much time we already spend with residents.

This respondent went on to compare these long working hours to the very limited public contact provided by other council departments:

Take the Health Department, for example. They have a large sign stating that staff will be available for consultation with the public between 10 and 3. It makes you sick.

Moreover, the problem was seen as one which could only get worse for, once meetings had been held with some groups over one issue, other groups would begin to demand the same attention on other issues. In this context, one respondent likened participation to 'Frankenstein's monster'. For example, despite the acknowledged benefits of a knowledgeable public, overall there was very little contact between planning departments and schools. In the previous two years nearly one-third of respondents reported that they had had no personal contact with school groups, whilst a further quarter of the sample had met with school groups only once during the two-year period. Only one-fifth had talked to school groups, on average, three times or more each year (Table 6.2). This record is at least partly

explained by the planners' fears that once a regular schools' programme was begun, it would very quickly overwhelm the limited staff time available. Indeed, several heads made it clear that the existing arrangements, where the department responded to school requests, were straining staff resources. For example, one planner in charge of a relatively large department commented: 'We deliberately restrict school visits - planners here simply don't have that much time'. Thus, although the lack of initiative on the part of teachers was occasionally criticised, no department had attempted to encourage schools to make more use of their local planners. One assistant planner in Sydney highlighted the political folly of making such an initiative commenting:

We'd get shot if we sent out a letter to schools offering our services. The aldermen would turn round and say that we must have nothing to do and were looking around trying to make work for ourselves!

Table 6.2 Local planners: average annual number of talks given to school groups during the previous two years*

Talks	Planners	
N	N	%
Nil	43	30.6
<1	36	25.9
1	16	11.6
2	14	10.2
3	9	6.1
4	9	6.1
5+	13	9.5

140

* Based on those respondents who had been employed in local government during all of the previous two years.

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

The essentially time-consuming nature of much participatory work was only one of the reasons cited to account for the slowing down of the planning system. Another factor contributing to the delay, and one mentioned by 20 per cent of respondents, was that participation tended

to generate conflict rather than consensus. This was seen to be the case particularly when public meetings were held, as they allowed people 'to blow their heads off'. Thus, one planner remembered a public meeting ending with 'death threats' being uttered. Another respondent, an engineer-planner from the Western Region, outlined his experience at a meeting concerned with road closures:

The meeting ended up as a bit of a riot. A large proportion of those attending were drunk, and a petition was circulated on the back of a beer mat. There were also threats to rip out the road blocks. The councillors decided that the protesters at the meeting were not representative of the community, and decided that in future they would stick with the legal provisions of the Act and advertise for written submissions!

However, even the strategy of providing proposals for public comment was regarded as likely to cause problems as the public's reaction was liable to be: 'You buggers, you've already made up your minds!'.

More importantly, the community was seen to be composed of many different groups, 'diverse cliques battling against each other', each with its own views on how developments should proceed. The processing of submissions by planners was seen to be an extremely difficult, if not impossible task to carry out in a completely objective manner. For example, the weighting placed on various groups' submissions was seen to require some knowledge of each group's public support - knowledge which was rarely available. Similarly, assessing the validity of the arguments presented often required more background information than the professionals had available, the main source of local information coming from the public itself.

These problems were seen to be in addition to those related to weighing up the expressed needs of existing residents with the unexpressed needs of future residents - a 'potential public' which could be of considerable significance in areas with a high proportion of old or transient people. Indeed, one respondent preferred to concentrate his participation efforts solely on owner-occupiers, regarding people in rented accommodation as generally staying for too short a time for their participation to be worthwhile. In addition, local views had to be weighed against the generally unavailable views of the much wider public who might be affected by a proposal. Thus,

one assistant planner working for a northern suburbs metropolitan council asked:

How large should your participating public be? One rezoning could influence all the metropolitan area. Do you inform all the city?

So, for example, one North Shore locality was regarded by its inhabitants as purely an upper-class residential area, whilst other available survey data showed that at the regional level it had an important recreational function.

Consequently, problems also occurred in the decision-making phase as 'it is impossible to satisfy all points of view at any one time'. Unfortunately, 'once you've asked the public for their views, all respondents seem to think that their pet schemes, however selfish or subjective, must be included in the final resulting plan'. This situation thus had the potential to generate further conflict between disaffected community groups and the local council. Often the situation was seen to be resolved simply by the councillors procrastinating on making a decision as 'they become scared to move knowing the variety of viewpoints'. Thus, one Northern Region planner felt that the major cause of a protracted public participation programme was that 'this Council tends to put off the difficult things for as long as possible - it's been dithering over the issue for the last nine months'. Similarly, a second planner saw the establishment of subcommittees as simply the Council's way of deferring making any decisions, particularly 'when it gets pushed into a corner'.

Planners considered this situation to be professionally frustrating as it meant that their professional advice tended to be ignored. According to one Northern Region planner:

People can be told too much. It can lead to people thinking that they are the experts in the field. But the public are not qualified as planners, and the councillors are not qualified in administration. If public opinion is contrary to planning, the Council can be swayed by the ideas of unqualified people.

The potential of public participation to generate conflict was also

regarded as threatening to the job security of the local planner. Councillors were portrayed as assessing the efficiency of the planning department in part by the amount of public unrest generated by planning proposals. The potential for a participation programme to 'get out of hand' thus led to local planners playing a very careful role. One assistant planner in Sydney explained the situation as follows:

We're not going around rabble-rousing and possibly losing our jobs. We provide information that will help preserve our jobs.

For example, one planner had initiated a citizen advisory committee to help with the detailed planning of one residential area. Although committed to the idea of the committee, he admitted that, in the early stages particularly, he was extremely concerned that it might 'get out of hand', especially as, in the selection of the committee members from the nominations, he had felt obliged to include representatives of the local resident action groups. So, he explained, 'I strongly impressed on the committee that they were purely an advisory body, and that they would have to moderate the sorts of extremist views expressed at public meetings if they were to achieve anything'. In fact he did 'keep it under control', and intended extending the idea to other areas. However, his comments indicated that the exercise would not have been repeated had any strong criticism of council activities occurred.

Similar arguments were used by respondents in relation to advocacy work. Thus, most of the 45 per cent of respondents who qualified their support for advocacy did so by insisting that such work take place outside their employers' administrative areas as pressure groups were seen to be prepared to use all means at their disposal in an attempt to secure their demands. Thus, one town planner with one of the western suburbs' councils observed:

I tried advocacy once, but never again. It left me with a totally cynical view of community groups. The members of the Catholic Church organisation whom I tried to help turned out to be a pack of liars and thieves, eventually dragging me through some very deep and very murky political waters.

Less extreme viewpoints also highlighted the ease with which a technical role could very quickly become a political one. One planner reported that 'advocacy work needs to be handled very, very carefully because of the high level of emotionalism and political intrigue that is inevitably generated'. So, for example, six planners stated that they deliberately refrained from joining certain clubs because of the social pressures that that membership would generate. For example, a planner in the Botany Division of Sydney made the following point:

I stay out of clubs such as Rotary because I don't like the way they operate. They have become simply another pressure group intent on furthering their own interests.

Moreover, several respondents also saw professional difficulties with advocacy work that was conducted outside their own administrative areas. Thus it was considered important to inform the planner in the area where the advocacy work was to be carried out, with some respondents suggesting that the work should cease if the local authority planner did not approve. Others, particularly those completely against advocacy, extended the argument, emphasising the potential for conflict between local government planners. For example, an assistant planner with a Northern Region shire council commented:

Local government is a close-knit mob, and although you might be dealing with a different council you're still involved with local government. At some stage it's bound to become unethical as it would be likely to cause my colleague in the other municipality a lot of headaches. If he recommended a refusal of the scheme, it would result in two local government professionals being at loggerheads. If he recommended an approval of the scheme, he is always open to the claim that his judgement was biased because the application came through a fellow local government planner.

Also raised was the possibility that career prospects could be damaged by advocacy work as a planner could get a reputation for being a 'stirrer'. According to one metropolitan assistant planner:

I might want to apply for a job in the area where I had previously been working for a community group. I wouldn't stand much chance after having caused so many problems for the council and their planners!

6.4 Summary

This chapter presents the findings from interviews with 158 local government planners in N.S.W. about their attitudes towards public participation. The basic rationale is that, as personal definition is an important determinant of role behaviour, it is important to understand local planners' attitudes to their participatory role.

The use of open-ended interview questions established that, typically, local planners had a view of public participation that closely corresponded to the new democratic elitism model outlined in Section 3.2.2. Thus, the new elitist emphasis on public participation as an information exchange mechanism (Hague and McCourt 1974,153) was supported virtually unanimously by N.S.W. local planners. Information dissemination was perceived to be valuable for broadening the public's ideals about planning (cf. Daland and Parker 1962,196), and improving the public's image of the planning profession (cf. R.T.P.I. 1974,1). Information collection was seen to help ensure the rationality of the planning system by ensuring the availability of detailed local knowledge, which only residents could provide (cf. Robinson 1979,435). The basic new democratic elitist idea of social stability through information exchange is reflected in the view widely expressed by local planners that public participation was helpful in stimulating a feeling among the public that the final plan was worthy of their support.

Although there was a recognition that the planning system could benefit some social groups more than others, there was virtually no explicit support for the pluralist view of using participation to make the system fairer by ensuring that the disadvantaged are well represented. Moreover, there was an explicit rejection of the fundamental element of participatory democracy, that there be a decentralisation of decision making to the most local level possible. The general view among local planners was that the opinions expressed during public participation programmes were valuable only as one element in the total data base, and in no way predetermined the final

planning policies. A rejection of the conflict-oriented approach, advocated in much of the participatory democracy literature, is also indicated by the lack of acknowledgement of Green Bans as a legitimate participation mode.

Although regarded as an excellent concept in theory, public participation in practice was seen to be beset with problems. The local planners' responses closely match the arguments used by opponents of participatory democracy (Section 3.7). Thus, there was widespread concern about the unrepresentative nature of public participation responses, a reflection of the lack of interest of the majority who are not directly affected by the planning proposals, and the differing abilities of those who are to realise their situation and to make their views known (cf. Keeble 1966,219). Planners regarded the public as viewing participation exclusively as a protest activity. Those who are satisfied, and who thus have nothing to protest about, do not become involved. Thus, the argument of participatory democrats about psychological development through public participation is countered by the local planners' perception of participants as solely self-centred (cf. Edelston and Kolodner 1968,236). There are also doubts about the ability of the general public to participate effectively, particularly with regard to developing original ideas (cf. Grove and Procter 1966,416).

The concerns about delays to the planning process caused by public participation (e.g. Keeble 1966,221) are reflected in the planners' responses. Participation is also seen as being very labour-intensive which, given local authorities' lack of financial support, results in more work for an already overworked staff (cf. T.P.I. 1970,51). Citizen involvement is regarded as often exacerbating social disharmony, particularly when participating groups are disgruntled if their suggestions are omitted from the final proposal. This is of considerable concern to planners as it can lead to political procrastination about adopting the scheme. Moreover, as a basic objective of public participation is social harmony, any resulting social unrest is seen to reflect on the abilities of the professional planner.

Planners thus had a rather ambivalent attitude to public

participation. All planners considered it to be an excellent theoretical concept, but had serious doubts regarding how an information-exchange strategy might be effectively put into practice. Overall, the New South Wales attitude results correspond closely with those found elsewhere: the respondents overwhelmingly supported the new democratic elitist model of public participation, with the emphasis on information exchange to achieve a planning consensus, and to strengthen the planner's role. In addition, many of the complementary arguments used by critics of participatory democracy were also articulated, including the inability of the general public to effectively participate, and the severe administrative difficulties inherent in the participatory system.

Having outlined local planners' personal definitions of their participatory role, the research now moves on to consider the factors likely to be influential in determining these personal role definitions.

CHAPTER 7

DETERMINANTS OF THE LOCAL PLANNER'S PERSONAL ROLE DEFINITION

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 suggests that personal role definition is a function of two factors: motivation and ability. With regard to a local planners's participatory role, it is argued that the dominant motivational factor will be the individual's professional values. It is also suggested that two types of ability can be identified as important: a general social expertise and a more specific technical expertise. Information about professional values, social expertise and technical expertise was collected during the interviews with 158 local government planners in N.S.W., which were conducted during 1978-79. This chapter initially describes the results of the various measures used for each factor. It then presents the results from the statistical analysis to determine if there was any association between each measure and planners' attitudes to public participation as suggested by the literature outlined in Section 5.4.

7.2 Professional Values

As Section 5.4.1 makes clear, social groups can exert a powerful influence in the development of an individual's values. When referring to values specifically related to how an organisational role should be performed, the major reference group is likely to be individuals carrying out similar jobs in the individual's own workplace and elsewhere. This is particularly so with regard to a professional role (Hall 1973,122; Bolan 1971,389).

7.2.1 Measures of professionalism

As Section 5.4.1 points out, there are three generally accepted traits of a professional group: the orientation towards the welfare of the client; the possession of specialised knowledge; and the development of a professional subculture. This section describes N.S.W local government planning in relation to these traits.

The universalistic orientation of local government planners is apparent in the previous chapter which shows respondents' strong support for the concept of the general public interest. Thus planners emphasised both the need to obtain a representative cross-section of the community's views, and the value of information dissemination in terms of educating self-interested groups and individuals to appreciate the public interest.

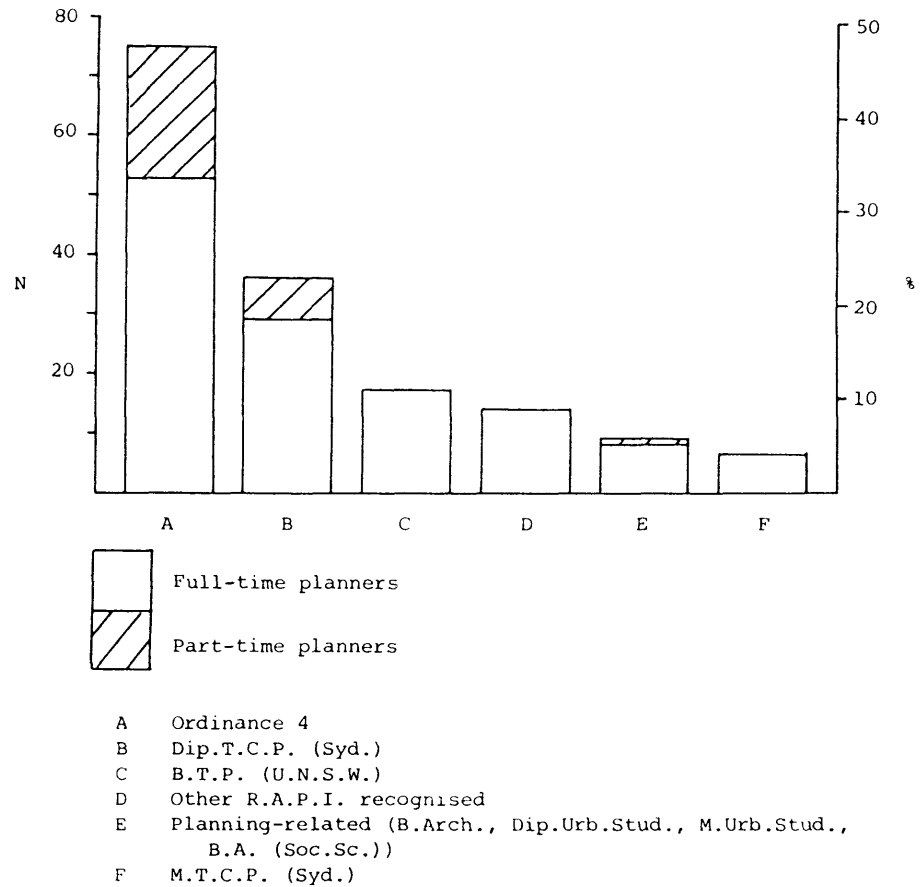
Emphasis on the possession of specialised knowledge is in part, reflected by the overall level of qualifications of local government planners. Table 7.1 shows that 52 per cent of full-time planners held a tertiary planning qualification. Figure 7.1 shows that 47 per cent of local government planners held degrees and diplomas from planning schools recognised by the Royal Australian Planning Institute.

Table 7.1 Local planners: professional qualifications

	Full-time		Planners Part-time		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
With tertiary qualifications						
In planning	67	42.4	7	4.4	74	46.8
Not in planning	15	9.5	19	12.0	34	21.5
Without tertiary qualifications						
But studying for one	19	12.0	1	0.6	20	12.6
Not studying for one	27	17.1	3	1.9	30	19.0
TOTAL	128	81.0	30	19.0	158	100.0

Source: author's 1978-9 N.S.W. survey

Figure 7.1 Local planners: planning qualifications
(N=158)

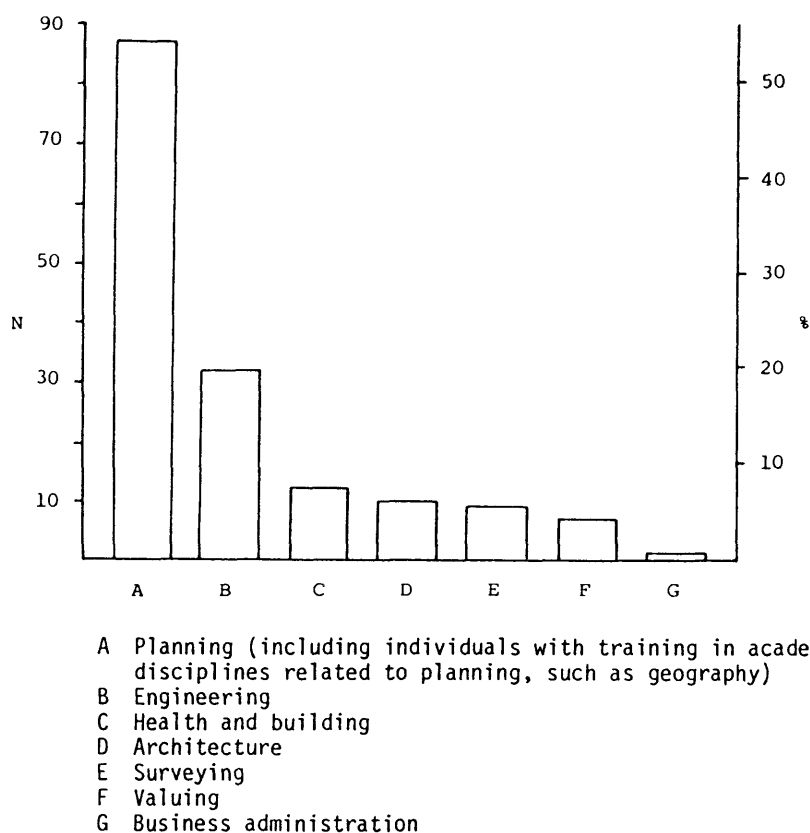


Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Although a few respondents reported 'a reaction against academic planners in local government', and a preference for less qualified but more experienced planners, nevertheless the trend would appear to be towards higher levels of qualification. Only one-fifth of respondents neither had a tertiary qualification nor were studying for such a qualification. Thirteen per cent of respondents had no tertiary qualification but were studying for one. The Mitchell course had the greatest number of enrolments among respondents - as might be expected considering the support given to the course by the Local Government Planners Association. Not surprisingly, it was the younger, less established, unqualified planners who were studying most.

A second approach to the issue of qualifications is to consider the breadth of qualifications rather than their depth. The historical development of local government planning in N.S.W. has resulted in many local government planners being trained in other professions in addition to planning. Thus, Figure 7.2 shows that over two-fifths (44.9%) of all respondents had qualifications in other occupations, one-fifth having engineering qualifications. Intuitively, it would appear that this group may be less influenced by professional planning values than their more narrowly-qualified colleagues. For example, their professional links, both organisationally and psychologically, may still be with their other professional group. This is especially likely to be the case with those 30 respondents who practised planning on only a part-time basis, and whose title (e.g. 'Engineer-Planner') reflected their job emphasis in terms of status and salary. More generally, Schoenherr and Greeley (1974,408) in their discussion of job commitment, note that 'the availability of alternatives (or opportunities) has a negative influence on staying in a job', suggesting greater commitment on the part of those constrained from engaging in other employment areas.

Figure 7.2 Local planners: areas of professional qualifications
(N=158)



Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

The third measure of professionalism relates to the development of a professional subculture. Table 7.2 shows that the establishment of planning as a significant full-time part of the local government bureaucracy did not occur until the 1970s, during which time the number of full-time planning positions and the number of separately functioning planning departments more than doubled. The creation of a separate department is probably of greater long-term significance - a significance reflected in the second of the Local Government Planners Association's 22 objectives: 'To promote the ultimate establishment of separate Planning Departments within individual and groups of Local Government Authorities where practically and economically feasible' (L.G.P.A. n.d.,1). As Table 7.1 indicates, nearly one-fifth (19%) of the interviews were conducted with individuals holding joint positions, there being 26 engineer-planners and 4 health surveyor-

planners.

Table 7.2 Local government planning as a full-time occupation in N.S.W.

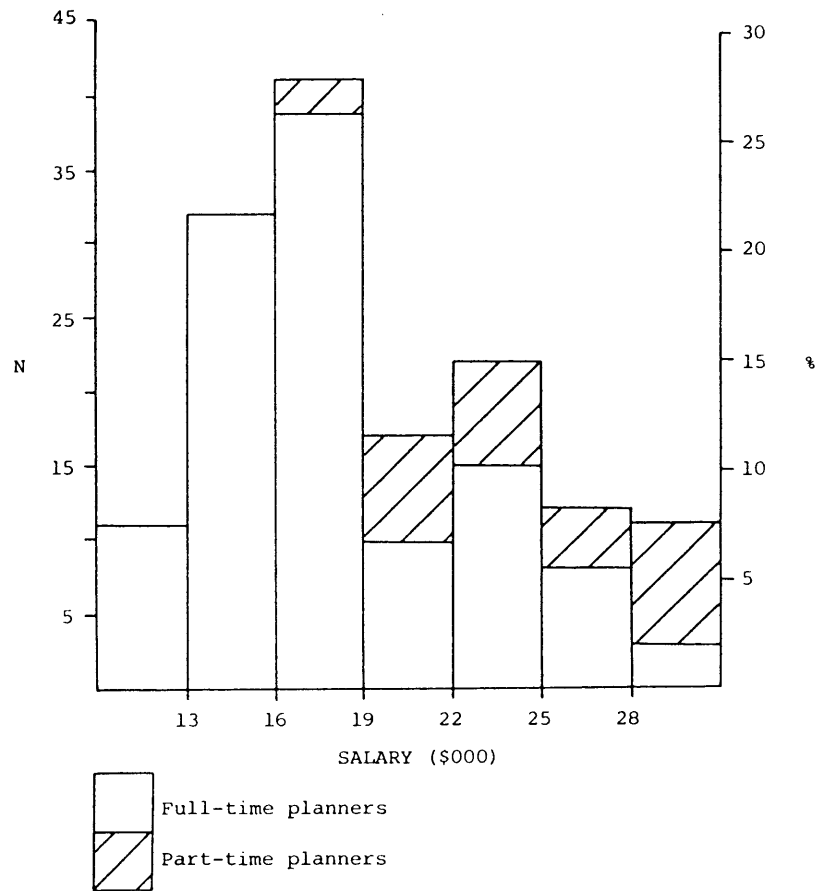
	1949	1959	1969	1979
Councils with a full-time professional planner (N)*	5	14	30	62
Councils with a separate planning department (N)*	3	8	21	47
Total number of local authorities	246	227	225	205

*Each row excludes 2 local authorities for which information was not available. Data in row 1 include data in row 2.

Sources: N.S.W. 1974b,66 and author's 1978-9 N.S.W. survey

The seniority, or status, of individuals within each local authority's planning hierarchy was reflected in their official departmental title. In the smaller departments only the man in charge was given a special title, the other professional staff being designated as assistant town planners. In larger departments there were a variety of intermediate categories, such as 'deputy', 'principal' and 'senior' planner. In all, 56 per cent of respondents held a position above that of assistant planner. A measure of the different levels of planning responsibilities of respondents in the sample as a whole is indicated by their annual salary (Figure 7.3). The positive skew of the distribution is largely due to the inclusion of engineer-planners in the sample with, for example, 8 of the 9 most highly paid respondents holding joint positions. It is doubtful that the professional planning status of individuals holding joint positions is accurately reflected by their salaries, which are based primarily on their non-planning duties. Indeed, it can be argued that the continued existence of joint positions hinders the professionalisation of planning *per se*, as they illustrate the dominant position of engineering in local government. The aim of the Local Government Planners Association to eliminate joint departments gives an indication of this feeling.

Figure 7.3 Local planners: gross annual salaries
(N=146)



Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Another aspect of the professional subculture relates to the membership of professional planning organisations. Table 7.3 shows that 71 respondents were eligible for R.A.P.I. corporate membership at the time of the survey, and 45 per cent of them were corporate members.³⁹ When asked to explain their reasons for becoming corporate members of R.A.P.I., respondents usually referred to links between planners and to links between planners and other groups. Thus, internally, R.A.P.I. was seen as one way of 'keeping in touch with what's going on', the Journal, conferences and seminars enabling contact at either a technical or social level. Externally, planners

highlighted the employment advantages of membership which was seen as an 'additional technical qualification' which could 'improve job opportunities' as 'extra letters mean extra money'. However, only 4 planners thought that, as professionals, they were obliged to join the Institute. For example, one deputy planner from Sydney's northern suburbs observed that 'R.A.P.I. is the professional body for town planning in Australia, so each professional should be a member of that body'.

Table 7.3 Local planners: membership of professional organisations

	L.G.P.A.		R.A.P.I.	
	N	%	N	%
Full/Corporate member	97	61.4	32	20.3
Eligible for Full/Corporate membership but enrolled as Associate/Affiliate or Student	0	0	14	8.9
Eligible for Full/Corporate membership but not member	61	38.6	25	15.8
Associate/Affiliate or Student member not eligible for Full/Corporate membership	0	0	8	5.1
Not eligible for Full/Corporate membership, and not Associate/Affiliate or Student member	0	0	79	50.0
	158		158	

The main grades of membership within each of the professional organisations are:

R.A.P.I.: Corporate, Affiliate, Student (R.A.P.I. 1981,13)

L.G.P.A.: Full, Associate, Student (L.G.P.A. n.d.,9)

Source: author's 1978-9 N.S.W. survey

Despite the additional status which corporate membership was perceived to bestow, the majority of R.A.P.I. members agreed with the

idea of a further relaxation of the Institute's membership requirements to admit experienced Ordinance 4-trained local government planners. Thus, 18 approved of such a move, whilst only 7 were definitely against it and a further 7 were undecided (chi square=7.56, df=2, p<0.05). Those who favoured widening membership felt that the Institute would benefit from the inclusion of more of the 'front-line troops', as it would help to counteract the current elitist, architectural and academic bias. Thus, one Hunter Region planner commented:

I agree with widening the membership of the Institute. Town planning is not an applied science of the same nature as civil engineering, for example, in which case membership should be restricted to those skilled in the science. Town planning requires people to have a broad knowledge of society rather than a restricted one. Therefore, there is room for many disciplines in the Institute.

And more specifically on Ordinance 4 planners, another planner in the Hunter Region maintained that:

The Institute must have a broad membership base including Ordinance 4 people. There is no need for two separate planning bodies. Ordinance 4 touches on areas not covered in university planning courses, and we already admit people with graduate qualifications in disciplines other than planning. I prefer an Ordinance 4 trained, experienced planner to an inexperienced graduate any time.

Those opposing the move adopted the position of Lewis Keeble (A.P.I.J. January 1970 pp.27-8), maintaining that professional standards must remain high and that a broader membership base would erode the Institute's - and its members' - status. They felt that an appropriate membership grade was already available - that of affiliate. Indeed, Ordinance 4-trained planners were occasionally ridiculed, one planner explaining contemptuously that 'they see planning simply as colouring in a map'. Similarly, an architect-planner described how, on joining local government two years previously, he had been 'shattered at how infantile planning was', and how he was 'keen to see it emerge as a reputable profession'.

Thirty-nine of the 71 (55%) eligible planners had opted not to join R.A.P.I. as corporate members. Of these 39 respondents, 25 had no

connection with the Institute, and the remainder had continued as student members, essentially to delay paying the higher corporate membership fee.⁴⁰ Most of the 25 non-joiners professed no interest in a professional organisation, seeing R.A.P.I. membership as both expensive and lacking in any benefits. They regarded their academic qualifications as more important than R.A.P.I. membership. Ten R.A.P.I. non-joiners had in fact become members of the L.G.P.A., considering that the Association was much more closely related to their professional needs as local government planners. This sentiment was also repeated by many of the planners who were ineligible for corporate membership. Thus, one Ordinance 4 planner described the Institute as 'a moribund organisation of long-haired intellectuals'.

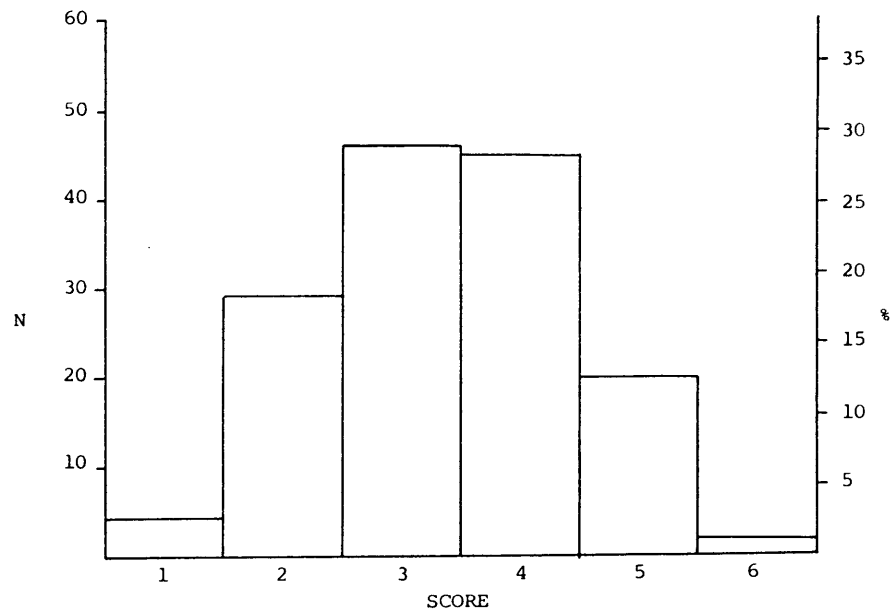
Table 7.3 shows that the L.G.P.A. had recruited 61 per cent of all eligible planners to become full members, a figure which rises to 70 per cent when considering planners who were eligible only for Association membership. Thus, the L.G.P.A. had a significantly better rate of recruitment to its full membership grade than the Institute (chi square=5.31, df=1, $p < 0.05$ when comparing membership rates for all eligible planners; chi square=10.13, df=1, $p < 0.01$ when comparing membership rates of respondents eligible for R.A.P.I. membership and those eligible only for L.G.P.A. membership).

Virtually all L.G.P.A. members considered that the Association had an important role in helping to stimulate a 'professional interchange of ideas', especially at the 'nitty-gritty' level. In contrast to R.A.P.I. members' responses, the majority of L.G.P.A. members saw the Association's main task as being 'to promote local government planning'. Thus, respondents talked about 'lifting the credibility', 'improving the esteem', and 'raising the status' of local government planners. Educational improvements were seen as important, there being a general recognition that 'Ordinance 4 is not good enough' - though a rider was usually added explaining how, even though the Certificate needed upgrading, current Certificate holders still commanded a considerable amount of expertise. The Association was also seen as a pressure group, a 'mouthpiece for local government planners', trying to ensure that they were represented whenever discussions relating to local planning were being conducted.

Non-members gave no generally accepted reasons for not joining the L.G.P.A. Some R.A.P.I. members considered that they would derive no extra benefit. Other planners thought the Ordinance 4 Certificate not to be a high enough entrance standard for the L.G.P.A. Some believed the Association to be ineffective or to have an unclear role in relation to R.A.P.I. and the Municipal Employees Union, the planners' wage negotiation body. Overall, however, the trenchant criticism that was often levelled at the Institute - both by joiners and non-joiners - was generally absent from the comments about the Association.

In addition to considering separately each of the measures of professionalism, a composite professionalism index was devised to indicate an individual's level of commitment to the planning profession. It comprised six of the measures used above: type of planning qualification; breadth of professional qualification; membership of professional planning organisations; type of appointment; level of appointment; and salary. Each was dichotomised as follows: possessing/not possessing a planning qualification recognised by R.A.P.I.; not possessing/possessing a qualification in a second professional activity; member/non-member of a planning organisation; engaged full-time/part-time on planning duties; engaged as departmental head/assistant; receiving a salary greater than/less than the median. For each measure a score of 1 was awarded to those planners who through their qualifications, organisational membership and employment appeared most integrated into the planning profession. Thus, the professionalism index had a maximum score of 6 and a minimum of 0. The distribution of the resulting scores is shown in Figure 7.4.

Figure 7.4 Local planners: professionalism index scores
(N=146)



Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

7.2.2 Professionalism and public participation

As is noted in Section 5.5.1, the relationship between professionalism and public participation can be viewed from two conflicting perspectives. First, it can be seen as a counteracting relationship, the professional's claim to possess specialised knowledge being contrasted with the need to draw on the specialised knowledge of the public. There was little explicit support for this view expressed during the interviews with N.S.W. local planners. The clearest reference to this idea came from an assistant planner in one of the most affluent areas of Sydney:

When you do attempt to involve the public they don't treat you as a professional, but as a lackey from the Council who doesn't know anything about it. Don't tell me how to be a town planner and I won't tell you how to be a doctor.

However, by far the majority of respondents seemed to hold the

opposing view, seeing professionalism and public participation as complementary with, in theory at least, public participation being regarded as one element in the planner's legitimate array of data collection techniques. Thus, one Northern Region planner commented:

A lot of people think that planners will lose authority as a result of public participation. But if it is used correctly the planner's role in fact is increased, public participation being added to the list of sources from which the planner can draw his information.

However, it should be remembered that local planners' support for public participation as a theoretical concept was tempered by their strong reservations about it as a practical proposition.

Statistical testing of the relationship between professionalism and public participation was undertaken using two modes of analysis. First, the total sample of 158 respondents was used, the median scores of the Thurstone attitude scale providing a measure of each planner's attitude towards public participation.⁴¹ Secondly, the 25 planners whose responses to the open-ended interview questions showed that they gave the strongest support to the concept of public participation were contrasted with those 25 planners least in favour of public involvement.

The first measure of professionalism concerns the possession of specialised knowledge as indicated by the respondents professional planning qualifications. These are considered from two perspectives. First, there is the type of planning qualification held. Some are generally regarded as more valuable than others in terms of being an indication of the holder's specialised knowledge. In general, the qualifications recognised by R.A.P.I. are most highly valued⁴² whilst the N.S.W. Local Government Examination Committee's Town and Country Planning Certificate, issued under Ordinance 4 of the Local Government Act, has a lower status, its value being limited largely to local government positions in N.S.W. The second perspective concerns the breadth of professional qualifications held. As has been shown above (Figure 7.2) nearly half of N.S.W. local government planners have, in addition to their planning qualification, a certificate, diploma or degree in other professional fields.

Table 7.4A compares the Thurstone participation attitude scores of those respondents holding R.A.P.I.-recognised qualifications and those without such a qualification - primarily planners with an Ordinance 4 Certificate. There is no significant statistical difference between the two groups and, similarly, virtually no difference between the two polarised attitude groups (Table 7.4E). The second perspective concerns the breadth of professional qualifications held. Table 7.4B shows that the mean Thurstone scale value for the planning-only qualification group was 7.2 compared to 7.5 for the wide-based qualification group. Although not significant at the 0.05 level, this difference in scores was nevertheless very close to this level ($t=1.92$; critical minimum value= 1.96) A statistically significant result ($p<0.01$) was apparent when comparing the two polarised attitude groups (Table 7.4F) with, for example, four-fifths of the least positive group comprising planners holding only planning qualifications compared to just over two-fifths of the most positive group.

Tables 7.4C and G compare the attitudes of respondents in full-time and part-time planning positions. Results are similar to those relating to breadth of qualification, the part-time planners, as expected, having overall a more favourable attitude to public participation - significantly so when comparing the polarised groups of 25 planners. Tables 7.4D and H compare the attitudes of full-time respondents holding only planning qualifications and part-time respondents (holding engineering, and health and building qualifications). A similar pattern of results is again evident with, as predicted, the less professionalised planners overall holding the more favourable attitudes to public participation.

Table 7.4 Local planners: public participation attitude and professional qualification and position

Using Thurstone attitude scores

Qualification status	N	mean	t	df	p*
A. Holding R.A.P.I. recognised qualifications	74	7.41	1.03	156	NS
Not holding R.A.P.I. recognised qualifications	84	7.21			
B. Holding only planning-related qualifications	87	7.15	1.92	156	<0.1
Holding other qualifications	71	7.50			
C. Holding full-time planning position	128	7.26	1.69	156	<0.1
Holding joint position	30	7.63			
D. Full time planner holding only planning qualifications	87	7.19	1.69	115	<0.1
Holding joint position	30	7.63			

Using oral responses (25 most positive and 25 least positive planners)

Qualification status	Most positive N	Least positive N	Chi square/ Fisher	p
E. Holding R.A.P.I. recognised qualifications	13	12	0.27	NS
Not holding R.A.P.I. recognised qualifications	12	13		
F. Holding only planning-related qualifications	11	20	6.88	<0.01
Holding other qualifications	14	5		
G. Holding full-time planning position	19	24	Fisher test	<0.05
Holding joint position	6	1		
H. Full-time planner holding only planning qualifications	13	21	Fisher test	<0.05
Holding joint position	6	1		

*Probability levels refer to two-tail tests throughout the thesis. The exploratory nature of the study meant that in most cases a directional hypothesis was inappropriate. In addition, as Ebdon (1977,56) points out, some statisticians 'have questioned the logic of one-tailed tests'.

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Another measure of professionalism concerns planners' membership of professional planning organisations. As pointed out in Section 7.2.1, there are two major groups in N.S.W. - the Royal Australian Planning Institute and the Local Government Planners Association. Eligibility for membership is based on professional qualifications (plus experience stipulations), an issue discussed above. None of the variety of organisational groupings tested using the Thurstone scale showed any statistically significant results (Table 7.5 A to E). However, one pattern which is consistent through all five tests is that the members of the less professionalised group in each pair had a higher attitude score than their more professionalised colleagues. The greatest difference in mean Thurstone score was when comparing those R.A.P.I. corporate members who were against any further relaxation of R.A.P.I. membership standards and those planners who, although eligible for corporate membership, had rejected all formal links with the Institute (Table 7.5C). A similar general pattern appears when considering only the most and least positive groups of 25 planners (Table 7.5 F to J). Again although no statistically significant differences are shown between the two groups, the least positive group consistently exhibits a higher degree of organisational membership.

Table 7.5 Local planners: public participation attitude and membership of professional groups

Using Thurstone attitude scores

Membership status	N	Mean	t	df	p
A. R.A.P.I. corporate member	32	7.28	0.69	69	NS
Not corporate member but eligible for corporate membership	39	7.49			
B. R.A.P.I. corporate member against widening membership	7	6.51	1.16	23	NS
R.A.P.I. corporate member advocating widening membership	18	7.24			
C. R.A.P.I. corporate member against widening membership	7	6.51	1.95	30	<0.1
Eligible for R.A.P.I. corporate membership but not a member	25	7.57			
D. L.G.P.A. full member	97	7.24	1.46	156	NS
Not full member but eligible for full membership	61	7.51			
E. Member of two or more planning organisations	36	7.08	1.56	70	NS
Member of no planning organisations	36	7.44			

Using oral responses

	Most positive	Least positive	Chi square/ Fisher	p
F. R.A.P.I. corporate member	6	6	$\chi^2=0.17$	NS
Not corporate member but eligible for corporate membership	7	5		
G. R.A.P.I. corporate member against widening membership	0	3	Fisher	NS
R.A.P.I. corporate member advocating widening membership	3	1		
H. R.A.P.I. corporate member against widening membership	0	3	Fisher	<0.1
Eligible for R.A.P.I. corporate membership but not a member	6	3		
I. L.G.P.A. full member	12	15	$\chi^2=1.11$	NS
Not full member but eligible for full membership	12	8		
J. Member of two or more planning organisations	5	8	$\chi^2=1.99$	NS
Member of no planning organisations	8	4		

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Another measure of professionalism relates to the seniority level which the individual has attained within the profession. In local government this is based largely on the position a planner holds within a local authority, and even more importantly, the relative size of the local authority. These factors are essentially the basis for determining individuals' salaries, the award scheme recognising 3 professional internal grades and 18 local authority categories (L.G.P.A. 1979, 7-17). Statistical analysis of the association between departmental status and public participation attitude showed that the difference in attitude between each of the pairs of departmental status groups was usually not large enough to be statistically significant (Table 7.6). However, all the results consistently show the more senior ranking planners to be slightly more favourably disposed towards participation than the more junior planners.

Table 7.6 Local planners: public participation attitude and departmental status

Using Thurstone attitude scores

Status groups	N	mean	t	df	p
A. All heads	63	7.34	0.77	156	NS
All others	95	7.18			
B. All full-time heads	35	7.14	0.23	126	NS
All full-time others	93	7.07			
C. All senior planners	89	7.41	0.95	156	NS
All assistant planners	69	7.21			
D. Full-time senior planners	61	7.30	1.03	126	NS
Full-time assistant planners	67	7.10			

Table 7.6 Local planners: public participation attitude and departmental status (continued)

Using oral responses

Status groups	Most positive N	Least positive N	Chi square	df	p
E. All heads	13	6	4.16	1	<0.05
All others	12	19			
F. All full-time heads	7	5	1.35	1	NS
All full-time others	12	19			
G. All senior planners	16	11	2.01	1	NS
All assistant planners	9	14			
H. Full-time senior planners	10	10	0.51	1	NS
Full-time assistant planners	9	14			

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Table 7.7 shows the results of testing for a relationship between salaries and attitude to participation. The two sets of results highlight the importance of the holders of joint positions, particularly engineer-planners. This is most clearly seen in the comparison of the most and least positive groups of 25. The inclusion of the six engineers and health inspectors in the most positive group (as compared to only one engineer-planner in the least positive group) resulted in a statistically significant difference between the two, the average salary of the most positive group's members being nearly \$5,000 greater. In contrast, when only full-time planners were included the difference in mean salaries dropped to just over \$2,000, and the overall salary structures were not significantly different. Generally, there appears to be a slight tendency for the more highly paid planners to show a more favourable attitude than their less well paid colleagues.

Table 7.7 Local planners: public participation attitude and salary

A. Using Thurstone attitude scores

Status groups	N	Salary mean	Thurstone mean	rs	P
Full-time planners	118	17,850	7.26	0.034	NS
Part-time planners	28	24,785	7.62	0.348	<0.1
All planners	146	19,180	7.33	0.085	NS

B. Using oral responses

Status groups	N	Salary mean	Wilcoxon T	z	p
Full-time most positive planners	18	19,090			
Full-time least positive planners	23	16,920	51.39	1.35	NS
All most positive planners	24	21,970			
All least positive planners	24	17,140	128.52	2.65	<0.01

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Table 7.8A shows the Thurstone mean scores of the planners in each of the six groups on the composite professionalism index. Inspection reveals no apparent pattern in the results, and this is confirmed by statistical analysis. Similarly, a comparison of the attitude scores of planners with low professionalism scores (1 & 2) and high professionalism scores (5 & 6) revealed no significant difference ($t=0.23$, $df=53$). Table 7.8B duplicates these inconclusive results, there being no significant difference between the professionalism scores of the most positive attitude group of 25 planners (mean=3.6) and the least positive group (mean=3.3).

Table 7.8 Local planners: public participation attitude and professionalism index score

A. Using Thurstone attitude scores

	Professionalism index score						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Planners (N)	0	4	29	46	45	20	2
Thurstone (mean)	-	6.93	7.43	7.25	7.25	7.54	7.45

$$r_s = +0.040$$

$$n = 146$$

$$p = \text{NS}$$

B. Using oral responses

Attitude Group	Professionalism score						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Most positive (N)	0	0	4	7	8	4	1
Least positive (N)	0	1	4	8	7	3	1

$$\text{Wilcoxon } T = 28.5$$

$$z = 0.59$$

$$p = \text{NS}$$

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

The lack of strong, consistent results in the foregoing analysis is not surprising considering the radically different, but equally defensible, theoretical interpretations of the association between public participation and professionalism. Generally, the analysis gives more support to the argument that participation and professionalism are counteracting developments - though the evidence is more in the consistency than the strength of the results. Thus, it was evident that there was a marked difference between what might be termed the specialised planners - those possessing only planning qualifications and holding a planning appointment within the local bureaucracy - and those respondents who had more broadly-based qualifications and who had a wider range of responsibilities. Similarly, although none of the several tests on membership of professional organisations produced results that were significant at

the 0.05 level, all showed a consistent pattern: that those individuals who had not joined were more supportive of participation than those who were members. These conclusions appear to contrast with the tenor of the verbal responses outlined earlier in this section. However, a more meaningful approach is to interpret the statistical results in the context of overall support among local planners for the idea of public participation as a valuable data collection technique. The difference is therefore one of intensity, not direction. The two interpretations of the association between participation and professionalism can thus be regarded as being superimposed: the overall direction is laid down by the complementing developments model and is reflected in the verbal responses; the intensity is determined by the counteracting model (the more professionalised respondents being more conscious of the drawbacks of public participation), and is reflected in the statistical analysis.

The only measure which indicated a different relationship between professionalism and participation concerned a planner's status within the bureaucratic hierarchy. The data, although not usually significant at the 0.05 level, tended to support Buck's (1976,44-5) thesis that senior staff are more likely to approve of public participation than their junior colleagues. Although in part related to the concept of joint positions discussed above (the engineer-planner being in charge of the department and commanding a high salary) the relationship also applied to full-time planners. Buck (1976,44) contends that senior planners look towards public participation as a source of legitimacy in order to 'get their programs approved'. However, only six (4%) N.S.W. planners directly gave this argument in justification of their attitude of public participation.

The composite professionalism index produced no clear results in relation to public participation attitudes. This is not surprising as the index comprised variables measuring qualifications, organisational membership and bureaucratic status, the last factor tending to counteract the first two.

7.3 Social Expertise

The second set of factors which may help determine a planner's personal definition of his or her participatory role relates to an ability to establish harmonious relations with other members of society. This is referred to as an individual's social expertise. A discussion of the literature relating to social expertise is to be found in Section 5.4.2.

7.3.1 Measures of social expertise

Public participation almost inevitably means that the professional planner will become more directly involved with his or her client community. These encounters may be traumatic for the planner, both at the personal and professional level. For example, one engineer-planner from the Western Region commented:

Public participation is never a nice, rational, harmonious sort of thing - you always have a 'voices raised' situation. It is definitely not a comfortable process!

In fact, few respondents directly cited the possibility of abuse from the public as a disadvantage of public participation, yet those who did were often vehement in their condemnation of the public's treatment of professional planners. For example, referring to his experience as liaison planner to a local planning advisory committee, one assistant planner from the Western Division of Sydney commented:

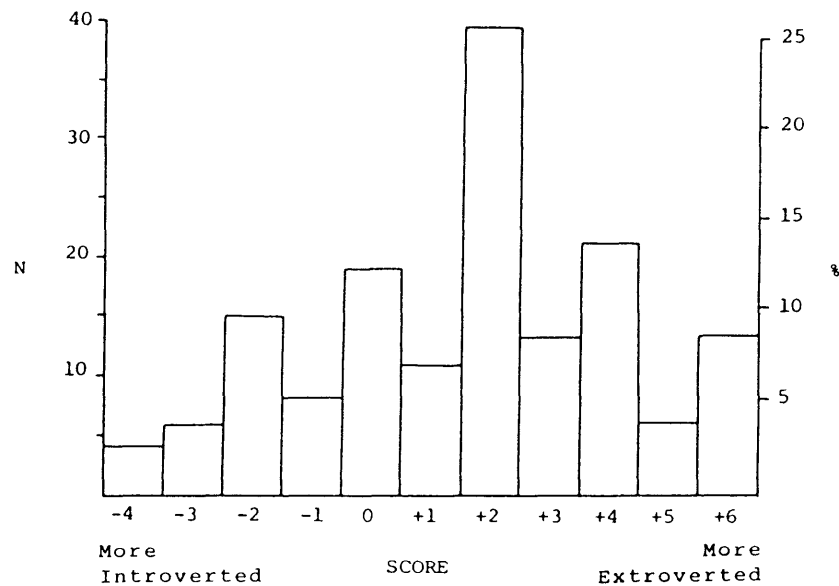
The group that responded to the invitation to sit on the committee were simply self-seeking, anti-council stirrers. I got berated and abused by them, and my personal integrity was attacked. They were a rabble.

More generally, from public meetings attended by the researcher, it is apparent that at least some planners are uncomfortable when in the public spotlight. Thus, the dislike expressed by many respondents of public meetings dominated by 'stirrers' and 'ratbags' may be in part because they tend to place the planner in a potentially embarrassing

situation.

Use was made of the concept of introversion-extroversion as an indicator of the ease with which an individual might approach such a social situation. Eysenck's (1958) six-item questionnaire for the introversion-extroversion dimension of personality was administered. Results from the instrument are given on Figure 7.5 which indicates that two-thirds (66.5%) of respondents had a positive (extrovert) score, whilst only one-fifth (21.3%) had a negative (introvert) score.

Figure 7.5 Local planners: introversion-extroversion scores
(N=155)



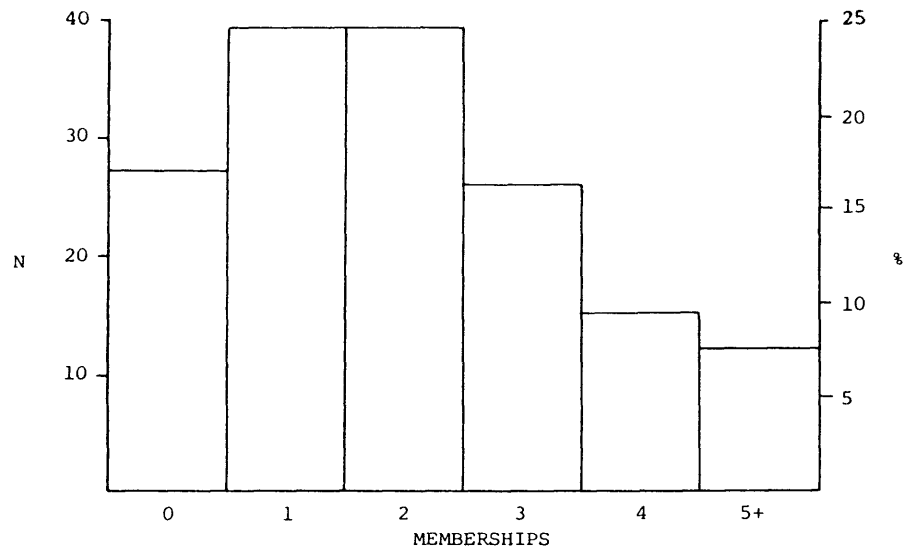
Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Overall, the mean Eysenck score for the male respondents (who comprised all but 3 of the entire sample)⁴³ was 1.61, a figure significantly greater ($V=7,961$, $z=3.95$, $p<0.001$) than the mean of 0.60 obtained by John Ray in a random cluster sample of males in the Sydney metropolitan area (pers. comm. 7 October 1982). However, the reliability of the short Eysenck extroversion scale is low. The Cronbach alpha test of internal consistency produced a reliability coefficient of only 0.50 in the 1978-79 survey and 0.47 in Ray's 1982

survey, thus implying that the various items in the instrument are measuring more than one dimension of personality (see Dominowski 1980,259).

A further measure of social expertise is respondents' formal membership of social organisations, it being thought that such voluntary behaviour would provide an indication of the propensity of an individual to engage in social intercourse. Figure 7.6 shows that over four-fifths (83%) of respondents had taken out membership of at least one club, with one-third (34%) having three or more formal memberships. By far the most popular were the licensed sports or social clubs, such as golfing and bowling organisations and the Returned Servicemen's League clubs, two-thirds (68%) of planners being members. Membership of more community-orientated organisations such as Rotary, scouts and church groups, was cited by approximately one-third (32%) of planners. Local planners' high level of membership of such groups is indicated in figures related to Rotary, an organisation of business and professional men, the basic object of which is 'to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise' (Article III of the Standard Rotary Club Constitution). In 1978 approximately 4.5 per cent of business and professional men were members of Rotary. This compares to 10.3 per cent of the male planners surveyed - more than double the national average.⁴⁴

Figure 7.6 Local planners: social club memberships
(N=158)



Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

An overlapping measure of social expertise relates to respondents' political activities. Table 7.9 shows the number of planners involved in each of Milbrath and Goel's (1977,21) modes of public participation. The largest group were the 'commentators'. Twenty-one planners gave this as their only mode of participatory activity. Of these, a majority (12) cited only signing petitions - and usually they were unspecific about the issue of concern. More extensive commitment involved, for example, one planner making a submission to a mining inquiry against a coal mining proposal in a national park. Overall, this group's use of infrequent, impersonal forms of communication, such as petitions, letters and written submissions, meant that they were the least active and least visible of the 'gladiators'. Twelve planners were 'party and campaign workers', with 5 respondents (3.2%) being party members at the time of the interview. The most active planner described himself as being 'involved in A.L.P. machinery and policy committees as well as local branch politics'. Twenty planners were 'community activists'. Eleven detailed their involvement in only a single issue, such as organising

a petition in support of a street closure or the establishment of a drug rehabilitation centre. The others were involved in a more general, long-term way with community groups. The extent of this assistance - and the difficulties it can generate - are illustrated in the following response from an assistant town planner working in the Hunter Region:

I am a member of a political party. I've been in a number of residents' groups and issue action groups, conservation societies etc. and have given advice to others. I believe all planning is political and prefer it to be UP FRONT. Unfortunately, some elected representatives see this honesty as subversive.

The smallest group, the 'protesters', overlapped almost completely with the other groups in terms of membership. Protest issues included the war in Vietnam, uranium and expressway development.

Table 7.9 Local planners: political activities

Participation role	Planners*	
	N	%
Apathetics/spectators	95	60.1
Gladiators:		
Commentators	28	17.7
Party and campaign workers	12	7.6
Community activists	20	12.7
Protesters	7	4.4
Unspecified activity	12	7.6

*10 planners were placed in 2 or 3 gladiatorial subgroups.

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

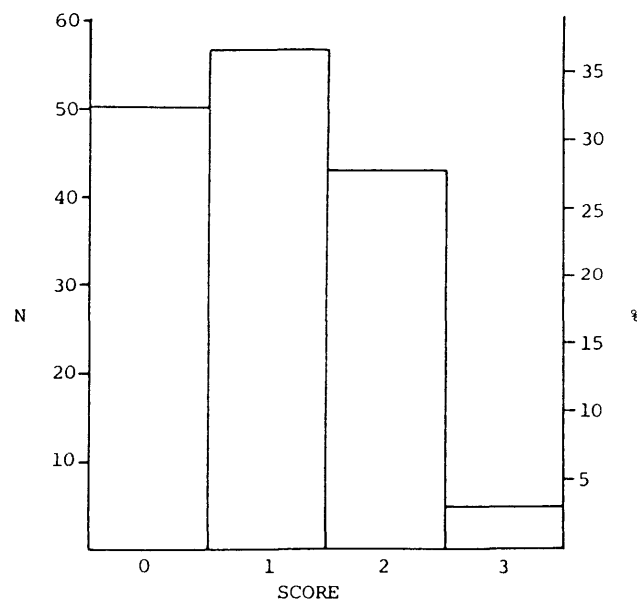
Aitken (1976,416) suggests that approximately 27 per cent of the Australian electorate could be described as 'politically aware and active'. He goes on to say that 'The ranks of the politically active are crowded with the well-educated, the well paid, and the middle class generally'. Consequently, the 40 per cent of planners who were politically active (Table 7.9) may be regarded as low considering the background of the respondents. Indeed, Buck's research on planners

in San Francisco found that

Some 60% have been politically active at one time or another, at least to the extent of participating in a political campaign or belonging to a political organization. If writing letters to political officials is included in political activities, 86% of these planners have participated in politics outside of their jobs. (Buck 1976,17)

In addition to considering separately each of the measures of social expertise, a composite social expertise index was devised. It comprised the three measures used above: Eysenck extroversion scores; number of club memberships; and political activity. Each was dichotomised as follows: achieving an Eysenck score more/equal or less than the median; belonging to more/equal or less than the median number of clubs; being a political gladiator/spectator or apathetic. A score of 1 was awarded to each planner if he or she had a high Eysenck result, a high affiliation result, or was a political gladiator. Thus, the social expertise index had a maximum score of 3 and a minimum of 0. The distribution of the resulting scores is shown in Figure 7.7.

Figure 7.7 Local planners: social expertise index scores
(N=155)



Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

7.3.2 Social expertise and public participation

The following section outlines the results of the statistical analysis of the association between the measures of social expertise, outlined above, and local planners' attitudes to public participation as measured by their responses to the Thurstone scale and to the open-ended interview questions.

No statistically significant results were recorded when analysing the association between the Eysenck extroversion scores and public participation attitudes (Table 7.10). However, both results are consistent in that, as expected, they indicate a very slight tendency for the more extrovert planners to be more in favour of participation than their more introvert colleagues.

Table 7.10 Local planners: public participation attitude and Eysenck introversion-extroversion scores

A. Using Thurstone attitude scores

Eysenck score	Planners N	Thurstone mean
-6	0	-
-5	0	-
-4	4	6.6
-3	6	7.5
-2	15	7.2
-1	8	7.6
0	19	7.1
1	11	7.8
2	39	7.0
3	13	7.5
4	21	7.4
5	6	7.2
6	13	6.9

$r_s = +0.012$
 $n = 155$
 $p = NS$

Table 7.10 Local planners: public participation attitude and Eysenck introversion-extroversion scores (continued)

B. Using oral responses

Attitude group	Planners N	Eysenck mean	Wilcoxon T	z	p
Most positive	25	1.88	67.00	1.30	NS
Least positive	25	1.44			

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Similarly, Table 7.11A shows no clear pattern in the Thurstone mean scores for each of the categories based on number of club memberships, though the highest Thurstone score (7.5) is recorded by those planners with the greatest number of club memberships, and the lowest Thurstone score (7.1) recorded by those planners who belonged to no clubs. The Spearman rank correlation coefficient test also indicated a very weak positive correlation. However, the club membership level of the 25 most positive planners was significantly higher than that for the 25 least positive planners (Table 7.11B). Membership levels of the most positive attitude group were higher for both the more inward-looking licensed social and sports clubs, and the more community-orientated social welfare organisations. However, it was in the latter type of organisation that there was the greatest difference in membership levels, only 4 of the 25 least positive planners being members, compared to 14 of the 25 planners in the most positive group (Table 7.11C).

Table 7.11 Local planners: public participation attitude and affiliation behaviour

A. Using Thurstone attitude scores

Formal club memberships	Planners	Thurstone score mean
N	N	
0	27	7.08
1	39	7.26
2	39	7.13
3	26	7.36
4	15	7.24
Over 4	12	7.53

$r_s = +0.090$

$n = 158$

$p = NS$

Using oral responses

B. Attitude group	Planners N	Clubs mean	Wilcoxon T	z	p
Most positive	25	2.29	113.39	2.20	< 0.05
Least positive	25	1.02			

C. Attitude group	Less community-orientated clubs		More community-orientated clubs	
	Members	Non-Members	Members	Non-Members
Most positive	19	6	14	11
Least positive	16	9	4	21

chi square= 0.86

df = 1

p = NS

chi square=8.68

df =1

p < 0.01

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Table 7.12 provides a comparison of the planners' political activities in relation to their stated attitudes to public participation in planning. There is some support for the hypothesis that the more politically active planners may be more inclined to support the idea of public participation. When the sample is dichotomised into gladiators and non-gladiators (apathetics and spectators), the former group score a higher rating on the Thurstone scale, though the difference is not statistically significant (Table 7.12A). Because of their low level of gladiatorial activity, commentators were removed from the analysis and only the high-profile gladiators - the protesters, party and campaign workers, and community activists - were compared to the non-gladiator group (Table 7.12B). The Thurstone scores for these two groups were significantly different with the more politically active group being more in favour of planning participation than the more inactive group. This trend is also shown in Table 7.12C and D, although neither set of data is statistically significant.

Table 7.12 Local planners: public participation attitude and political activity

Using Thurstone attitude scores

Political activity group	Planners N	Thurstone mean	t	df	p
A. All gladiators	63	7.52	1.30	156	NS
Spectators/Apathetics	95	7.20			
B. High profile gladiators	30	7.81	2.33	123	<0.05
Spectators/Apathetics	95	7.20			

Using oral responses

C. Attitude group	Political activity group		Chi square	df	p
	Gladiators N	Others N			
Most positive	14	11	2.92	1	<0.1
Least positive	8	17			
D. Attitude group	High profile gladiators N	Spectators and Apathetics N	Fisher Exact Probability Test p		
Most positive	7	11	< 0.1		
Least positive	3	17			

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Table 7.13A shows the Thurstone mean scores for each of the social expertise index groups. Inspection reveals that those respondents with the higher social expertise scores had the more favourable attitudes to public participation. Spearman rank correlation analysis showed a statistically significant positive relationship. Table 7.13B compares the social expertise scores of the most positive attitude group of 25 planners (mean=1.3) and the least positive groups of 25 planners (mean=0.7). It supports the above result, showing a significantly higher level of social expertise among the most positive attitude group.

Table 7.13 Local planners: public participation attitude and social expertise index

A. Using Thurstone attitude scores

	Social expertise score			
	0	1	2	3
Planners (N)	50	57	43	5
Thurstone (mean)	7.23	7.19	7.62	7.84

$r_s = 0.1809$
 $n = 155$
 $p = <0.05$

B. Using oral responses

Attitude group	Social expertise score			
	0	1	2	3
Most positive (N)	5	9	10	1
Least positive (N)	11	10	4	0

Wilcoxon T = 114
 $z = 2.21$
 $p < 0.05$

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

The social expertise section was based on the premise that, as public participation almost inevitably means that the professional planner will become more directly involved with the client community, an individual's ability to quickly achieve rapport with others will be of considerable importance. Thus, an individual who possessed such social expertise would be less likely to find conducting a public participation programme a stressful experience, and would therefore be more likely to support participation. As Bolan (1971,389) points out, 'one would not expect to see a jovial back-slapping personality as a funeral director, regardless of his embalming skills'.

Because of the wide-ranging nature of the interview, only the simplest measures of social expertise could be used in the limited time available. Thus, the short form of Maudsley Personality Inventory for the measurement of introversion-extroversion was used, and simple behavioural measures of affiliation were employed rather than one of

the more elaborate projective techniques. However, despite the simplicity of the measures, there was considerable support for the working hypothesis that greatest encouragement for public participation would be likely to be found amongst individuals with the highest level of social expertise. Both the individual and composite index tests produced results which were consistent with the hypothesis: planners with more favourable attitudes to public participation belonged to more social clubs, exhibited greater political activity and had higher scores on the Eysenck extroversion scale. Although some of the individual results - particularly from the Eysenck test (where there are reliability problems) - did not, in themselves, provide firm evidence in support of the general hypothesis, the consistency of the results is significant. In particular, those planners most active in community affairs - the high profile political gladiators and the members of the community-orientated social welfare organisations - tended to be most sympathetic to public participation. Such activity indicates an ability to engage in the social interaction necessary to successfully implement a participation programme. It also shows, of course, a set of personal values which favour such community activity, and the close association with the attitude scores simply indicates consistency in the planners' responses. More specifically, those experienced in such community activities would, through being participants themselves, be better able to appreciate the difficulties and frustrations of others, and thus be more likely to try and improve the planning participation system.

7.4 Technical expertise

The third set of factors which may help determine a planner's personal definition of his or her participatory role relates to the skills and knowledge acquired largely through job-related experience and professional training. This is referred to as an individual's technical expertise. A discussion of the relevant literature is to be found in Section 5.4.2.

7.4.1 Measures of technical expertise

The first measure of technical expertise concerns the level of public participation experience which local government planners had gained during their professional careers. Although extremely difficult to quantify, overall such experience appeared to be generally rather limited. Three categories of experience were defined.

In the first category, over two-fifths of the sample reported participatory activities which were confined to advising individuals over the counter in the department, giving an occasional talk to a school group, or publicising by letter or advertisement a specific development application.

In the second category nearly one-third of the respondents noted only sporadic contact with the public, much of it as a result of initiatives from community groups. For example, one Northern Region planner reported that, in addition to the statutory exhibition of a new planning scheme, a public meeting was also called as 'a direct P.R. exercise'. In addition, the extension of the city's boundaries led the planner to recommend the preparation of development control plans for the newly incorporated areas. The plans were exhibited and taken out to the relevant progress associations for discussion. A similar type of limited participation was reported by an inner city planner in connection with a proposal to establish a depot for the breaking up of full shipping containers. Initially, the application simply was advertised, but following a campaign by a local newspaper, there developed a general demand for a public meeting. Eventually, three meetings were organised by the planner.

In the third category were those respondents with the most extensive experience of public participation. Only one-quarter of the respondents had had a major input into an extensive participation programme, or had maintained regular contact with local groups at a more low-key level. For example, the head of one small country department in the Western Region reported on the development of what he called 'a strategy-local planning system'. It included the drawing

up of two broad strategy plans. They incorporated the results of a questionnaire on residents' views on new development, the data collection being carried out by high school students. The alternatives were then discussed with local groups before the preferred plan was placed on informal exhibition for three months. After being adopted by the Council, the strategy plan was then used as the basis for neighbourhood development plans which were also exhibited and discussed with local groups. At the time of the interview, the planner was in the process of establishing an advisory group of about 18 people who were selected to represent the types of people likely to live in the new residential areas. A rather different type of contact was reported by a planner in the Hunter Region where there were a large number of 'mixed' advisory committees (comprising councillors, local authority staff and interested members of the public). Each committee had been set up following a public meeting held to see whether there was sufficient public interest to warrant such a move. In addition, the planner was closely involved with the high schools in the area, for example, speaking several times to students enrolled in a course on local economic development, inviting school students each year to the department under a work experience programme, and engaging a school group to undertake a land use survey.

Closely related to both political activity (Section 7.3.1) and job-related participation experience is the issue of professional advocacy work. Fifty-three planners (33.5%) reported that they had had experience of advocacy. It was possible to differentiate between those who regarded their advocacy work as part of a larger political framework - the 20 community activists mentioned above - and those for whom the work was entirely a technical exercise. Included in this latter group were those planners who made little distinction between their public and private professional roles. All examples of advocacy given by this non-political group related to specific technical details such as drawing up plans for a bowling green or organising the installation of playground equipment into a park. Forty-two per cent of the respondents in this group were engineer-planners or health and building inspector-planners. This is more than twice the percentage of such office holders in the sample as a whole, highlighting the

technical nature of much of the advocacy work performed by this group.

Another measure of professional technical expertise relates to the planner's level of knowledge of the client community. Two surrogate measures of this level of knowledge were used. The first concerns the length of time for which each planner had worked for his or her current employer. The second measure is concerned with whether the respondent lived within the employer's administrative area. As pointed out above, an area's character may change significantly during the evenings and at weekends, and a planner who commutes into the area will see it mainly during office hours.

Table 7.14A provides details of the length of time the survey planners had worked for their current employer. The mean duration was nearly 7 years. Table 7.14B compares local planners' job tenure data with those from a national survey. The data is limited to men aged between 25 and 54 as, in the sample, only 3 respondents were women and all but 10 of the male planners were in the above age group. The comparison is complicated by the small differences still existing in the age distributions of the two samples and, more importantly, by a lack of national data about the duration of specific positions. Overall, however, Table 7.14B gives some slight indication that local government planners may change jobs less frequently than the national average.

Table 7.14 Local planners: duration of work with current employer

A. Using all respondents

Job duration Years	Planners N	Planners %
<1	20	12.7
1	13	8.2
2	15	9.5
3	11	7.0
4	11	7.0
5-9	50	31.6
10+	38	24.1

Table 7.14 Local planners: duration of work with current employer
(continued)

B. Using only males aged between 25 and 54 (for comparison with national figures)

Job duration Years	Local planners %	National survey %
<1	11.0	16.8
1	6.9	8.8
2	9.7	8.8
3	7.6	7.4
4	7.6	5.9
5-9	33.1	21.6
10+	24.1	30.7

Kolmogorov-Smirnov D = 0.077
N = 145
p = NS

Sources: Australia 1976a, 5 (national survey data) and author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Table 7.15 shows that over half (56.3%) of the planners in the survey lived inside the area for which they had planning responsibilities. As might be expected, bearing in mind the large area of some non-metropolitan authorities and the often limited choice of residential areas, the practice of living inside the employer's municipal boundaries was most evident in non-metropolitan areas. There was also a significant difference in results when the metropolitan area was dichotomised into fringe and central areas, planners in the larger metropolitan fringe local authorities tending much more to live inside their council's municipal boundaries than their colleagues who worked for the smaller local authorities nearer the centre of the Sydney conurbation.

Table 7.15 Local planners: residence location

	Working for metropolitan authority			Working for non-metropolitan authority	Total (N=158)
	Fringe %	Centre %	Total %		
Living inside employer's administrative area	13.3*	3.2*	16.5+	39.9+	56.3
Living outside employer's administrative area	13.3*	25.9*	39.2+	4.4+	43.7
Total	26.6	29.1	55.7	44.3	100.0

* Using raw scores: chi square=16.15, df=1, p < 0.001

+ Using raw scores: chi square=57.92, df=1, p < 0.001

Metropolitan fringe authorities are those classified by Harris (1975,97-101) as 'M4' and 'M5b', and metropolitan centre authorities are those classified as 'M2'.

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

When asked about their reasons for their choice of residential location, only 11 per cent of respondents mentioned that it was important to be part of the client community. Thus, one planner in a municipality in the Northern Region commented:

I made a deliberate choice to be part of the community by living in the area. I'm then able to experience the conditions and environment that we are supposed to be managing - I can understand them as a resident.

Indeed, several country planners made the point that this community commitment was the expected role for local government officials. Thus, one Northern Region planner observed that:

In a country town it's total involvement 24 hours a day. It's part of the penalty of working in local government. In Sydney it's an eight hours a day job. Here, my wife is known as 'the Town Planner's wife' rather than Mrs.---

On the other hand, 6 per cent of respondents, all but one of them

either a chief planner or deputy, confided that they lived outside the area to get away from continual queries from councillors and the public. For example, one planner from the western suburbs of Sydney commented:

I now live outside ---- to have a change of environment between home and work. This helps to avoid 'marking' every time I go to the local shops or drive around with the children. It also means that I escaped from continuous contact after work hours by the public and aldermen who thought nothing of calling me back to the office at 7 or 8 p.m. for a half hour's consultation.

The only other reason cited by planners to explain their residential location which related directly to their relationship with the public concerned the need, expressed by 4 per cent of respondents, not to place themselves in the situation where their judgements might be considered to be influenced by the fact that they had a personal interest in the development of a particular area. Thus, one inner Sydney engineer-planner commented:

I've always made sure that I didn't live in my employer's area. I need to have a completely unbiased approach and I feel that the fact that I don't live here gives credence to my stated objectivity.

Generally, however, it was personal rather than professional issues which were the major influences on residential location. Thus, travelling time to work and school, proximity to friends and relatives, a pleasant environment, and housing costs were the reasons usually cited.

A major potential influence on an individual's level of technical expertise relates to how much formal instruction the person has received during the training course. Planners' comments about the degree to which public participation was covered in their planning courses indicated that the tertiary educated respondents, and particularly those who had graduated recently, had had the most extensive instruction in public participation. Thus, both the University of Sydney and the University of New South Wales - the only tertiary institutions with significant numbers of graduates in N.S.W. local planning at the time of the survey (Figure 7.1) - during the

early 1970s introduced participation skills such as the preparation of audio-visual materials, public speaking and writing reports for the non-professional reader. Other skills, such as interviewing and draughtsmanship, were taught in the Sydney Diploma course during the 1950s. In contrast, the Ordinance 4-trained planners reported virtually no academic background in public participation. This is confirmed by the Ordinance 4 Certificate syllabus which did not directly refer to public participation, or even mention the idea of planning being a political as well as a technical activity. The only allusion to these ideas was in one-third of one of the eight units, entitled 'Social Science', which dealt with

the philosophy of town planning as a social activity. Candidates will be tested on their knowledge of social trends in the light of economic, demographic, cultural and political changes. (N.S.W. 1976c,8)

In order to provide a simple measure of the extent of a respondent's study of public participation, planners were asked whether they were familiar with the names of Skeffington, Davidoff and Arnstein, probably the most well-known authors associated with the democratic elitist, pluralist and participationist traditions. As shown on Table 7.16A, over three-fifths (62.0%) did not recognise any of the writers, whilst only three planners were familiar with them all. The most well-known name was Skeffington's (Table 7.16B), which was recognised by almost one-third (30.4%) of respondents. Several planners had copies of the report People and Planning. However, the more radical authors, Arnstein and Davidoff, were not as widely recognised, less than 1 in 7 N.S.W. planners being familiar with their names.

Overall, the results bear out the comments made above regarding age and qualifications. Thus, there was a significant difference in the scores of the younger planners compared with the older respondents (Table 7.16C), the latter group generally having completed their formal education before much of the participation literature was written. However, as Table 7.16D shows, there was little difference between the various age groups in terms of their knowledge of the Skeffington Report. Table 7.16E shows that those planners with

tertiary planning or planning-related qualifications had a significantly greater knowledge of the three authors compared to their Ordinance 4-trained colleagues. Table 7.16F breaks down the public participation knowledge scores by both age and qualifications. The overall chi square value was comprised mainly of the two individual values representing the 30s age group, a finding confirmed by Table 7.16G. It is evident that there is no significant statistical difference between the scores of those planners in their twenties holding tertiary planning qualifications and those planners in the same category holding an Ordinance 4 Certificate. However, 9 of the 10 planners in the latter group were also studying for a tertiary planning qualification. When the planners aged 40 or more were dichotomised into tertiary planning educated and Ordinance 4 planning educated, again there was no significant statistical difference in the knowledge scores (though, as with the twenties age group, the more educated respondents had a greater total score than expected, and the less educated had a lesser total score than expected). Most planners in the oldest age group, no matter what their qualification, were educated when little attention was given to public participation. The major difference in knowledge scores was shown by planners in their thirties. Only 10 of the 34 respondents with only an Ordinance 4 planning certificate were studying for a tertiary planning qualification, and most of the remainder of the group were already in charge of a local government department, 12 being engineers or health and building inspectors with little incentive for further planning study.

Table 7.16 Local planners: knowledgeability of selected participation literature

A. Knowledgeability scores

	Score							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	
N	97	19	21	9	8	1	3	158
%	61.4	12.0	13.3	5.7	5.1	0.6	1.9	100

B. Knowledgeability of selected authors

	Skeffington		Arnstein		Davidoff	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Only recognised name	17	10.8	7	4.4	12	7.6
Also outlined context	31	19.6	15	9.5	6	3.8
TOTAL	48	30.4	22	13.9	18	11.4

C. Knowledgeability scores by age group

Age group	Planners N	Score	Chi square	df	p
20s	38	40	8.38*	2	<0.02
30s	68	70			
40s+	52	30			
	158	140			

Table 7.16 Local planners: knowledgeability of selected participation literature (continued)

D. Knowledgeability of selected authors by age group

Author	Age group	Observed score	Chi square	df	p
Skeffington	20s	20	1.11*	2	NS
	30s	38			
	40s+	22			
Arnstein	20s	14	6.34*	2	<0.05
	30s	15			
	40s+	6			
Davidoff	20s	6	8.33*	2	<0.02
	30s	17			
	40s+	2			

E. Knowledgeability scores by planning qualification

Planning qualification	Planners N	Observed score	Chi square	df	p
Tertiary	83	107	32.07*	1	<0.001
Ordinance 4	75	33			

F. Knowledgeability scores by age groups and planning qualifications: overall test

Age group	Knowledgeability scores		Chi square	df	p
	Tertiary	Non-tertiary			
20s	32	8	48.95*	5	<0.001
30s	59	11			
40s+	16	14			

Table 7.16: Local planners: knowledgeability of selected participation literature (continued)

G. Knowledgeability scores by age group and planning qualification: group tests

Age group	Knowledgeability score		Chi square	df	p
	Tertiary	Non-tertiary			
20s	32	8	0.83*	1	NS
30s	59	11	32.91*	1	<0.001
40s+	16	14	2.08*	1	NS

* Expected values used in the chi square tests were calculated on the assumption that each group's proportion of the total knowledge scores should be the same as each group's proportion of the total number of relevant planners. The following table was used to calculate these proportions.

Age group	N of planners holding		Total
	Tertiary qualifications	Non-tertiary qualifications	
20s	28	10	38
30s	34	34	68
40s+	21	31	52
Total	83	75	158

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Two general open-ended questions were asked in order to help determine how highly planners rated their own expertise in relation to public participation. Planners were first asked for their initial reaction on being informed by their employer that they had to organise a public participation programme about a current local development issue. In general, the responses indicated a personal confidence to carry out such an exercise. One-third (32.9%) of respondents saw no problems, either personal or organisational, in such an exercise. Thus, one planner commented that 'we have got it down to a fine art', and that 'there are no problems now that we have got the expertise and experience in the office'. On the other hand, only 13.3 per cent of planners directly admitted that such an exercise would lead to feelings of 'horror', 'fright', 'trepidation', 'shock', 'panic', or 'confusion'. For example, one recently qualified planning graduate who

had been employed for only a few months commented:

I'd feel confused - and probably not know what to do. I suppose I'd contact other councils to find out what they had been doing. It would be quite a responsibility and I'm not sure whether I'd be up to it at the moment. I'd certainly have to do some quick research!

More specific problems, such as the skills needed to draw up a meaningful questionnaire, or speak at a public meeting were raised by only a handful of planners. More frequently, planners indicated that they disliked the idea of conducting a public participation programme not because of any lack of expertise on their part, but because of the more general perceived disadvantages of participation discussed in Chapter 6. These included the apathy of the public, the delays in dealing with development applications, and the vulnerable position in which the planner was likely to be placed during such a programme. Others disliked the idea because they saw it as an unwelcome intrusion into their personal lives, as they would have to commit themselves to large amounts of work out of office hours. An extension of this problem, raised by one-third of respondents, concerned the drain that such an exercise was likely to place on staff time and other resources. For example, one Illawarra Region planner remarked:

I'd let Council know that I'd be only too happy to do the work, but I would make it very plain that it was going to be expensive, not only in cash terms but also in the pile up of work that would inevitably result once my usual duties were dropped. I would impress on them that really some additional staff would need to be taken on on a temporary basis.

The second question relating to perceived personal competence to conduct participation programmes concerned planners' reactions to the suggestion that the State planning authority, the Planning and Environment Commission, might in the future provide assistance to local government planners with public participation programmes. In reply, 30 per cent completely rejected the idea, 41 per cent considered that the Commission could usefully play a role by supplying material resources, whilst the remainder were more enthusiastic, advocating the use of P.E.C. personnel during participation programmes.

Of the 46 planners who were completely against P.E.C. involvement, only 11 argued that such action was unnecessary because of the expertise already existing in local government departments. For example, one planner from the Northern Region commented:

It is the local planner who understands the local situation. He is the one with the expertise to involve the public in local planning issues. We're the only ones who have had any experience with the public. The P.E.C. are in an ivory tower. We could show them a thing or two!

Instead, the majority of the responses were couched in terms of the relative inadequacies of the Commission, claiming that it was already responsible for inordinate bureaucratic inefficiencies and delays. Slightly less trenchant criticism came from those who felt that there was not enough expertise available at the Commission to enable it to assist local government planners with public participation. For example, one engineer-planner from Sydney's western suburbs observed that:

They're too academic and remote. They seem to be divorced from practical problems, which is not surprising as they haven't had to fight with developers, aldermen and community groups like local planners. So, although the assistance of the P.E.C. would be desirable, I doubt that there would be any benefits coming from the Commission's participation.

Forty-one per cent of respondents envisaged a technical role for the P.E.C. They regarded the Commission's role primarily to be one of research rather than application. For example, one assistant planner from Sydney's western suburbs remarked:

We're every bit as capable as the P.E.C., probably more so. Certainly, we're more in tune with the local situation. I think that bringing in the P.E.C. would simply bog us down in further complications. However, they could be useful if you wanted the conclusions of their research findings on participation - which should, of course, include the experiences of local government departments in N.S.W. which the P.E.C. should be busy collating. For example, the first time we mounted an exhibition here we put it in the Town Hall, with the result that nobody came to see it. Therefore, the next time we used a caravan and took the exhibition out to the public. It was expertise that we had to learn the hard way. The P.E.C. could act as an information service providing that hard-earned experience to others who are just setting

out. But it certainly shouldn't become directly involved!

This idea was expressed most forcibly by one Illawarra Region planner who had had considerable experience of participation:

Many planners are scared stiff of public participation. They don't know how to handle it. What they need is a simple set of instructions - a nuts and bolts manual with step by step directions. It's the P.E.C.'s job to see to it that such a manual is made available.

Some planners saw the idea of technical bulletins being associated with a check list of minimum requirements. It was argued that such a list was needed because otherwise many councillors would, as far as possible, attempt to side-step the participation recommendations. In addition, several respondents considered that the P.E.C. could play a valuable role by making available for loan the often expensive but infrequently used audio-visual equipment, by producing more general public relations films, slides and literature on planning, and by helping out financially with, for example, the hiring of a hall or the provision of public transport for participants.

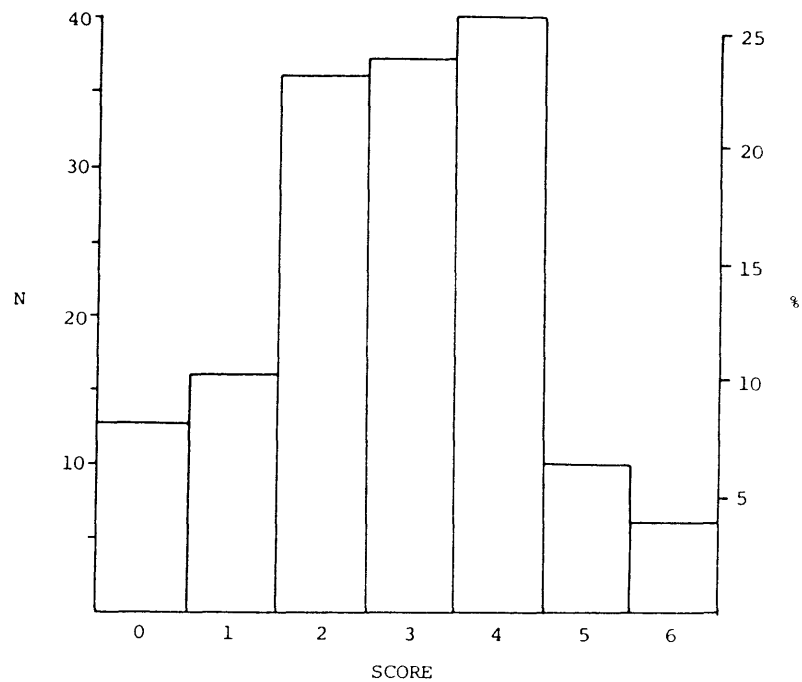
The 29 per cent of respondents who advocated the participation of P.E.C. personnel can be divided into two halves: those who envisaged Commission staff being directly involved in the organisation of participation programmes; and those who saw Commission staff being confined to a consultancy role, advising the local professional on specific details. Overall, the P.E.C. was seen as having the potential to supply a range of specialists who would have the skills necessary to mount a successful participation programme. So, for example, some planners envisaged mobile specialist teams who would be available to local government departments to advise on participation programmes, possibly organising and running them. The need for staff with the skills to produce audio-visual material was most often stressed. Also mentioned was P.E.C. involvement in the construction and analysis of questionnaires, and the drawing up of advertisements and other printed material in an appropriate journalistic style. The attendance of P.E.C. staff at public meetings was considered particularly important when regional issues provided a framework for local policies.

This educational role was also stressed by those planners who saw

the P.E.C. more as consultants than participants. Some respondents wanted to see the P.E.C. mount seminars for local government planners on the skills of public participation, but most envisaged a less formal, more individual approach. The Commission's educational role was also extended to include councillors, several planners making the point that 'councils tend to take much more notice of outside experts, such as the P.E.C., than they do of their local staff'.

In addition to considering separately each of the measures of technical expertise, a composite technical expertise index was devised. It comprised the following items. First, two measures of each respondent's practical knowledge of public participation: job-related experience and private advocacy work. Secondly, two measures of theoretical knowledge of public participation: knowledge of selected participation literature, and tertiary level study of participation issues. Thirdly, two measures of a respondent's familiarity with the client community: how long the planner had worked for his or her current employer, and the location of the planner's residence. Each of the six measures were dichotomised as follows: having some/negligible job related participation experience; having some/no experience of advocacy work; recognising some/none of the participation literature; having done some/no study of participation issues at tertiary level; being on the staff of the current employer for more/less than the sample median number of years; and living inside/outside the employer's administrative area. Thus, there was a maximum score of 6 and a minimum score of 0 on the technical expertise scale. The distribution of the resulting scores is shown in Figure 7.8.

**Figure 7.8 Local planners: technical expertise index scores
(N=158)**



Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

7.4.2 Technical expertise and public participation

The following section outlines the results of the statistical analysis of the association between the measures of technical expertise outlined above, and local planners' attitudes towards public participation as measured by their responses to the Thurstone scale and to the open-ended interview questions.

Burke's (1980,275-6) comment regarding the importance of professional experience on role definition was strongly supported by N.S.W. local planners (Table 7.17). For example, 52 per cent of respondents rated their own professional experience of participation as very important, compared to only 20 per cent who similarly rated their own reading and research, 12 per cent for the influence of colleagues, and 7 per cent for the influence of planning course

lecturers. (No other factors were suggested by more than 3 or 4 respondents to be important influencing factors.) Moreover, the primary importance of experience was maintained regardless of the educational background or the duration of the individual's planning career (Table 7.17B-E).

Table 7.17 Local planners: perceived importance of selected influences on participation attitudes

Response group	Planners N	Influencing factors (mean score*)			
		Professional experience	Reading & research	Colleagues	Teachers
A. All respondents	156	1.8	2.6	2.8	3.6
B. Holding tertiary planning qualifications	74	1.9	2.8	3.0	3.5
C. Not holding tertiary planning qualifications	82	1.8	2.6	2.7	3.6
D. Under 30 and holding tertiary planning qualifications	29	2.1	2.9	3.0	3.1
E. Under 30 and not holding tertiary planning qualifications	9	1.6	2.1	3.0	3.7

* 1 = very important, 5 = very unimportant

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Table 7.18 shows the results of comparing planners' attitudes to participation and the extent of their work-related experience of participation. To highlight any underlying differences, the Thurstone scores of only those respondents with the most and those with the least experience of public participation were compared. Both sets of results give some support to the idea that the more experienced

respondents will have the more favourable attitudes. Table 7.18B showing a highly statistically significant result ($p < 0.001$) when comparing the experience levels of the two polarised attitude groups.

Table 7.18 Local planners: attitude towards and experience of public participation

A. Using Thurstone attitude scores

Test group	Planners N	Thurstone mean	t	df	p
With most experience of participation	39	7.58	1.48	107	NS
With least experience of participation	70	7.26			

B. Using oral responses

Test group	Most positive N	Least positive N	Chi square	df	p
With most experience of participation	12	6	20.64	2	<0.001
With some experience of participation	12	3			
With least experience of participation	1	16			

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

A similar pattern of results is evident in Table 7.19 which compares planners' participation attitudes and their private advocacy activities. In both sets of results the planners with experience of advocacy work hold attitudes which are significantly more favourable to public participation than those of their inexperienced colleagues.

Table 7.19 Local planners: public participation attitudes and private advocacy activities

A. Using Thurstone attitude scores

Test group	Planners N	Thurstone mean	t	df	p
Experienced advocacy	53	7.60	2.55	156	< 0.02
Not experienced advocacy	105	7.20			

B. Using oral responses

Test group	Most positive N	Least positive N	Chi square	df	p
Experienced advocacy	14	2	13.24	1	< 0.001
Not experienced advocacy	11	23			

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Statistical analysis of respondents' attitudes to participation and their length of service with their current employer produced no statistically significant results (Table 7.20). Both tests indicated that the more long-serving planners tended to be more in favour of participation, the average term of the 25 most positive planners, for example, being nearly two years more than the average for the other group.

Table 7.20 Local planners: public participation attitude and current job duration

A. Using Thurstone attitude scores

Variable	Variable mean	r_s	n	p
Thurstone attitude scores	7.3	+0.025	158	NS
Years on staff of current employer	6.9			

B. Using oral responses

	Most positive (N=25)	Least positive (N=25)	Wilcoxon T	z	p
Average duration of current job (years)	7.7	5.9	16.49	0.32	NS

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

Statistical analysis of the data relating to participation attitudes and residential location also produced no statistically significant results, there being very little difference between those planners living inside and those living outside their employers' administrative areas (Table 7.21).

Table 7.21 Local planners: public participation attitude and residential location

A. <u>Using Thurstone attitude scores</u>					
	Planners N	Thurstone mean	t	df	p
Living inside employer's administrative area	89	7.31	0.17	156	NS
Living outside employer's administrative area	69	7.32			
B. <u>Using oral responses</u>					
	Most positive N	Least positive N	Chi square	df	p
Living inside employer's admin- istrative area	11	15	1.28	1	NS
Living outside employer's admin- istrative area	14	10			

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

The relationship between planning qualifications and attitudes to participation was discussed earlier (Table 7.4). It was shown that there was no significant statistical difference in the attitudes of those planners with qualifications from tertiary institutions and those holding an Ordinance 4 Certificate. Results from the analysis of respondents' knowledgeability scores and their Thurstone attitude scores (Table 7.22A) also show no clear pattern. Similarly, the two extreme 25-member attitude groups showed no significant difference in knowledge scores (Table 7.22B). However, in the most positive group the high percentage of individuals scoring 3 or more (24% compared to 12.7% in the total sample) resulted in the group's total knowledge score being significantly higher than that of the least positive group (Table 7.22C).

Table 7.22 Local planners: public participation attitude and knowledgeability of selected participation literature

A. Using Thurstone attitude scores

Knowledgeability score	Planners N	%	Thurstone mean
0	98	62.0	7.19
1	19	12.0	7.38
2	21	13.3	7.03
3	8	5.1	7.37
4	8	5.1	7.53
5	1	0.6	8.60
6	3	1.9	8.53

$r_s = 0.0517$
 $n = 158$
 $p = NS$

Table 7.22 Local planners: public participation attitude and knowledgeability of selected participation literature (continued)

B. Using oral responses: comparing individual knowledgeability scores

Knowledgeability score	Attitude group	
	Most positive	Least positive
	N	N
0	15	17
1	1	3
2	3	5
3	2	-
4	1	-
5	1	-
6	2	-
	25	25

Wilcoxon T = 51
z = 0.99
p = NS

C. Using oral responses: comparing total knowledgeability scores

	Most positive	Least positive	Chi square	df	p
Observed total knowledge score	34	13	9.38	1	< 0.01

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

The final measure of technical expertise related to perceived personal competence to handle participation programmes. Statistical analysis indicated that those planners who expressed the greatest degree of confidence about their own personal competence to conduct participation programmes tended to be those least in favour of public involvement (Table 7.23). This is illustrated most strongly in the responses relating to P.E.C. involvement (Table 7.23B and D) where, for example, only 1 of the 25 planners in the most positive attitude group wanted no P.E.C. involvement compared to a total of 12 of the 25 planners in the least positive group.

Table 7.23 Local planners: public participation attitudes and perceived personal participation competence

Using Thurstone attitude scores

	Planners N	Thurstone mean	t	df	p
A. Participation programme would present no problems	52	7.17	0.41	71	NS
Participation programme would present personal problems	21	7.30			
B. Wanted no P.E.C. involvement	46	6.90	2.91	90	< 0.01
Wanted P.E.C. personnel involved	46	7.50			

Using oral responses

	Most positive N	Least positive N	Chi square	df	p
C. Participation programme would present no problems	6	10	1.47*	1	NS
Participation programme would present non-personal problems	14	13			
Participation programme would present personal problems	5	2			
D. Wanted no P.E.C. involvement	1	12	12.97	2	< 0.01
Wanted P.E.C. technical involvement	14	9			
Wanted P.E.C. personnel involvement	10	4			

*'Non-personal problems' and 'personal problems' categories combined to allow meaningful chi square analysis.

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

The association between attitude to public participation and the composite technical expertise index is shown in Table 7.24. Table 7.24A shows the Thurstone mean scores for the 7 categories of the technical expertise index. The respondents with the higher attitude scores also had higher expertise scores, there being a statistically significant positive rank relationship between the two variables. Similarly, Table 7.24B shows that the 25 planners in the most positive attitude group had significantly higher technical expertise scores (mean=3.4) than their 25 colleagues in the least positive attitude group (mean=2.2).

Table 7.24 Local planners: public participation attitude and technical expertise scores

A. Using Thurstone attitude scores

	Technical expertise scores						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Planners (N)	13	16	36	37	40	10	6
Attitude (mean)	7.05	6.90	7.33	7.34	7.35	7.78	8.05

$$r_s = +0.1972$$

$$n = 158$$

$$p < 0.02$$

B. Using oral responses

Attitude group	Technical expertise scores						
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Most positive (N)	2	2	3	5	7	3	3
Least positive (N)	2	7	6	5	5	0	0

$$\text{Wilcoxon } T = 131.5$$

$$z = 2.55$$

$$p = 0.02$$

Source: author's 1978-79 N.S.W. survey

The technical expertise section is based on the idea that skills and knowledge are acquired through job-related experiences and professional training. These result in each planner possessing a particular degree of technical expertise. As outlined in Section 5.4.2, the general premise is that, other factors being equal, those with the greatest level of relevant technical expertise will also be

the most sympathetic to public participation.

The relationship between public participation experience and attitude is based on the idea that an individual who feels a particular task is in some way rewarding will be more inclined to repeat the same task at a later date. This will apply most obviously to an activity that is completely voluntary in nature. This basic contention was supported by the interview data: the more experienced respondents tended to be more sympathetic to public participation. This applied especially to those with the most extensive advocacy experience, this being almost entirely dependent on the individual planner's voluntary commitment, whilst job-related participation is more susceptible to organisational and role-set pressures. Nevertheless, the opponents of the fixed role model were also supported by the survey results which showed, for example, that the 25 planners expressing the most favourable attitudes to participation also had considerably more experience of participation than their counterparts in the group least favourable to public participation.

It remains unclear whether experience of public participation is, overall, a positive learning process. The results indicate that those who found it rewarding tended to continue their participation activities, their experiences reinforcing their positive attitude towards such programmes. Conversely, for some planners the initial experience may not have been regarded as successful and was thus not repeated. However, there is an indication that involvement in participation is generally a positive learning experience. Thus, one-third of respondents reported having advocacy experience, yet only one planner indicated that the experience had convinced him never again to become involved in such work.

A more general hypothesis is based on the idea that, if public participation is regarded primarily as a data collection exercise, those planners who feel that they already have an intimate knowledge of the client community will be more likely to consider public participation to be unnecessary. It would simply provide another avenue to collect data which was already available. Two surrogates were used to measure each planner's knowledge of the client community: the length of time the respondent had worked for his or her current employer; and whether the planner lived inside or outside the employer's administrative area.

Overall, a comparison of each planner's public participation attitude and these measures of knowledgeability of the client community produced inconclusive results. None were statistically significant and there was no consistency in the overall direction of the results. Thus, there was some indication that the long-serving planners were more sympathetic to public participation, whilst planners who lived outside their administrative area also tended to be slightly more sympathetic.

It may be that, in addition to the local planner becoming more knowledgeable about the affairs of the client community, there also develops over time a subtle change in the professional's approach, from working for to working with the community as the planner becomes more established as part of the community. This development is, of course, one envisaged by the supporters of participatory democracy who foresee the professional becoming an integral part of the community rather than being seen as an outside expert trying to impose ideas on his or her clients.

There was only slight support for the idea that planners who commute into the area will be more appreciative of the value of public participation. Very few respondents raised the idea that a marked change may occur in the character of their administrative areas after business hours, and it is on this contention that the working hypothesis was based. Moreover, there is also the possibility that some planners who did not wish to be closely associated with the public during office hours also wished to preserve their professional anonymity when away from work.

It was suggested that a major potential influence on an individual's level of technical expertise relates to how much formal instruction the person has received during his or her training course. It is unlikely that any teaching about public participation will generally lead to students having a negative attitude towards the subject: participation is presumably included in the syllabus because it is regarded as a valuable aspect of the students' training; and the instructor is likely to be that member of staff most enthusiastic about participation. Similarly, the majority of articles appearing in the professional literature are generally biased towards participation as a means of achieving a variety of objectives. Thus, it is possible that an acquaintance with such literature will also tend to generate a

positive attitude towards participation, the experience possibly being reinforced by extending the reading to other related works.

These ideas are given only limited support by the survey results. Although all results are in the expected direction, they are usually far from being statistically significant. Thus, as pointed out earlier, the tertiary educated planners, whose courses included at least some instruction in participation, were slightly more in favour of public involvement than their colleagues who held only the Ordinance 4 Town and Country Planning Certificate, the syllabus of which was virtually devoid of reference to participation. Similarly, the testing of planners' awareness of three prominent writers on participation showed a slight positive association between knowledgeability and attitude.

A possible cause of the absence of definite results is the overall lack of knowledge of the respondents about the theoretical background to public participation. Thus, over three-fifths (62%) of respondents could not identify one of the three authors cited (Skeffington, Davidoff and Arnstein). This fraction rose to nearly three-quarters (74%) when those respondents were included who, although they claimed to recognise one name, could give no further details. The younger, more educated planners undoubtedly performed better than their older, less well educated colleagues, but the average score on the participation literature knowledgeability test of those tertiary educated planners in their twenties and thirties was still less than 1.5 (and even lower when considering only those in their twenties). Thus, it appears that even the tertiary planning courses offered during the 1970s did not produce a lasting impact on their graduates.

The final set of results related to planners' perceived personal competence to handle participation programmes. In other words, results were concerned with individuals' subjective assessment of their own expertise rather than, as was the case earlier, with more objective measures of expertise. The general contention was that individuals who considered themselves capable of effectively coping with public participation would also be those most in favour of such involvement. Two measures were used to gauge perceived personal competence: initial reactions on being asked to conduct a participation programme; and views on seeking assistance with participation from the Planning and

Environment Commission.

The results from both pairs of tests were the opposite of what was predicted: those planners who expressed the greatest degree of confidence about their own personal competence to conduct participation programmes tended to be those least in favour of public involvement. Moreover, an analysis of the respondents in each of the groups showed that there was no intervening factor influencing the results - the groups were in other respects simply random samples of the main sample. However, one possible explanation lies with the type of activities each individual envisaged as constituting a participation programme. Basically, those with the least positive attitude appeared to think mainly in terms of relatively simple activities such as newspaper advertisements or the localised distribution of handbills. On the other hand, planners with much more favourable attitudes to participation envisaged much more extensive programmes, including mobile exhibitions, group seminars and so on. For example, one assistant planner from the northern suburbs of Sydney reacted to the question concerning the employer's request to him to mount a participation programme commenting:

No worries! We do it anyhow. We'd have to advertise and ask for comments, then decide whether these comments are a fair reflection of general opinion. The sort of programme depends on the sort of scheme proposed. I'm against a North Sydney model - it was a complete shambles. You can take these things too far!

In contrast, an assistant planner from the Hunter Region envisaged considerable problems because of the number of activities which he saw taking place:

My reaction would be one of how far I can go before I am stopped. Have I got the energy and commitment to complete what amounts to a massive workload by myself? Will I be able to maintain the energy required?

When considered from this perspective, the initially surprising results on Table 7.23B and D also become more understandable. The limited programmes of the most negative groups means that few personal problems will be encountered. Therefore, P.E.C. assistance was not desired - particularly bearing in mind the Commission's reputation among respondents to complicate and prolong local activities. On the

other hand, the most positive planners realised that there more complex participation programmes might well test their personal skills. More importantly, such programmes would benefit considerably from the help which their colleagues at the P.E.C. might be able to provide.

Overall, the predictions regarding the relationship between technical expertise and attitude to public participation were shown to have general validity. Thus, the scores from the composite technical expertise index - which combined measures of each respondent's practical and theoretical knowledge of public participation and familiarity with the client community - showed a marked association with the attitude measures. Generally, it was the experienced, knowledgeable planners who tended to be most in favour of public participation.

7.5 Summary

This chapter presents the remaining results from the interviews with 158 N.S.W. local government planners. It discusses three groups of factors considered to be possibly important influences on the planner in terms of his or her personal definition of a participatory role. The factors are labelled personal values, social expertise and technical expertise.

The influence of professional peers was regarded as being a particularly important determinant of personal values relating to a specialised professional activity. Two general traits of professional groups were measured: the possession of specialised knowledge; and the development of a professional sub-culture. Thus, results were given relating to planners' professional qualifications, current job title and salary, and membership of professional planning organisations.

The relationship between each of these measures of professionalism and planners' attitudes to public participation was then tested. The Thurstone scale scores of all respondents were used. In addition, two polarised groups of 25 planners were identified through their verbal responses to open-ended interview questions. Although results from the analysis often were not statistically significant, overall there was some indication that those respondents

most closely integrated into the planning profession tended to be least in favour of public participation. Thus, respondents with a professional educational background which had been restricted to include only planning were less inclined to favour public participation than their more widely educated colleagues who also had qualifications in a second professional field such as engineering or architecture. Similarly, those planners who had taken up membership of professional planning organisations usually had less positive attitudes to participation than their colleagues who had decided not to become members. However, with regard to departmental status, it was those respondents in the more senior positions who were more inclined to support public involvement.

The second set of measures related to social expertise, or an individual's ability to establish harmonious relations with other members of society. Results were given from the administration of Eysenck's short questionnaire to gauge the introversion-extroversion dimension of personality. A further measure of social expertise related to respondents' formal membership of social organisations. A third measure concerned planners' political activities, using Milbrath and Goel's (1977,21) framework of gladiators, spectators and apathetics.

Statistical analysis of the relationship between the above measures and attitudes to public participation showed that those planners who were most involved in the community through social and political groups were also the planners most in favour of public involvement in local planning.

The third set of measures related to technical expertise, or the skills and knowledge acquired largely through job-related experience and professional training. Results were given for the following: planners' experience of public participation gained as an employee; the degree to which they practised advocacy in a private, unpaid capacity; their knowledge of the client community; their familiarity with the public participation literature; and their perceived personal competence to handle participation programmes.

Statistical analysis of the relationship between the above measures and attitudes to public participation showed that those planners with the most experience of public participation, both at work and in a private advocate capacity, were also those planners most

in favour of public participation in local planning. Other results, although usually in the expected direction, were usually not at a statistically significant level.

Following the discussion of personal factors in role definition in Chapters 6 and 7, Chapter 8 analyses the influence of probably the most significant members of the the local planner's role set, the locally elected aldermen and councillors. It presents the results from responses to a questionnaire mailed to a sample of N.S.W. local government representatives. The chapter outlines councillors' views of public participation and compares them with those of the professional planners. The remainder of the chapter discusses several personal factors which, according to the literature, are likely to be associated with the councillors' attitudes to participation.