Social network and the organization of community responses: a study of public participation in east Middlesbrough

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SOCIAL NETWORK AND THE ORGANIZATION OF COMMUNITY RESPONSES:

A STUDY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN EAST MIDDLESBROUGH

by

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts

March, 1977

ABSTRACT

The main body of this thesis presents the results of a field study of public participation and responses to planning in North Ormesby, a district of East Middlesbrough. An examination of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the locality highlights the essential 'working class' nature of the population. The locality had experienced considerable physical transformation in the five years prior to the study and was still in a period of transition.

There is a large body of literature which focuses on the problem of public participation, particularly in the field of planning. Some of this literature is examined in the first chapter. Much of the work has been based on large scale survey studies which have attempted to establish the degree of 'participation' of the population measured in terms of membership of voluntary associations or other groupings. It is invariably the middle class populations who score highly when participation is measured in this fashion. The literature wouldlead us to expect that there would be poor responses to planning in a locality such as North Ormesby.

However, a very vigorous and organized response emerged from the North Ormesby population. It is argued that previous explanations of high participation which turn to socio-economic status or level of education are inadequate, and an alternative framework is proposed within which variations in responses to planning can be analysed not only between localities but within them. This framework not only gives attention to socio-demographic and structural features of populations but also to interactional processes on a local level. By utilising the concept of social network the writer is able to show how the North Ormesby Residents Association operates as a participating body and mobilizes support from within the community.

CONTENTS

FIGURES

TABLES

PREFACE

This thesis is the outcome of field research which was undertaken while working as a research assistant on the 'Cleveland Project' in the Department of Anthropology, Durham University. The project was directed by Dr. Norman Long. My period of fieldwork began in July 1975 and was completed in March 1976, although I did make several trips back to North Ormesby to learn about developments subsequent to my research. It is almost a year since I finished fieldwork, in which time I have written a working paper with Miss Rosemary Lumb, who also worked on the project, and I have also contributed to the final report for C.E.S.(London) who financed the project.

The fieldwork was carried out in North Ormesby, a district of East Middlesbrough, while the other two research assistants worked in Yarm and Skelton. The main object of the research was to investigate variations in the local patterns of responses to structure planning. It was decided to utilise the concept of social network in order to examine in detail how particular individuals and sets of interacting individuals define and assess the relevance of various strategic and local planning issues. We felt that involvement in certain types of social networks would affect the ways in which they present their views and seek legitimacy and support for them. This kind of approach was experimental and marked a significant departure from previous studies of social responses to planned change. I was, however, allowed a considerable amount of freedom to implement the research in my own fashion.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Centre for Environmental Studies who financed the project and made my research possible. I would also like to thank them for organizing the one day workshop which was well attended and from which I received many useful comments, some of which

have been incorporated into the thesis. I am also grateful to the post graduate students of the department of Anthropology for their discussion in seminars concerning the Cleveland Project. Most of all, however, I owe a special debt to Dr. Norman Long for his encouragement and intellectual stimulation and for the special qualities he showed in guiding the project through difficult times. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of my colleague, Miss Rosemary Lumb.

During my fieldwork in North Ormesby, I was welcomed by many people and was given hospitality in almost every home I visited. I am grateful for their warmth and assistance in making this thesis possible. In particular, I would like to thank the members of the residents association committee. Last, but by no means least, I am indebted to Mrs. Connie Dowson for the excellent job she has made in typing all my work connected with the Cleveland Project and in particular this thesis.

Durham, February 1977. DECLAN LYNCH

INTRODUCTION

British anthropologists have always shown reluctance to turn their skills and methodologies to the study of their own society. Although there are several fine studies of rural communities[1], anthropologists have been particularly unwilling to invade the research area of the sociologist of British urban society. As emphases change in Third World studies from exclusive interest in rural communities to such problems as migration, urbanization and industrialization, it may be that British urban society and culture will become a more attractive field of study. Anthropologists, in general, have also been ineffectual in influencing government policies through the exposition of their findings. There are many and varied views on why this should be so, but there seems to be a rather bad taste left from the abortive efforts to introduce an "applied anthropology" in the 1950's and 1960's. The significance of this thesis is that it presents an anthropological study of an urban district of Britain, and also comments on the implications of the findings for certain aspects of government policy.

One aim of my thesis is to present an alternative framework within which public participation and responses to planning can be adequately analysed. I will attempt to show that an anthropological approach to the problem (a problem which has more often been the concern of the planner, social administrator or sociologist) can contribute substantively to our understanding of individual and group reactions to local government policy.

"Public participation in planning" has become a familiar and well used phrase in the media. Surprisingly, the idea of giving attention to the public's views in formulating planning policies is a relatively new one. Over the last decade or so there has been a prevailing political climate

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1. See for example Littlejohn (1964), Frankenberg (1957) and Rees (1951).

of increasing the say of the "ordinary citizen" in the decision making which affects his life and livelihood. This has been so in the spheres of industry and education as well as planning. During the 1960's there was a growing disillusionment with the structure and operation of local government and particularly with the conduct of town and country planning. Many notable writers called for more public involvement, supporting their argument by pointing to the problems of massive slum-clearance and such misguided ventures as the multi-storey blocks.

Recent town planning legislation, which has attempted to improve the situation, has also been heavily criticised. It has been said that this legislation does little more than aggravate the existing inequalities and that there has been no substantial movement towards a participatory form of democracy. Other writers have pointed to a lack of motivation on the part of a large majority of the population. It is invariably the small vociferous and well organized minorities who monopolize the existing channels for participation. Since 1971, advice on how to conduct public participation exercises has been sent out from the Department of the Environment in the form of circulars. But no real indications have been given as to how participation by a significant number is to be achieved. The onus has been on the county and district planning departments to interpret and implement the new legislation as they see fit. Consequently, discrepancies exist from one authority to another in the way that public participation is sought and the variations in response from the public are often seen as a result of the different methods of consultation adopted from one authority to another.

Other factors which have been used to explain variations in responses to planning include socio-economic groupings, levels of education and types of occupation. The middle classes are said to be more likely to participate in local politics because they, in general, have more responsible jobs and a higher standard of education. Working class

individuals in contrast often lack the skills necessary to compete with the middle classes in the attempt to influence decision making. It is also said that they are only drawn into public involvement when the issues at stake are crucial, while participation for the middle classes is another expression of their predeliction to join voluntary organizations and civic groups.

My central thesis is that social structure, the types of organizational resources and local interactional processes will all have a crucial bearing on the way a locality responds. These factors also go a long way to explaining interlocality variations. I will argue that these variables have often been neglected or overlooked in previous analyses which have attempted to explain variations in terms of local government attitudes or class differences.

I believe that a more satisfactory understanding of responses to planning can be achieved by employing a three dimensional framework which takes account of relevant 'external' factors, relevant 'internal' factors and also examines the nature of interaction between residents on a local level and the governing bodies. By external factors I mean those which stem from outside a locality but affect the way in which a population will respond to planning issues. These include the regional structure, the administrative and political structure and the orientations of national and local government policies. Under the rubric internal factors I identify those factors which emerge from within the local population and which actively shape the type of response and its intensity. These factors include both local social structural and interactional aspects such as the issues at stake, the local institutional and associational structure, patterns of local leadership and the types of social network. The third dimension of my framework involves the identification and examination of groups and individuals who emerge on a local level to interact with

government bodies on behalf of the local population. It is important to examine the ways in which these 'middle men' go about gaining access to government officials and hence attempt to span the discontinuity between a local population and the governing bodies.

The primary concern of the study is with a neighbourhood residents association committee as a political interest group and as a participating body. The committee is an organized group of individuals whose primary role is to make demands on local government officers and councillors on behalf of the population of the locality. Their involvement is primarily in the field of planning, but they also have interests in other fields such as community social activities.

The case study introduces data from North Ormesby, a district of inner Middlesbrough. North Ormesby was chosen as a good illustration of an old, long-established and well defined neighbourhood within the city. The area has been affected by a re-development scheme over the last ten years and there has been extensive slum clearance and some new local authority housing has been built. One of the main local problems is environmental deterioration. The population consists largely of manual workers employed in the traditional heavy industries of Teesside. This provided an opportunity to document the responses to planning in a predominantly working-class neighbourhood experiencing considerable social and physical transformation.

During the public participation exercise for the structure plan in Teesside, a residents association was formed in North Ormesby. During the time the group has been in operation it has developed skills as a participatory body and has broadened its base of support within the community. It has also been able to use this support fruitfully in its efforts to influence planning decisions. Paralleling this growing confidence as a participating body, the group came increasingly into

situations of conflict with the councillors for the area. This conflict usually comes in the form of confrontation at public meetings or in private meetings between the committee and the councillors.

This case study forms the core of the thesis. It will be preceded however, in chapters 1 and 2 by a more general discussion. Chapter 1 reviews some of the more important literature which has focussed on public participation. It also gives some indication of the growth of the concept as part of planning policy. A large part of the chapter is given over to a review of some of the more relevant empirical studies. Chapter 2 presents some comments on and criticisms of the literature and attempts to develop a more comprehensive framework for analysing responses to planning.

Chapter 3 consists of two main parts. The first presents a brief historical and socio-demographic background to the locality and the second part provides data from a random sample survey conducted in the locality. In the following chapter I turn my attention to the formation of the residents association and through the use of network analysis I examine the organization and activities of the group. In chapter 5 my discussion of social networks leads to an examination of the attitudes, opinions and images of the various group members and how they have changed during the time the group has been in operation. I explore in particular their attitudes to public participation and their perceptions of the role the group is playing as a participating body. Having examined the group in detail in chapters 4 and 5, in chapter 6 I explore the roles played by officials and the relationship between the group and councillors, how this has changed over time and why it has done so. I illustrate my assertions by presenting three cases. Finally in chapter 7 I attempt to determine the wider implications of my case study and draw attention to the possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER 1

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter attempts to review some of the more relevant literature which has dealt with the problem of public participation. In the first part of the chapter, I point out the origins of the concept in the field of planning and I then go on to give some indications of the wider debate about public participation and democratic theory. I will also deal briefly with some of the arguments which have been put forward in favour of and against the move towards a participatory society. The rest of the chapter draws attention to some of the criticisms which have been levelled at planners, their ideology and their attempts at implementing public participation policies. The latter section introduces some of the empirical material which exists on this subject both from the United States and Britain.

Over the last ten years or so there has been considerable scrutiny of the structure and operation of local government in Britain. Response from the government came in the form of the Maud Report which led eventually to the reorganization of local government in 1974. Of the services administered by local government, planning was subjected to some of the severest criticism. There was a general disillusionment with the existing system of local government and also with the decision making process which shapes the future social and physical environments. Many voices had been raised demanding that the general public should have a greater say in formulating the policies which impinge upon their lives. "Public participation" in planning therefore became, and continues to be, a central concept in government policy, although the meanings attached to it are often vague and varied, and there has been considerable debate revolving round the merits and shortcomings of such a policy.

The concept of public participation in planning developed out of the work of the Planning and Advisory Group set up by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 1965. This group produced a white paper in 1967 which stated explicitly that one of the major defects of the planning process in Britain was the lack of citizen involvement in formulating policies. A bill was later drafted which was presented to the Commons in 1968. The Town and Country Planning Act of the same year required planning authorities

a) to give "adequate publicity to the report of survey" that must be carried out;

b) to inform anyone who might want to make representations on the subject that they have the opportunity to do so; and

c) to actually provide that opportunity.

(As quoted in Levin and Donnison, 1974, p.89)

As a result, the Skeffington Committee was set up in 1968 with the task of advising the minister on what provisions could be made to secure more public involvement in local government. A report was published by the committee in 1969 and, as Damer and Hague (1971) comment, it "served to stimulate considerable debate about the notion, both within the planning profession and by the public." The report expanded on the three requirements set out in the 1968 Act and gave extended proposals on how public participation could best be achieved. It gave considerable emphasis to improved publicity and to the setting up of community forums and neighbourhood groups. It also suggested the appointment of community development officers "to work with people, to stimulate discussion, to inform people and give people's views to the authority" (Skeffington Report: 'People and Planning', quoted in Levin and Donnison, 1973).

British planning has always had a concern for the social content of plans (see Damer and Hague, 1971.). But this has often taken the form of a paternalistic desire to provide an "optimal physical framework

for the good life" (ibid, p.219). But although this 'social ethic' has existed for some time, it has usually taken a subsidiary role to the more dominant planning ideologies. In the fifties the main emphasis was on transport systems and road building. In the sixties this gave way to an era of quatification and model building. "By 1970", according to Scott, "the limitations of a purely physical approach were being revealed and planning has become more society oriented, more concerned with the quality of life" (Scott, 1972, p.19). This feeling was reflected in the planning journals which gave considerable attention to the emerging concept of public participation. Planners began to give emphasis to local plans and the possibility of public discussion. Thus, in 1970, MacMurray argues

> It is hoped that public argument and discussion over a flexible and non-statutory plan will involve the public and vent objections on route to plan making. There are opportunities here for using plans experimentally, to float ideas for example, or to educate the public in understanding the context of their local environment ... Thus the keynotes are flexibility, informality and consensus planning all of which are complementary to an inductive participation oriented planning approach.
>
> (MacMurray, 1970, pp.24;25)

The new two tier system of local government which came into effect in 1974 consists in most areas of County and District Councils, with the addition of Parish Councils in some localities. Planning takes place within both tiers: the County is responsible for producing a Structure Plan, which gives the broad outline of land-use patterns and resource-allocation, and the Districts produce local plans which cover the detailed effects of the overall strategy in each area. The Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act of 1972 requires that Structure Plans be submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment with details on how they have been publicised and the public consulted. The Secretary of State must consider all objections put forward and then select certain matters to be examined in public by a panel of experts and selected participants. He may then approve the plan or require alterations, after which local plans

must fit in with the overall strategy adopted. Local planning is now theoretically achieved through a combination of representative and participatory methods, with elected councillors and the general public each having an ascribed role in the official procedure.

The origins of the move towards public participation: the arguments for and against

I have already given some indication of the origins, during the late 1960's, of the concept of public participation in the field of planning. This, however, needs to be set within the context of the more general trend in certain western countries towards participatory forms of democracy rather than the more familiar and established representative democracy. The participation of non-experts is becoming a significant part of decision making in many fields, such as industry and education, as well as government. During the 1950's voluntary organizations and other associations became increasingly more aware of the potential power they had for influencing government decisions,and their demands for a say in formulating policy paralleled a concern for civil rights.

Pateman (1970) makes more explicit a feeling that had been prevalent for some time - that there had been a continuous misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the basic doctrines of some of the 'classical theorists' of democracy. A democratic idealism had been afoot which advocated a closer look at what writers such as Rousseau, Mill and Cole, had actually said in relation to the participation of the public in decision making. Thus, many of the arguments in support of increased public participation were in fact derived from a reappraisal of the classical theorists.

Pateman (1970, p.22) has called Rousseau the "theorist par excellence of participation" because of the emphasis he gave in The Social Contract to the participation of each individual citizen in government. Rousseau saw it as important that individuals should assemble as politically equal and independent, while at the same time advocating co-operation and the

interdependence of individuals. Behind this apparent contradiction was the notion that independence could only be preserved by co-operating in the decisions which affected the whole polity. Rousseau saw participation as being educative, in that it would engender and foster awareness of the need to consider other people's views in formulating policy. In summary Pateman suggests that "Rousseau's ideal system is designed to develop responsible individual society and political action through the effects of the participatory process" (ibid, p.25).

John Stuart Mill gave further emphasis to the educational aspect of public participation in decision making, claiming that activity within popular participatory institutions assisted the development of the politically conscious individual. Participation in decision making on a local level would be most important in this respect in that socially responsible individuals would be the result. G.D.H. Cole set the theories of Rousseau and Mill in the context of modern industrial society. Cole turned his attention not only to politics but to other spheres of social life which could be democratized and for him it was the work place that would be central to the development of a truly democratic society. Cole also gave emphasis to the way the individual can learn about democracy through participating at a local level in associations. He wrote that "over the vast mechanisms of modern politics the individual has no control, not because the state is too big, but because he is given no chance of learning the rudiments of self-government within a smaller unit" (Cole, 1919, p.157).

As the debate about public participation was re-kindled in the 1960's it became apparent that many of the arguments being used in support of the concept were derived from the writings of earlier theorists. Such arguments, for the most part, arise out of the general quest in certain western countries to improve the existing democracies. The educative

nature of public participation in planning was given prime importance in the Skeffington Report. Levin and Donnison commented in the following way: "They [authors of the Skeffington Report] see participation as a pilgrim's progress, leading from ignorance and apathy to understanding, consensus and constructive action" (Levin & Donnison, 1973, p.91). Following from this, individual talents and a community oriented personality will be developed. It is implied that the present passive majority of the population could make a valid contribution to decision making.

In addition to its educative nature, public participation would also be instrumental in instilling a greater sense of political efficacy into a population which, on the whole, has a low confidence in its ability to influence decisions. There were other assumptions made in the Skeffington Report which resulted in its proposals being well supported by the planning profession. Planning in Britain had been plagued by delays and bottlenecks in the process, particularly in the stage of appeals. It was generally felt that increased participation would automatically mean less delays. As Damer and Hague argue "Participation was an administrative necessity if the whole British planning system was not to disintegrate" (Damer and Hague, 1971, p.221). It was also suggested that greater involvement of the public would lead to a wider acceptance of the decisions taken and would therefore facilitate their implementation.

The move towards participation was also given support by planners because it was seen as an opportunity to improve their public image. It was regarded as a good exercise in public relations which would enable the barriers between planners and people to be overcome resulting in less antagonism. The planners would be seen to have greater concern for the effects of their policies after having listened to the views of the people affected. In summary participation was seen as a means of improving the efficiency of the planning process and of stimulating a sense of involvement and hence a greater commitment to the policies.

The trend towards participation in planning has not gone unopposed.

Certain writers have denied that it would have beneficial effects in a democratic structure. In particular, so called "libertarians" would argue that political freedom includes the right to choose between action and inaction. Many people may prefer to delegate powers of decision making to elected representatives rather than becoming involved themselves. Many may also regard political involvement as of secondary importance in relation to other more important social duties such as work and family affairs, and it may also compete for time and interest with recreational activities. Furthermore, the direct costs in time and effort may not bring sufficient rewards. It has also been argued that the introduction of participation procedures brings with it a certain compulsion to use the channels. Individuals who would otherwise be content to allow elected representatives to make decisions may be unwillingly drawn into participating to make sure their interests are defended. Thus, increasing participation holds the danger of "politicising" the whole of social life. It is in this vein that Parry argues: "There would cease to be any means to discriminate between those areas in which society and government might legitimately intervene and those where such intervention would be illegitimate. The individual would then be willy-nilly a participant and consequently subject to pressure from other participants" (Parry, 1972, p.32).

In opposition to the argument that participation would increase efficiency, some would hold that participation would in fact bring about a decrease in efficiency. The planning process may come to be overloaded with information if there is a massive input from non-specialists. Another common criticism is that participatory procedures would favour the powerful and organized groups with abundant resources. Such groups would have an unfair advantage in the competition to influence decisions.

Criticisms of planning ideology and attempts at implementing public participation policies

> Planning is a method of public decision making which emphasises explicit goal choice and rational goals means determination, so that decisions can be based on the goals people are seeking and on the most effective programmes to achieve them. In theory, city planning should be an application of that method to cities, but in practice, it has been an art plied by a profession dedicated to a set of narrowly architectural goals and to land use and design programmes for realizing them. As a result city planning has not paid much attention to people's goals, effective means, or to the urgent problems of the cities.
>
> (Gans, 1968, preface)

This assertion made by Gans, that the goals of the planner are narrowly defined and have little place for the economic, political and social dimensions, is a theme which has often been pursued in the British literature concerning planning. Writers have often drawn strongly from the experiences of urban renewal in the U.S.A., a subject which has been well covered. Gans' main point is that planning should be "user oriented" in that "the goals which planners work towards must relate to the behaviour patterns and values of the people for whom they are planning, and not just their own values" (ibid, preface). Earlier in the sixties Nisbet, in a discussion of the American situation, had some strong criticisms to make of the "tragedies perpetrated in the name of slum clearance." One of his main arguments was that slum areas had a culture and community atmosphere which was indiscriminately wiped away by the planners grand schemes which often rehoused the people in "architecturally grim", "monolithic" housing areas which rapidly degenerated into slums themselves.

Several British commentators have also referred to the discrepancy between the values of the planner and the variety of attitudes and values of those planned for (see, for example, Dennis, 1970; and Davies, 1972). Some writers, speaking from the standpoint of an academic discipline, have argued for the use of their particular knowledge in the decision making process. Thus Harvey (1973) has suggested that the planner operates

with only "intuitive evaluations" on the economic and social factors obtaining in particular areas. Later in the same work, Harvey argues that the only adequate way to understand the city is to "build upon both the sociological and geographical imaginations", by relating social behaviour to the spatial form of the city. Scott (1972) on the other hand, has asserted that planning is closely tied to politics and he sets out to demonstrate that planning not only operates within constraints imposed by a political system, it is actively shaped by that system. Planning also "reflects the prevailing political philosophy, or set of attitudes, underlying the behaviour of political decision makers" (ibid, p.20). Sociologists too have pressed for a greater sociological awareness in drawing up plans.

Many commentators, therefore, have drawn attention to the rather limited conceptualizations held by planners in the field of economic, political and social matters. Broady (1968, p.62) pointed out that

> British town planning, which began with the idea that it should be democratic, that the people for whom the plan was prepared should be actively associated with its elaboration, has become increasingly bureaucratised.

The implication is that planners are becoming increasingly remote from the general public and their isolation increases the degree to which they retain their rather limited concepts about society. One of the main contradictions inherent in introducing a policy of participation is that planners may regard themselves as qualified to make decisions and public participation, to a certain extent, poses a threat to their professional position.

Following from this, several writers have commented on the contradiction of imposing a policy of participation on a system geared to a representative form of democracy. Professionals are still appointed by the council and councillors are delegated power at the polls to make such decisions. Yet

the structure of local government has not been altered to accommodate the public's new role. The Act only requires that the local authority allows the public to state its case; there is no obligation to alter policy accordingly. Thus the degree to which the public's views are taken account of may vary greatly from authority to authority. The law is still sufficiently vague to allow for wide differences in interpretation. This leads Hague and McCourt (1974, p.153) to claim that,

> ... one of the main reasons for the introduction of participation was the need to overcome a crisis in the administrative system rather than being based on the ideals of a participatory democracy. Thus participation is seen to a large extent as being administratively expedient rather than involving a transfer of power ... At best, then, this form of exercise is geared to improve the technical and administrative efficiency of the system.

The implication is that to planners and councillors, public participation merely offers a good public relations exercise, but where this threatens overall policy or their well worked out schemes, repudiation of the public viewpoint can be justified. As Hauge and McCourt have pointed out, "attempts have been made to stimulate participation while still paradoxically holding firm to elitist principles" (ibid, p.153). The public is merely being allowed to try and influence a well established and traditional method of decision making.

Public participation is a process closely controlled by the planning authority and only available on their terms. This leads Cox (1976) to argue that the rigid formalization of the participation procedure in itself reduces the impact of any organized response from the public. The only alternative is to mount an independent campaign, the funds for which would be beyond many citizens. The planning authority and the council are given considerable scope to interpret the new laws in their own fashion and no precise definitions are given for such terms as "adequate publicity", "opportunity" or "consider". It is the planners themselves who decide what information shall be given, to whom and at what stage in the process.

Some writers have commented on the fact that a public participation policy is likely to lead to an increase in the existing inequalities. Those taking up the offer to participate will be those groups and individuals with a better knowledge of the local government system and with more than average resources. Thus, influence may come to be monopolized by small and powerful groups not necessarily representative of majority opinion. This leads Styles to suggest that an important "area of concern to a planner promoting citizen participation must be that of equality. Given existing situations, the effect of starting a programme of citizen participation must be to increase the existing inequalities among respondents, as the people or groups most likely to gain from the programme are those who are already well organized and articulate" (Styles, 1971, p.166).

There are also a wide range of conceptualisations concerning participation in planning. It has already been noted that some writers would argue that planners merely see it as a good public relations exercise which has helped the administration through a difficult period. Others go even further and argue that from the planners point of view the participation of the general public, in something they know nothing about, merely slows down the planning process and is inhibitive of effective decision making. Thus, participation is an exercise to be hurried through with the utmost speed so that the real objectives can be achieved.

Councillors, for their part, have often been accused of using the public participation exercise as a means of persuading the public that council policies are the correct ones. Several studies have shown that councillors often adopt an attitude that they alone know what is best for the people in their districts. Consequently they welcome participation from groups and individuals who support council policies or from those

groups which can be manipulated to do so, and, on the other hand, they are distrustful of groups displaying inimical points of view. To many councillors, then, participation does not include open debate and issues which arouse conflicting opinions may be seen by them as a threat to their traditional positions as elected representatives.

Even within that mass we call "the public" one can find a wide range of views concerning participation. This is exemplified by the fact that some groups and individuals have been quick to seize the new opportunities whilst others have made little or no attempt to assert their rights. Of those using the participation channels, some have been indifferent, others have been enthusiastic whilst many have been disillusioned and become hostile. There is also the so-called "apathetic majority" who have been reluctant or unwilling to play any part in the planning of their areas. This "apathetic majority" has not been adequately analysed as yet. Some writers have attempted to point out reasons for the existence of large numbers of people who play little or no part in decision making even when opportunities are available and it has been argued that the existing channels of communication are insufficient to reach more than just the enthusiastic minority. Following from the lead of Almond and Verba (1963) others have pointed to the lack of confidence that many people have in their relations with local government. Those who feel "subjectively competent" are more likely to be politically active while those who have feelings of inefficacy will remain inactive. In a country where decisions have never been entrusted to the general public and particularly in poor working class areas where people traditionally have been denied any responsibility in determining their future, individuals have yet to come to terms with this rapid change in policy.

In a recent attack on planning ideology and attempts to introduce participation, Simmie (1974) argues that the sociology of town planners

is essentially structural-functionalist. In other words it is based on an out-dated conception of society as a co-operating and integrated set of groups. Thus in situations of rapid planned change, such as a slum clearance scheme, the planner sees a need to overcome "anomie" by reintegrating individuals into the society particularly via such mechanisms as the neighbourhood unit. Such individuals will then become society-oriented and co-operative. Simmie asserts that the planners have failed to understand situations which are based on conflict and alienation rather than co-operation.

> The distribution of scarce and desirable resources in British society is structured in such a way as to produce varying degrees of conflict between groups in different situations, and not only over their current distribution but also over the dynamic mechanisms maintaining and changing that distribution. The distribution of resources such as property wealth and special skills determines the structure of society which in turn is both reflected in and reinforced by the distribution of status and political power.
>
> (Simmie, 1974, p.85)

Simmie goes on to argue that town planning has done little or nothing to break the poverty cycle and so the policies serve the particular interests of the better off classes and the planners themselves rather than those who really need a voice - the poorer classes.

Hampton (1971) has also made a similar point. His general feeling is that local government officers and officials view situations of conflict with distaste. There would seem to be a general opinion that co-operation is desirable rather than open debate. He comments,

> Participatory institutions cannot be developed unless all sides recognize that conflicts of interests may legitimately arise. Conflict must be understood more frequently as Hegelian dialectic leading to better forms of the truth, rather than a contest which only one side can win.

Many of the points which have been raised in the discussion above have also emerged from the many empirical studies which have examined planning, public participation and responses to planning. In the next two sections I will review some of the more important studies from both the United States and Britain.

The Empirical Evidence

a) The American experience

As Damer and Hague rightly comment (op.cit., p.218) "The evolution of public participation /in Britain/ can be seen as having been influenced, to some extent at least, by the American experience of 'citizen participation'." Fagence (1974, p.6) argues that there has been an almost inevitable transatlantic impartation of U.S. procedures and philosophies.

After the Second World War, American city governments began to focus their attention on the widespread housing problem. Slum dwellings covered large areas of the major cities and since conditions were not being improved by private builders it became standard policy for governments to operate clearance and building programmes of their own, whilst also offering subsidies to private builders to encourage them to provide accommodation for the middle and low income people. This policy, which had begun as a 'bulldozer approach' in the late forties, was later superseded by one which allowed for conservation and rehabilitation.

The politics of urban renewal have received considerable attention in the literature of planning in the United States and it is indeed a complex process involving numerous government and non-government groups and actors. Many of the massive slum clearance projects were attacked by 'liberals' who claimed that the process was dominated at a government level by the affluent middle class and that disabilities and deprivations existed which actively prevented the people affected from participating in the decision making process. The low income groups, often racial minorities, were seen to be less privileged since in the competition for inadequate municipal funds they had little power or influence. Much of the

literature, therefore, focuses on analysing the causes of this deprivation and suggesting ways in which it can be overcome.

Broadly speaking, three main approaches to the problem can be identified. The first has been termed the 'culture of poverty' approach and is based on community development work similar to that carried out in the Third World. Such an approach gives emphasis to 'motivating' the population to solve their social and economic problems for themselves, in order to break out of the self-perpetuating cycle of poverty and deprivation in which they are trapped. A second type of analysis sees the problem as located within the national social structure itself, which is geared to discriminating against minorities. Such arguments reject the idea of low income groups being apathetic and in need of motivation. Rather the problem lies in the way in which these groups are excluded from the decision making process, which is shaped and controlled by the affluent middle class. The solution lies in encouraging political action from the poor themselves in order to impress their views on the government bodies. A third approach advocates the alteration of existing social institutions in the city to meet contemporary problems and to be more responsive to the needs of the under-privileged.

During the 1950's and 1960's several important studies were produced concerning the political aspects of urban renewal and public participation which illustrate these differing approaches. Meyerson and Banfield (1955) examined neighbourhood attitudes and political activity concerning a series of housing projects in Chicago. Dahl in New Haven and Kaplan in Newark, N.J., outlined the kinds of political strategy necessary to gain approval for large-scale renewal projects (Dahl, 1961; Kaplan, 1963).

Few American studies have focussed in detail on local-level opinions and how these are expressed, but there are some exceptions. Gans (1962) has analysed the failure of opposition to an urban renewal scheme in Boston, focussing on the cultural attributes of the local residents. In The Politics of Urban Renewal Rossi and Dentler studied one neighbourhood of Chicago - Hyde Park/Kenwood - an area heavily populated with university professors, business men and professional people. In the wake of extensive renewal the leaders of this group of middle-class professionals formed the 'Hyde Park/ Kenwood Community Conference'. This apparently had two important roles: to stimulate public awareness of the necessity and practicability of change and to influence the most general aims of the planning departments. However, it was unable to change even the more specific details of the plans. Thus Rossi and Dentler conclude that the "maximum role to be played by a citizen participation movement in urban renewal is primarily a passive one" (Rossi and Dentler, 1961, p.287). The organization in question was made up to a large extent of persons who attached a high value to community-wide and neighbourhood-wide goals. Such individuals were termed 'community regarding' or 'public regarding' by Rossi and Dentler, who suggest that

> This ethos, which is most likely to be found amongst citizens who rank high in income, education, or both, is based on an enlarged view of the community and a sense of obligation towards it. People who display it are likely to have a propensity for looking at and making policy for the community as a whole and to have a high sense of personal efficacy, as long time-perspective, a general familiarity with the confidence in city-wide institutions, and a cosmopolitan orientation towards life. In addition they are likely to possess a disproportionate share of organizational skill and resources.
>
> (ibid, p.280)

In contrast, most renewal areas are likely to be populated by low income people, often negro, who have limited time-perspectives and

an unfamiliarity with and lack of confidence in city-wide institutions. They are also likely to be preoccupied with personal and immediate problems and will have a low sense of personal efficacy. These individuals are termed 'private regarding' by Rossi and Dentler. One conclusion they draw from their study is that "... middle class beneficiaries of re-habilitation will be planned with; lower class persons who are disadvantaged by re-habilitation are likely to be planned without" (ibid, p.281).

The primary concern of J. Clarence Davies was to study neighbourhood groups as political interest groups, to analyse how they became involved in particular controversies and the methods they used in attempting to influence government officials. This led him to focus on the concept of 'access', as being "the goal for which all political interest groups strive" (Davies, 1966, p.2). Three case studies are presented, outlining the role which neighbourhood groups have played in urban renewal in New York, and details are given of the formation of neighbourhood attitudes and the role of neighbourhood and non-neighbourhood actors. Davies isolates some of the factors which determine the degree of involvement or success of neighbourhood groups. In particular he believes that it is the cohesiveness of the group which will be important, "for the more closely related the basis of the group to the stakes of the members, the more uniform will be the attitude of the members towards the proposed project and the more cohesive the group will be" (ibid, p.169). He also concludes that open conflict of interests is a desirable addition to the planning process.

The proliferation of neighbourhood civic associations in the cities of the United States has often been seen as having the dual purpose representing local views to the city government and of bringing an end to the political alienation of the deprived classes.

Wilson has expressed his doubts that this will ever be the case. According to him, rather than overcoming alienation, they may merely provide a forum for expressing it. He does assert, however, that public participation has an important part to play in the development of American cities: "Citizen participation in urban renewal ... is not simply (or even most importantly) a way of winning popular consent for controversial programmes. It is part and parcel of a more fundamental re-organization of American local politics. It is another illustration of how deeply embedded in politics the planning process is" (Wilson, 1963.)

The three studies mentioned above provide examples of the three major approaches advocated. Rossi and Dentler see the solution to the problem of the lack of meaningful participation amongst low status groups in terms of 'motivating' them, through breaking down the private-regarding and limited perspectives inherent in their social positions. Such an argument is similar to that which sees participation and a sense of political efficacy as inevitably bound together. Davies, on the other hand, advocates the incorporation of political conflict into the planning process as being a better way of achieving realistic participation. Lower status groups need to be offered more opportunities of presenting their views in a system dominated by "middle class" organized groups.

More recently, Arnstein has put forward strong criticisms of the citizen participation policy in the U.S.A. She has developed a typology of citizen participation which is illustrated in the form of a ladder. Each rung corresponds to the level of the citizens' power in determining the content of the plan or programme. Her typology is as follows:

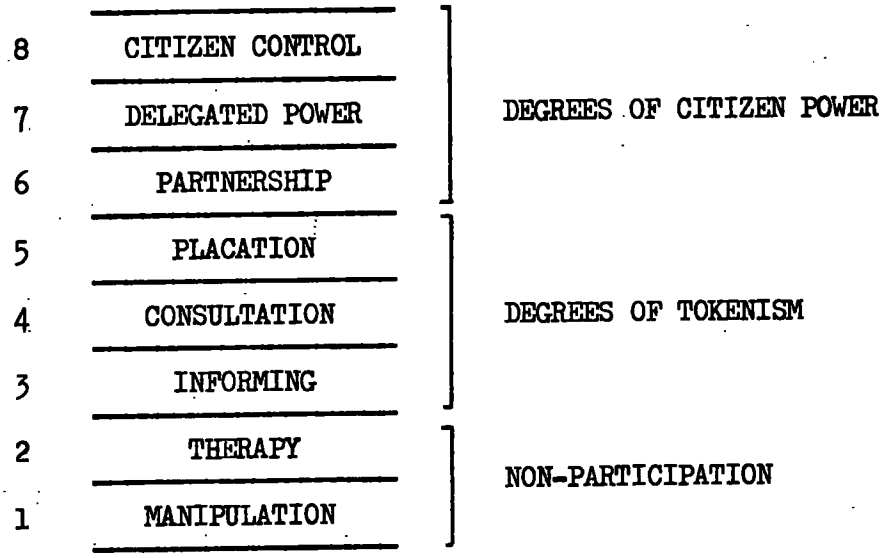

Fig. 1. Arnstein's typology of citizen participation in the U.S.A.

In the U.S.A., participation has usually been of the kind characterized on rungs 3, 4 and 5, while much of what has masqueraded as participation could be included on rungs 1 and 2. She goes on to argue that given the present inequalities in the system "participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the power leaders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of these to benefit. It maintains the status quo" (Arnstein, 1971, p.176).

To the extent that the American experience has had such a great influence on the evolving policy of public participation it would be expected that many similar problems would be encountered in this country. The British experience of public participation in planning is both more recent and less documented by social scientists than its American counterpart. But several studies have emerged which highlight both the similarities and the contrasts to the American experience.

(b) Planning and Public Participation in Britain

A number of publications have emerged in recent years which have been critical of the present public participation procedures in Britain. Broadly speaking there have been two types of empirical study with two different kinds of criticism to make. The first one we can call an "improvement approach" and has mainly been concerned to examine the defects in the present methods of consultation and improve them accordingly. A second type of approach advocates a more radical appraisal of the whole planning system.

Several studies have been undertaken by a team from Sheffield University mainly concerned with observing and evaluating the procedures adopted by several planning authorities. The data are drawn from the experiences of North East Lancashire, Cheshire and Teesside. A series of case studies have been presented with the aim of providing examples and guidelines for planners in other areas who are attempting to implement a policy of participation[1]. One assumption which seems to be made by these writers is that the present structure and mechanisms of the participation procedures are basically adequate. What they seem to be advocating is a more efficient use of the means available. Thus they have focused on ways that publicity can be improved through the use of exhibitions, circulars, pamphlets and the press. They have also given attention to the ways that the structure and layout of public meetings might be refined, to create an atmosphere more conducive to discussion.

Another aspect of their research was their attempt to identify the social characteristics of the participants at public meetings. In the Cheshire case Goldsmith and Saunders found the audience to be

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1. See for example, Stringer and Plumridge (1975), Hampton and Walker (1975 and 1975), Boaden and Collins (1975).

comprised "very much of the middle class, male, older, long term residents and members of voluntary groups ... Over two thirds had some recent experience of meetings of a similar kind, and about one third of them contributed to the discussions at the meetings, fully demonstrating an ability to grasp and comment on the settlement policy proposals." (Goldsmith and Saunders, 1976, p.1). This profile of the typical participator is one which occurs in several of their study areas. The obvious conclusion is, then, that public meetings attract a particular kind of person and the audience as a whole may not be representative of the local population. They therefore warn planners that public meetings should not be regarded as the main means of participation since the views collected from local people may not be representative. They suggest that public meetings should be used primarily for the dissemination of information rather than as a means of gauging community attitudes.

One is left with the impression that this type of approach is only useful for the planners. It gives them an indication of how to improve their methods of consultation. The Sheffield research tells us little, however, about the nature of public responses to planning. Why are middle class people more likely to attend public meetings than working class individuals? How does the nature of community and the neighbourhood affect the response? To a certain extent they recognize this when they write: "perhaps we should have asked people why they did not visit the exhibition as much as we asked people why they visited it and what they thought of it" (ibid, p.10).

Other empirical research has led some writers to point to much more fundamental impediments in the planning process, particularly as far as it relates to the public. Such writers have been far

more critical of the efforts made by officials to secure that public opinion is taken into account. Norman Dennis, for example, presents a detailed study of the housing problem and how the planners attempted to solve this in Sunderland. He emphasises that his criticisms of planners, although old ones, are nevertheless still valid in an era of supposed change. In the first place, planners appear unreceptive to local opinion and little attention is given in their plans to the assumptions, needs and expectations of the people affected. Dennis argues that

> On the one side lies the comparatively homogeneous group which is seeking to alter the physical environment. To a greater or lesser extent they have independently committed themselves to the objectives towards which control is directed. Belief in the value of the objectives (and the suitability of the various means) has been inculcated in the course of professional training. Whatever their original view, furthermore, and no matter how effective, they have been indoctrinated while becoming qualified, their career constrains them to accept the 'weltanschauung', the social philosophy, of their colleagues and of their superior officers ... on the other side there is a variety of individuals and family types. All perceive and respond to the environment according to its relevance for the attainment of the aims they themselves value. The interests of many of them match those implied by the 1965-70 slum-clearance proposals (Sunderland). They perceive the environment as something which, given the alternative, they wish to abandon or substantially modify. Others however judge that in their current and foreseeable circumstances what they have is better than anything they expect would result from municipal intervention.
>
> (Dennis, 1970, p.298)

Here Dennis is pointing to a major problem of planning - that those formulating the plans are often of a very different social group from those affected and that the latter group are not always a homogeneous category. Furthermore, plans tend to ignore the subjective evaluation of the non-physical environment. Dennis shows from his detailed case-study work that there was no uniform type of response from the inhabitants to their slum environment. He demonstrates that for different individuals "the house represents an exceedingly large and complex range of values" (ibid, p.298). Thus, what to the planners may be an identical physical environment, will be interpreted in a variety of ways by the inhabitants.

Although other writers have pointed to the need for planners to treat areas and neighbourhoods in a detailed way as heterogeneous units, few have suggested ways in which this can be accommodated in the work of the planner. Dennis suggests that the planner would need the knowledge of the sociologist to examine the factors which contribute to the variety of local attitudes: length of residence, family ties and distance to work may all be as important to the inhabitants as the quality of housing.

Dennis argues that the interests of local residents played little or no part in determining the pattern of slum clearance in Sunderland during the 1960's. Although the planners conceded that the views of local residents were relevant, little attempt was made to ascertain those views and attitudes. He states that "the decision was reached by using an incorrect and outdated stereotype of the slum family, eager and impatient to be granted improved accommodation" (ibid, p.345). The official view seemed to be that local residents did not really know what was best for them and therefore their views could not be regarded too seriously. Dennis then asks the pertinent question "if public comment is either absent or ignored what can be the criterion for success?" His answer is that success is defined by the planner within the framework of values which he shares with his professional colleagues.

Although many of his respondents had a great attachment to their homes they showed little response or felt ineffective in the face of the momentous changes which were in progress. To understand this so-called 'apathy' or the inability of the local residents to use available channels of influence Dennis draws attention to the life-style of working class people which tends to be more passive in many spheres than that of the middle class. He writes:

> The world presents the working class families with situations to which it must adapt. The middle class family is more likely by comparison to view any situation as something amenable to its control.
>
> (ibid, p.348)

This feeling of inefficacy is most characteristic in areas affected by "planning blight" where the decision to demolish an area in itself results in further rapid physical and social deterioration of the "slum area". Dennis argues that the planners make the unwarrantable assumption that methods such as exhibitions and public meetings are sufficient to break down the barriers between themselves and the general public and when they fail to do so the fault lies with the people not the methods. Although existing channels are not without value, they do in fact serve certain groups of the population extremely well, they need to be supplemented with much more rigorous methods. "At its most indispensible, most simple and least controversial popular participation means, then, public contributions to a particular fund of knowledge: knowledge of the physical and social factors which are relevant to a particular decision. When this is understood then the comparative failure of existing methods designed to encourage participation becomes a matter of discovering more effective methods rather than to excuse the professional's 'contempt for the consumer'" (ibid, p.353).

Jon Gower Davies, in another study of re-development in North-East England, endorses many of the assertions made by Dennis. One of his main points is to argue that "As the best way of doing the job will vary from area to area, and from street to street within each area, the first essential is knowledge of the idiosyncracies and particularities of these areas and sub-areas. Decentralised offices and area teams would appear to be a good idea, with plans emerging from the egalitarian interaction between architect and resident" (Davies, 1972, p.197). Such writers are proposing a fundamentally different approach to public participation, with the emphasis on much smaller units than County or even District planning can take account of. Radical alterations of this nature are bound to encounter difficulties, as has been shown by the few case-studies which do exist.

One of the most detailed of such case-studies is the work done by Davies in Rye Hill, an area of Newcastle being subjected to extensive re-development. This took place before the law required public participation in planning, but at the time, Newcastle had adopted its own policy for introducing participation. His main concern was to examine the problems which arose from the attempts of the city officials to allow the voice of local people to be heard. He shows that the planners and council officials were too ready to adopt a stereotyped picture of Rye Hill as a down-at-heel area with a poor reputation, inhabited largely by people of doubtful character (prostitutes, drunkards, criminals, etc.). Davies suggests that because they held this view, the authorities adopted a paternalistic attitude to the area. They ruled out the idea of any meaningful form of participation taking place there and policy decisions were made without attempting it. It is this kind of approach which leads him to call the officials "evangelistic" - they assumed that any change in the locality could only be an improvement and that they themselves were best qualified to decide what should be done. According to Davies: "Planners are the most highly developed form of the evangelistic bureaucrat" (ibid, p.110). He goes on to describe the way in which certain individuals did attempt to become involved by joining a neighbourhood council and attempting to voice their views through this. But the attitude of the authorities gave the population a low sense of confidence in their own ability to influence decisions. There was a feeling that even though the insistence of citizens may have brought about a change in policy, such changes would only be minor and might involve lengthy negotiations. Furthermore, the structure of meetings served to create a feeling of distrust and disillusionment and this inevitably led to friction in the encounters between officials and the public. Davies concludes that, in the case of Rye Hill, 'real' participation

was never offered to the public because of the evangelism of the planners. The general implication of his case-study is that it is far too easy for a public participation procedure to become an exercise in public persuasion. He states that: "There are the same assumptions about everyone's desire for uniform and expensive housing, and the adoption (in the new plan) of a 'public relations' type of approach, an approach which relies for its validity on a notion of a 'breakdown in communication' - i.e. that people's refusal to consume a particular commodity means that they don't really know how good it is and that if they did they would all be consuming it and enjoying it with great vigour and zest" (ibid, p.218).

Newcastle was also the locale of study for Batley who examined the nature of public participation and the relationship between community and government officials in the Byker and Jesmond areas of the city. These two areas were both undergoing change and were included in the same public participation exercise. However the nature of response from the two local populations to the facilities offered for participating were quite different. Jesmond, a suburb inhabited by professional middle income people, was scheduled for revitalization, while Byker, an area of poor housing was scheduled for phased demolition. Batley, at the beginning of his article, questions whether public participation can in fact work in an area which does not demand a say in planning. He writes:

> There is a danger that these areas could be jostled even further away from resources and considerations as the more vocal areas which have always demanded attention take full advantage of their rights under the new system. The citizen's statutory right to information and consultation means little if he doubts that his involvement can have any impact on planning.
> (Batley, 1972, p.95)

Batley argues that at a structure plan level details of the plan are too skeletal to allow for meaningful citizen participation while at the level of the local action area plans, more tangible to the residents of the neighbourhood affected, open debate is precluded because of the

council's commitment to the structure plan. "Much depends, therefore, on the way in which local authorities use their new powers and on their willingness to evolve an effective means of communication with the public."

Batley goes on to suggest that the difference between the passive response of Byker and the organized and vociferous response of Jesmond can be explained by focussing on certain situational factors. Successful participation is based on the locality's ability to organize its population to make a political response, on the quality of its communication with the authorities and also the overall sense of efficacy in the area to influence decisions.

Jesmond was an area whose population contained many professional people, such as architects and university lectures, who were well equipped to respond to the opportunities available for participating. It was also an area replete with residents associations and other voluntary organizations eager to demand a say in planning the area. Batley states "the sort of vigorous and organised action which was the response of Jesmond residents implies both a belief that the council is open to persuasion and also some knowledge of the processes of local government." (ibid, p.99).

In contrast the response from Byker was almost completely passive. Even though there was a much greater potential threat to their environment, the Byker population did little to avert the threat and displayed a general feeling of inevitability. Batley points out that this was in spite of the fact that the area was characterised by a dense network of kin and neighbourhood ties and also a high percentage of the households had at least one of its members involved in one of the local voluntary organisations. Since the available channels of communication were poorly utilised, the Byker people had little access to relevant information about the redevelopment scheme. As a result the network of relations was an important medium for the dissemination of information. The information however, was often

inaccurate and had a detrimental effect. As for the role of voluntary organisations, Batley argues that the degree to which they operate as means of political communication "depends firstly on the public's expectation of the roles of these organisations and their leaders, and secondly on the view which the leaders of these organisations have themselves of their role" (ibid, p.102). In Byker the majority of the clubs which existed there, in particular the working men's clubs, rejected involvement in community issues claiming that it was beyond the sphere to become involved in politics. Moreover, the local residents themselves did not give any importance to these organisations as potential negotiators for the community as a whole. The most active organisations were those concerned with the church and the Community Association, but these usually took up a guiding role rather than a "reactive role".

The councillors of the area were on the whole poorly known or mistrusted and therefore played a minor role as disseminators of information or as points of contact with the city council. Batley attributes this failure partially to the attitudes of the people but also to a large extent to the attitudes of the councillors themselves who displayed an attitude of "we know best". Furthermore the councillors seemed to adopt a view of participation which was somewhat different to that of the City Planning Officer. To them it was a means of persuading the public that the policies of the council were the correct ones.

This disparity in ability to communicate, absorb information and organize protest led to the planners adopting a different approach to the two areas. Jesmond and Byker were competing for the finite resources of a single authority and their attitude towards the latter was another example of what Davies called the "evangelism" of planners to areas which are apparently unable to participate effectively. The contrast offered within

the study adds weight to this argument, for Batley concludes that "Not only was it assumed that the problems and future of Jesmond were more suited to discussion by residents, but also that the residents themselves were better equipped to take part in the debate than was the population of Byker" (ibid, p.112).

Another study which analyses the reasons for differential participation is that carried out by Simmie in a parish in Oxfordshire. He also attempts to discover whether the "participants" were in any significant way different from the population as a whole in terms of social characteristics. The village, with a population of 3,000, had experienced considerable recent in-migration, mainly from within the county, and contained a wide range of socio-economic groups. Simmie describes how Wheatley Parish Council, exasperated by the delays in the County Council producing a plan for their village, commissioned one of their own. However, he demonstrates that almost 90% of the population had taken no interest in village affairs, as indicated by the low attendance at Parish Meetings concerning the new plan. The reasons given were lack of time, lack of interest, and a feeling against interfering with local government processes. He goes on to identify three distinct groups of participators in the population, together with an apathetic majority, who, despite continual press coverage and local discussion, were not aware that a village plan had been prepared. Simmie characterises the three groups of participants as follows: "leaders", comprising 5% of the population, who actually worked towards the development of the plan; "active participants", 10% of the population, who helped the leaders, and "passive participants", 38% of the population, who were aware of the plan and had a latent interest which was only expressed in cases where their individual concerns were threatened. The remaining 47% he assumed "would react to adverse effects of the plan only if and when these impinged on their daily lives" (Simmie, 1971, p.161). He then

analyses the three types of participants in terms of the Registrar General's categories (professional, intermediate, skilled, partly skilled and unskilled) and compares them with the population as a whole. Leaders were more likely to be drawn from the professional and intermediate categories, although a significant minority were unskilled. The active participants were made up largely of unskilled, with a minority of professional and partly skilled people. The passive participants were skilled and partly skilled. So the usual characterization of participants as being the more educated, able and affluent among the population appears to be insufficient explanation for the situation in Wheatley, since a good number of unskilled people were among the leaders and active participants. Furthermore, the proportions in the various groups of participators did not reflect the local pattern of socio-economic distribution. Skilled manual workers accounted for half the sample, yet they never formed this proportion of the participants and Simmie is concerned to explain why minority groups seem more likely to become involved in local government than the majority.

Simmie looks in more detail at the individual characteristics and motivations of the participants. He finds that the local social status system is important even though it does not lead to the occupational hierarchy being reflected in degrees of local involvement. He points to the fact that certain types of people, for example the skilled workers, have a certain amount of status in the work context which overrides any desire to achieve status in village politics, whereas the unskilled have no status to lose, but the possibility of achieving some degree in village affairs. It also became apparent that those who participated had fewer kinship links in the village than those who did not, either because they were recent in-migrants or local people whose kin had died or moved away. Thus, involvement could be seen as a mechanism for developing friendship networks among those with few, ready-made links in the village.

Simmie concludes that the fact that participants were disproportionately drawn from the extremes of the social class spectrum may in part be due to status considerations but that, as his data demonstrate, a wide range of factors are involved. Hence categories of participants can be isolated but these are not based on gross socio-economic variables as so many observers have assumed. The case-study shows that the propensity to participate is based on the personal situation of each individual and is related to the social structure of the local area.

Concluding Remarks

Perhaps in no other sphere of government has there been such an adamant demand for the rights of the citizen to have a say in policy as that of planning. Yet even with the introduction of a policy of participation there have been problems encountered and considerable criticisms levelled at planners and councillors. Some would argue that present policies have merely increased previous inequalities, for those taking up the opportunities are the well organised and vociferous minority who have better resources at their disposal. The present methods for consulting the public have done little to encourage the "apathetic majority" to participate or to aid less articulate individuals who want to be heard. Many individuals may have little sense of efficacy in their dealings with local government.

The present legislation also leaves scope for a considerable range of interpretations by planners and councillors. Hence they have almost complete control over the type and amount of information which they release and, in effect, the authority is only required to allow participation, it cannot enforce public involvement and does not even have to encourage it. Thus from authority to authority there is likely to be considerable variation in responses to public participation in planning according to the different methods of consultation employed by different authorities.

Other writers have pointed to the fact that traditional council viewpoints and planning ideology have not changed to accommodate the

new policy. Hence the assertion that the present proposals "offer a system of publicity which purports to tell the public all that is going on without letting it make any real contribution to policy formulation." (Damer and Hague, p.231) Officials are therefore attempting to introduce a participatory policy into a system largely geared to a representative form.

Some of the empirical material supports many of these points. The more statistically based analyses emphasise the domination of the participation channels by those with above average education and income - the so-called 'middle class'. Comparative research has shown this to be a general trend. Also the few studies of slum clearance areas in the British literature have highlighted the evangelism and paternalism of both councillors and planners. The planners show an attitude of "we know best" and tend to reject the idea that those in the slum areas can decide their future for themselves. The councillors have been shown to be poor channels of communication. Many local people may have little knowledge of their representatives or may be distrustful while the councillors themselves may come to use the participation exercise as a means of persuading the local residents that council policies are in fact the correct ones. The methods of participation available at present favour the more educated and articulate, whilst the attitudes of planners and officials make it difficult for the lower socio-economic groups to become involved in any effective way.

The predominant opinion amongst writers would seem to suggest that an 'improvement' approach, giving emphasis to increasingly sophisticated methods of communication, will not change the present situation. Thus if existing inequalities in resources and access to government channels are not to be merely reinforced, a more radical change is needed in planning concepts and council policy. The major problem facing local

authorities is how to incorporate the variety of opinion which emerges from even relatively small neighbourhoods. Officials have also to reconcile the wide variety of meanings which are attached to the participation process. There will also be differing perceptions of the role played by councillors and planners within the population.

With Simmie's community study in Oxford it becomes apparent that this problem of participation and non-participation is clearly a complex one. Such gross variables as class or level of education are not sufficient to explain why certain individuals will take up the opportunities to participate while others will remain uninvolved or unmotivated. It is likely that each individual community or locality will present a different combination of social factors, attitudes and planning issues. Thus the general policies which planning departments employ are often inappropriate in many circumstances. In addition, planners may employ rather stereotyped images of what particular areas or neighbourhoods are like socially which may have very little basis in the real situation.

This review of the literature, while by no means exhaustive, has indicated some of the main subjects of debate. It has also served to characterise the main approaches which have been used to explain responses to planning issues. It is my contention that none of the literature has provided an adequate framework within which responses to planning, emerging from a particular locality or on a regional basis, can be analysed. In the next chapter I will make some comments on the deficiencies of the available literature and I will attempt to suggest an alternative framework for a better understanding of responses to planning.

CHAPTER 2

THE ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC RESPONSES TO PLANNING: AN ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK

In the previous chapter I reviewed some of the more important literature which focused on public participation in planning. From this it emerged that many writers, while proclaiming the virtues of a participation-oriented society, have been disappointed by the results of attempts to stimulate public interest in planning issues. One line of research was concerned basically with an improvement approach, seeking ways in which the present methods of consulting and involving the public could be improved. Other writers have been far more critical of the present system and have highlighted more fundamental obstacles to successful participation of the public in decision making.

Much of the latter discussion has revolved round two main themes. On the one hand, it is frequently pointed out that the majority of people have low feelings of efficacy in their ability to influence local and national government decisions. Apparently, this is particularly so of the lower socio-economic groups. The life experiences of the working classes are said to influence the development of a view of the world which sees government decisions as remote and very difficult to influence. Middle classes, in contrast, are said to have a greater sense of efficacy in their ability to influence decisions. This leads some writers to fear that participatory channels will be monopolised by the more vocal neighbourhoods and by the better equipped and organised groups.

On the other hand, it has been emphasised that there is poor articulation between people on a local level and the governing bodies. It has often been pointed out that the concept of participation has been incorporated into a system which is not geared to it and participatory forms of democracy may be antipathetic to the well established representative

forms. Thus it has been argued that the participation policy has been embarked upon without a thought for its likely implications and, while purporting to favour such a policy, the governing bodies still hold firm to their representative or elitist principles.

Several commentors have also highlighted the discrepancy between the values of those controlling the planning service and those who are planned for. Arguments range from statements to the effect that planners have failed to appreciate the 'specialized sub-culture of a different socio-economic group' to more inexorable statements that planners are evangelistic or paternalistic. According to such a point of view a large part of the blame for the poor responses to planning issues from the general public is to be attributed to the planning departments and the local authorities for the way they conduct themselves in public participation exercises. Hence it has been argued that these exercises have merely been a window dressing to promote good public relations or have been applied as methods through which the public is persuaded that the council policies are in fact the correct ones.

So far, the literature on public participation in planning has failed to provide an adequate framework within which the variety of responses to participation exercises or more generally to planning issues can be analysed. The literature has also been deficient in handling what would appear to be a crucial dimension, that which concerns the social structural and interactional characteristics of localities.

It is my contention that too much emphasis has been given to the way local government policy shapes the nature of responses to planning in a locality or a region and that, consequently, little attention has been paid to the 'internal' factors which shape the way a population responds. Thus,it may be said that populations in particular localities will either possess the ability or will lack the ability to organize a response

to an issue or a set of issues. Furthermore, I would argue that it is not necessarily the case that areas, such as Byker, because they show little knowledge of government affairs or have little confidence in their ability to influence decisions, will be passive to planning issues. There is a series of factors which may operate against a passive response, factors which effectively enable the population to overcome its lack of confidence.

Also, most writers have failed to differentiate between two types of variation in responses; that which exists between localities and that which occurs within a locality. Whilst it is possible to explain in broad terms the variations within a region by reference to such gross variables as socio-economic structure, levels of education and the differences in the way policies are implemented, intra-locality variations must, in part at least, take account of local structural and interactional criteria. The latter sets of factors will also go a long way to explaining regional variations.

Existing studies have also concentrated rather too much on political and economic resources as being paramount in determining the effectiveness of a response. Little attention, therefore, has been given to the social resources which are available to aid attempts to participate by the general public. Social resources include such aspects as the kinds of social network prevalent in the locality and the institutional and associational structure which is available.

These deficiencies in the existing literature point to the need to develop a more adequate framework within which the variations in responses to planning issues can be better understood. Such a framework should be capable of dealing with both the wider regional structure and the influence of so called 'external' factors together with an examination of local level structures and processes. In the next part of this chapter I will put forward a framework which I believe has these qualities. The framework will

have three interrelated dimensions; first the identification of relevant external factors, second of relevant internal factors and thirdly, the examination of the individuals or groups who perform a mediating role linking the locality to the wider government structure.

External factors

By external I mean those factors which are outside the locality but influence the way in which the population responds to planning issues. These include:

a) Regional structure - The response from a locality cannot be fully understood without examining how it relates to the overall regional system. One would need to examine the overall demographic, economic and settlement patterns of the region. The way in which a locality is integrated into a regional system will clearly have an important effect on local social organisation and will govern its degree of dependence on centres of industrial and commercial control. Thus it is necessary to treat the locality not as an isolate but as part of a broader regional structure, being related in various ways to other localities in the region.

b) Administrative and political structure - This entails examining the system of local government, planning authorities and party political organization. The way in which a locality is contained within the wider political structure is important because the structure shapes, to a large extent, the methods of implementing policies of participation. It will also set limits on the types of political activity which are possible. Hence, individuals attempting to influence decisions can only do so by gaining access to the political structure through certain channels. These channels may be open or restricted and will vary inter- and intra-regionally.

c) The orientations of local and national government policies - Planning strategies at different levels - regional, county and district - will partly determine the kinds of issues which arise at a local level. Furthermore the methods adopted by authorities will vary not only spatially but through time. The degree to which the public's views are taken into account in formulating policy will naturally have some effect on the attitudes and opinions of local populations. It may also be found that in some localities the attitudes and values of the local population and the officers and officials largely coincide whereas in other situations there is likely to be a greater discrepancy and possibilities of antagonism.

Internal factors

The factors I identify under this rubric are those which emerge from within the local population and which actively shape the type of response and its intensity. These factors include both local social structural and interactional aspects such as:

a) The issues at stake - Localities will be affected by an issue or a set of issues which may have wider significance or may be restricted to particular localities. These issues will also vary according to the degree to which they arouse public feeling. The degree of emotiveness of an issue will be determined by the kinds of stakes - economic, political and social - that individuals have invested in their localities.

b) The specific local socio-economic and demographic characteristics - This set of factors includes such aspects as age-sex structure, socio-economic composition, housing standards and mobility. From this one is able to characterise the population in a general way and to identify the major social or class groupings, and examine how far such differences in the population correlate with differences in the degree

to which individuals participate in local affairs or organize in order to influence planning decisions.

c) Local historical trends - An examination of the social structural aspects of communities requires an appreciation of the historical processes which have shaped the present form. Past experiences will inevitably play a part in shaping the way in which the population organizes itself to respond to specific planning issues.

d) Local institutional and associational structure - This refers to the number of organizations in their locality, their particular orientations, the nature of their membership and the kinds of activities pursued. This aspect is important because certain associations may be more amenable to organizing a public participation response than others.

e) The nature of interpersonal relations - Here one would be interested in looking at ties of kinship, neighbourhood and friendship which cut across institutional boundaries.

f) Patterns of local leadership - Types of leadership which are developed within a locality are influential in determining the character of organized response, the types of issues identified as being most important, and the channels of participation utilised.

g) The 'popular ideologies' and value orientations - Individuals and groups who engage in public participation (and indeed, those who do not) generally have ideologies or social perceptions which provide the rationale for pursuing particular courses of action. Such ideologies need examination because they have a direct bearing on the way a population or a sector of the population will respond.

h) Social network characteristics - The concept of social network in many ways spans the previous strucutral and interactional characteristics mentioned and provides a useful integrating construct. I will expand upon aspects of community social structure and the use of networks below.

Political Brokers and Mediators

The third dimension which I propose to include within the framework necessitates the study of individuals and groups who articulate the locality with the wider political and socio-economic system. The main aim here is to examine the strategies used by such persons and groups to gain access to the decision making bodies in their attempts to influence decisions being taken. This entails examining their activities both in the local and regional arenas, observing how they organize their resources, how they mobilise support, the kinds of links they have with the localpopulation and with the local government structure.[1]

Wolf drew attention to the need to study such categories in an early paper which attempted to move away from the anthropologist's predilection for looking at communities as isolates (Wolf, 1956). He advocated a closer look at the relationships between community and nation and particularly at political and cultural brokers who provide the link between the community oriented groups and the nation oriented groups. He suggests that

> The study of these 'brokers' will prove increasingly rewarding, as anthropologists shift their attention from the internal organisation of communities to the manner of their integration into the larger systems. For they stand guard over the crucial junctures or synopses of relationships which connect the local system to the larger whole.
>
> (Wolf, 1956, p.1075)

Wolf also suggests that the study of such 'broker' categories will also provide a useful insight into the dynamics of a complex system "through the study of its dysfunctions".

Following from this discussion by Wolf, Silverman (1965) has suggested using the terms 'mediator' for those individuals who perform 'critical functions' and do so exclusively, and 'intermediary' as a more general term

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1. The literature taking this kind of perspective is probably most developed in that which deals with the problems of economic development and social change. See, for example, Geertz (1963), Paine (1965), Long (1968 and 1972).

to describe a person or group who merely performs a contact function. She proposes that the relationship between community and nation in the form of the mediator can be looked at in at least five ways. Firstly there is the tie between the mediator or mediating group and the local system for whom they mediate. Secondly their social characteristics can be studied in order to throw light on how they are recruited and from what sectors of the population. Thirdly, the variations in the functions of these mediators need to be examined. Fourthly, the size of the group which becomes involved in this role may be an important variable to take account of and fifthly, the degree to which they are integrated into the local system will affect their degree of commitment to local affairs.

Another dimension to be explored concerning these political mediators or brokers is their goal orientations. Merton (1957) has made a basic distinction between "local" and "cosmopolitan" influentials in the way their goals differ. The local influential will be more community oriented and will be concerned to maintain his local relationships. This he does by trying to operate within community values and norms. In contrast the cosmopolitan will be more oriented to the outside and will not be so concerned to operate within the limits of the community's code of values and norms. He neglects the maintenance of local relationships and prefers instead to develop external links.

As I stated earlier most studies of this kind have dealt with economic and entrepreneurial activity and how local economies are linked into regional structures.[1] Clearly, however, this kind of approach could be important in the context of public participation in planning. Such an approach would enable one to identify the individuals and groups who emerge from given populations to perform the function of mediators and enable the local population to interact with government officials in an ongoing fashion.

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1. A particular example of this is the work carried out in Peru by Long and Roberts (in press).

One would then be examining the links between the local system and the wider regional and national structure. By focussing on their activities, the ways in which they organize themselves and utilise their resources, and on the ways in which they are linked both to the local population and to the government structure, it will be possible to make more general statements about the variations in responses to planning and more generally about the problems of a participation policy.

An explanation of the variations in responses to planning which utilised such a framework, taking account of external factors, internal factors and examining mediating roles would of course need research of considerable depth and scope and a fairly extensive exposition. This, I believe, is beyond the scope of the present thesis. I do propose, however, to examine the responses emanating from a particular locality, North Ormesby, a district of East Middlesbrough. The analysis will focus particularly on the second and third aspects of my framework viz. internal factors and the role of mediating groups, although I examine certain external factors in order to supplement my explanation.

I have already mentioned above the kinds of factors which I would use to try to explain the type of response coming from particular localities. In relation to North Ormesby, I will examine the demographic nature of the locality, in particular its socio-economic composition and domestic standards. This will enable us in a general way to characterise the local population and identify any major social or class differences.

At another level of abstraction we will also be concerned with the social structural and interactional characteristics of the North Ormesby population. There will be several strands to this examination. In the first place we will attempt to outline the 'institutional equipment'[1] or

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1. This is a term used by Glass in her work (1948).

structure of the locality. The number of organisations and associations within a locality and their particular orientations and activities will have an important influence on the type and degree of response to planning issues. It may be that certain types of institution are more amenable to use in a public participation exercise than others.[1] The institutional equipment may be important in another way. Granovetter has demonstrated that so called 'weak ties' created through common membership of organizations may, in fact, be extremely important for the dissemination of information. To extend this, one could argue that these weak associational ties may become active in organising a response to a particular issue. Hence the emotiveness of an issue and the strength of these weak ties may be able to overcome any feelings of inefficacy in relation to influencing government decisions. It may be posited at this stage that the decision to participate could be related to the strength of feeling about particular issues or may be engendered by membership of institutions in the contexts of work, church or community.

A second aspect of locality social structure which will be examined is the social relations which emerge from informal contexts. Many anthropological studies have highlighted the potency of ties of kinship, neighbourhood and friendship which develop outside of institutional contexts, but which may be crucial for understanding many aspects of formal social organization. Such informal links cut across institutional boundaries and could be said to form the cement of the social fabric. Such links will be crucial for mobilising support for the mediating groups which emerge from within the population.

A third aspect of local social structure with which we will be concerned is that of the leadership which emerges from the local population. Two types of leaders are important in this context, those who define group

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1. Batley makes the point that in Byker the working men's clubs and their leaders declined any active role in the public participation exercise.

and community goals and methods of achieving these goals and the leaders who operate as mobilisers of support in the dealings with local government.[1] Locality and community leaders are important in the present context since they have a great deal of influence on the nature and the outcome of particular issues. It is important, therefore, to look at the attitudes and orientations of the leaders, their motives for becoming involved in public affairs, and their activities and organization. Such leaders also frequently define, for the community, what is to be an issue and may act as interpretersof local government policy for the population as a whole.

The ways in which these leaders attempt to gain 'access'[2] to local government circles will also be significant in determining the overall community response. The 'access' of these leaders to information influences the degree and type of action they will take. If the leaders are the only sources of information concerning planning matters for the local population, this will give them a considerable amount of power and freedom to determine the prescribed courses of action to be taken. Certain skills and talents are necessary in local leaders to enable them to influence decisions and to participate effectively. Some localities are better endowed with such leaders than are others. Thus for a locality to participate effectively it may be essential to have leaders with the necessary political acumen to gain successful 'access' to local government circles.

A fourth aspect to be considered is that which I have termed 'popular ideologies'. Individuals who participate (and indeed those who do not) may have particular ideologies which provide them with motivations for pursuing particular courses of action. Such 'value-orientations'[3] are the

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1. This distinction between leaders who are crucial for mobilization and those who define group goals is made by Smelser (1962).

2. This term is used by J.C. Davies (1966). He defines it as "the ability of a group or individual to transmit its views to some other group or individual."

3. Pickvance (1975) uses this term "to refer to tendencies for action to take certain courses, which in actual situations are subject to constraints which fully or partially prevent their realization." (p.8)

result of a complex process involving social experiences. The ideas may be drawn from membership of church groups, from trade union experience, from mass media sources, etc. These ideas are crucial to an understanding of why a population responds in the way it does.

A fifth aspect, which in many ways spans the previous four elements, is that of social network. Social network refers to the set of linkages which exist between a given number of individuals. Networks can take many forms and can be characterised by a variety of types of interaction. The types of networks which are prevalent in a locality will have a considerable effect on the nature of responses in that locality. Networks will determine the way in which information about planning is disseminated and how the information is manipulated. They will also determine whether a population is easily mobilized to participate. Networks also provide the context within which issues become defined and attitudes and opinions formulated. The degree to which the locality leaders are integrated into the local population and the degree to which they have 'access' into local government circles will be reflected in the characteristics of their social networks.

To obtain data pertaining to the aspects mentioned above, particular kinds of research methods are necessary. In the next part of this chapter something will be said about the theoretical orientation we call "network analysis" and the available literature.

Network Analysis

It has frequently been pointed out that the development of network analysis in anthropological literature generally coincided with the increased interest in societies which were seen as 'complex', which were open as opposed to closed systems and for which the traditional anthropological methods of analysis were inadequate. This was connected with the anthropologists' increased awareness that the behaviour of individuals and sets of interacting individuals in a given locality could not be understood without seeing their behaviour in relation to events and circumstances outside the unit of study.

Radcliffe-Brown used the term network (1952, p.19) when he described social structure as being a 'network of actually existing social relations'. Barnes (1954) took up this theme of network and began to define it more precisely in interpreting aspects of the class structure of a Norwegian island parish. He identified three separate fields of social relationships. Two were formal or institutional consisting of the industrial and territorial fields. The third was a set of relationships which interfused and crosscut the former two and consisted of informal ties of neighbourliness, kinship and friendship. Barnes argued that this third set of relationships was equally important to an understanding of behaviour as the other two institutional sets. He made the distinction between the total network which included the content of all interaction in structured and in informal situations and the personal network which he confined to friendship, kinship and neighbourliness.

Bott's study of conjugal roles in London families (1957) was a more rigorous attempt to introduce network analysis to anthropological and sociological literature. Her main interest was directed towards the way in which the morphological characteristics of the networks of the families she was studying affected the allocation of conjugal roles within the family. She made the distinction between 'close knit' and 'open' networks and pointed out a correlation between these and particular types of family organization. She writes

> When many of the people a person knows interact with one another, that is when the person's network is 'close knit', the members of his network tend to reach consensus of norms and they exert consistent informal pressure on one another to conform to the norms, to keep in touch with one another, and, if need be, to help one another.
>
> (Bott, 1957, p.60)

This type of analysis, focussing on networks in relation to the definition of norms and values, was further explored by Phillip Mayer (1961) and Epstein (1961). Mayer examined the different types of behaviour between two sets of migrants in a South African town and again used the distinction

between 'close knit' and 'loose knit' networks to explain the discrepancy. Epstein, similarly, argued that the relative close knit part of the personal network of the elite in an African town served to define the norms of community and that these norms could be transmitted to other parts of the community (the non-elite) through the extended links of the personal network.

During the latter part of the 1960's there was a concerted effort to establish network analysis as a key concept in anthropological and sociological literature, particularly through the work of J.C. Mitchell (1966, 1969, 1973). In 1966 he suggested the conceptual separation of three types or orders of social relationships for understanding the behaviour of individuals. The first he termed the "structural order" which concerned the positions persons occupied in an ordered set of institutional or associational positions. The second he called the "categorical order" which were wider social stereotypes such as class or race. The third he termed the "personal order" which consisted of the personal links individuals have with a number of people and these people in turn are linked themselves. Commenting on his tripartite separation he writes:

> These three orders of social relationships, however, should not be looked upon as three different types of actual behaviour, but rather as three different ways of making abstractions from the same actual behaviour so as to achieve different types of understanding and explanation. By this argument, therefore, there can be no opposition of structural and personal links but only different ways of subsuming the data into explanatory frameworks.
> (Mitchell, 1973, p.20)

Mitchell also began to define more precisely the qualities or different criteria of the social network as an entity (1969). These he grouped under two major headings: "morphological" and "interactional". The morphological criteria are those which give shape to the individuals's network and included the density, reachability and span of the network. The interactional criteria concerned the behavioural dimension and included the content of links and the durability, intensity and frequency of contact with the various links. Mitchell also made a useful distinction between

ties or links which are multiplex or many stranded and those which are uniplex or single stranded.

Barnes (1972) taking a lead from Bott's work took the network concept further by developing an interest in the way 'lateral links' can affect the behaviour of ego. These 'lateral links' refer to the links between the persons in ego's network who may not necessarily be directly linked to ego. Barnes notes of network analysis:

> Every individual in society is seen as linked to several others by social bonds that partly reinforce and partly conflict with one another; the orderliness or disorderliness, of social life results from the constraints these bonds impose upon the actions of individuals.
>
> (Barnes, 1972, p. 3)

Barnes was also interested in how A, who is in touch with B and C, is affected by the relation between B and C. Thus, a person's network forms a social environment from and through which pressure is exerted to influence his behaviour. He, in turn, is able through his own links to influence the behaviour of others.

Mitchell (1973) drew attention to the need to specify more clearly what the lines actually meant and represented that linked individuals and how were they related to reality. He suggests that there are three different ways in which the content of links can be appreciated.

a) Communication content. This refers to the information content which flows through network links.[1]

b) Exchange contect. This aspect of network analysis concentrates on network relations in terms of sets of transactions in an economistic sense.[2]

c) Normative content. This he defines as "that aspect of the relationship between two individuals which can be referred to the expectations each may have of the other because of some social characteristic or social

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1. Mitchell gives the examples of Bott (1957), Coleman, Katz and Menzel (1957) and Epstein (1961).

2. The example he cites is Adrian Mayer's work (1962 and 1966).

attribute the other may possess." The observer here uses the actors' perceptions or perceptual categories , such as "kinship", "neighbourliness" and "friendship" - as frameworks for evaluating the behaviour of people in given situations.

Commenting on his conceptual distinction Mitchell writes:

> Communication, exchange and normative contents of the linkages in social networks are all intermingled in real social situations for all social interaction involves communication, explicit or implicit, some exchange and evaluation of behaviour in terms of social norms. (p.26)

In the same paper Mitchell also turns his attention towards the relationship between social networks and institutional or corporate groups. In an earlier article Boissevain (1968) had posited a continuum of social relationships ranging at one end from "personal networks" through "quasi groups", factions, interactional groups, corporate groups and society on the other end of the continuum. Mitchell questions this conceptual device by casting doubt on whether, in fact, a single dimension underlies this continuum. Mitchell prefers to view the "group" as an abstract of both participants and observer. For the participants it can be seen as "a set of interwoven folkways, mores and laws built round one or more functions." Institutions are concerned with a set of norms and values "which relate to a phenomenologically distinct aspect of social relations." The anthropologist or sociologist is also interested in role expectations and role behaviour and the discrepancies which may occur between the two. It is at this point, argues Mitchell, that network analysis can be crucial in explaining the departure or deviations from standardized behaviour. Such deviations are difficult to explain using a structural or institutional approach. Thus network analysis provides a supplementary or alternative approach to the structural approach which is particularly valuable in urban situations where the observer is equally interested in the relationships of the various groups and institutions to each other, as in the institutions per se.

From this brief review of the social network literature some indications

can be made as to the way in which such an approach might fruitfully be used in the context of public participation in planning. Network analysis will be used to explain the response of the North Ormesby population and in particular the response of a group which was created during the public participation exercise in Teesside. Particular attention will be given to the initiation, development and activities of a residents association committee and an attempt will be made to offer some explanation for the nature of the group and the way it presents itself to the local authorities. The residents' committee is involved in an ongoing relationship with local councillors on the one hand, and local residents on the other; its activities are centred around a set of major and minor issues basically concerned with a struggle for public power.

The primary goal of the group is to influence the planning of the area. As such their activities can be interpreted as 'political' in that there is a struggle for the use of influence and power in the pursuit of clearly defined goals.[1] From the group's point of view, it is striving to be heard, to be involved and to be informed of decisions being taken by local government officials. Consequently, it enters a series of related contests with the local authorities; and for both sides there are gains to be made and losses to be sustained.

By utilising the concept of social network, I will examine in detail how the group members, as individuals and as a set of interacting individuals, have responded to the planning process. I will also give attention to the way the group is organised internally, how this organisation has developed through time in response to external pressures, and also why they present themselves to the local authorities in the ways they do. In addition I will examine the links the group has with the local population and how these are used to mobilize support for the group's efforts in influencing

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1. Swartz, Local Level Politics, 1968.

local government policy in the area. Network analysis will enable us to highlight such important aspects as channels of communication and systems of influence, by identifying individuals and groups influential in local affairs.

Another important dimension which will be explored concerns that of popular ideologies. These are important in that they provide orientations for the group and its followers and they also provide substantial legitimation for becoming involved in local affairs. One set of ideas are those drawn from the christian institutions in the locality, particularly the Methodist church. The second set of ideas are those concerning 'community spirit' and neighbourhood ideals. North Ormesby is seen by many of its inhabitants, including the members of the group, to be a real 'community' which has been deleteriously affected by recent planned change and whose community spirit is still threatened.

However, before these various themes can be explored, it will be necessary in Chapter 3 to give an extensive account of the locality of study. Aspects of North Ormesby's history in relation to its larger neighbour, Middlesbrough, will be presented. Evidence from the 1971 census will enable us to indicate the demographic characteristics of the population and also some aspects of the locality social structure. This will provide a crucial background for a better understanding of the response to planning issues which emerged from North Ormesby. Chapter 3 will also introduce some of the data from the random sample survey concerning attitudes and knowledge of the North Ormesby population about planning and local government matters. I will also examine the degree of participation of the population. From this it will emerge that there is a strange paradox to explain. As in Byker, the North Ormesby population had very poor knowledge of their local councillors and on the whole had little confidence in their ability to alter local government decisions.

But from this population emerged a vigorous and organized response in the form of the residents association. Also from the random sample five individuals (5.7%) are identified as 'high participators'. This was a higher percentage of the population than in any of the other five localities sampled in County Cleveland.[1] The question which therefore poses itself is, how is a locality such as North Ormesby, which has poor knowledge of local government and little confidence in its ability to influence decisions, able to organize an effective and durable response? I believe the latter chapters of the thesis will provide some answers to this question by examining the activities of the local residents association and how they draw their support from various community institutions.

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1. The other five localities sampled were Yarm and Kirklevington in West Cleveland, Skelton-Brotton and Marske in East Cleveland and Hemlington on the outskirts of Middlesbrough.

CHAPTER 3

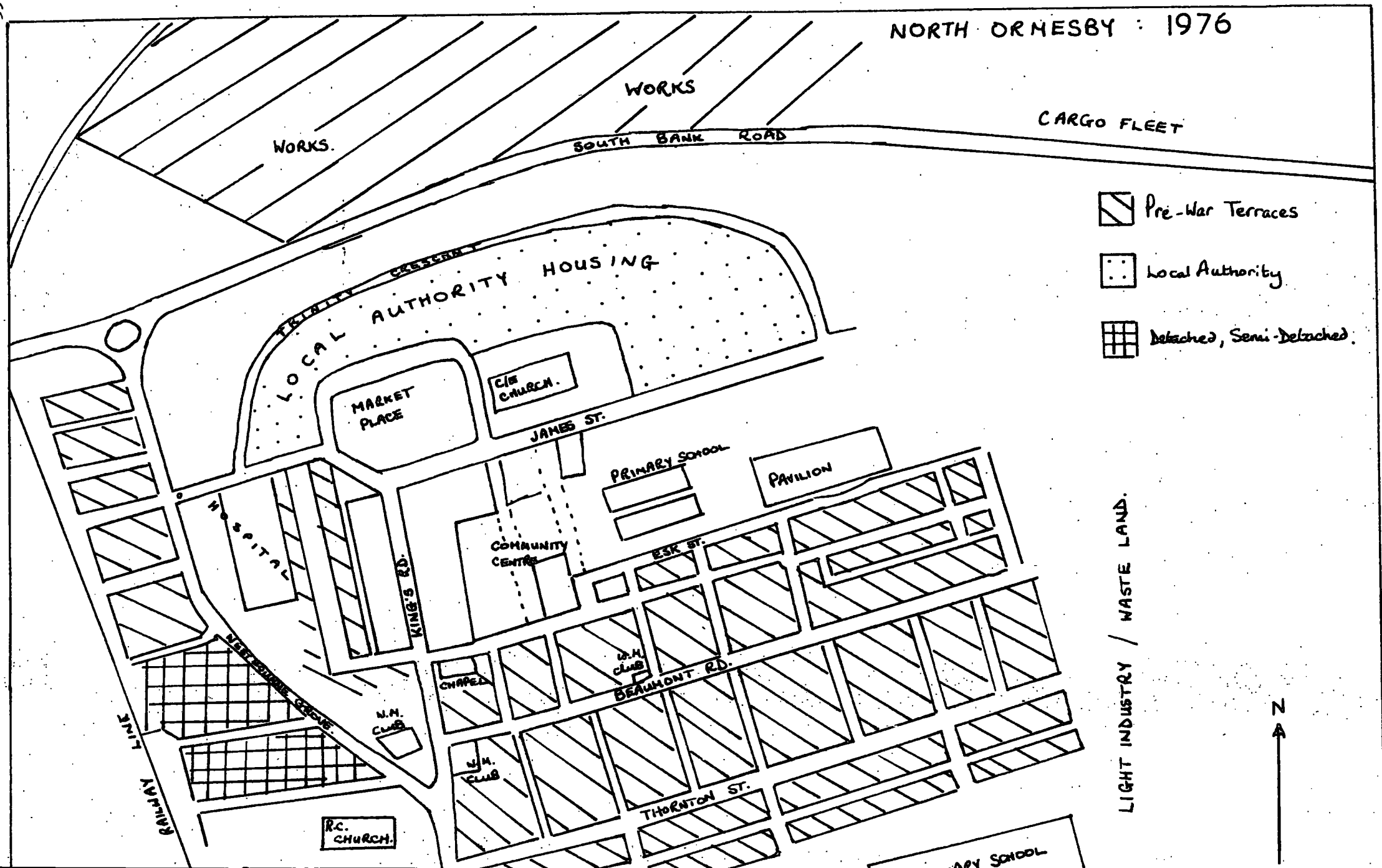
HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL OUTLINE OF NORTH ORMESBY

The background for our later discussion of social network and the organization of community response is contained in this chapter which provides a historical and social outline of the locality. In the first part of the chapter I will attempt to tie together several aspects of the locality's history, its socio-economic composition and its institutional framework. I will also briefly outline some of the more recent planning issues. In the second half of the chapter I present some of the data collected in North Ormesby through a random sample survey. In this part of the chapter particular attention is given to the population's attitudes towards planning issues and their sources of information and also to the levels of participation in local affairs which relate to planning matters.

Historical Background

North Ormesby is a well defined district of Middlesbrough lying approximately one mile east of the town centre and half a mile south of the river bank. King's Road is the major thoroughfare as well as the main shopping street, although Beaumont Road also has several shops. At the northern end of King's Road is a market place which is occupied by traders on Tuesday and Saturday, and the district also has its own police station, branch library and slipper baths. The three main churches are represented in North Ormesby (Catholic, Church of England and Methodist) and there are several public houses and social clubs. The district acts as a service centre not only for its own inhabitants but for a substantial portion of the population of the council estates to the south of Longlands Road.

To the north of the market place is an area of recently constructed local authority housing which has replaced a number of old terraced streets


NORTH ORMESBY : 1976
WORKS
WORKS.
CARGO FLEET
SOUTH BANK ROAD
Pre-War Terraces
Local Authority
Detached, Semi-Detached.
TRINITY CRESCENT
LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING
MARKET PLACE
C/E CHURCH.
JAMES ST.
PRIMARY SCHOOL
PAVILION
HOSPITAL
KING'S RD.
COMMUNITY CENTRE
ESK ST.
W.H. CLUB
BEAUMONT RD.
CHAPEL
N.N. CLUB
RAILWAY LINE
W.H. CLUB
THORNTON ST.
R.C. CHURCH.
LIGHT INDUSTRY / WASTE LAND.
N

demolished in the late 1960's and early 1970's. To the south of Esk Street and to the east of King's Road is a compact series of streets built in terraces during the pre-First World War and inter-war years and to the west of Westbourne Grove is a mixed residential area of terraced, detached and semi-detached dwellings.

Even at the present time North Ormesby retains some of the physical and social qualities which made it a well defined and encapsulated district. It has now been totally surrounded by urban growth, particularly since 1945, but it remains a distinct neighbourhood community. Geographically it is clearly bounded by two major roads to the north and south, a railway line and brook to the west and an area of waste land and small industry to the east. Although North Ormesby's physical separation from Middlesbrough proper assisted the creation of an inward looking community, the social and economic development of the district is inextricably bound up with that of Middlesbrough.

In 1808 Middlesbrough consisted of six houses and the site of North Ormesby was still farming land. The hamlet of Cargo Fleet, situated in the parish of Ormesby, was a thriving port, having two thirds of the whole produce of Cleveland sent through it. Graves (1808, p.450) describes the parish as being a fertile area with "the advantage of an excellent port upon the river Tees, called Cargo Fleet or Cleveland Port, where extensive and commodious granaries have been erected". By 1830 Cargo Fleet was being eclipsed by the rise of Middlesbrough as a coal port and shipbuilding centre. This occurred as a result of the extension of the Stockton - Darlington railway to Middlesbrough, the construction of new shipping staithes and a New Cut in the Tees.

With the development of Middlesbrough as a port came the first local industry. In 1840 Henry Bolckow and John Vaughan settled in Middlesbrough and started a foundry and rolling mill. Later that year Edgar Gilkes and Isaac Wilson, in association with the Pease family, created the Pease

and Partners Tees Iron Works and the Normanby Ironworks. With the establishment of an iron industry a new town rapidly developed, built in a grid-iron pattern around a church and a market place. Between 1841 and 1850 Bolckow and Vaughan struggled to put the industry on a firm footing but were handicapped by the fact that they had to look well outside Middlesbrough for their raw materials.

In 1850 the discovery was made that iron ore in the Cleveland Hills at Eston was workable and of good enough quality for the production of iron. 1851 saw the first blast furnace blown in and by 1860 there were forty blast furnaces located mainly in the Ironmasters district of the town, but also by now the industry was moving eastward along the river bank. The 1850's was a decade when ironmasters emerged and became powerful local figures, many of the more important companies being Quaker concerns. Among the local pioneers were the Cochranes, a family of ironmasters from Staffordshire, who, in 1854, built their first furnace on the river bank close to the future site of North Ormesby. In the same year the first house was built and, in much the same way as its larger neighbour, North Ormesby itself grew rapidly in a grid-iron pattern around a market square with the erection of back to back houses. Up to this date Middlesbrough had experienced a phenomenal rate of population growth which was to continue throughout the century. North Ormesby also expanded rapidly to have a population of almost 1,000 four years after the founding of the township and over 14,000 by the First World War.

Table I: Nineteenth Century Population Growth in Middlesbrough

1801	...	25	1861	...	19,416
1829	...	40	1871	...	39,563
1831	...	154	1881	...	55,934
1841	...	5,463	1891	...	75,532
1851	...	7,431	1901	...	91,302

North Ormesby, from its inception, was built for the housing of working class families, the large majority of working males being employed in one of the nearby works - Cochranes, Pease and Partners or Cargo Fleet. The first houses were built close to the works and were probably of the type described by Lady Bell (1907, p.3):

> Most of the houses ... consist of four rooms: two rooms on the ground floor, one of them a kitchen and living room, which in many of them opens straight from the street, and in some has a tiny lobby with a door inside it - and another room behind, sometimes used as a bedroom, sometimes shut up as a parlour. A little steep dark staircase goes up from the kitchen to the next floor, where there are two more rooms. Sometimes there is a little scullery besides, sometimes a place hardly big enough to be called a room, just big enough to contain a bed, off the kitchen. Such abodes are big enough to house comfortably a couple and two or three children, but not to house the families of ten, twelve, or more, that are sometimes found in them.

In 1858, a Day school was opened on the corner of Smeaton Street and West Terrace and in 1859 a Cottage Hospital, the first in England, was established by the Community of the Holy Rood on the site of the present hospital. The latter part of the nineteenth century saw North Ormesby develop into a rather independent township, within the Ormesby Urban District, with its own parish church, police force, fire brigade and market.

In 1874 the first steel was successfully manufactured in Middlesbrough but soon the iron and steel industry was to become increasingly dependent on the world overseas. "The very need to survive encouraged firms to integrate vertically in order to secure sources of raw materials and markets and to integrate horizontally to expand production facilities as well as to reduce competition in similar processes" (North, 1975, p.27).

With the onset of the steel age the industry began to shift noticeably towards the mouth of the river. Cargo Fleet had already emerged as an important centre for blast furnaces. By 1914 the multitude of firms producing iron and steel which had been established in the boom years between 1840 and 1880 had been replaced by a small number of large enterprises dominated by Bolckow, Vaughan and Co.,

Dorman Long, and the South Durham Steel and Iron Co. Briggs (1968, p.266) points out that this process of integration and amalgamation had three important social effects. Firstly, the employer became more remote from the shop floor and his place was taken by a hierarchy of managers and foremen; trade unionism then became the established way of bargaining. Secondly, the employers also retreated from public life and thirdly, Middlesbrough came to depend more and more on the outside financial world.

The geographical distinctiveness of North Ormesby from Middlesbrough had been heightened by the creation of toll bars between the two. These were far from popular as the Middlesbrough Exchange and North Ormesby News made clear (April 9, 1869):

> Some of the toll gates are downright imposts, barbaric signs of protection and monopoly, on the face of them. Such is the North Ormesby bar, at the end of what is called Cargo Fleet Road. The bar on the Ormesby road is also little better than a public nuisance.

However, after the turn of the century, the geographical isolation which had nurtured an independent spirit was to be eroded away. In 1913 North Ormesby was incorporated into the rapidly expanding Middlesbrough borough, thereby ceasing to function independently and the green spaces disappeared as municipal building began in the 1920's and council estates spread southwards and eastwards. At the time of its absorption into the County Borough, North Ormesby occupied 834 acres and had a population of 14,288.

Ruth Glass gives a good picture of Middlesbrough in the 1940's in her work The Social Background of a Plan. In this she is concerned with the concept of the neighbourhood unit as a tool in town planning. Her definitions of the neighbourhood unit are based on both physical and social criteria. "It assumes the tendency for, and the desirability of, social integration on the level of the small territorial group. Each neighbourhood unit is supposed to be equipped with a number of institutions for the use of its own residents. An admixture of social groups within

its boundaries is usually considered desirable" (Glass, 1948, p.17). In Middlesbrough she identified a series of neighbourhoods using such criteria as house types, rateable values, social, occupational and religious groups within the population. Geographical boundaries, railways, roads and open spaces were also used to demarcate the areas. In addition, she sought to define neighbourhoods in terms of catchment areas of schools, youth and adult clubs, post offices and shops. Her aim, she stated, was "to know which neighbourhoods have satisfactory and which have unsatisfactory environmental conditions; which contain chiefly poor and which contain chiefly prosperous households; which are adequately and which are inadequately equipped with social institutions" (ibid, p.18).

Neighbourhoods were graded according to four aspects: living conditions, institutional equipment, neighbourhood integration and geographical demarcation. Indices from 1 - 6 were used; 'one' indicated the lowest or most negative rank and 'six' the highest or most positive. For the index of living conditions, North Ormesby came in rating group 'two' with the oldest working class districts in group one: viz. Newport, Cargo Fleet, St. Hilda's. The average for Middlesbrough as a whole was group 'three'. As regards institutional equipment North Ormesby came in group 'five', St. Hilda's the old core of Middlesbrough being the highest and Middlesbrough as a whole coming in group 'four'. Glass comments that "North Ormesby, which used to be a separate township, has retained all its old urban equipment" (ibid, p.34). North Ormesby was ranked in group 'five' for neighbourhood integration and group 'six' for geographical demarcation. "The major part of North Ormesby, which is also isolated, again receives few visitors from outside since its institutions fulfil a strictly local function" (ibid, p.38). It is apparent from the assessment made by Glass that even at this time North Ormesby had, to a certain extent, retained an independence which had been fostered after the absorption of the township into the Middlesbrough

borough. Since that time circumstances have changed and North Ormesby does in fact serve as an important centre for the surrounding council estates. This is due in no small part to the numbers of North Ormesby people who have been moved out onto these estates after the demolition of their houses and who have retained a link with their previous neighbourhood by using its services.

From the observations made by Glass it can be seen that North Ormesby in the 1940's was one of the most geographically distinct areas in Middlesbrough; a well integrated neighbourhood with a good range of neighbourhood institutions and, although not the worst area, having poor living conditions.

Recent Planning Policies

In the early 1960's, North Ormesby came under the scrutiny of the Middlesbrough Town Planning Committee, who envisaged substantial redevelopment of the area, sectors of which had remained largely unaltered since the nineteenth century. North Ormesby was to lose up to one half of its houses, mainly in the region of the north of the market place, and the planners estimated the population would be approximately halved from eleven to five and a half thousand. The old High Street to the north of the market place would be demolished, thereby reducing considerably the number of shops in the area.

Details of the committee's proposals for North Ormesby were released to the local press in February 1964. Even as recently as twelve years ago the elected representatives saw their duty as no more than informing local people of the extent of redevelopment. The chairman of the committee was reported as saying:

> I think it is right and proper that we should keep the public fully alive to what we consider should be the ultimate form of particular areas of Middlesbrough.
>
> (Evening Gazette, 20.2.1964)

Between 1964 and 1969 very little occurred in the way of redevelopment. The local press made several references to 'complaints' about the stagnation in North Ormesby and the tardiness of putting the proposals into action (e.g. Northern Echo, 21.10.1965). In September 1969, the Evening Gazette reported that 200 residents of North Ormesby congregated in a school hall 'to hear about proposals for completely transforming their part of Teesside within the next ten years.' The Chairman of the Town Planning Committee gave details of the report which had been drawn up, and assured the audience that efforts would be made to retain and foster the 'community spirit' the area had enjoyed for a hundred years. The main points of the plan were:

(1) A new urban motorway to follow the line of Smeaton Street crossing the railway by the new bridge.

(2) The land to the north of Smeaton Street would be earmarked for light industry and warehousing, but immediately to the south of the road there would be a landscaped green buffer.

(3) South of this again, there would be housing redevelopment of the low-rise, high-density, family type - about 220 houses in all, accommodating about 750 people.

(4) The houses to the north of Esk Street and to the east of Kings Road were to be revitalized.

(5) Existing shops in the Smeaton Street and High Street areas were to be cleared and a new shopping street created on Kings Road.

By 1970, work was under way in clearing a whole series of streets to the north of Smeaton Street, and those around the market square were also earmarked for demolition. Along with the clearance scheme came the familiar social problems documented in other decaying urban areas of Britain: old residents not wanting to leave, or dying when they had been moved onto the new estates, and the breaking up of the neighbourhood

communities. Odd families were left in streets which were almost depopulated. They awaited rehousing while their immediate environment deteriorated and became derelict. With the neglect of the unoccupied houses and the continual abandonment, the remaining residents had to fight against the unsanitary conditions which ensued. The largely derelict area was infested by rats, children were suffering from dysentry, and over 40 people from one of the streets signed a petition demanding quicker action in rehousing them (Evening Gazette, 2.3.1971).

Eventually, the houses were demolished and replaced in 1974 by a much smaller area of local authority housing of the low-rise high-density type. Certain adjacent areas on the opposite side of James Street were also demolished but the shape of future development on these sites remains a subject of debate between local government officials and residents. A large proportion of the people who came to live in the local authority flats and houses had previously been residents of North Ormesby, in the already demolished areas. Some were also drawn from other redevelopment areas elsewhere in Middlesbrough, notably from the Newport district of the town. Thus, many people were able to resettle in North Ormesby and maintain their community, kinship, and friendship contacts.

The experience of the people who were living in the compact series of streets to the south of Esk Street and to the east of Kings Road had been somewhat different. Here the housing, although built in terraces during the pre;First World War and inter;war years, was of a better quality than that to the north of James Street. Several informants told me that traditionally this had been an area slightly better in 'quality' both physically and socially. One elderly man remarked that his parents often told him, as a child, not to associate with children from the 'rough end' of North Ormesby. His father was a blacksmith at Cargo Fleet works, a skilled and respected position. It seems that this southern

area of North Ormesby originally attracted the more affluent of the working class in the area - the skilled and semi-skilled men from the industries on the river bank. The development plan of the sixties had envisaged a longer life for this area through the provision of council grants for home improvements and the creation of play areas and traffic restrictions.

Socio-Demographic Aspects

Data drawn from both the 1971 census and the random sample survey confirms the picture which has been drawn of North Ormesby in the previous section; viz. that of a well established, predominantly working class community containing numerous families with long residential histories in the locality. The population in 1971 was 5,326 and Figure 2 gives details of the population structure in the form of an age-sex pyramid, which shows that there is a relatively high number in the older age categories but that the younger age categories are predominant. This can be accounted for by the movement into the area of young families from other redevelopment areas and the retention of an established ageing population. The development of an incipient age gap has been accentuated by the movement out of some of the younger middle-aged people with older families.

Table II consists of data drawn from the 1971 census when the clearance scheme was well under way. This shows that 175 (8%) of the total dwellings were vacant, indicating the extent of the urban decay. Furthermore, only 670 (33%) of the dwellings had all amenities, while 452 (22%) had no hot water, 773 (38.5%) no bath and 1,102 (55%) no inside toilet. Since 1971 the situation has improved as all the houses scheduled for demolition have been cleared and the council have made grants available for home improvements.

Table III highlights the concentration of the working population in manual occupations. This concentration is more marked for the

economically active males of whom 40%, 20% and 21.5% were classed as skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled respectively. 42% of the economically active females were employed in the intermediate and junior non-manual category which includes clerks, office workers, shop assistants, catering staff and so forth.

Present Institutional Framework

In North Ormesby there is an Anglican church, a Catholic church, a Methodist chapel, and a Salvation Army centre. All three main churches were established in the last century and have always played an important part in the life of the community. The Catholic and Methodist churches are particularly well supported and have numerous subsidiary voluntary associations. The purpose of these associations is primarily a moral or spiritual one, but they do serve an important function as social gatherings. The Methodist chapel has the most developed extra chapel activities catering for both males and females and a variety of age groups. Particularly important is the Social Responsibility Group which acts as the local Methodist forum for discussing topics of public concern. These topics usually relate to welfare and social policies in North Ormesby, but frequently also include discussion of planning problems.

As regards leisure and recreational institutions, the Working Men's Clubs, of which there are three in North Ormesby, are the most popular and best supported. These clubs are predominantly male institutions although many women visit the clubs at the weekend with their husbands. However, one of these social clubs, the Conservative Club, remains exclusively male. Although in name it is tied to the political organization, most of the clientele of this club are not affiliated to the party. Many North Ormesby men are also members of Working Men's Clubs outside North Ormesby, particularly those in Middlesbrough. The three clubs in North Ormesby, while providing centres of social intercourse and recreation, have not played much part in the political life of the community, although their members are often also members of trade unions.

Apart from the churches and the Working Men's clubs there is little associational organization. There is a Labour Party branch but the

membership is small and the meetings infrequent. Their field of interest is predominantly wider than North Ormesby, being more concerned with city and county council politics. The leading members are also members of Working Men's Clubs and trade unions. One institution which has become important over the last few years is the North Ormesby Community Centre. This was only created in the early 1970's, primarily from the initiative of the churches and their subsidiary voluntary organizations. The centre provides a wide range of social and recreational activities for all ages including sports, a youth club, dancing, and handicrafts. It is also important as a venue for public meetings. The warden of the centre is a council appointed official but the members of the House Committee and the Management Committee are drawn from local population. The most prominent members on these committees tend also to be leading churchmen. Recently, the Community Centre became the main focus for organising a North Ormesby Carnival.

The Random Sample Survey

Of the sample 52 (59.1%) were male and 36 (40.9%) were female. The age structure shows a predominance of the older age categories with 35 (39.6%) between 46 and 65 years of age and 17 (19.3%) over 65 years. 11 (12.5%) were between 17 and 25 years and 25 (29%) were between 26 and 45 years of age. The numerical preponderance in the sample of the older middle-aged category (46-65) over the younger middle-aged (26-45) could support the statement made in connection with the population figures from the 1971 census; viz. that there has been a trend for younger middle-aged people to move out of North Ormesby and the older population to be retained.

Table IV gives a breakdown of the occupational structure of the sample. 53 (59.8%) of the respondents were employed in the manual trades, and (from applicable cases where information was gained about heads of households) 26 (82.5%) of the heads of households were employed in manual trades. Only 2 (2.3%) were self-employed.

TABLE II. Population and Housing Amenities according to the 1971 Census

Total population	5,326	(100%)
Population in private households	5,113	(96%)
Population aged 17+	3,853	(72%)
Number of dwellings occupied	1,995	(92%)
Number of dwellings vacant	175	(8%)
Dwellings with all amenities	670	(31%)
Dwellings with no hot water	452	(21%)
Dwellings with no bath ..	773	(35.5%)
Dwellings with no inside toilet	1,102	(51%)

TABLE III Socio-Economic Structure

	1971 Census Male	1971 Census Female	1971 Census Average	Cleveland Project Survey (1975) Male and Female Percentage	Actual No. of Respondents
Skilled manual workers	40.0%	4.0%	22.0%	24.7%	22
Unskilled manual workers	21.5%	15.5%	18.5%	14.8%	13
Semi-skilled manual workers	20.0%	16.0%	18.0%	18.0%	16
Foremen/supervisors (manual)	3.5%	---	1.75%	2.2%	2
Intermediate and junior non-manual	5.0%	42.0%	23.5%	21.4%	19
Ancillary workers	2.0%	6.0%	4.0%	6.8%	6
Own account workers	4.0%	7.0%	5.5%	0.0%	0
Miscellaneous	4.0%	9.5%	6.75%	5.7%	5
Housewives	---	---	---	5.7%	5
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.3%	88

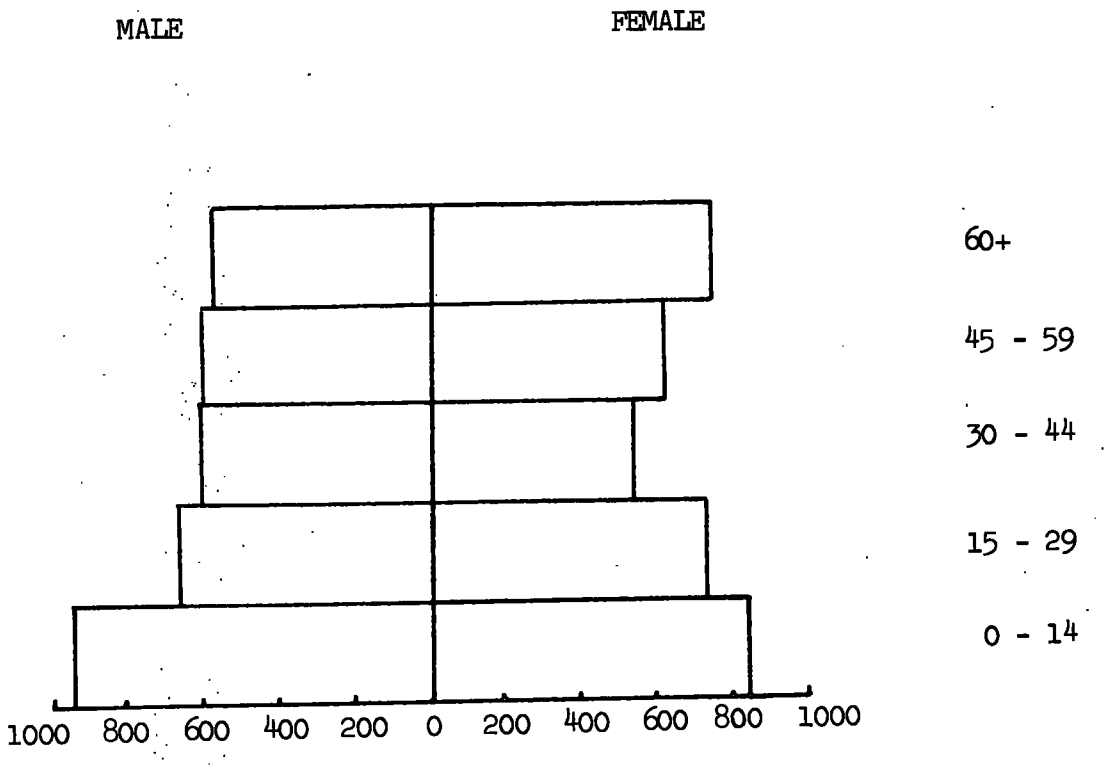
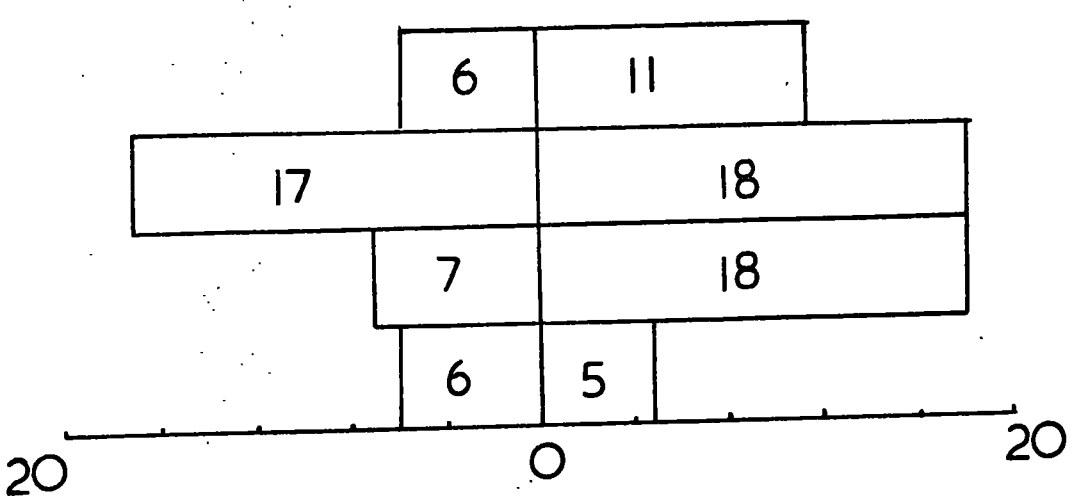


Fig.2. Age-Sex pyramid for North Ormesby constructed from the 1971 Census Data.

Fig. 3. Age-Sex Pyramid: North Ormesby Sample.



36 (40.9%)

FEMALE

52 (59.1%)

MALE

TABLE IV. Occupational structure; Random Sample Survey (North Ormesby)

Socio-economic category	Respondent	Head of Household
Skilled	22 (24.7%)	11 (34.3%)
Semi-skilled	16 (18.0%)	9 (28.2%)
Unskilled	13 (14.8%)	6 (18.8%)
Foremen	2 (2.3%)	2 (6.2%)
Intermediate and junior non-manual	19 (21.4%)	2 (6.2%)
Ancillary	6 (6.8%)	1 (3.1%)
Miscellaneous	5 (5.7%)	-
Housewives	5 (5.7%)	-
Professional	-	1 (3.1%)
Total	88 (99.4%)	32 (99.9%)

Another important feature of the workforce, highlighted by the random sample, is the narrow spatial range within which it is employed. 63 (71.6%) worked in Middlesbrough or the North Ormesby area and 46 of these (52.2%) travelled a mile or less to their place of work. A further 27 (30%) travelled less than five miles. With a population oriented to the manual trades and in close proximity to a range of heavy and light industries the sample shows a marked tendency for employment within a relatively small area. This, coupled with the fact that 47 (53.4%) respondents neither owned nor had access to a car, suggests that the mobility of the population is relatively low in comparison with other neighbourhoods of Middlesbrough.

Being an old and established neighbourhood area, North Ormesby contains numerous families with long and continuous residential histories in the locality. In comparison to the other localities sampled, the North Ormesby sample shows a higher degree of residential stability. Only 6 (6.8%) had lived at their address for less than a year and 24 (27.3%) for less than five years. Almost 50% of the sample had lived at their address for more than ten years. This is very much linked to the fact that the sample has a marked tendency towards the older age categories who, for the most part, constitute a residentially stable group in the locality.

TABLE V. Number of other places lived: Random Sample Survey (North Ormesby)

No. of other places lived	No. of respondents	Percentage of sample
None	15	17.0%
1	34	38.6%
2, 3	19	21.6%
4+	20	22.7%

This picture of an established and relatively stable population is given further evidence in the above table which gives the distribution of the number of places lived for the sample. Over half of the sample had either had no other address or had only made one residential move. 39 (44.3%) had never lived outside Cleveland. Of those who had been mobile, 41 had lived outside Cleveland. Most of these moves were accounted for by national service during the war or post-war years. Of those mobile within Cleveland, the majority mentioned other addresses in Middlesbrough, Cargo Fleet and North Ormesby. One inference which can be made from the sample data presented so far is that a large number of the inhabitants of North Ormesby are closely tied to their neighbourhood. This is further supported by the fact that 27 (30.7%) respondents had fathers who originated in North Ormesby and 28 (31.8%) had mothers born in the locality[1]. The survey also indicates that some families have three generations all living in North Ormesby. Many respondents made reference to the 'clannish' nature of the area in former times and one elderly respondent remarked: "When we first moved into North Ormesby it was a sort of closed community - everybody knew everybody else." Many, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the way this 'community spirit' was being eroded away by recent trends; in particular the increasingly rapid turnover of residents through demolition, the movement out of many families and the erection of new council houses. Thus, North Ormesby provides a good example of an old and stable working class area suddenly beginning to experience rapid physical and social change.

The level of education of the sample was on the whole low. Almost half of the respondents had left school at fourteen years of age or younger and a further 26 (29.5%) at fifteen years old. Only 17 (19.3%) had remained at school till sixteen or older. This, again reflects the

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1. These figures would probably have been substantially higher but for the fact that the sample included respondents from outside North Ormesby proper but who were part of the North Ormesby electoral ward.

predominance of the older age categories in the sample. In addition to the fact that many had left school at an early age, the level of full-time further education was also low. Eight (9.1%) had pursued full time further education courses but the majority of these were acquiring paper qualifications for manual trades at colleges of technology. Fifteen (17.1%) had attended similar part time courses.

Just over two thirds of the sample were owner-occupiers, 18 (20.5%) were renting their accommodation privately and 9 (10.2%) were renting from the local authority. It is likely that many more of the houses were at one time in the control of private landlords, usually living outside of the area and operating through intermediaries such as estate agents. It was the older residents who tended to be the ones still occupying rented accommodation. House buying was most common amongst the younger middle-aged people and these were also the ones favouring applying for improvement grants.

Twenty six of the sample claimed membership of local churches, thirteen being Catholic (14.8%), six Church of England (6.8%) and five Methodist (5.7%). The preponderance of Catholics is to be expected in this population, a substantial fraction of which is no doubt descended from the numerous Irish immigrants who have come to Middlesbrough over the last century. However, another important sphere of activity is that associated with the recreational life of the population. Forty-six (52.3%) mentioned a regular pub or club which they visited, most of these being establishments within North Ormesby, and thirty-five of these went there three or more times in a week. Working men's clubs, of which there are three in the locality, were particularly popular centres for socializing. Thirty-two of the sample said they were members of social clubs. Several of these (mainly women) mentioned bingo clubs. Eighteen (20.4%) mentioned membership of a sports club and twelve (13.2%) referred to church or welfare groups. In contrast, few claimed membership of political groups (3%) or civic and community groups (3%). Almost one third of the groups or clubs

mentioned were in the North Ormesby and Cargo Fleet area and 43% were based in Middlesbrough.

In addition to the contacts developed in institutional contexts, more informal ties were also found to be very important. Many respondents mentioned kin and friends resident in the North Ormesby area and in answer to the question "Which six people do you spend most time with?" neighbours were frequently among those cited. Consequently kinship ties and other relationships based on friendship and neighbourhood predominate along with more formal links based on work, church, social clubs and voluntary organizations.

The evidence drawn from the sample suggests that even over the years since the study made by Glass (a period of considerable change in comparison to that of the previous century) North Ormesby has retained a fairly high degree of neighbourhood integration. The area provides shopping facilities, public houses, social clubs, places of worship and a variety of religious groups. Furthermore, places of work are not far removed. This corroborates the local image of a neighbourhood endowed with "community spirit", distinct socially and geographically from other areas of Middlesbrough.

Participation, Information and Attitudes

Participation in local affairs concerning planning is often gauged by officials in terms of the numbers attending public meetings or the responses to 'official' circulars and publicity. In the Cleveland project survey we were concerned to examine in more detail the possibilities open for participation, both official and unofficial, and if possible to ascertain the motivations for participating. Eighteen (20.5%) of the North Ormesby sample claimed to have taken part in a "local issue". This could range from joining local pressure groups to the signing of a petition. Nineteen (21.6%) claimed to have attended a public meeting. This is in comparison to the total sample of which 16.7% had taken part in a local issue and 26.6% had attended a public meeting.

The survey also attempted to ascertain why these persons decided to get involved. It became apparent in the North Ormesby sample that the motivations for becoming involved varied from relatively passive participation such as signing a petition on the doorstep to more active participation expressed through attending meetings. This could be sparked off in different ways either through some personal threat to one's immediate neighbourhood or through some wider issue. Comments such as the following are typical:

> The meeting was about general redevelopment plans. They started pulling houses down near the school. I decided to get involved because I'm a resident here and I have to put up with it.

or:

> I've been to meetings about different things in the community centre, for example when the residents association proposed those plans of their own. I found out about that meeting at the chapel. I think people have the right to decide what their town is going to be like.

Another individual claimed to have attended a meeting of a local residents association because of curiosity, he wanted to know what was going on. One is left with the impression that for different people "participation" means very different things. For some it offers a means by which individual grievances can be expressed or interests defended; for others it presents the opportunity to develop more fully an interest in their area and its people and for some it may simply be an interesting way to spend a few evenings. The situation in North Ormesby is further affected by the range of issues which have come to the fore over the last few years. Different issues attract different people to participate. This was shown in the survey results: those who became involved, did so through various issues from traffic problems to general redevelopment, rates, road schemes and parking problems.

As regards more specific public participation, the survey results show that five of the sample claimed to have read Teesplan while a further thirteen (14.8%) had read summaries of it or were aware of some of the

content. Six of these said they had made their views known to the planning office in writing.

Although only 20% of the sample can be regarded as 'participators' in the broadest sense of the word many more expressed strong views on a variety of issues. It is apparent from the information yielded by the survey that many more than 20% have a latent interest in local affairs although this may not come to be expressed in active participation. Such people may not emerge as participators for many different reasons. Attending public meetings or meetings of residents associations may compete for time with family duties and other social activities. Others express the view that regardless of any effort to participate, decisions have already been taken by officials and they cannot be altered. This feeling of inefficacy is often clearly voiced. The questionnaire attempted to elicit this by including the question "Can local people influence the decisions taken by councils?" Thirty (34.1%) of the sample clearly stated that there was no possibility of this. "A lot of the time planners and councillors decide on something and local people are never consulted."; "Local people who have the education or money might be able to but it would not be worth my while to make the effort."; "They are willing to listen but don't always do anything about it." Such comments illustrate a feeling common in the North Ormesby population, that efforts to influence decisions are fruitless. Fifty (56.9%) did believe that local people could influence decisions made but very few of these felt it was easy. Many made reference to the need for local people to organize in groups to be effective:

> If there are sufficient number but not individually.
>
> If there's a good body of them but if there's only one or two individuals they've no chance.
>
> If you get a group up - yes. You need to get a proper leader - someone who is a good speaker. It depends on the manner of how you go about things.

Even from people who had had no experience of dealing with councillors there were comments referring to the inaccessibility of councillors or the futility of relating problems to them. These were obviously views drawn from a common neighbourhood opinion of councillors:

> You can talk to them and they will listen but then it's up to them whether they do anything or not. I've heard a few saying they've complained about things but never got them done.
>
> It's not very easy to get them to listen according to what I hear.

On the other hand some individuals (31, 35.2%) held the view that councillors were accessible if a person was prepared to make the effort to go and see them. They were more sceptical, however, of the effectiveness of the procedure. In comparison with the overall sample, North Ormesby was low in terms of how effective the population felt in influencing decisions and a larger percentage was unable to offer an opinion.

As regards some of the more emotive issues the North Ormesby sample had some clearly defined views. Many of the sample were aware of the public participation concept and 74 (84.1%) stated explicitly that local people should be given a much more active role in the planning of the area. One issue which had emerged concerned the demolition of houses which were felt by many local people to be worthy of modernization. Several argued that modernization would be much less costly than new housing and would help to maintain the traditional North Ormesby 'community spirit'. Well over half of the sample thought that residents and industry should be kept separate, but some had reservations, stating that industrial establishments could not be too divorced from the working population because of the travelling costs that would be incurred.

On the whole the North Ormesby sample displayed poor knowledge of the local councillors. Furthermore, several of the respondents made mistakes by mentioning well known local public figures who were not councillors or misplacing the ones they did refer to; i.e. by naming as

local councillors individuals who were not councillors for North Ormesby. The relevant data are set out in the following table along with those for the Cleveland project survey sample as a whole.

Table VI. Knowledge of local councillors: the North Ormesby sample

	North Ormesby	Cleveland Project Survey
None	64 (72.7%)	324 (58.7%)
One	17 (19.3%)	118 (21.4%)
Two	3 (3.4%)	55 (10.0%)
Three	0 (0%)	18 (3.3%)
Four	2 (2.3%)	9 (1.6%)

The figures show quite strikingly the lower level of knowledge of councillors among the North Ormesby sample as compared with the sample as a whole. The data also seem to suggest a poor knowledge of local government generally which would tie in closely with the commonly held view of political inefficacy exhibited by the North Ormesby respondents.

Attitudes towards the changing face of North Ormesby

Three rather contrasting types of attitude were expressed concerning the changing landscape of North Ormesby. Firstly, certain individuals stated that North Ormesby was being ruined, that the old community spirit which it had enjoyed was being lost. Blame was focussed mainly on planners or the council and several made reference to an influx of undesirable residents. Such views were mainly expressed by older individuals who had lived in the area for most of their lives. Comments such as the following are typical:

> There's a big difference between the old part and the new part of North Ormesby. The 'community spirit' is still preserved to a certain extent in the old part. In the new part there's no 'community spirit' ; the houses are built in such a way as to prevent it. I don't know the people upstairs just a few from the road.
>
> (Old man living in the new flats.)

> Around the market place they've knocked some good houses down and moved some poor old people out that have never been used to moving.

Other respondents on the other hand claimed that North Ormesby had improved over the years. Middle-aged and younger people appeared to be more likely to hold these views preferring to see the old face of North Ormesby replaced by a more modern outlook.

> North Ormesby is changing for the better. It's good to see them get rid of the old rotten houses and build some new ones. You wouldn't know the market square these days from what it was.

> North Ormesby has changed for the better 100%. Those houses should have been down years ago. I would also like to see the council buying houses and improving them.

Another group claimed that North Ormesby had changed very little in their view. These people were for the most part in the younger age group. They often expressed a dissatisfaction with the appearance of the area and argued that very little seemed to be happening.

> They've knocked down a few houses otherwise it hasn't changed much. The only part that has changed is around the market square.

The North Ormesby population, therefore, exhibits a variety of views and attitudes towards their neighbourhood and interpret the changing landscape in different ways. Many factors can affect the way an individual interprets his immediate surroundings, but in particular one must look to his sources of information, his socio-economic circumstances and the types of social relationships in which he is involved. The channels through which individuals find out about new developments in the area are set out in the form of a table below.

The table shows two things. Firstly, it highlights the mixed results of the official channels of publicity as sources of direct information on developments. Newspapers are clearly important as disseminators of information - 68 (77%) of the sample took the local evening paper. In contrast the other official channels (public meetings,

Table VII. Sources of Information about Planning and Local Government Matters: the North Ormesby sample.

Newspapers	62	(42.3%)
General talk	35	(23.5%)
Local T.V./Radio	28	(18.8%)
Through associations/ societies	4	(2.7%)
Public meetings	3	(2.0%)
Official channels/displays/ handouts	2	(1.35%)
Personal approach	2	(1.35%)
Other	12	(8.0%)

handouts, displays, etc.) show up as poor direct sources of information. Secondly, the informal or unofficial channels under the heading of "general talk" are clearly important. This could include a whole range of personal social contacts, i.e. the individual's social network.

The general talk category stands out even more strongly in relation to the current local issues known by the respondents. A third of them mentioned local gossip as being their source of information, 17% mentioned newspapers and 12% public meetings. It was only in relation to the active participators in finding out about the issue they took part in that the official channels began to assume a key role.

There are many ways in which individuals may participate in community activities and more particularly in the planning of the locality. These cannot be encompassed in "official" channels alone and it was therefore necessary in our investigations to include "unofficial" channels. Such informal participation could include finding out about plans without necessarily writing to comment on them, or could involve the person in participating in a local issue by giving support to more active participants (signing a petition or attending non-official meetings would be examples

of such "unofficial" participation). On this basis a participation index was constructed with five categories:

1) No participation in local affairs.

2) Those who have been involved in a local issue and/or attended a public meeting.

3) Those who had read the plans and/or commented on them but had not been involved in a local issue or attended a public meeting.

4) A combination of three out of the four mentioned above.

5) Those who had done all of these things, viz. had been involved in a local issue, had attended a public meeting, had read the plans for the area and had sent in comments on them to the planning office.

A comparison of the North Ormesby sample and the total Cleveland survey sample is shown in Table VIII. The striking feature to note in this table is the higher percentage of high participators (categories four and five) in the North Ormesby sample as compared to the total sample. This seems to contradict the data which shows that North Ormesby scored poorly on knowledge or local councillors and local planning matters as compared to the total sample. On closer examination it seems that these high participators in the North Ormesby sample are also the individuals who had a high degree of knowledge of local planning matters and of local councillors. This dichotomy was not so clearly marked in relation to the total sample. The higher figure for high participators also reflects the greater need to participate in planning matters to safeguard personal interests in an area undergoing rapid physical development and change.

I conclude this section by describing the social characteristics, knowledge and attitudes, and the types of social networks of the five people who fell in the category "high participators".

High Participator A.

This individual was male, 48 years old and a chemist's dispenser at Boots in Middlesbrough. His work involved him in a lot of travelling around the region. He was born in North Ormesby, has had more than five addresses and owns his present home. He has a car and a telephone. He has a strong attachment with the Methodist church and is also a member of the North Ormesby residents association. He knew the names of several officers and also of the four district councillors. He also knew of local issues and had attended meetings on the planned change of North Ormesby. He had written letters to the councillors and it was his view that in order to get councillors to listen to local views, strength in numbers was essential and also "good contacts". Several of his kin were also living in North Ormesby and his affines lived closeby in Thorntree. Of his six most frequent contacts, five lived elsewhere in Cleveland.

High Participator B.

The second high participator was female, 64 years old and a housewife. She had no further education and had lived at only one other address. Her present house was privately rented. This participator also had close links with the Methodist church and in particular the voluntary organizations associated with the chapel, viz. the Methodist Sisterhood and the Guild. She was also a member of the North Ormesby Community Centre and the Berwick Hills Community Centre. She did not know any local government officials by name and could name only one councillor. She did however have a good knowledge of local issues particularly pertaining to planning. She had attended public meetings about local plans and felt the best way to express her views was through the residents association or alternatively at a public meeting. As far as influencing decisions was concerned she claimed that it depended very much on the type of councillor approached and also that strength in numbers was effective. Her parents and the parents of her spouse were local people and her husband had been a skilled

workman at the Cargo Fleet steel works. Her children were married and living elsewhere in Cleveland. The six mentioned as most frequent contacts were all North Ormesby people and were drawn mainly from the church and community centre contacts she had. Her view of the plans was that, while she was not against change, she felt that "they take too long to replace buildings they have knocked down."

High Participator C.

This person was male, 43 years old and a fuel technician at the British Steel Company at South Bank. He had had some further education at Teesside Polytechnic in connection with his job. He was born in North Ormesby, was an owner-occupier and had had three other residences. He was a practising Catholic. He was also a member of several voluntary organizations including a union, the Labour Party, a cricket club, a social club and the W.E.A. He knew the names of some planners but not of any other local government officers. He mentioned ten councillors including the four district councillors. He felt the best way to express an opinion was to go personally to a district councillor. He thought it was quite easy to get councillors to listen but to influence decisions "depended on who you are". The respondent had a close-knit network of kin centred on North Ormesby and his six most frequent contacts all lived in North Ormesby. He believed it was a good policy to rehouse people but stated that "planners made some big blunders".

High Participator D.

High participator D was 36 years old and a mechanic working in North Ormesby. He was born in Dover but had spent a considerable part of his life in the Teesside region. He was the owner-occupier of a house threatened by demolition and had presented an argument for the preservation of the row of houses of which his was a part to the local authorities through the North Ormesby residents association. His only voluntary

organization membership was of the army reserves. He could not name any local government planners or officers or any local councillors, although he did mention a previous North Ormesby councillor who was resident in the area. He had attended local meetings concerning the plans for North Ormesby and had written a letter to the district planning office about the proposal to demolish his home. He felt it was difficult to get councillors to listen to the complaints of local people and it was only possible to influence the decisions they took "occasionally". Apart from his father and mother who were non-local, his network contacts were primarily within the neighbourhood. His wife had originated in North Ormesby and had kin still resident there. His six most frequent contacts were all resident in North Ormesby.

High Participator E.

This individual was 40 years old and a process operator at ICI Wilton. He was an owner-occupier and had had only one previous residence. He was a member of the local Caged Bird Society and was involved with the social committee at his works. He knew of local government officials and could name all four local councillors. He had attended public meetings concerning rates and local plans and was a member of the Cargo Fleet residents association. He felt it was easy to get councillors to listed to local views but the strength of a group was needed to alter decisions taken. Several of the network links mentioned were resident in the neighbourhood and others in Middlesbrough.

Concluding Remarks

Drawing on the evidence of the random sample survey it becomes clear that the problem of participation and non-participation is a much more complex one than is often suggested in the literature. Within the relatively small population of North Ormesby, a variety of conceptualizations is apparent concerning "participation". Furthermore, there is a variety of attitudes about the changing face of North Ormesby and other more specific

issues. One fact which does emerge, one which has not been adequately recognized in the existing literature, is that the pattern of responses to planning cannot be divorced from the social context in which they are set. The nature of the responses to planning from a particular locality are not only a result of the policy adopted by the local government authorities or of the types of issues which arise, they are also a reflection of the local patterns of social organization.

The pattern of responses emerging from a particular locality will be closely related to the local institutional framework and also the types of social networks prevalent in the area. The character of the former will determine the extent to which there is a base from which to organize a response and what form this response will take. For example in the study by Batley, cited earlier in the thesis (Chapter 1), he shows that Byker was well endowed with voluntary organizations, but that since these rejected any political role they could not form the basis for an organised response. In contrast there are clues from the survey results which suggest that the institutional framework within North Ormesby incorporates certain groups which are amenable to organizing a response to planning issues. In particular Methodist organisations, a community centre and a residents association have been mentioned.

In addition to the character of the institutional framework, the nature of the social networks prevalent in the locality will also assume great importance in shaping responses to planning. This is reflected in the prominence of the 'general talk' category for obtaining information about planning matters. Social networks are not only important as 'informal' disseminators of information, they also act as the media through which attitudes, opinions and values become established. A more 'active' aspect of social network is that they form informal bases from which to organize responses to particular issues. One suggestion which can be made from the survey results is that a low sense of efficacy does not necessarily

correspond with non-participation. Individuals may feel that the odds are against them if they attempt to change or influence decisions but this does not prevent them attempting to participate. This is illustrated by the fact that although the North Ormesby sample scored low on the confidence it felt about being able to change or influence council decisions, it scored highly in terms of overall participation in and knowledge of planning matters.

Our brief look at the five high participators from the North Ormesby sample suggests that there may be a close connection between participation in local planning matters and membership of voluntary organizations. All five have some connection with local associations, two of them being closely tied to the Methodist church and one to the Catholic church. Four of them showed knowledge of a local residents association and one was the neighbour of the chairman of the North Ormesby residents association. All had well-developed local networks of kin, friends and relatives.

Responses to planning issues in North Ormesby are clearly affected by the nature of the institutional framework of the area and the character of local informal networks. In the remainder of the thesis I propose to examine in more detail the mechanisms through which responses are organized. This will be accomplished by examining the initiation, development and activities of a residents association in order to demonstrate that certain internal factors are crucial for understanding the nature of responses to planning in North Ormesby. I will pay particular attention to the internal dynamics of the group and also to its connections with the local population and how these are utilised to gain support for the group in its dealings with local government. In the first part of the next chapter I give a description of how the group was formed, and the social characteristics of its personnel and in the second part of the chapter I go on to examine the group as a bounded network of social relations and identify the roles played by different members of the group.

CHAPTER 4

THE NORTH ORMESBY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

The Formation of the North Ormesby Residents Association

After the Second World War, and particularly during the 1960's, planning departments within the Teesside region gave attention to the old inner urban core regions along the river. The 1969 "Teesplan" identified one of the main problems in the region as being the obsolescence of much of the housing of the inner urban areas. It also pointed to the bad atmospheric pollution which was associated with these housing areas since much of the heavy industry was close by. There was a strong feeling in the planning departments that living conditions needed to be improved for the bulk of the population living close to the urban centres. Alternative housing would also be made available on the urban fringe.

North Ormesby was one of the areas affected by such a policy. I have already mentioned in an earlier section how the late 1960's ushered in a period of considerable change for North Ormesby with the council emphasising the need to clear many of the old pre-First World War streets. By the early 1970's these had been cleared and although some new council houses were soon erected large areas of land were left as open spaces to wait till sufficient council funds were available for building. There was, however, a question mark on what would actually be built. The council and planning department seemed to favour the building of an old folks day centre and old folks bungalows. The series of streets to the east of Kings Road, and to the south of Esk Street was labelled a G.I.A. (General improvement area) although the shape that these 'improvements' might take was unclear. Along the eastern side of North Ormesby, an area of open waste land, small industry was beginning to take up sites, much to the distaste of local residents.

It was while North Ormesby was in this state of flux that a public participation programme was launched in February 1973. The Teesside County

Borough proposed that it would consist of three basic elements: publicity and information, meetings to exchange information and stimulate discussion and the collection and analysis of public response. Thus exhibitions, the distribution of leaflets and information and the calling of public meetings became the main focii for those wishing to participate. Following the suggestions of the Skeffington Report, many local councils were attempting to stimulate neighbourhood and residents groups. Teesside County Borough had also adopted this policy.

Such neighbourhood councils and residents groups have flourished in recent years throughout the country but their success has varied greatly. The scope, range of interests and the method of operation have varied widely but in particular they have been initiated, from an official point of view at least, to stimulate self-help, to provide a link for local residents to voice their opinion, and to foster a feeling of community responsibillty. In the case of NORA the group came into being during this period of public consultation for the Teesside Structure Plan (1973). A series of public meetings was held in North Ormesby concerning the future development of the area. The main aims were to present the ideas of planners to local people and to give the residents a chance to air their own views and grievances. At one such meeting in 1973, one of the councillors for the area outlined the desire of the council to involve people in the planning process. This introduced the North Ormesby people to the relatively new phrase 'public participation'. He stated it was policy in the country generally, and also in Teesside, to create residents' groups, as it was felt that this would be the most effective way of allowing people to participate. He appealed to the audience for volunteers to get the Residents' Association off the ground, looking to certain members of the audience with whom he was already familiar, being the individuals who had turned up at other meetings with grievances and had spoken out.

The first people to become involved all lived along the eastern fringe of North Ormesby, an area which had for some time been in the news locally because of the complaints of its residents. Along this eastern fringe the houses faced onto open waste ground which was slowly being taken up by light industry such as vehicle sprayers, panel beaters, and an ice cream factory. The council were also using part of it as a dump. Petitions had been drawn up to appeal against the use of heavy lorries through the streets of North Ormesby and against the use of the land as a dump (Evening Gazette, 5.10.1967). Individuals had also, for some time, been complaining to councillors or to various local authority departments about the noise, health hazards, and general environmental deterioration of the area.

Ivy McEvoy was one of the original NORA members. She is forty-five years old and married with three children, two of whom are employed and live at home and one is on voluntary service overseas. At the time of NORA being formed she was working as a sales assistant on a North Ormesby market stall. She was born in Middlesbrough but moved to North Ormesby after being married in 1950. She has worked in North Ormesby market for about fifteen years. Due to her long residence in the area, her association with the Catholic church, and her working in the market, she has a wealth of contacts in North Ormesby. Her husband, Ted McEvoy, was born in North Ormesby and has lived there for most of his life. He is forty nine years old and is employed nearby in a heavy engineering works as a boilermaker/plater. He has had a long association with the boilermakers' trade union for which he is the branch treasurer. The McEvoys' original involvement at public meetings occurred as a result of several grievances they had in their immediate neighbourhood - the sudden erection of a small factory across the road and the untidy and muddy mess which was their street. Ivy in particular had been tenacious in her attempts to pressure the councillors into doing something about it.

Betty and Bob Ferguson lived nearby, both natives of North Ormesby. Betty worked as an assistant in a North Ormesby betting shop and her husband as a maintenance engineer at I.C.I. Wilton. They had complained about the squalid conditions of nearby derelict and boarded up houses and the unsurfaced 'bsck-archway' between their own street and that of Ivy. They too had put pressure on councillors privately in public meetings and at ward surgeries.

Also on the east side lived three other individuals who became involved in NORA from the outset. Bill Bradshaw, fifty-one years old, is employed as a foreman electrician at I.C.I. Wilton. He has been resident in North Ormesby for over fifteen years, having previously lived at South Bank, Grangetown and Eston. Janice Hawkins, forty-two years old, was born in North Ormesby and although she has spent some time living at nearby Brambles Farm, moved back to North Ormesby after marriage. She has two teenage children and works as a secretary in the North Ormesby hospital. Susan Parkes, a life-long resident of North Ormesby, is thirty-nine and works with Betty Ferguson at a local betting shop. She is married with two children and was born in one of the North Ormesby streets now demolished. All three had been active individually for some time, ringing the councillors and local authority departments, being concerned about the noise from the ice cream factory across the road and the dumping of rubbish on the spare land.

To summarize, seven individuals were drawn into membership of the NORA committee because of their previous behaviour as local 'activists'. A variety of local issues had emerged - the expanding industry, the noise and pollution from these industries, and the general neglect of the environment along the eastern fringe of North Ormesby all presenting threats on the doorsteps of these early participants.

During the early months of its existence the NORA committee, according to the participants themselves, was disorganized and ineffective. Ivy

McEvoy assumed the role of secretary, Betty Ferguson that of treasurer and the man who had agreed to act as chairman at the public meeting was neither heard of nor seen again. They made an early attempt during the summer of 1973, to gather a substantial following from within the North Ormesby population by calling a public meeting at the North Ormesby community centre, but this was attended by only six people. Their attempts to get NORA on a firmer footing were unsuccessful and they had to be content with pursuing relatively minor issues such as the personal complaints of particular individuals and the problem of re-siting a post box.

However, during 1973 four individuals joined NORA who could be described as local leaders, three of them well educated and articulate, and all of them already involved in local affairs through other channels. In interviewing the seven original NORA committee members (and also to a certain extent in the random sample survey conducted in North Ormesby ward) these four men were described as individuals to whom one could go to get things done. Three of the four are leading North Ormesby Methodists (Matt Woods, Fred Pickering and Ron Clayton) and the fourth (David Harvey) is the Church of England vicar of North Ormesby.

Both Matt Woods and David Harvey only arrived in North Ormesby during 1973 but in contrasting church situations. Matt Woods, a native of Lowestoft, had only qualified as a Methodist minister in 1970 and had held one other post in Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham, before taking his second post in North Ormesby. NORA had already been created at this time, but, in his own words ... "one felt almost obliged to get involved, particularly as the group was doing work which is important in the kind of community North Ormesby is."

The Methodist church had been established early in the history of North Ormesby, both Wesleyan and Primitive sects being represented. With the amalgamation of the two, a new chapel was built in the centre of

North Ormesby on Kings Road. The new minister found a thriving Methodist church with a proliferation of church groups and voluntary organizations. In contrast David Harvey took over a situation where the church was at a low ebb, with poor attendances, few church groups and minimal participation.

Fred Pickering, an elderly man now retired but previously a clerk with a local engineering firm, was born in North Ormesby and has lived there for most of his life except for a period in the navy. He had also had a life-long association with the Methodist church and had become a well respected local figure. One informant described him as the 'Guardian angel of North Ormesby' referring to his activities as a letter writer and representative of local people who could not speak for themselves, particularly in their dealings with bureaucratic organizations. He was also chairman of the Methodist Social Responsibility group - a voluntary organization deliberately founded to act as a stimulus for community responsibility. During the early 1970's he had been actively campaigning for the creation of a community centre in North Ormesby to give a concrete base from which to develop a genuine community atmosphere and it was during his activities in this field that he became increasingly well known at public meetings. He was already known to several NORA members before this time: Ted McEvoy was employed at the same engineering firm, Bill Bradshaw knew of him through his children who were involved in some of the Methodist church groups and Betty also knew of him since she had once lived in a nearby street.

Ron Clayton, similarly, has lived in North Ormesby for most of his life and has also been involved with the Methodist church since childhood. He, too, was active in several of the church groups and had also been a scoutmaster and a sunday school teacher for a period. However his education, career structure and his experience in various church, sports and social clubs

were such that he could provide NORA with a set of skills and experiences that previously it had lacked. Having been educated at Middlesbrough grammar school to the age of eighteen, he then trained and worked as a draughtsman for a local firm. In 1967, at the age of thirty, he changed his career and became an advertising salesman with a local newspaper. In 1973 he took over as manager of a travel agency and more recently worked as a sales promotion manager for a Teesside night club. During my period of research he was engaged in setting up his own publicity business. He already knew three of the original NORA group. Bill Bradshaw had previously been a neighbour and was also a member of the same Conservative club as Ron.[1] He knew Fred Pickering from the Methodist chapel and Betty was an old friend of both Ron and his sister. At a large public meeting during 1974, Ron distinguished himself by taking on the councillors and local authority officials. He was cynical about their attempts to stimulate public participation, and questioned the shape 'development' had already taken in North Ormesby. In effect, he made himself an obvious target for some of the early NORA members for after the meeting Betty Ferguson and Ivy McEvoy approached him and asked him to be chairman of the NORA committee, a post which Fred Pickering, since his involvement, had agreed to fill temporarily.

This completes the description of how the eleven NORA committee members came to be included in the group. One can immediately make the distinction between two types of involvement. On the one hand, there is the type of involvement which, through a process of discontent and apprehensiveness, culminates in the individual attempting to communicate local feeling to the governing bodies. This frequently ends in frustration or dissatisfaction with the response of the councillors. This type of involvement stems from 'back-door' threats - discontent with the developments or lack of developments in the immediate vicinity of the subject's home.

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1. The Conservative Club is a social rather than political institution.

These can be called 'limited interest' participators. On the other hand, one can distinguish the kind of involvement which follows naturally from the structural positions certain individuals occupy in the community. By virtue of their role in the community they become the focus for local pressure groups who may attempt to conscript their support for the skills they possess and for the influence their position would carry in their dealings with outside bodies. Furthermore, these individuals themselves may be motivated to become involved not so much for any threat to their immediate situation but to fulfil certain moral obligations. Such individuals can be seen as 'community oriented' participators.

None of the original seven committee members had previously been involved, in any way, in local political affairs but each of them had lived there for a number of years and several of them (Ted, Betty, Bob and Susan) for most of their lives. All of them claim to be able to gauge the tenor of feeling in their particular circle of kin, friends and neighbours, and consequently argue that they can speak for a substantial fraction of the North Ormesby population. Furthermore, five of them work locally and come into contact with many North Ormesby people in the course of their jobs. Ivy worked as a sales assistant on a North Ormesby market staff for fifteen years and recently took a job in a fruit shop on Kings Road. This brings her into contact with a wide range of local people, particularly housewives, and it was apparent that the fruit shop was often used as a place of gossip with information being passed both ways, from Ivy to the customers and vice versa. Similarly, Betty and Susan are employed in a local betting shop which brings them into contact with a wide variety of North Ormesby people - predominantly male. Ted is employed at an engineering firm about half a mile from his home where a considerable number of North Ormesby's male working population are also employed. He

TABLE VIII Social Characteristics of the NORA Committee Members

Name	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Birth Place	Length of residence in North Ormesby	Occupation	Network qualities local	Network qualities extra-local	Local Kin	
									Birth	Marriage
Ron Clayton	40	M	S	Middlesbrough	36 years	Sales Promotion Manager	++++	++++	/	X
Matt Woods	36	M	M	Lowestoft	2 years	Methodist Minister	++	++	X	X
Fred Pickering	70	M	M	North Ormesby	65 years	Retired (Clerk)	++++	++	/	/
David Harvey	32	M	M	York	3 years	C/E Vicar	++	++	X	X
Ivy McEvoy	45	F	M	Middlesbrough	25 years	Shop Assistant	++++	+	X	/
Ted McEvoy	49	M	M	North Ormesby	49 years	Boilermaker/Plater	+++	++	/	X
Betty Ferguson	42	F	M	North Ormesby	40 years	Betting-Shop Assistant	++++	+	/	/
Bob Ferguson	43	M	M	North Ormesby	42 years	Maintenance Engineer ICI	+++	++	/	/
Bill Bradshaw	51	M	M	Thornaby	15 years	Foreman Electrician ICI	+++	++	X	X
Janice Hawkins	42	F	M	North Ormesby	30 years	Secretary (North Ormesby Hospital)	+++	+	/	/
Susan Parkes	39	F	M	North Ormesby	39 years	Betting-Shop Assistant	++++	+	/	/

Network Qualities:
++++ Very extensive
+++ Fairly extensive
++ Moderately extensive
+ Few contacts

/ Kin present
X No kin present

has a wide range of work contacts because he is a trade union representative for the boilermakers and holds a position of considerable respect in the works union as branch treasurer. Bill is also an ardent trade union man and joined the branch committee of the I.C.I. electricians' trade union in 1970. Both Bill and Bob are employed at I.C.I. Wilton, which, although several miles away, provides employment for many North Ormesby people (5.7% of the sample).

Table IX, which summarizes the social attributes of the seven NORA members, shows that five of them have both cognates and affines living in the area. Also their local networks of friends and acquaintances vary from moderately extensive to very extensive; and three of them (Ivy, Betty, and Susan) are involved in local church or voluntary organizations. When asked about how they got involved with NORA, all seven tended to give similar answers. According to Janice:

> This end of North Ormesby was probably the worst of the lot. We [husband and herself] kept going to meetings to complain about the state of the land across the road. All the garages had been vandalized ... The place was in a mess and the workshops didn't help. Basically, we had complaints of our own.

Susan:

> Even before the residents' association we had complained about it [the ice cream factory]. Everybody in the street complained. But I actually rang up the council to complain about it.

Ivy:

> Really it started when we wanted a proper road laying outside the house. Also the planners said they were going to leave an open space across the road but we got garages and a warehouse instead. It really annoyed us.

Thus each individual had a personal complaint shared by their neighbours which was transmitted to the councillors. Furthermore, it became apparent in interviewing that for these seven NORA offered a powerful way of influencing the councillors, far superior to the process of presenting complaints on an individual basis. For example, Bill expressed his motives in the following way:

> I got involved with NORA right at the beginning. A meeting was called at the community centre by Councillor Barton for the people of North Ormesby ... I think Councillors Harrison and Whelan were there as well. Councillor Barton said that they were trying to get the participation of people in planning the place. Anyway, he was leading up to saying that the best way for residents to be involved was through a residents' committee. The ideal thing would be a residents' association. To get it off the ground they asked for volunteers to form a committee. Barton assured us that the councillors would do everything to help us get things going ... Eventually, Janice, Susan and myself ended up on the committee. With the monstrosity we have to put up with across the road we wanted a way in which we could let our feelings be known.

In contrast, the more altruistically motivated churchmen expressed their involvement in terms of serving the community. The vicar described the group as the 'community-conscious element', and for him there is a commitment to the community ideal allied to a Christian ethos. He said that on arriving in North Ormesby 'there was a need to get involved because many of the people were unable to speak for themselves'; and went on to say that at the moment it tends to be him alone who is involved rather than the members of his church, although he was trying hard to get over to his congregation the need to be active in local affairs ...'these people have never been consulted before and so they won't get involved. They think they can't change anything.' The vicar came into contact with the residents' association through the community centre which was beginning to flourish at the time of his arrival (early 1973) and he was asked to join the management committee. At the same time the residents' association was beginning to operate and they too saw in the vicar a valuable recruit for he possessed educated skills, the influence of his position, and in a short period of time had established himself as an outward-going and forward-looking clergyman. At first he declined the offer from the residents' association because of his major commitment of trying to expand his church congregation which for some years had been run down and ineffective. However, 1973 was an eventful year for North Ormesby with a considerable amount of redevelopment taking place. Local elections were held in the spring and also the public participation exercise was first

put into operation. Consequently through his participation in public meetings the vicar became drawn more and more into the activities of the residents' association committee.

The addition of the vicar to the group was not the only injection of community and christian ideals. There was also a substantial Methodist element in the form the group was eventually to take. Again, all three Methodists expressed the ideals of community above those of self interest and saw their involvement in 'local affairs' as totally compatible with their religious commitments.

In the words of Ron Clayton:

> The feeling in the Methodist church at the moment is to bring in a series of committees ... these are much more sensible for present day neighbourhood needs. Fred Pickering is the chairman of the Social Responsibility group ... he's always been involved in that kind of thing. There is a bigger awareness now of its importance. It used to be called the Christian Citizen Society and was concerned mainly with the evils of drinking and gambling - Methodists saw these as the two biggest evils. Social responsibility has greatly widened ... there is the idea of the church being a club ... a place where you can go and catch up on the gossip. They've had to look at what they were doing and realized what they should be doing was <u>outside</u> the church rather than in. NORA and my commitments with the church are totally compatible. My basic philosophy is a sense of love and concern for other people as well as myself. I think there is a responsibility to get involved and to get other people to think for themselves ... I see it as performing a Christian function.

Thus the NORA committee consists of a fusion of community and individual interests. But the strong altruistic and magnanimous ethos of certain persons in the group has pervaded to such an extent that some of the earlier participants are also beginning to talk in terms of community ideals. According to David Harvey, the group as a whole has experienced a broadening of vision and the ultimate aim is to transmit this to the wider population of North Ormesby. No longer is the committee a coalition of persons with specific complaints about 'backdoor threats', rather there exists a series of individual, group and community interests. For different individuals the group may have meant different things but there is now a common thread linking them: the way they express the need

to represent community interests. Indeed it would seem that this was an essential step in the development of the committee as an ongoing pressure group, for such a group could not be based totally on the diffuse collection of individual interests from which it had originally been formed.

Robert Moore (1974) has drawn attention to the crucial role of Methodism and its ideology in facilitating the emergence of radical political careers from within the church in certain Durham mining villages:

> Their political language was often the language of the bible. Thus at a relatively simple level we may say that Methodism was conducive to radicalism by providing a language for political protest, giving the religious basis for social and political activity ... for those who wished to pursue such activities heightening social consciousness through study and by providing oratorial and organizational skill.
> (Moore, 1970, p.225)

I am not suggesting that the processes highlighted by Moore in his analysis are to be found within the Methodist communities of Middlesbrough, but there are parallels in the way community leaders have emerged in North Ormesby and the rise of Methodist political activists in certain Durham pit villages. The well-developed extra-chapel activities (in the form of youth clubs, discussion groups and welfare organizations) has, in certain individuals, stimulated a community-oriented consciousness and a desire to be involved in local affairs.

Having outlined in detail the formation of the group and what it means for the different actors, it is necessary to focus on the committee as a bounded network. Following this I discuss the roles played by particular individuals in the group in dealing with its internal and external business. This provides the necessary background to an understanding of the mechanisms by which the group attempts to present a unified front <u>vis-a-vis</u> the local authorities. It is then possible to examine more precisely the conditions influencing the types of interaction between the two.

Some Aspects of the NORA Committee as a bounded network

The present network study is anchored on a particular group - the committee of the North Ormesby residents association consisting of eleven members. As a political group, the network possesses certain internal morphological and interactional characteristics and can be studied as a bounded structure in itself, the actors being bounded by their common membership on the committee. However, each individual on the committee is also part of a much wider set of interlocking or discrete networks of kin, neighbours, friends, workmates and so forth. The total political network relevant to studying the activities of a local residents' group is much more difficult to define, but since the network of any one individual is interlaced with the networks of other committee members, the total operative network of each actor overlaps with that of others at many points.

Only a moderate proportion of the interaction between committee members could be defined as 'political'. In addition to the relationship of common membership on the committee there are seven other important normative contexts which enable interaction to take place between committee members: marriage, the methodist chapel, neighbourhood, informal friendship, community centre, work and conservative club. From Figure 4 it can be seen that there is a considerable amount of overlap, with certain individuals being involved in several of these contexts. It was noticeable during the period of research that there would be a dramatic rise both in frequency of contact and a rise in the political content of the interaction as particular issues emerged and developed. Between periods of high activity the amount of political information disseminated through the network would be small and the majority of interactions would be concerned with types of transactions not normally associated with political matters.

One of the most important features of the network under study is the

g. 4

normative contexts
interaction: North
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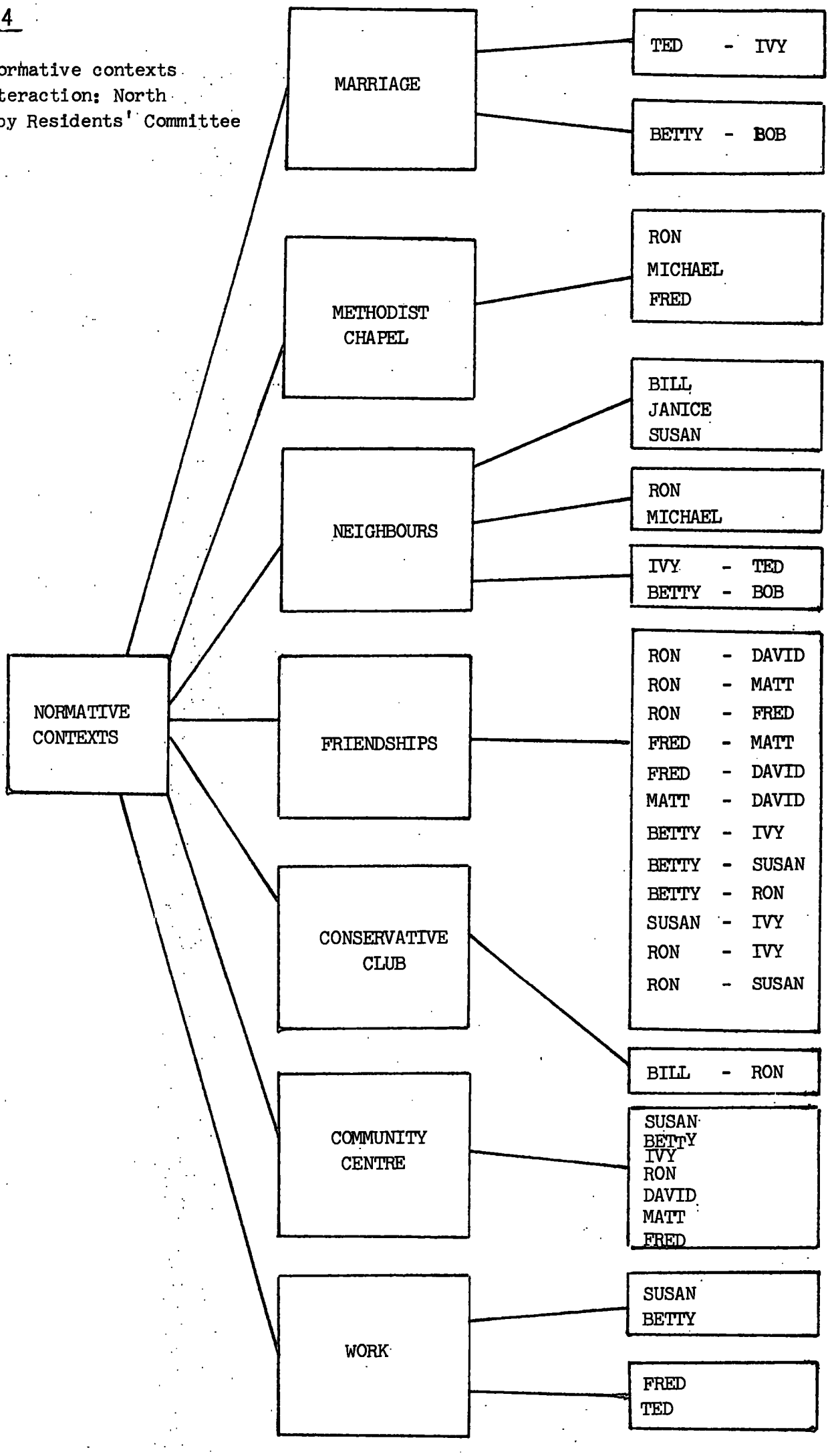
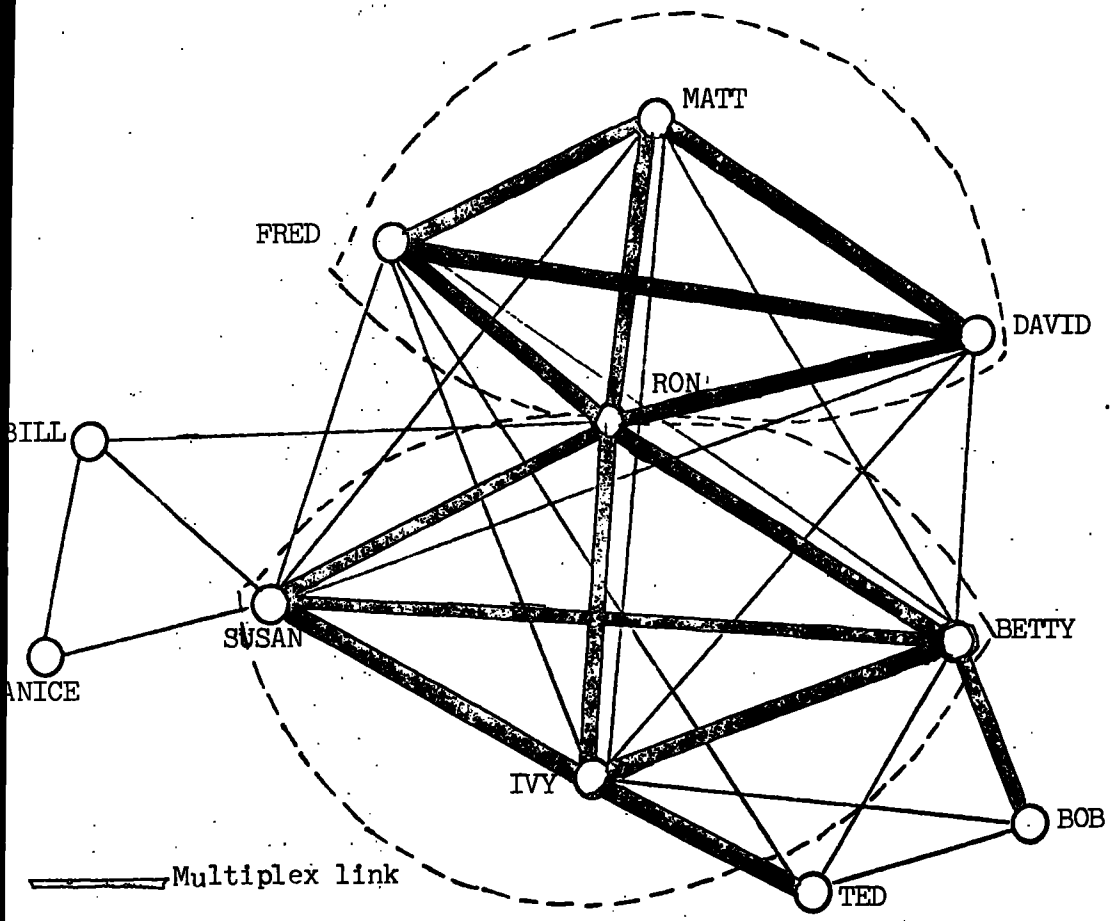


structural diversity of several of the interpersonal links. Because some of the individuals are linked to others in more than one way, by their common participation in different contexts, opportunities exist for transactions in a variety of situations. A person may know a fellow member of the committee as a friend, a neighbour, a fellow churchman, and as a member of the management committee of the community centre. In contrast some individuals are only linked by their common membership on the residents' committee. A distinction can thus be made between links which are multiplex or many stranded and links which are uniplex or single stranded. In the case of the committee it is the former which tend to be the stronger since they are usually of longer standing and with a higher frequency of interaction.

Boissevain (1974, p.32) hypothesises that 'where a many-stranded relationship exists between two persons, there is greater accessibility and thus response to pressure, than is the case in a single stranded relation. This would indeed appear to be the case with the committee for it is the strong multiplex ties which are the most intimate and constitute the most cohesive parts of the group.

The table accompanying Figure 5 gives the number of multiplex and uniplex ties for each individual. From this it can be seen that certain individuals (Ron, David, Fred, Ivy, Betty and Susan) have a greater number of multiplex ties binding them into the group. These individuals form the core of the committee, being the most active and committed to the ideals of the group. They also tend to have greater stores of information about council activities and more of their time and energy is put into making the group successful.

Figure 5 also illustrates that two clusters are present - that consisting of Ron, Matt, Fred and David on the one hand, and that of Betty, Susan, Ivy and Ron on the other. Ron occupies a pivotal position between the two clusters. Within these clusters the persons are relatively



NAME	MULTIPLEX	UNIPLEX	NAME	MULTIPLEX	UNIPLEX
RON	6	1	BOB	1	2
DAVID	3	3	TED	1	3
MATT	3	3	BILL	0	3
FRED	3	4	JANICE	0	2
IVY	4	4	SUSAN	3	5
BETTY	4	4			

Fig. 5

Relations between members of the NORA Committee

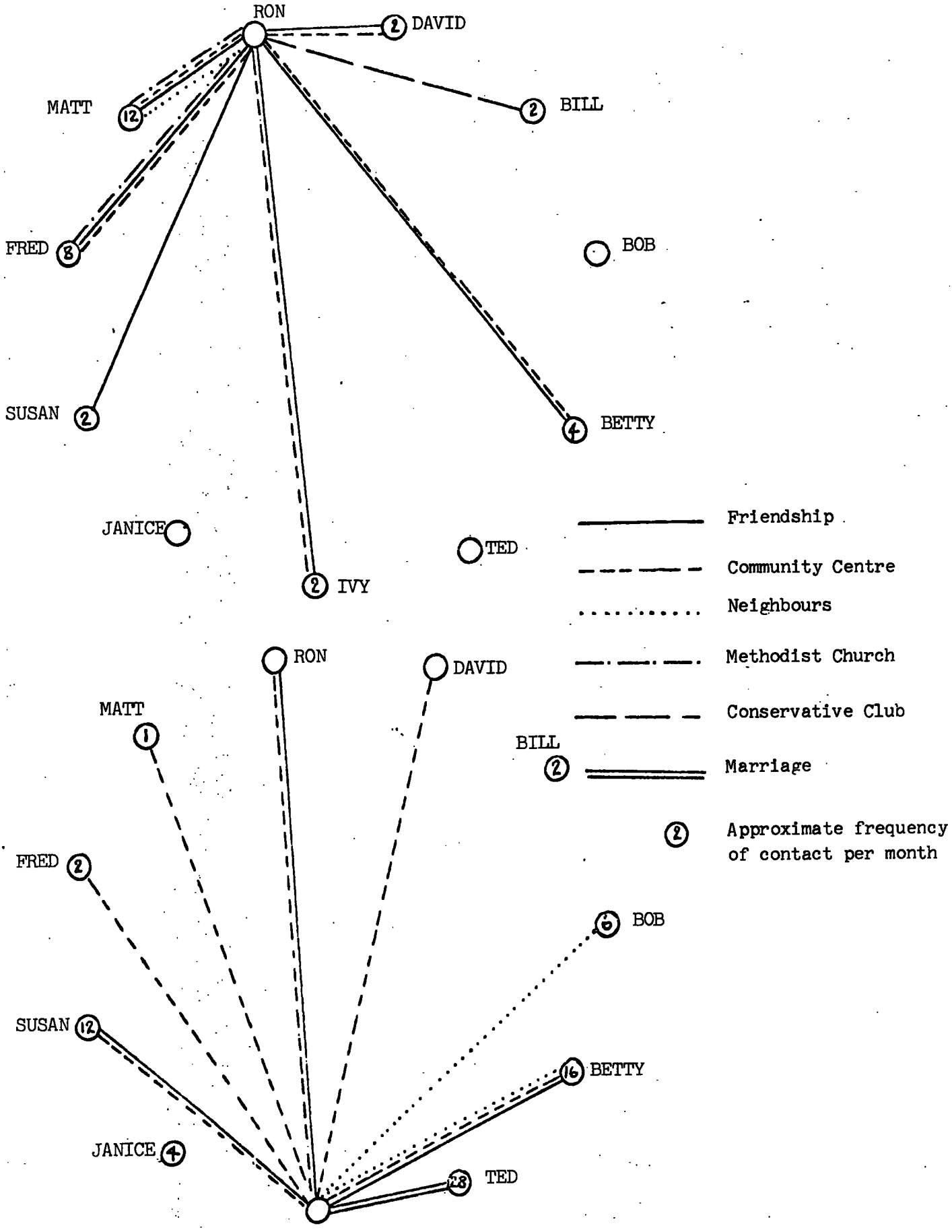


Fig. 6 and 7

Comparison of frequencies of interaction and multiplexity of networks of Ivy and Ron.

more closely tied than they are with the rest of the network as a whole, and interact amongst themselves more frequently than with other members. These individuals are also linked in multiplex ways.

In Figure 6, I take Ron as an example and show the degree of multiplexity and the approximate number of times per month he is likely to see or otherwise interact with each individual. Where no number is recorded he is unlikely to see that person unless a meeting of the committee is called. His most frequent contact is with Matt, the Methodist minister, who is also a friend and neighbour and both are on the management committee of the community centre. Ron sees Matt on average three times a week. He is in touch with Fred slightly less frequently, because although he is not a neighbour, they are both members of the Methodist church, personal friends and both involved at the community centre. There are five other individuals with whom he is in contact at least once a fortnight, Susan, Ivy, Betty, David and Bill. He is likely to see Susan and Ivy at the community centre or occasionally in the High Street. Betty has a strong friendship tie with Ron's sister but both Ron and Betty regard themselves as good friends also, and they are likely to see each other about once a week at his home, in the community centre or by chance in the street. With David he only has a moderate amount of face to face interaction but they are often in contact on the phone. His most frequent place of contact with Bill is the local conservative club of which both are members. Although they have different groups of friends there is ample opportunity for interaction to take place.

In contrast, Ivy (Figure 7) shows a greater number of contacts with more individuals in the group. Unlike Ron she works part-time locally, and also, as a housewife, spends a lot of time at home or shopping in North Ormesby. She is likely to see all the members of the group at least once in a month, while she sees some of them several times in a week,

Betty four times and Susan three times. Again it must be emphasised that many of these interactions do not have a political content but, at times when public issue arises, transactions between individuals are likely to contain pieces of political information or enquiries about the development of particular issues. Local political activity for these people does not take a central place in their social life, or in the content of their interactions. However, within their various spheres of activity, they come into contact with each other, whether at church, in the community centre or by chance in the street, and are able to use these more regular and normative contacts for the passing on of political information or for the discussion of local issues.

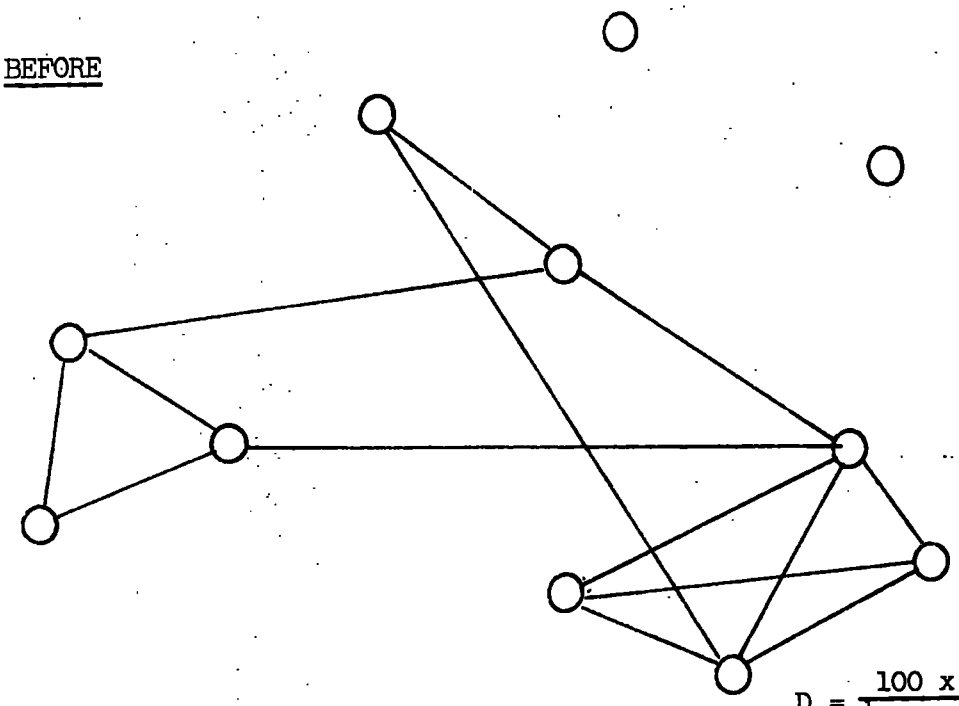
The durability of the group is undoubtedly connected in some way to the durability of the individual links and their intensity. Following Mitchell's definition I see durability as the strength of a link over time and intensity as being the degree to which an individual feels obligated to continue the link (Mitchell, 1969, p.26). The individuals tied into the group with multiplex links are also those with the greatest degree of commitment to the group and its activities, while those in the group with only uniplex ties tend to be more isolated, less knowledgeable about NORA and council decisions. Thus a long-standing tie of friendship, as a neighbour, as co-members of a religious or voluntary organization or a multiplication of such ties can prove important for the durability and intensity of a link and can also provide a regular and strong basis of interaction upon which the exchange of political information can be superimposed. The intensity of the relationships within the two multiplex clusters contributes to the high degree of commitment espoused by the members: in interviews they all believed in the efficacy and the validity of NORA as a pressure group, while the more peripheral members were more sceptical of the effectiveness of their efforts.

Related to the durability and intensity of the relationships between committee members is the historical development of the links. It is not necessarily the case that the older the tie the more durable it is likely to be. However in a community such as North Ormesby, which is traditionally inward-looking with a high percentage of the population having long residential histories, ties of friendship and neighbourhood are often durable over time. An extreme example of this is the link between Betty and Ron who have known each other since childhood, at one time living around the corner from one another. Although Ron moved into different spheres of social activity after leaving school, the link was maintained through the strong friendship between Betty and Ron's sister. Ron's occupation and leisure time interests took him outside North Ormesby for much of the time but nevertheless he remained resident there. During the development of NORA it was not difficult for Betty to re-kindle the relationship. Later they both became involved in the community centre, thereby adding another strand to their relationship and thus strengthening the tie.

In contrast the relationship between Ron and David has only existed for about two years. Since David arrived in the area he has become associated with NORA and with the community centre at about the same time as Ron. A friendship has grown out of this common involvement, helped by the fact that many of their views on the role of NORA and the shape that community development should take are compatible.

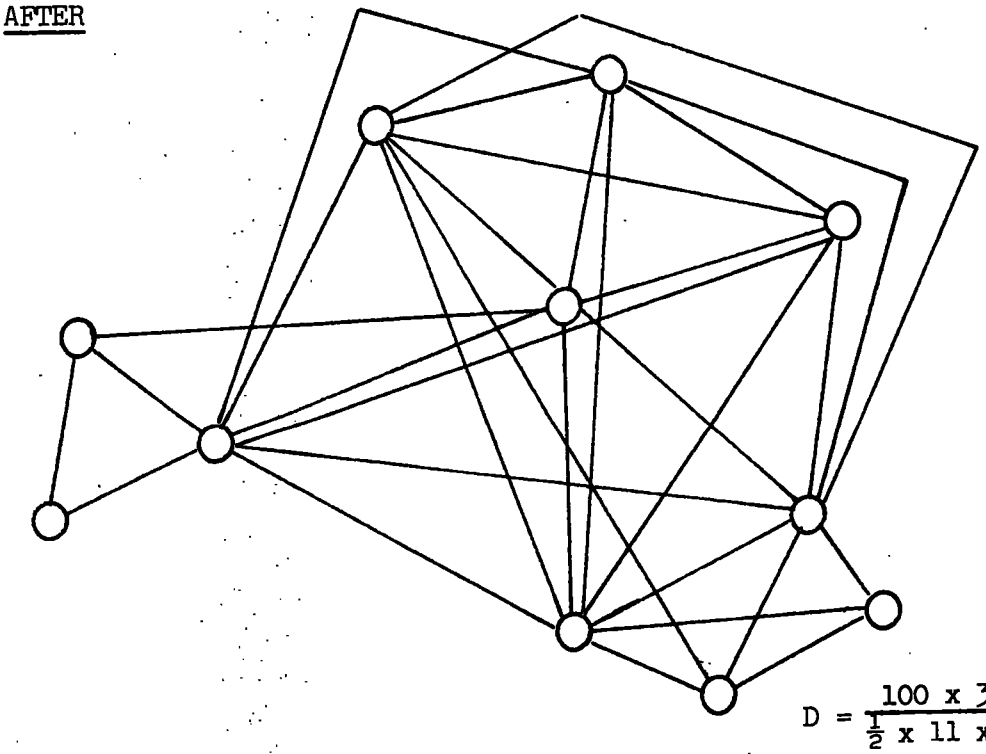
The fact that some of the links have a long history is beneficial to the overall stability of the group. Even before they came together to form a residents' association committee there was a considerable degree of familiarity amongst certain individuals. This familiarity ranged from merely knowing of one another to the stronger bonds of marriage and friendship. Since the formation of the residents' association relationships

BEFORE



$$D = \frac{100 \times 14}{\frac{1}{2} \times 11 \times 10} = 25.4\%$$

AFTER



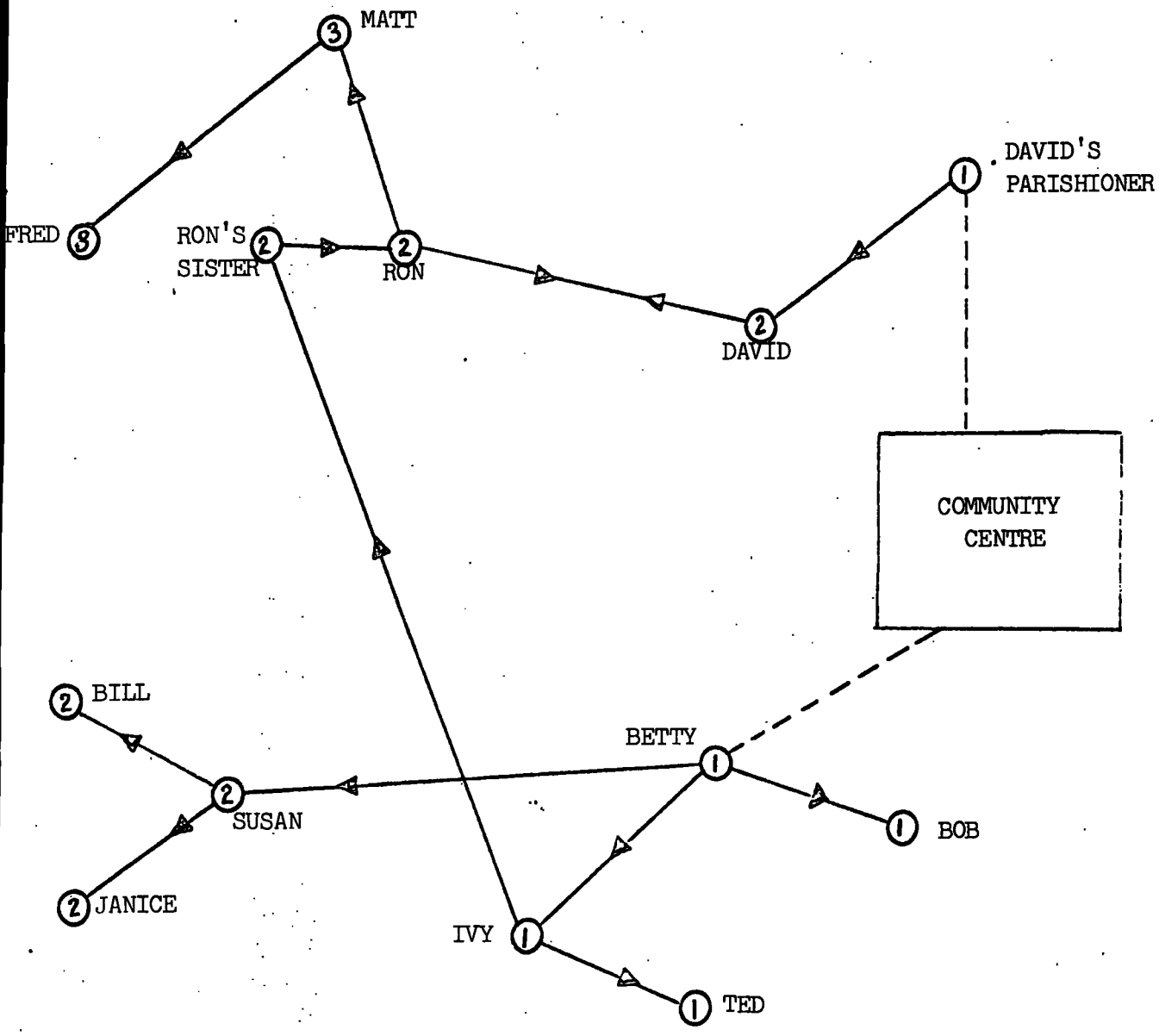
$$D = \frac{100 \times 31}{\frac{1}{2} \times 11 \times 10} = 56.3\%$$

Figs. 8 and 9

A comparison of the density of networks before and after the creation of NORA.

have been consolidated and new ones have emerged. In network terms there has been an increase in the density of links existing between the individuals of the committee since its creation. The density of a network can be measured by calculating the number of actual links as a proportion of the total possible number of links. The problem in this exercise is in defining when a relationship can be called a link. In calculating the density of links for the NORA committee before the creation of the group, the criterion I have used is to regard a link as being a potential network link when it provided a clear possibility for interaction, regardless of whether that interaction took place. This, in effect, means discounting the category 'know of' and only including more formal bonds. Another problem is that the density is not pinpointed in any particular year and only represents an accumulated density over many years. Figures 8 and 9 show an increase in density from 25.5% to 56.3%, the difference being made up largely of new friendships which have been generated, the arrival of two persons on the scene since the creation of the group and, most important, the decision made by several individuals to join the community centre management committee. This development is significant in that it shows a tendency towards consolidation of the group by intensifying the degree of potential communication between various persons. As a result of this increase in density a more uniform set of values and norms have emerged from a group representing diverse interests and aspirations and has contributed to the ability of the group to present itself as a unified body.

Related to the notion of density is that of reachability. Mitchell puts a considerable amount of emphasis on the extent to which individuals can interact with people who are important to them through their first order contacts (Mitchell, 1969). This factor is also important in determining the paths along which information flows and the speed with which it is disseminated. Because the density is high among the residents'



Direction of information flow.

① , ② Day on which information was received.

Fig. 10

The flow of information concerning the new residents' association.

association committee, the degree to which one person is able to contact another is rarely more than one step removed and often there is a direct link. Furthermore, the spatial distribution is such that direct approach is always possible anyway. Seven of the group live clustered on the eastern fringe, Matt and Ron are neighbours, David lives close to the market place and Fred lives close to Beaumont Road. This small, well defined spatial range within which the group lives does not mean constant interaction between all the individuals but it does allow for chance meetings in the street, the shops or pubs and clubs, and for more expected meetings at church or in the community centre. Information is continually being passed in a variety of ways and in many places. The situation is so flexible that it would be unusual for any member of the group not to have picked up a relevant piece of information within three or four days of it first appearing on the scene.

Figure 10 gives an example of how a particular piece of information was disseminated through the group. It concerned the setting up of a new residents' association in the area of local authority housing around the market place. Betty was the first to know of this since she happened to be present in the community centre at the time the new committee was meeting. The same night she went to play bingo with Ivy and passed the news on, and their husbands subsequently came to be told. The following day the vicar came to know of the events from a parishioner who was herself involved in the new association. Meanwhile Betty had told Susan at work and Ivy had contacted Ron's sister on the telephone in order to have her pass on the information to Ron himself. By the following day the whole group knew and a meeting was arranged to discuss the matter.

Levels of Commitment and Types of Involvement

The analysis so far has implied that persons exhibit different degrees of commitment to the group and to its goals. It has also been shown that those with the highest commitment tend to be individuals tied into the group in a multiplex way. It is possible, then, to identify varying degrees and types of involvement; and, over the period the residents' association has been in operation, certain individuals have developed specific kinds of expertise for dealing with various internal and external relationships. Here one can distinguish between four main role types: persons acting as "transformers", those performing a "middleman" function, "initiators" of collective action and the "supporters", but these roles are not necessarily rigidly adhered to by particular individuals. There is flexibility in the way the group handles its internal and external business, with different individuals filling different roles in various situations, though over time a structured pattern has emerged in the way persons operate within the group.

A person who occupies a strategic position in the network by virtue of his role as a link between that netowrk and outside bodies can handle information channelled through him in three basic ways. The information may be passed from one body to another in an essentially unchanged form; it may be used enterprisingly in order to gain material or non-material profits; or it may be absorbed, interpreted and passed on with added meanings. In the first case the actor is operating as a "middleman", in the second as a "broker", and in the third as a "transformer".

According to Bailey (1969, p.167):

> Middlemen in the situation of encapsulation, are roles which come into existence to bridge a gap in communications between the larger and smaller structures.

He goes on to state:

> His interest is to keep going a process of bargaining: either in what he does or in what he says, or both, he must persuade the two sides that this is a situation in which compromise can be made.

In certain situations he may act purely as a channel for information passing it on from one source to particular destinations without altering the basic content or making value judgements about the nature of the information. His main aim is to keep the two sides in contact and to attempt to show that there are areas of agreement which can be built upon.

The situation of a "broker" is similar in that such a person holds a strategic position within and between networks through which information may be passed. However, certain characteristics make his activities distinctive from those of other middlemen roles. According to Boissevain (1974, p.148), "a broker is a professional manipulator of people and information who brings about communication for profit." The primary motives of an individual who operates as a broker of information is to acquire profits, notably in terms of status, political support and influence. The broker, in effect, becames a kind of "political entrepreneur" building up resources of information and contacts in order to expand the enterprise.

In the third type of link role, the individual concerned may make value judgements about the nature of the information he handles. This I have called a "transformer" role. Such a person acts as an interpreter of information and events and may attempt to "read between the lines". The information he handles may come to be modified or altered by adding to or reducing the content in the process of channelling. In transmission the message is given meaning by the transformer. Certain parts of the message may be weighted more than others and the interpretation that he gives is superimposed on the message before it arrives at its destination.

In the case of the NORA committee, nobody acts as a broker in Boissevain's sense. This can be put down to two basic reasons: in the first place no one individual has yet built up a network of sufficient political content to be able to manipulate relations for his own ends; and secondly, no one has yet emerged in the committee with a desire to operate for personal gain. The ways in which information enters the

network and is channelled through it can prove enlightening, as has already been shown by the description of the dissemination of the news about the new residents' association. In that example it was seen that on entering the network the information was passed from individual to individual, not haphazardly, but in a structured way. However, in some senses, this example was somewhat atypical since it is more usual for information to enter the network through the individuals who have more contact with councillors - face-to-face, by letter or on the telephone. The persons engaged in transactions of this nature are for the most part Ron, David and Fred and these are the individuals who tend to act as channels between the governing bodies and the residents' association committee. However, from time to time, as in the example cited, other individuals may obtain information and channel it into the group or may themselves be in touch with councillors on particular issues.

The role that a person comes to play is the product of a complex process resulting from life experience, the type of social network within which he is enmeshed and the expectations he holds for the future. Ron is the only one of the committee members who has regular contact with either councillors or planning officers because of his role as chairman. His education, experience in the methodist church and his career in publicity and sales promotion have contributed to the way in which he has rapidly developed skills in managing the group in its relations with the administrative bodies. He is informed by councillors and planners about various aspects of the planned re-development of North Ormesby or, as is more often the case, he will write or phone them himself in order to obtain information. In turn he is contacted by other committee members seeking knowledge of recent developments or he may pass the information on through his first-order contacts in the group. Ron is a middleman who has emerged from the North Ormesby population, rather

than being one created by the larger body. This means that he is operating independently of local government engaged in a process of eliciting information from local government officials and communicating this to the local people through the residents' association. In turn he reciprocates by giving the local views to the governing bodies.

After taking the position of chairman of the NORA committee, Ron soon developed into more than just a middleman. As one of the major channels of information, other members of the group rely on him as a source of knowledge and increasingly he is becoming a commentator on decisions being taken and developments already occurring. His role has become that of gatherer of information, interpreter and expositor. He has made the effort to be informed of decisions taken at local government level, and, as well as setting these out to the other members of the group, he also comments on the merits and shortcomings of such planning decisions and interprets their meaning for the future of the North Ormesby community.

A number of factors have contributed towards his development as a "middleman" and "transformer". His long association with the Methodist church and involvement in some of the Methodist groups encouraged a desire to work for community ideals. His career as a publicity and sales promotion manager and his contacts with the local newspaper have given him the ability to keep the residents' association in the news and enhance its reputation. Ron is the only member of the group with both extensive contacts within North Ormesby and beyond in other areas of Teesside. In North Ormesby he has family, church, neighbourhood and social club contacts while beyond North Ormesby he has two brothers, both involved in their own local area affairs; extensive contacts in various sports clubs; he is involved in the "Tidy up Middlesbrough Campaign" and he has contacts with the local newspaper for which he used to work. He is thus not entirely dependent on the information he can gather from the councillors or planners.

Furthermore, one of the planners involved in the redevelopment of North Ormesby lives in the next street to that of Ron and can be easily contacted in order to obtain information about or explanations of decisions being taken.

David also acts as a middleman but not in the same way as Ron. He does not have the same extensive network either within North Ormesby or in Teesside generally. This results from his relatively short residence in the area. However, soon after his arrival in North Ormesby he became acquainted with one of the local labour councillors, Mary Harrison, and a friendly relationship developed between the two. Both had similar socialist political ideals and were committed to the concept of public participation in local government. According to David, Mary had already made efforts to help local people in their dealings with local government, making herself available as their representative by visiting North Ormesby as much as possible. She explained that she was making a conscious effort "to get out from behind the desk" and do something for the people of North Ormesby in contrast to many councillors who felt it was sufficient to sit back and have people approach them. Having established a friendship and relationship of mutual trust, Mary became David's main source of information on council affairs and he has often acted as a bridge in passing the details on to Ron or other members of the group.

To the committee David is important because of his prestigious position, his ability to "talk to the councillors on the same level" and his great awareness of the local political situation. He too, like Ron, is becoming a commentator on the decisions of the planning committee, but he presents himself as the calm and collected member of the group. This is in contrast to Ron who is the outward going and resolute leader of the committee. Ron often rises to his feet in public meetings to make spontaneous speeches about aspects of public participation and planning

which he feels particularly strongly about. In contrast David is the one to quietly probe the councillors about the motives behind certain decisions and is enthusiastic about showing his desire to co-operate with councillors as opposed to purely criticising them.

Fred, a senior citizen and prominent local Methodist, has always been a conscientious community worker. He shows an interest in the history of North Ormesby, always keen to point out the fact that it was, at one time, independent of Middlesbrough, and is interested in its development and the welfare of the residents. His occupational experience as a clerk carried over into his activities as chairman of the Methodist Social Responsibility group, treasurer of the community centre and as a leading member in the residents' association. His local contacts are extensive, particularly in the Methodist church and persons connected with the community centre. Fred has often acted as a local representative in the past by writing letters for local people in difficulty. He also kept newspaper clippings and copies of his correspondence with councillors and for the residents' association committee he performs the function of the respectable senior citizen who is an organized and reliable source of information particularly about past dealings with councillors.

The other members of the group do not have the same degree of contact with local government officials. They tend to operate as "supporters" of the main "front man", Ron, and appear content to allow "the headpieces" (as Ivy calls them) to do the major part of the interacting with councillors. However, Ivy, Betty and Susan tend to perform the roles of "initiators" or "mobilizers" in that their extensive local networks and their involvement in the community centre means they are important as gatherers of support for public meetings. Furthermore, they operate as links between the more prominent members of the group and the more peripheral members. Ted and Bill, with their long trade union experience, act as local shop stewards.

They are aware of their rights as citizens to participate and are prepared to defend those rights with their support for the leaders of the group and may themselves contribute to the debate in public and private meetings.

Different members of the group have specialized but complementary functions and an important feature of the committee is the interdependence which has developed between the various roles. Ron is not only involved in transactions with outside bodies, he occupies a pivotal position within the group in the sense that he is the main link between the community-oriented leaders of the residents' association committee and the other members. Figure 5 showed the existence of two clusters - that of the leaders of the group and that of the main supporters. These clusters are interdependent in the sense that one provides the skills of leadership with persons acting as middlemen through well developed links with the governing bodies and the other is critical for the mobilization of community support. This interdependence has been an important factor contributing to the cohesiveness and consolidation of the group as an ongoing political force. It has also inhibited the development of factionalism within the group.

Links with the locality and span of social relationships

The ways in which the committee members are linked into the local community, and the links they have outside the locality, clearly affect the character of the group and its degree of success. Since the time the group was formed, new relationships have been forged outside the group in both formal and informal contexts which are relevant to the ongoing operation of the group. Relationships which existed before the group was created remain important resources. Through these other contacts the group members receive assistance, support, advice and generally are able to gauge the feelings of the North Ormesby population. Support for public meetings is also mobilized through these links.

Table IX. Committee Members and their Associational Links in North Ormesby

	Community Centre	Methodist Chapel	Methodist Social Responsibility Group	Methodist Sisterhood	Methodist Guild	Catholic Church	Catholic Women's League	Church of England	Conservative Social Club	North Ormesby CIU Club	Teesside Bridge and Engineering Club	Salvation Army	Labour Party	Affiliated to organizations outside of North Ormesby
RON	X	X	X						X					X
MATT	X	X	X											X
FRED	X	X	X											X
DAVID	X							X						X
IVY	X					X	X							
BETTY	X													
SUSAN	X													
BOB										X				
BILL									X		X			X
JANICE														
TED						X					X			X

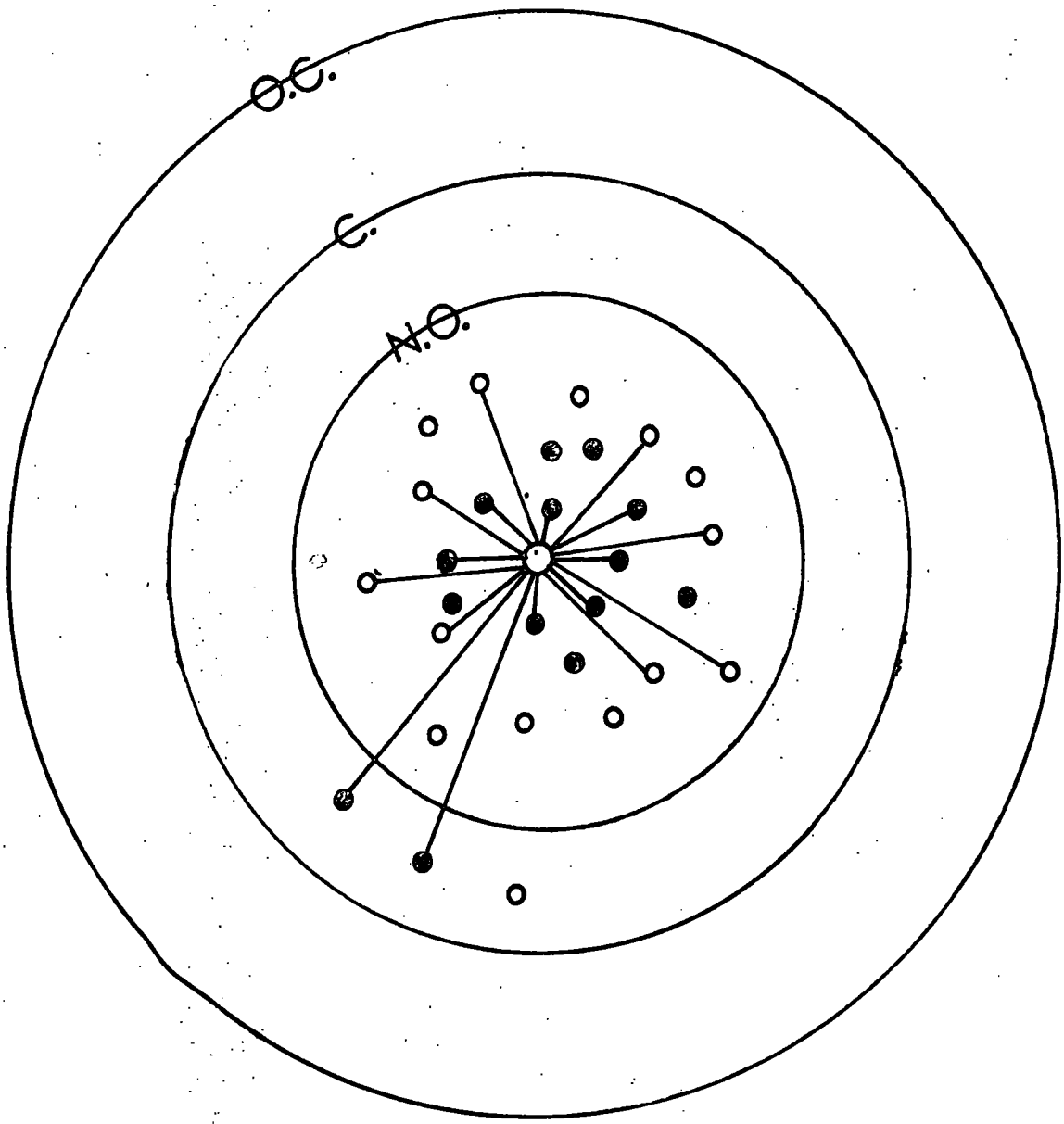
Variations exist between members in the span and content of their networks. On the one hand certain individuals (e.g. Ivy, Betty and Susan) have very dense networks confined almost entirely to the locality while in contrast other individuals (e.g. David and Matt) have fewer contacts in the locality and more of their relationships are with people outside North Ormesby. In order to illustrate these variations I have chosen three individuals with contrasting types of network, Susan, David and Ron. (See Figures 11, 12 and 13).

Susan Parkes is very much oriented to the locality and only four individuals were mentioned by her in interview who lived outside North Ormesby. She has several kin resident in the locality and most of her friends live in close proximity. In contrast David Harvey's network is geographically rather scattered. Most of his kin live outside the locality as do the majority of his friends, but of these external contacts some are politically relevant. The most striking feature of Ron's network is the number of contacts which constitute strong "political" links by offering support for his activities or with whom he has some discussion about local affairs. Ron's network is extensive within North Ormesby, but he also has strong and influential links with individuals elsewhere in Cleveland. Twenty three (72%) of those mentioned by Ron lived within North Ormesby and nine (28%) lived outside the locality.

These variations are in fact a source of strength for the group. When they are taken as a whole it effectively means that the total network of the group is extensive and dense within North Ormesby itself, but there are several crucial links with individuals of political significance elsewhere in Cleveland. It also means that support can be mobilized along many different lines; through religious ties, ties of formal organizations, kinship, propinquity, friendship and even through more casual contacts. An indication of the degree to which the committee members are tied into the community is given in Table X which lists the

major locality organizations and the members of the committee who belong to these organizations. The table highlights the strong connections of the group with the churches and the community centre. These strong connections are reflected in the composition of the audiences for public meetings which have large contingents from the congregations of the three main churches.

In this chapter I have described the initiation of the residents association and the social backgrounds of the committee members. I have also examined the group as a bounded network and have highlighted variation in roles performed by different members. In the next chapter I will again be examining the group as a bounded social network but I will be more concerned with the effects of participating in such a group on the perceptions the members have of planning, local government and the role of public participation. This will be achieved by presenting the views of the committee members as they themselves expressed them in interviews.



N.O. Within North Ormesby

C. Elsewhere in Cleveland

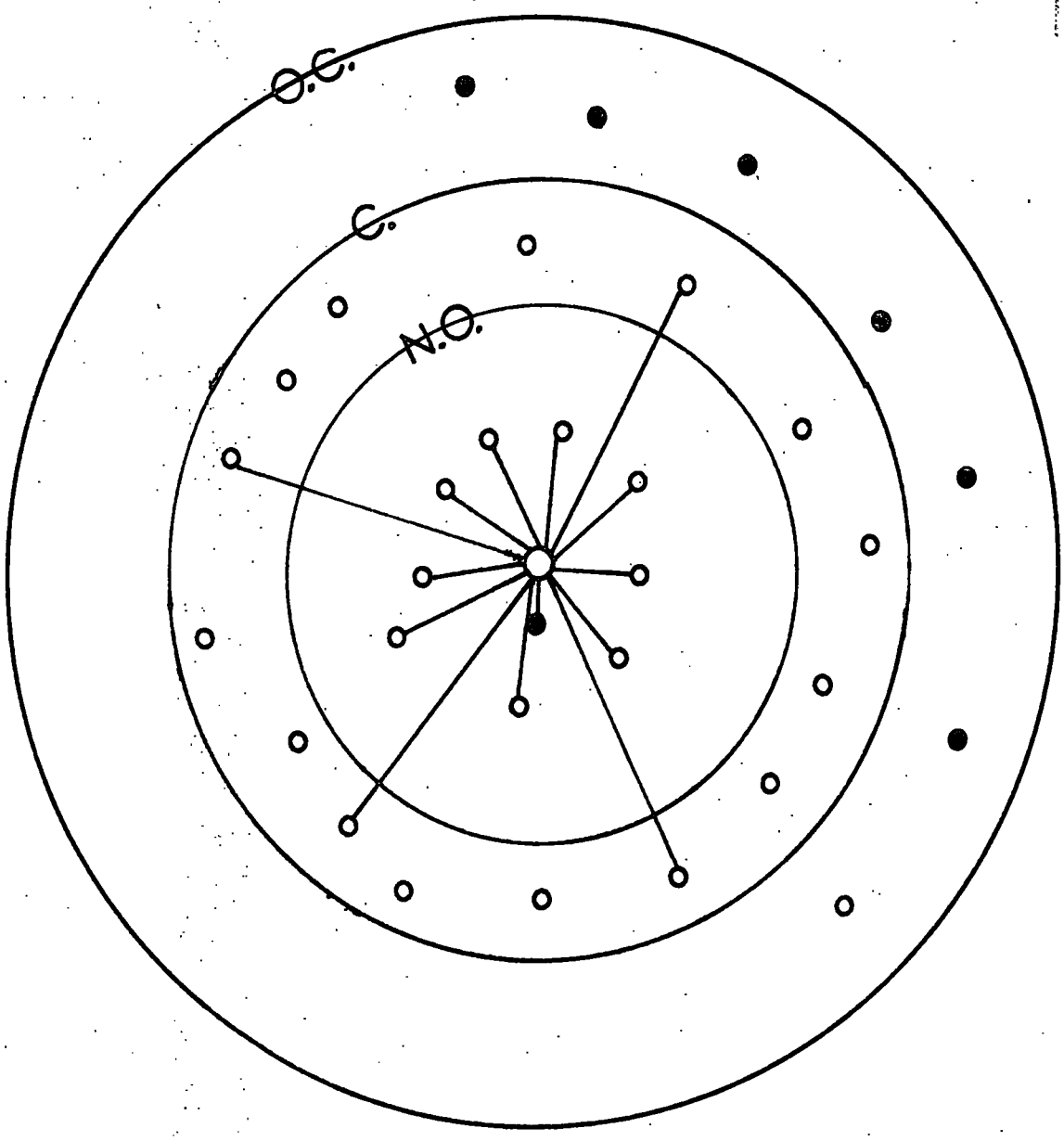
O.C. Beyond Cleveland

● Kin

○ Friend, Neighbour or other Contact

——— Relationship includes discussion of 'political' matters or support

Fig. 11. Span and Content of Personal Network: Susan Parkes



N.O. Within North Ormesby

C. Elsewhere in Cleveland

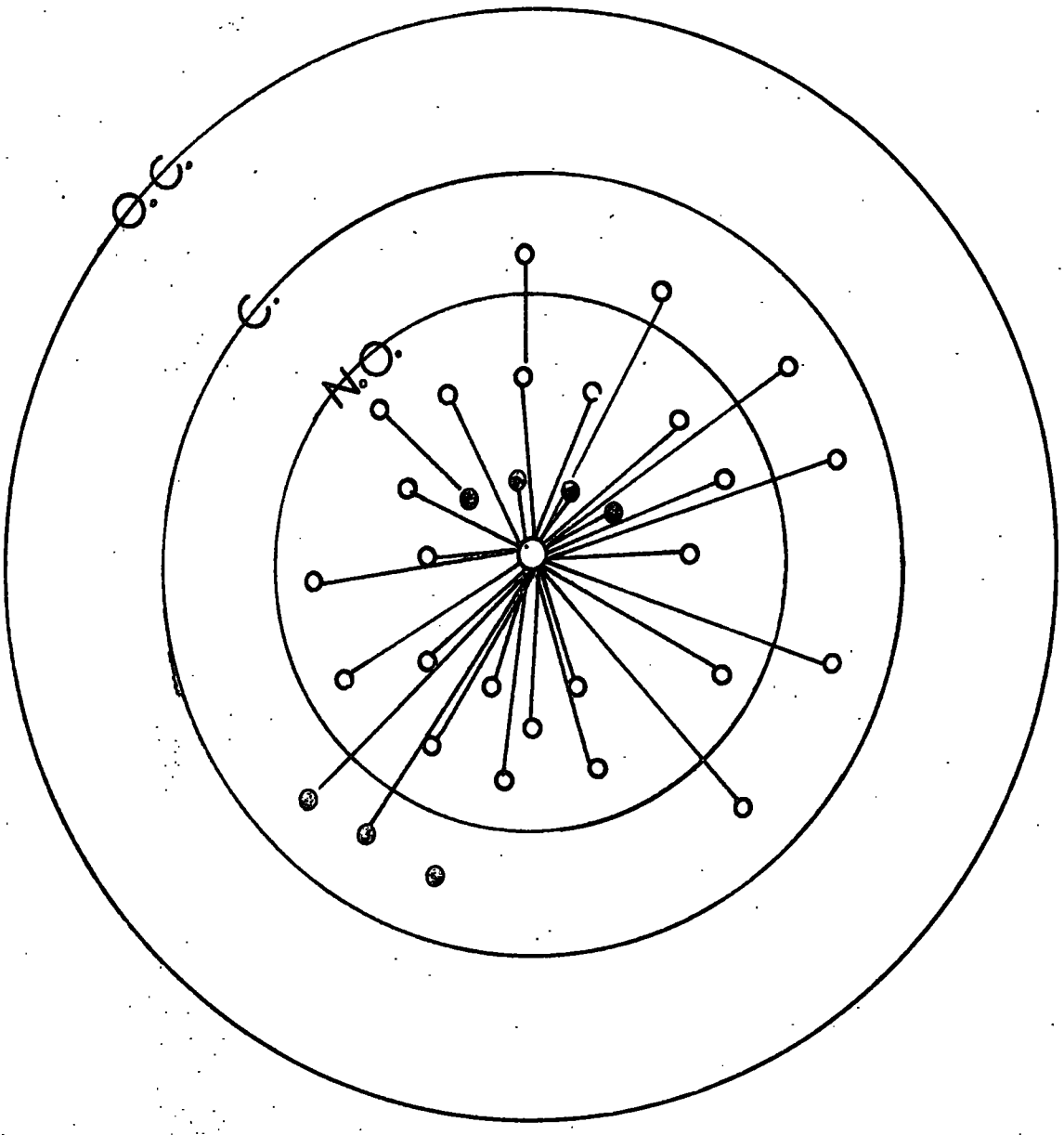
O.C. Beyond Cleveland

● Kin

○ Friend, Neighbour or other Contact

——— Relationship includes discussion of 'political' matters or support

Fig. 12. Span and Content of Personal Network: David Harvey



N.O. Within North Ormesby

C. Elsewhere in Cleveland

O.C. Beyond Cleveland

Kin

Friend, Neighbour or other Contact

Relationship includes discussion of 'political' matters or support

Fig. 13. Span and Content of Personal Network: Ron Clayton

CHAPTER 5

SOCIAL NETWORK AND IMAGES OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In the previous chapter I described how the NORA Committee, as an organized group, has become a focus for the development or reinforcement of interpersonal relations. Each individual member also has "politically" relevant links beyond the group. It was pointed out that it is difficult, if not impossible, to isolate the group as a political network (i.e. a partial network in Barnes' terms 1972) since several relationships within the group are multi-stranded and interaction in other contexts may involve political transactions in the form of information being passed on, views expressed and opinions formulated. In the present chapter I examine more closely the effects of interaction, within the committee, on the perceptions that individual members have of the role of the public in the decision making process and discuss how they conceptualize their relationship with local government.

As yet, little attention has been given in the literature to the perceptions people have of public participation in planning or to the different expectations they may have of such a concept. Our findings suggest that perceptions and expectations vary as a result of the influence of a whole series of factors. These variations occur not only from locality to locality but within particular localities according to the differing social situations. Each individual operates with pragmatic formulations of what government and planning are all about and to a large extent these are drawn from social experience and develop in response to

certain personal needs. The types of community issues which emerge and the historical and social background of a locality are clearly important factors in determining the pattern of response to a public participation exercise. But the public's values, sentiments and assumptions concerning such an exercise are also important variables. Each individual constructs for himself a model of the society in which he lives which serves him as a "rough and ready means of orienting himself in a society so complex that he cannot experience directly more than a limited part of it " (Bott, 1971, p.45). In constructing these images of society in general, and of local government and planning in particular, individuals draw on the fund of information, knowledge and attitudes from the network of kin, neighbours and friends of which they are a part. They may also draw on their work experiences and the ideologies of such institutions as the church. As individuals encounter new experiences and new ideologies so their working definitions may come to be modified to meet new contingencies.

In this Chapter, then, I seek to explore the ways in which a group of individuals, engaged in the process of attempting to participate, come to construct common definitions of the situations which confront them. It is posited that the ability to arrive at a high degree of consensus on important issues marks a critical departure for a "participating" group for this gives added meaning to their efforts and allows more meaningful joint action. This high degree of consensus is generated through their common experience as participators and through the development of the group as a closely knit network of social relations.

Several writers have made reference to the importance of the concept

of social network in studying the flow of communication, particularly in the way this can be used to understand the mechanisms by which the definitions of norms are reinforced. Bott (1957) in analysing conjugal roles in a sample of London families was interested in the influence of the structure of the network on individual behaviour. She states that,

"When many of the people a person knows interact with one another, that is when the person's network is 'close knit', the members of his network tend to reach consensus of norms and they exert consistent informal pressure on one another to conform to the norms, to keep in touch with one another, and, if need be, to help one another " (Bott, 1957, p.60).

This assumption, that structural and interactional characteristics of a social network have a crucial influence on the maintenance of norms and values, has been further explored by writers such as Phillip Mayer and A. L. Epstein. Mayer (1961), for example, utilizes this concept to explain the differences between two sets of African migrants in adapting to an urban environment in South Africa. One group remain encapsulated because they rigorously maintain traditional or tribal types of relationships which reinforce tribal norms, and consequently, cultural change is minimized. The other group in contrast are drawn from a culture "which has been more tolerant in principal of the engagement in diversified institutions" of which 'loose knit' networks are the result. Cultural change is therefore inherent in the type of social network developed by this group.

Epstein (1969) implies that this type of analysis can be taken further by regarding social network as a crucial variable in the formulation of the perceptions people have of society and their place in that society. He argues that the relatively close knit networks of the Ndola elite serve

to reinforce the norms existing in the community and legitimate their positions as members of the upper class. His examination of this process focuses on the flow of communication through a network.

In the present Chapter I employ this kind of approach in order to understand the attitudes and viewpoints expressed by the members of NORA on a series of important interrelated topics concerned with the role of the group in the planning process. A distinction was made in the previous Chapter between two types of participator in the group according to the circumstances under which initial involvement was precipitated. Four members can be regarded as "community oriented" and seven as "limited interest" participators. For the former, a kind of Christian ethic provides both the motivation and legitimation for becoming involved in local affairs, while for the latter participation is a matter of necessity, a response to certain threats in the actor's immediate environment.

In the early days of the group's history this distinction between the two types of participators was marked by a dichotomy in perceptions of the role to be played by the group in local politics. Gradually this dichotomy is being reduced and replaced by a greater degree of consensus on what the role of the group should be. This consensus is also apparent in other important attitudes, such as those expressed on the expected roles of the individual members of the group, the representativeness of the members and how their positions as community spokesmen are legitimated. It is reflected too in the way they view local councillors and planners.

The structural and interactional characteristics of a network are a dominant influence on the way the group comes to perceive participation and local government. If it is to participate effectively such a group

must have cohesion and this is achieved by developing common interests. Cohesion of a group is characterized (in part at least) by durability of association and a high frequency of interaction. Out of these are born common norms, rules and definitions; and these, in turn, allow meaningful joint action through an organized and accepted division of labour.

Attitudes towards the role of NORA

The North Ormesby Residents Association committee is made up of four "community oriented" participators and another seven who can be described as "limited interest" participators. The former see the role of NORA in very much wider terms than the latter who tend to see the group as having only limited functions.

For the "limited interest" participators, the NORA committee was an instrument of pressure to be focused on the councillors in an attempt to get them to listen to their views on particular issues. All of them had attempted to influence the councillors on certain matters prior to the formation of the group, but as individuals they had had little success. An organized body was seen as a much more powerful means of influencing council decisions. Thus Janice described the early character of NORA in the following way: "At first it was just a group of women incensed that things weren't getting done." She went on to emphasise that if she now wanted to get something done she would go through the residents association: "One person complaining on his own gets nowhere. The only way to do things is through a pressure group like NORA."

NORA also offered these people a chance to express their own views on how to improve North Ormesby or at least to curtail its deterioration.

There was a strong feeling amongst these seven that North Ormesby was degenerating both physically and socially. The "council" was blamed for the physical deterioration of the neighbourhood for they had neglected the area and had allowed landlords to let their properties decline into slums. Their slum clearance programme was seen to have been slow and indiscriminate, paying little attention to the feelings of those individuals who were re-housed or the people who remained in North Ormesby.

Indirectly the council were also held responsible for the social degeneration of the area. People had been moved in large numbers in a wholesale fashion and many streets had been left in a delapidated condition for some time before they were eventually cleared. This had caused some families not directly affected by the redevelopment scheme to move out to the newer estates. All seven told of cases of North Ormesby people having moved onto the estates but regretting that they had done so since the outer estates lacked some of the basic community qualities so prominent in North Ormesby. Many individuals were apparently waiting for a chance to return to the area. Their place in the meantime had been taken by a class of person who was seen as socially undesirable and who "lowered the tone of the neighbourhood". In effect North Ormesby was increasingly attracting "cast offs" from other areas who were neither interested in looking after their homes, nor in pursuing a "normal" lifestyle. Janice expressed this view graphically:

> "People make a place and I just don't think that the people who have moved into North Ormesby in recent years have been that good. They don't clean their backs (back yards), they leave the pavements unswept. Take those on the corner, they're a lot the council let in. The council bought the house and let it to that family - they're trash. I don't agree with the way they've (the council) left good houses boarded up."

To an extent there was a self-interested concern to safeguard investments that had been made in time and money while improving their houses and giving them a more modern outlook. The movement in of families who cared little for their homes and the visually offensive development of industry along the eastern fringe of North Ormesby where they lived, were both seen as depreciating the values of their houses.

In the eyes of these participators, organization of response through a group had other important advantages. A greater degree of sustained pressure was possible; all seven saw the most effective tactic as being constant pressure on the councillors until they grew tired of the continual complaining. They believed that this tactic had to a certain extent accounted for the growth in influence of the group. In its early days the group had not been very successful but had nevertheless persisted with its complaints. They believed that gradually the councillors and planners had come to realize that NORA was a group to be reckoned with and so were beginning to take more notice of what was being said by the local people. The role of the group, therefore, was to co-ordinate the individual complaints and channel them through the residents association so as to form a more effective and united voice.

This constant pressure on the councillors was seen as important because they, in turn, were regarded as the main source of pressure on the planners themselves. The view was often expressed that the planners had too free a hand and that councillors should be playing a more active role in transmitting the views of NORA to the planning authorities. The original idea behind the residents association was that it would be a body of locals who would examine the plans and comment on them. They claimed that despite

the fact that the planners had always been willing to present the contents of their plans and that the NORA committee had been given chances to comment on them, NORA's opinions were never taken seriously. It was therefore seen as important to persist with their complaints until the authorities did listen to them. Susan summed up the feeling in the following way:

> "Up to the last few months I would say we've had very little power at all. But they seem to be taking a bit more notice now. Previously, before all this lot went up (referring to the light industrial establishments across the road) we knew nothing at all; it went up and that was it. We don't get everything, obviously, but if you keep at them long enough they eventually take some notice."

In contrast, the other four members of the group, while holding some similar views on the role of NORA as a pressure group, saw it as encompassing a much wider set of functions. For these individuals a Christian ethic provided individual motivation and legitimation for participating in local politics. These four, as community leaders, felt that in a district like North Ormesby, which houses a predominantly working class population with low standards of education, it was important to make the local people more aware of the need to speak up for themselves. Referring to the local population, David Harvey, the Church of England vicar, remarked:

> "I suppose most of them wouldn't really be up to looking at things in a total sense and working it out for themselves. Perhaps that is what the group is for, to bring points to the surface."

It was also his opinion that the group as a whole had experienced a widening of vision and had become aware of the need to look at the North Ormesby situation in total. Speaking of the committee he said,

"I think many of them are beginning to see things in a wider sense. They see industry down here, market place and shopping over here and traffic flow (pointing at an imaginary map), it's quite a leap forward. It's quite a small compact area and so it's easy to do. Even I can see things in such terms and I wouldn't say I was skilled in that sense. Give me Berwick Hills or Ormesby and that would be a completely different matter. North Ormesby is a simpler area. You can see its basic problems and fortunately its basic solutions. Things are complicated by the lack of funds. The group seems to have a positive role now in that we understand the problems of the council. People inevitably get frustrated by the length of time things take. We know now that it's not always the incompetence of the council, although sometimes it is, and if we can use our contacts to let people know that the council are having difficulties or can transfer information from councillors to these contacts then we are serving a useful purpose. If the councillors can communicate it to us and we can communicate it outwards to those contacts, then that's a positive step."

The vicar did not think the group had necessarily grown in power or influence but it had, he argued, matured:

"The group has always had a reasonable standing with the local people, but now we have a certain respectability in the eyes of the councillors and the various departments. They recognize that it's not just a group bent on kicking the council and moaning. We are prepared to listen to what they have to say and we are given the impression that they are prepared to listen to us. There's more maturity also in the way we approach the councillors, a more measured approach. We've had less trouble with breakdown in communication."

Thus the vicar points out two important ways in which the group has developed over its first two years, firstly in the way it perceives North Ormesby and the planned change of the area and secondly in the way it handles its interaction with the authorities. The vicar also saw the group as important for initiating action by "stirring" and "prodding" the councillors.

The other three community-oriented individuals are all Methodists, but share similar views to those of the vicar on the role of NORA. Ron Clayton saw the initiation and development of NORA in a longer time perspective.

Referring to North Ormesby he said:

> "I think it had the wind knocked out of its sails with the demolition in the area. The only thing happening a few years ago was the mass emptying of houses. We lost a lot of the area and a tremendous list of people. Half of North Ormesby was chopped away and the people just disappeared into the estates. North Ormesby just frayed at the edge. There was a lot of uncertainty and apathy in the area; but there was a big desire from a lot of people to come back to North Ormesby. The obvious thing was to press for a house on the market place area. I think it stopped North Ormesby running away with itself. In the last three years things have improved considerably: there is a sort of community spirit. There's no doubt that it does exist. North Ormesby has got features which make it unlike any other area in the town; it's got a tradition that some areas of the town have not got. There's a basic quality in the people to be tapped and I see my role as tapping it. I want to get people realizing for themselves that they can get the sort of place they want."

Ron also showed great satisfaction at the fact that the council were at last taking the group seriously and consulting them on a variety of matters:

> "We have won a major battle in convincing the council etc. that we can have a say. There is no reason why they should know what is best for me and I would say that the other NORA committee members also think like that. We take the pulse of people in North Ormesby and get a sense of their feelings; we put those feelings into words and then put up proposals that the planners are able to discuss with us. I think planners are realizing that we are here to be consulted. As to our success, I think it's the way we presented our case. That plan of our's caused a furore; we'd done our homework. The council were only half-heartedly in favour of public participation, so we took the bull by the horns and laid down our own plans, that is what I call the ultimate in public participation. We wanted them to tell us what was right or wrong about the plans. It gave me a lot of satisfaction to see them treating us with respect."

Fred Pickering, an elderly Methodist, showed a nostalgia for the old days when North Ormesby was a tightly-knit and inward-looking community. He had always felt a keen community spirit in the area which was being destroyed by recent developments. He could not understand the

"stupidity" of the council who had demolished half of North Ormesby and moved the people out onto the estates, thereby destroying the community. His activity in local affairs in the Methodist Social Responsibility Group, in the Community Centre and as a member of the NORA committee were all ways in which he felt he could salvage or rekindle an ailing community. This, he felt, could be achieved by filling the gap between churches and the working men's social clubs, both of which were well supported in the area. If the people attending these could be encouraged to support institutions such as the Community Centre and NORA, a keener sense of community could be created which might prevail over the social forces which were destroying the area. Both had been important innovations in that they offered the possibility of bridging the gap between religious and social matters. The Methodist minister also echoed the views of the vicar, Ron Clayton and Fred Pickering. He saw NORA as performing a valuable and Christian service in an area which needed that type of organization. He saw the group's role as interpreter of local government proposals and a voice for the opinions of local people.

Although I have emphasised the dichotomy in the group between the views expressed by the "community oriented" and the "limited interest" participators in relation to the role of NORA, these reflect more the circumstances under which the actors themselves came to be involved with the group. This dichotomy is now no longer so marked as in the earlier days. Increasingly the "limited interest" participators talk in terms of "community spirit" and overall planning strategy in North Ormesby. Hence their attitudes towards planning and public participation have altered from a very narrow area of interest (the immediate neighbourhood) and a

limited view of the possibilities offered by participation, to incorporate a wider view of the situation in terms of area of interest and the functions of the group.

The sources of this change are twofold. Firstly, common experiences as participators over a period of two to three years had meant fairly frequent encounters with the local authorities and the experience drawn from these encounters has developed skills for dealing with such interactions and has increased knowledge of the overall planning situation in North Ormesby. Secondly, the change in attitude also reflects a higher degree of interaction among the committee members and a dominant flow of views from the "community oriented" leaders of the group to the others.

As members of a residents association, they have been involved, over a period of three years, in a series of encounters with local authorities, most commonly with the councillors for the area but also to a certain extent with planners and other local government officials. These encounters usually occur in the form of public meetings in the community centre or are private meetings between the group and councillors at the town hall. Occasionally the interaction is more informal consisting of personal conversations after meetings or discussion over the telephone. From this framework of encounters the individual members have been able to gain knowledge of planning matters and of the structure and process of local government. In the light of these experiences they are able to draw conclusions about the activities of particular councillors and can improve and modify their ideas on what form participation should take. In the long run this enables them to improve their approach in their dealings with the local officials as new issues emerge.

But, as members of a residents group, they are involved not only in public meetings and in encounters with the local authorities, but also in a considerable amount of interaction amongst themselves in situations which could not be regarded as dealing with official NORA business. These consist of regular meetings in other normative contexts (e.g. church, community centre and social club) or of chance encounters in the street or in the pub. Thus there are far more possibilities for information to be passed on, views to be expressed and opinions to be formulated than is evident from looking simply at the official committee meetings. The formulation of opinions and the expectations the actors have of the way the group should operate are clearly complex phenomena. Individual members carry with them images of local government and of their own positions in society which were formulated in earlier life experiences and which have then been subjected to modification in the light of new experiences. In no small way these images have been modified as a result of their membership of a residents group, with all that this entails.

In relation to other aspects of their participation and the types of issues which emerged no real dichotomy was discernible, only differences of emphasis, assertiveness, or subtlety with which the views were expressed. The common involvement in a series of issues as a structured and regularly interacting group of individuals has resulted in a blending of old views with new ones, and in the development of a high degree of consensus, particularly through the influence of certain individuals in the group. This consensus was particularly apparent when the respondents expressed their views on each other's roles in the group, when they made judgements on the councillors or planners and the way they operated, and also in the way they talked about

the representativeness of the group and how their position as community spokesmen was legitimated.

The fairly high degree of consensus in the group on certain issues, and increasingly on the role of NORA, was probably most marked in relation to the views the actors expressed on the roles of one another, particularly the expected roles of the group leaders. This resulted from the process by which all of them interacted and engaged in an ongoing set of shared experiences of participation in local politics.

Subjective assessments of the roles played by particular members

Ron was seen by the rest of the members as a key figure in that he was the main spokesman for the group and was involved in most of the interaction between the group and local government officials. Two reasons were frequently given for his prominence - his ability to communicate with the councillors and planners, and his numerous contacts in Middlesbrough with 'important people'. Betty commented in the following way:

> "He's the sort that can talk in their language. He's intelligent and understands and he's very interested in North Ormesby; he's lived here all his life."

Bob, her husband, added to this by emphasising Ron's multitude of contacts through work and through various types of voluntary organization. David Harvey also saw Ron in this way and described him as "a link man, a good front man and good with the chat. He's also good with the contacts of course." All the other committee members recognized his links with the local newspaper and with the North Ormesby Methodist church as being of crucial importance.

> "He was brought up around here and is known by a lot of older people. Of course he's got his links in the Methodist church, the conservative club and the community centre. He seems to be able to develop links. He's important to the group because he's a bit of a flier."

The positions of the vicar, Fred Pickering and Matt Woods were seen in a similar light by the other committee members, but they were assessed differently from Ron in several respects. They were all seen as natural community leaders and were regarded as valuable assets to the group for their ability to converse with the officials "on their level", but they lacked that charismatic quality which had been attributed to Ron.

Fred was seen as "a real committee man", "a meticulous kind of bloke who enjoys the machinery". Several members had great respect for him as a community worker of long standing and referred to the great work he did on his own before the inception of NORA. He was also still involved in important work outside NORA through the Methodist church and through the Community Centre. He had written letters for people who were unable to do so and had worked towards community ideals for years, long before his recent interest in NORA and the Community Centre. One respondent called him the "Guardian Angel of North Ormesby" and the vicar thought he was valuable to the group because he kept it "structured" through his keen sense of ordering and recording business.

Both David Harvey, the vicar, and Matt Woods, the Methodist minister, were highly regarded for their "modern attitude". Ivy stressed that David was not like usual clergymen, he was not aloof or merely concerned with church affairs but had a keen interest in the area as a whole. Talking of himself the vicar explained:

> "I suppose I represent the church basically. One of the tasks I have is to get other people in my congregation meaningfully involved. Personally I've got an interest in the area, but I suppose the fact that I've got a collar helps."

The other individuals in the group, the "limited-interest" participators, were said by the community leaders to be "very representative of the ordinary

people of North Ormesby". Indeed they themselves regarded their main role as "speaking up for the ordinary people" since they were all long-established residents in North Ormesby and had many contacts amongst the local population. Hence they could be used to "take the pulse" or test the feelings of the local residents, on various planning matters. They viewed themselves as typical North Ormesby people with circles of kin, friends and neighbours that were like those of the majority of local residents.

Views on Representativeness

Although the committee generally claimed to be representative of the locality in that the original seven members of the group, and also Ron Clayton and Fred Pickering as life-long residents of North Ormesby, were well-established in local networks of kin, friends and neighbours, several members of the group expressed the view that, strictly speaking, the group was not really representative of the North Ormesby population. In the first place, the geographical distribution of the members did not reflect the total neighbourhood interest; several groups of streets had no representatives on NORA. The original seven committee members all lived in close proximity along the eastern fringe, where the developing light industry had provoked an emotive reaction against it about the time the group was being formed. Secondly, it was frequently pointed out that the residents association was dominated by a religious interest, although the members themselves would argue that this wasn't deliberate policy, "it just happened that way".

The four community oriented leaders all expressed the view that in the long term the NORA committee needed to be reformed so that it would include representatives from all the institutional groups of the locality

and also all the geographical areas. It was hoped in this way to involve such institutions as the working men's clubs, and important social categories such as the shopkeepers and market traders.

Several respondents, however, were keen to point out that the interests of a considerable portion of the North Ormesby population were already represented through the members of the committee. The three major churches all had representatives: David Harvey for the Church of England, Matt Woods for the Methodist Chapel, and Ivy and Ted McEvoy for the Catholic church. Many members of the committee also had well-developed local networks and could claim to be closely in touch with the views and sentiments of the local population. Ivy, Betty, Susan and Janice were seen as "typical" North Ormesby housewives and Bill, Bob and Ted as representative of the working men of the area. The Community Centre was also well represented since seven of the committee were involved in the running of it.

Legitimation and the problem of local apathy

In addition to arguments concerning representativeness, there were two other important sources of legitimation for the position of the committee and their claim that the group was a focal point for community opinion. Firstly, several members, particularly the community oriented leaders, referred to a kind of Christian ethic in which it was seen as their duty to act as local representatives in order to help those who had difficulty in articulating their opinions to the local authorities, or in order to encourage those people who were not expressing themselves to do so. Active involvement in local politics through public participation was seen as

offering a service to the community and performing a Christian function. As Ron Clayton put it,

> "NORA and my commitment to the church are totally compatible. My basic philosophy is a sense of love and concern for other people as well as myself. I think I have a responsibility to get other people to think for themselves. I see it as performing a Christian function."

Ron was further motivated by the fact that he regarded himself as representative of local people through having lived in North Ormesby for most of his life.

Another frequently used source of legitimation was the so-called "apathy" of many local people; it was the general feeling amongst the original seven committee members that if they did not put forward the views of local people it was probable that nobody else would bother. Although the response to public meetings in North Ormesby had been good in recent times, compared to some of the earlier meetings after the formation of NORA and also compared to other areas of Middlesbrough, it was felt in the group that it had been poor considering the scale of the changes that were in progress. Furthermore the very fact that attendance at public meetings had swelled since the formation of NORA was a clear sign that their activities had been rewarded and that their links were being activated. This was emphasised by the fact that a majority of the audience at every public meeting was drawn from the churches.

The vicar had strong feelings about the apparent apathy among local people. He felt that areas like North Ormesby and Cargo Fleet had been "kicked around so much" by the local authorities that the people "just didn't want to know anymore". They had never been consulted in the

past about the planned changes for their area and were therefore suspicious, frightened, bewildered by or just not bothered about the recent trend towards participation. In his view the so-called "apathy' in the area was not characterized by an inbuilt resistance to authority:

> "It's something that is inbuilt, but not resistance to authority. I don't think it's a positive thing like that. If that was so it would be quite acceptable. It's nothing. They don't want to be involved or concerned with anything until if affects them personally, in other words, their pockets or their livelihood."

Ted McEvoy claimed that many local people were "frightened" to present themselves in public and state their views on the ways North Ormesby was changing. Betty, Bob, Ivy and Susan all said that they had attempted to gather support for public meetings but had received a relatively small response for the effort they had put in. Bob, Ivy and Susan all said that they had attempted to gather support for public meetings but had received a relatively small response for the effort they had put in. Bob and Betty explained this apathy in terms of the poor response shown by councillors to the complaints of local people and also said that people just are not interested as long as their lives are not affected. The following passage is an extract from an interview with them at their home:

Bob: "You could go in this street now and there's us two that will go to a meeting. Sometimes Alf'll go. But what do you get out of him? 'They'll never do anything.'"

Betty: "That's what's annoying, when you have got a few things done and they talk like that."

Interviewer: "But other areas of Middlesbrough don't seem to get as good attendances at public meetings as North Ormesby."

Bob: "Ah! But what complaints have they got to put in?"

Betty: "But I do think North Ormesby has got a good community spirit. Most people who live here have lived here all their lives. You know everybody."

Bob: "If you're on a new estate though, you haven't got many complaints. You're bound to have a few but not so many as here. They made a good start by clearing the really bad areas and they were supposed to go right through till they'd finished and now you don't see or hear of them. But if you go up with a complaint it sort of gets their back up and I can't understand why it should because they wanted us to do this (i.e. form a residents association). Yet now when you go up with a complaint you're fobbed off sort of thing. You can't weigh them up. You could go up there and you could really lose your temper with them. But, like I say, they started off well didn't they? (addressing Betty). But everything just died down. We got on about the drains - cleaning them. Smashing! They came round and cleaned them out regular. Very few and far between you see them now isn't it? We even got road sweepers down here a couple of times! You don't see them now. It's things like that that annoy me. Well you pay your rates don't you? You think they'd make an effort."

Betty: "But some of the people round here, they'd live with anything, you know?"

Bob: "But I think you always get that anyway."

Betty: "As long as it's not concerning them. Because we were at this end of the street and we had all this rubbish and muck to put up with - up that end they weren't bothered."

Assessments of Councillors and Planners

Betty and Bob had strong words on the lack of results from councillors and their inefficiency, and believed that they could be blamed for a lot of the so-called "apathy". Bob thought that they paid very little attention to the complaints made by local people - "You might as well talk to the wall." Betty claimed that the councillors "treat you like kids". Both were angry at the fact that before election time the councillors were never away from North Ormesby, but since then they had been infrequent visitors, generally

only at times of a public meeting. "Once they're in they don't want to know" argued Bob. Susan was of a similar opinion:

> "You can't believe everything they tell you obviously, because they only tell you what you want to know, what you want to hear. They tell you something and they have no intention of carrying through what they say."

On numerous occasions I heard the same evaluations of the four local district councillors, although the intensity of the comment often varied from individual to individual. Councillor Barton, a prominent county politician, was regarded as a power-seeking man whose main interests lay in a wider arena; he had "too many irons in the fire" to be interested in North Ormesby. Councillors Whelan and Sergeant were seen as close allies of Councillor Barton, but with little initiative of their own. Councillor Whelan was "short tempered" and took complaints "personally", while councillor Sergeant, an elderly man, was "past it" and "went on too much about his achievements in the past", which apparently amounted to getting a street light fixed. The fact that in a public meeting he claimed to have "brought the light to North Ormesby" was often referred to with great cynicism by the committee members.

One councillor, Mary Harrison, was singled out for praise for her willingness to co-operate with and fight for the local residents generally and the residents association in particular. All the members of the group claimed that they would contact Mary Harrison if they needed to impress an opinion on the other councillors or on a local government department and also if they needed to obtain information on the course of particular issues. Susan expressed her view of Mary in the following way:

> "If she couldn't do something she would say so. Well this is a lot better than making false promises."

Ivy also claimed that "she is the only decent one among them", and the vicar said that she was "good, sincere and gets things done". He went even further:

> "When I came here I learnt a lot more about the local government system through my association with Mary. Mary has proved to be a very valuable relation. My whole involvement stems from making contact with Mary Harrison. I don't know how interested I would have been if I hadn't got a meaningful link into the council through her. If it had been links through Sergeant, Whelan or Barton, I wouldn't have got anywhere I don't think. I don't think any of us would. She is the lynchpin of the whole thing in this area. Any progress we've made between the community and the Council she has been the real bridge - not Ron Clayton, not Fred Pickering, not any of the churches. It's definitely Mary who has made the links."

He also stated that there was no way in which public participation could work without the aid of councillors like Mary Harrison or without making meaningful links with councillors. Since she had presented herself as a councillor willing to fight for local people she had become the main target for the group in its attempts to influence decisions. It was generally held that the other three councillors were not particularly well known amongst the local population since they rarely visited the locality. It was also said that they had very different views about public participation from those of Mary Harrison, more traditional views in which they regarded themselves as elected representatives in office to make decisions. Several members of the group claimed that Mary Harrison had been "carpeted" on numerous occasions by Councillor Barton for contravening the normal procedures of councillors and becoming "too friendly with the locals". Ron sympathised with Mary and said that in future more pressure was going to be put on Councillor Barton to "try and get him to justify his being a councillor".

It was generally held that these three councillors disliked Ron for the way he had embarrassed them at public meetings. The councillors were

also said to be afraid that he would stand as a councillor himself in the next election and that one of them would lose his seat. Indeed it was often argued that they did not like the group as a whole. Ivy McEvoy believed that the councillors were of the opinion that the NORA committee had got "far too big for its boots":

> "Arnold Barton was quite happy in the beginning when it was just myself, Susan and Betty because he knew that we knew very little - he could manipulate us. But he can't do that with Ron and he doesn't like him."

Ted, her husband, agreed and claimed that NORA was becoming a handful for Barton, it was becoming "too awkward and getting a little but too much power."

The general feeling prevalent in the group was that the councillors were only prepared to encourage public participation as long as it suited them to do so. Residents associations were tolerated so long as they served a purpose useful to the councillors and as long as they weren't too demanding. "Once they become too pushy they just don't want to know."

The planners were occasionally lumped together with the councillors in these assessments of the local government officials, but several members had separate words for them. The general feeling was that the planners had too free a hand in drawing up their plans and they did not allow enough scope for the views of local people to be incorporated. Certain members thought that they were too paternalistic in the way they treated local people. They exhibited an attitude of "we know best." Thus Ted argued:

> "You don't need a degree to know that North Ormesby needs more houses and not another social club or to know that we need more shops. You don't need a degree to know what sort of an area you want to live in. Some of the plans I've seen make me laugh. There seems to be very little coordination between the departments."

Bill was of the opinion that the planners thought "on too grand a scale" and should be more "down to earth":

> "They can't see some of the small things for the grand schemes they have in mind. It's a common thing in this country at the moment. Everything must be done on a grand scale."

Susan was of a similar opinion:

> "They (the planners) suggested building old people's houses on the St. Alphonsus site, and until somebody pointed it out at the meeting I don't think they had thoughtabout the fact that they would be next door to the "Monk" (local pub) and facing the "Teesside Bridge Club" (working men's club). It would be lovely for the old folk at eleven o'clock at night! And I don't think one of them had thought about that - you know? 'we'll just shift this here and that there' type of thing."

A popular view amongst the committee members was that the planners, while appearing sincere in the way they favoured public participation, were actually only concerned to "go through the motions" and paid little attention to the opinions expressed in public meetings. There was optimism though in the way several of the committee members talked about the attitude of the planners. The vicar had been encouraged by their more recent encounters with planners at meetings and believed that the planners were beginning to respect the opinions of the residents association.

Concluding Remarks

I have emphasised a dichotomy in the group between "community oriented" and "limited interest" participators in the way that they view the role of NORA and how it should function. This however can be regarded more as a comment on the way these two groups were drawn into involvement in local planning matters, the former being motivated by a kind of Christian ethic and the latter responding to developments affecting their immediate

neighbourhood. This dichotomy was becoming less apparent as the "limited interest" participators began to talk more in terms of the whole community rather than specific personal threats. This had occurred, I argued, as a result of two sets of forces operating on the individuals concerned: on ongoing set of experiences of interaction with local government and increased interaction amongst the members of the group.

A certain amount of consensus had been achieved on the role that the group should play in the participation process. This high degree of consensus was also apparent in relation to opinions that had been formulated on matters such as the role certain individuals had to play within the group, how representative of local opinion the group was, the ways in which they could legitimate their positions as community spokesmen, and in their attitudes towards local government officials. The viewpoints expressed on these matters, although differing in their conviction, in their degree or in the subtlety with which they were articulated, were on the whole expressing common definitions of the situation. Evidence that common viewpoints had been achieved through the high degree of interaction amongst members and the dissemination of dominant opinions from certain members of the group was apparent in the phraseology used to describe the councillors and in the definitions of particular situations.

To present the viewpoints and attitudes of these individuals is an important exercise for it tells us something about the way they conceptualize public participation and the relationship between the ordinary citizen and the governing bodies. Such viewpoints and attitudes obviously have a direct bearing on the way they behave as individuals or as a group in

participating in local affairs. The images which are built up to give meaning to the complex relationship between local government and individual cannot be divorced from the contexts in which they are formulated. Thus the individual's experience in other outside contexts can also have a crucial bearing on their perceptions of local government and the way it operates.

Since certain individuals occupy strategic positions in the network, acting as the primary contacts with the councillors, they have a greater degree of access to relevant information. These, furthermore, tend to be the "community oriented" participators who, because of their control over information, tend to become a dominant influence on the main attitudes and viewpoints expressed by the group as a whole.

Originally the group was a group only in the sense that it had a structure defined by membership of the committee. At its inception the individual members held diverse opinions and had differing assumptions on the role of the group and the nature of public participation. Once their goals became more precisely defined and common interests were developed relationships became more established particularly in contexts outside of NORA. Furthermore, new relationships were created. Overall, individual members of the group were interacting more frequently. Information about planning and other local matters was more easily disseminated, and as the group became consolidated so common norms and rules became evident and common definitions were developed to give meaning to their relationship with local government. It was only at this stage that significant joint action became possible through the acceptance by each member of the roles each of them had to play. In other words, a kind of organised division of labour became established.

Given the right conditions, then, a group attempting to participate in the decision making process, may come to increase its fund of knowledge

about planning matters and may achieve a lasting association based on common goals. As several writers have pointed out, participation is a cumulative process in which the individual or group gradually acquires the necessary skills and knowledge for dealing with encounters with local government. This is not to say, however, that the process can always be educative. Increased knowledge does not necessarily lead to increased tolerance and understanding. It may in certain cases be used to reinforce previous erroneous attitudes or viewpoints. Also, the process of reaching a consensus, which I have described in this paper, indicates a stage in the group's history when it achieves a certain amount of independence of view[1]. Over the same period the group came more and more to question local government policy and displayed views often starkly opposed to those of the local officials. Generally councillors do not like operating with such groups. The scene becomes one set for situations of confrontation rather than one of discussion and debate which is supposed to characterize the participation process.

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1. In the Chapter I have highlighted two important factors which have been a dominant influence on the group's developing cohesion, viz: increased interaction amongst the members of the group and a series of common experiences as participators active in local politics. There is a similarity here between these factors and two of the bases for social cohesion identified by Merton (1968, pp.369-70). One he describes as "Organizationally induced social cohesion: resulting from realization of personal and group goals through the interdependent activities of others in the group"; and the other he sees as "Social cohesion induced by the structural context: resulting for example, from contrasts of in-groups and out-groups, conflicts with other groups, and the like."

CHAPTER 6

OFFICIAL ROLES AND ATTITUDES TO PARTICIPATION AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NORA AND LOCAL COUNCILLORS

In this chapter I will examine the role played by the four district councillors of North Ormesby in the public participation exercise. I will also say something about the relationship between NORA and the councillors and how this has changed in the three years since the initiation of the group. Towards the end of the last chapter I have an indication of how the residents association members assess their local councillors and the district planners, and from this it emerged that there was suspicion of and disillusionment with the councillors. In this chapter, then, I will attempt to highlight the characteristics of the relationship and how this is manifested in actual situations.

The impetus for the creation of NORA came from the local councillors as a product of the general policy in Teesside of stimulating the development of such neighbourhood groups. This kind of policy was (and still is) being carried out, particularly in areas such as North Ormesby, which are viewed by the local authorities as "working class" and impoverished. It appears that the councillors and planners operated with a stereotyped image of what North Ormesby was like: viz. a down at heel area inhabited by people who would not be able to organize a response of their own. Referring to this policy of stimulating residents groups, one Middlesbrough councillor remarked: "If they can't do it for themselves then we'll have to do it for them." The councillors and planners seemed to anticipate a structured and smoothly operating channel of communication through the NORA committee. The relationship would be harmonious and co-operative.

In view of the enthusiasm shown by the councillors and district planners for the involvement of the public in formulating policies, there

was surprisingly little contact between officials and the North Ormesby population after the initial series of public meetings in 1973. Communication between officials and the residents association consisted of infrequent meetings. These were either open to the general public in the community centre, or were private meetings between committee members and councillors at Councillor Barton's office at the town hall.

The councillors and officials apparently conceptualized public participation somewhat differently to the people of North Ormesby, and in particular to the residents association committee. The councillors were seeking a structured channel of communication through which the local people could express their views. However, they did not seem to anticipate that the views of the local people might contradict their own views and the policies which had already been worked out by the planning department. Instead, their emphasis was on using the public meetings to "educate" the North Ormesby people, to inform them in more detail about the proposed changes and to persuade them that the policies which were being worked out were in the best interest of North Ormesby. They envisaged a fairly passive response from the local population and a co-operative and agreeable atmosphere. For the councillors, participation was a means of communication. By communicating more effectively with the North Ormesby population they expected that their policies would be endorsed and their status in the locality assured.

The councillors and planners were also selective about the information which they passed on in public meetings. Many questions of importance concerning future land use were left unanswered or only vague answers were given. Most meetings were skilfully manipulated by Councillor Barton who had a high degree of control over the direction that discussions took. Vociferous or awkward residents were often ignored or curtly dealt with. The councillors' desire for smooth administration was reflected in their attempts to make public meetings run as concordantly as possible.

The North Ormesby councillors also regarded themselves as the right and proper channels of communication[1]. All comments, complaints, objections and views should be transmitted from the local people through the councillors. Bypassing them in any way, by contacting the officers personally or by going to the press, were frowned upon. But, as we have already seen in Chapter 3, very few of the North Ormesby population knew who their councillors were and few had any confidence in them in representing local views in the district council.

According to members of the residents association, the councillors had, at the time the group was set up, shown an attitude of amicable "we know best". One respondent went so far as to say that the councillors were manipulating the group for their own ends in order to present a public image of concern for local views while paradoxically pushing council policies as the correct and sensible ones. Indeed, there was a strong feeling of distrust, amongst the members of the residents association, of the motives of the councillors in the participation exercise. In the early days of the group's existence, its own ineffectiveness had meant that the councillors were able to maintain the paternalistic attitude they had adopted towards North Ormesby.

For several committee members the turning point came with the emergence of Ron as the committee leader. Ron helped the group to define more clearly its objectives and also focussed attention on the kinds of issues which should concern the committee. The committee began to broaden its interests, turning its attentions to such community problems as housing, shopping, roads and transport, use of cleared land, etc. The desire of the group to achieve recognition in the eyes of the councillors is illustrated by their involvement in wide ranging issues.

The smooth channel of information exchange, which had been envisaged by the councillors, failed to develop primarily because of the emergence of

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1. This would seem to be a fairly widespread attitude amongst councillors in England. See for example Batley (1972) and Dearlove (1971).

the community oriented leaders who were not prepared to act purely as channels of communication. Rather, they felt a need to debate many aspects of the policies affecting North Ormesby. The group leaders attempted to define more clearly community objectives and methods of achieving these. One of the group's main tactics was to project to the councillors and officers an image of the North Ormesby population as being willing and able to contribute to planning the future of North Ormesby. The development of a cohesive and organized response was intensified by the distrust of and disillusionment with the planners and councillors.

The behaviour of NORA committee members in public and private meetings, and in their dealings with the local government bodies generally, is influenced partly by the results of previous contests and by the expectations they have of future contests. The fact that they may have been frustrated in one issue seems to have had the effect of making them even more adamant in the next "round" of confrontation. As a relatively young political body they are still learning the rules of the political game, rules which are largely defined by the local government establishment. The councillors were content to have the residents' group operating within this set of rules, but with the frustration experienced after particular demands and the emergence of more skilful and demanding leaders, who on the whole were not prepared to have the rules of the game dictated to them, a united front was formed in opposition to the governing bodies. This was a united front to which the councillors themselves were contributing.

Illustrations of this communication breakdown are numerous, with almost every meeting between NORA and council officials following the same pattern. The residents, frustrated at the slow rate of development, or angry that certain projects which they had opposed have gone on in spite of their objections, put forward their complaints vociferously. The councillors claim that developments are in fact going ahead "but these

things cannot be done overnight". They also emphasise that local views are in fact being taken into account. The residents may interpret this as a "brush off" and claim that their views are being ignored. The councillors reject this as "unreasonable" arguing that residents must be patient since North Ormesby has no greater claim to government funds than any other district of Middlesbrough.

This often strained relationship between the residents of North Ormesby and the local councillors and planners is perhaps best illustrated through the presentation of particular cases. I will therefore in the next part of the chapter present three case examples. The first concerns an episode in which the residents drew up a plan of their own and called for a public meeting. The second case traces the development of the "supermarket issue". The third case looks at the consequences of the council setting up another residents association in North Ormesby.

Case 1: The residents' plan and the public meeting of April 1975

In April 1975 a major crisis occurred in the relationship between the NORA committee and the councillors and planners. For some time the NORA committee had been expressing their disapproval of many of the aspects of the local area plan. No satisfactory solution was being offered to curtail the development of small scale industry along the eastern fringe and it seemed, to the residents' association committee, that in future the heavy traffic associated with that industry would still be using the streets of North Ormesby. They had also been pressing for a much needed supermarket. Many local residents had shown a preference for the use of an old school site for this purpose which ran contrary to that of the planners who envisaged a social club on the site. Various other aspects of future land use were not satisfactory in the eyes of the committee. Their efforts to influence decisions being taken did not appear to be having much success and they claim that the Councillors were not helping them in their efforts. As a result of their frustration they took the

unprecedented step of drawing up their own plan for the area. Ron's experience as a draughtsman added a professional touch to the end product.

The residents' plan and the public meeting (which was subsequently organized to discuss the discrepancies between their plan and that of the planners) were given adequate publicity through the use of Ron's newspaper contacts. "Residents demand a say in planning" was the heading for an article in the Gazette (April 19th, 1975). The Rev. David Harvey was quoted as saying:

> We do not see this plan as a magic solution. But it is something concrete for both planners and residents to work on. Now is the crucial time to get things organized - before the bulldozers move in. By acting in such a way, we hope to put forward reasonable suggestions before it is too late and decisions are taken which cannot be reversed ... Apart from coming up with our own suggestions, we want to discuss some of the moves favoured by the council so that an overall policy can be agreed wherever possible.

In the same article Ron Clayton declared:

> As rate payers we want to show the council exactly what we are after. To be quite honest, I feel that we do much of the work for councillors. I am not completely happy with the interest some councillors have shown towards our problems.

Later in the week, the Evening Gazette contained an article headed "Area plan starts row", in which one of the councillors attacked the residents' association and its plan claiming that Ron Clayton was "electioneering" by introducing the plan without informing ward councillors. "I believe", he said,

> Mr. Clayton is electioneering and intends standing for a seat in the next council elections. He is using the association for a behind-the-scenes platform. If the residents' association have come up with anything different from the plans already worked out, then the correct thing to do would be to approach the ward councillors. Mr. Clayton is attempting to ruin the harmonic relationship between the residents of North Ormesby and their ward councillors.

The public meeting was held several days later and, because of the publicity and through the efforts of the committee "mobilizers", a crowd of 250 or more filled one of the rooms in the community centre. Councillors, local government officials and representatives of the residents' association

committee shared a table at the head of the room. Fred Pickering opened the meeting by appealing to the audience to confine their comments to the front and to speak through the microphone. He stated that NORA was non-sectarian and non-political and requested that the discussion be kept in those terms since some of the issues could be controversial. The press were also asked to be "indulgent and correct" in their reporting.

Ron Clayton, who was chairing the meeting took over and introduced the residents' plan which had already been examined by the planning department. He stated that many of the people of North Ormesby believed that recent developments had not been beneficial. They had been kept in the dark by the planners in their "white tower" and the councillors seemed to have to do what they willed. He went on to say that there was a rift between people and officials for which both sides were responsible. Ron singled out Mary Harrison as the one exception amongst the councillors who was in touch with what the people really thought. He went through various aspects of the residents' plan which differed from that of the planning department.

In reply, one of the councillors stood up in an attempt to defend their record claiming that many aspects of the residents' plan were already being attended to. He went on to say: Things don't happen that fast in local government. If Middlesbrough councillors can't get things done no-one else can. They are trained to do it." To this there was much heckling and murmuring. Each councillor in turn attempted to explain the difficulties facing the council with the lack of money available for public spending. Councillor Whelan argued that the councillors could not operate in a situation of hostility. One of the planners claimed that the ideas of residents and council seemed to be very similar and there was no need for open hostility. This was rejected by members of the audience. They felt the residents' plan was very much in conflict with that of the

council and the point of the meeting was to resolve those differences. Instead, they argued, the councillors were confining themselves to saying how hard they were trying and the planners were merely claiming that the two plans were, in fact, very much the same.

The pattern of interaction observed at this meeting is duplicated in many instances where local people meet local officials for the purpose of discussing local area plans. (See, for example, J. G. Davies, 1972). The residents display an attitude of distrust of and frustration with councillors and council officers. The councillors regard pressure groups, such as NORA, as unreasonable, individualistic and impatient. Furthermore, as far as the councillors were concerned, NORA (and in particular its chairman) had broken the rules of the game by ignoring and bypassing them in drawing up their own plan. This was seen as foul play and a form of politicking. In the process, Ron was beginning to use his experience in the field of publicity to glamourize the group in the eyes of the local residents, attempting to convey to them that it was possible to have a say in planning the area if one was prepared to speak up. As a result, a residents' plan which had been created in an effort to bridge a gap and allow discussion to develop, had, in many respects, created an even wider rift between officials and residents.

Case 2: Supermarket or Working Men's Club?
The Problem of the St. Alphonsus Site

The origins of this issue can be traced back to the years of active demolition during the 1960's when one of the old working men's clubs of North Ormesby, situated on the market square, was knocked down. Prior to its demolition, the club's committee had expressed its wish to remain established in North Ormesby and the planning department agreed to relocate it close by. At about the same time, the old Catholic school of St. Alphonsus had abandoned its buildings on King's Road to occupy a newly built school

elsewhere in North Ormesby, leaving the old site vacant to await demolition. Planning officers earmarked the site as one for the building of a new working men's club.

With the onset of the series of public meetings during 1972-3, many residents raised objections to the building of this social club. They argued that North Ormesby already had three working men's clubs and several public houses and that there was no demand for another social club. Instead, they put forward the idea that a supermarket should be built on the site. With the demolition of the High Street and the shops on the Market Square, North Ormesby had lost many shops. The old Co-op offering its popular "divi" had also closed down. Existing shopping facilities were seen as inadequate by the residents and they therefore argued that the St. Alphonsus school site could be used to build a supermarket.

The NORA committee took up this appeal for a new supermarket on the St. Alphonsus site and raised the issue at virtually every public and private meeting between the residents and councillors. Initially, the appeals for a supermarket were met with indifference by councillors and planning officers alike. A social club continued to be put forward as the most likely use of the site.

The supermarket issue in fact became a very emotive one and aroused strong feeling from many North Ormesby people[1], particularly members of the Catholic church. The leaders of the Catholic church in North Ormesby, while giving their general backing to the activities of NORA, had declined to take any active part. The supermarket issue, however, drew them out of their inactivity. The parish priest informed his congregation that the Co-op had made enquiries about the site and were prepared to apply for planning permission. The Co-op were, in fact, interested in building one

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1. This was apparent from the frequency with which the issue was referred to by the respondents interviewed in the survey.

of their modern style supermarkets there. There was, however, a considerable amount of confusion during the months of waiting to hear the outcome. Nobody was sure whether the Co-op had actually applied for planning permission or, if they had, whether they would be allowed to go ahead. The parish priest kept his congregation in touch with every development in the case and was even known to ask them to offer up a prayer in the hope that the Co-op would receive planning permission!

The issue therefore entered another stage and the councillors and planners could not afford to ignore the strength of feeling against using the site for another social club. Matters came to a head during 1975 when the NORA committee more or less issued an ultimatum to the North Ormesby councillors. They demanded that the councillors should support the residents in their demands for a supermarket. If they failed to do this, the residents association would work to unseat them as councillors for North Ormesby. The threat was not taken lightly, for it spurred the councillors into supporting the residents' case. The Planning Department, even in the face of such opposition, continued to attempt to dissuade the residents from favouring the St. Alphonsus site for a supermarket. They put forward what they saw as more suitable sites. But the St. Alphonsus site had, for the residents, one great advantage over any other; it could be rapidly re-developed. They also saw the planners' objections to the site as trivial[1]. The Co-op did, in fact, make a bid for the site which was eventually reluctantly passed by the planning applications committee.

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1. The planners were against the site because they were seeking to make North Ormesby's shopping centre compact and self-contained. The St. Alphonsus site was about one hundred yards outside the line which they had drawn to delimit the shopping area.

Case 3: The Setting up of the Trinity Association

This issue illustrates the speed with which the NORA committee can be mobilized in reaction to a sudden event. It also highlights the distrust the residents association members have of the motives and activities of their councillors. In January 1976, it was revealed one day that a new residents association had been set up by the councillors to serve the council dwellings around the market place. I have already described in Chapter 4 the speed with which this information was disseminated through the residents association (see Figure 10). The news in fact was the cause of a certain amount of consternation amongst members of the group although the degree of reaction varied from individual to individual.

David Harvey claimed that there was no point to the action; the councillors were merely creating artificial divisions within the locality. He also felt that the relationship between the group and the councillors, which had slowly been repaired after the confrontation of the spring of 1975, would be in jeopardy again because of this move by the councillors. It would have made much more sense, he argued, for the councillors to have approached the NORA committee and asked them to make places for two or three representatives from the council houses on the NORA committee.

Other members of the group interpreted the councillors behaviour as perfidious or Machiavellian. Ted and Ivy McEvoy saw this as the councillors attempt at curtailing the growing power of the NORA committee, a "divide and rule" kind of strategy according to Ted. Ivy argued that the councillors felt that the committee was "getting a little bit too big for its boots". They also asserted that since it was nearing election time, Councillor Barton was making sure his name was known in the new council estate where there were plenty of potential labour votes. In sum, the, the setting up of this new council tenants association was seen as underhand and devious.

Within a few days the committee had met to decide on a course of action. It was agreed that the councillors should be requested to explain their activities in a private meeting between councillors and residents during the following week. The North Ormesby councillors sent along Councillor Hardaker, chairman of the council's housing committee, and Mr. Brown, the public relations officer. Councillor Hardaker explained that the setting up of tenants associations was general council policy in Teesside in areas of local authority housing, and was merely an attempt to improve tenant-council relations.

After the councillor and the public relations officer had left, the committee members were still sceptical and apprehensive. In later weeks the NORA committee chairman did in fact make contact with the new committee's members to offer them the opportunity to join together to create a single body representing North Ormesby. This, on the whole, was welcomed by the Trinity Association members and several of them did eventually go on to join the NORA committee.

These cases illustrate various aspects of the group and its relationship with the local authorities. In previous chapters, I have shown how the group has developed during its time as a participating body. I identified interdependent and specialized roles within the group and I have shown that the group has increased in its degree of cohesion. Over the time the group has been in operation, it has also developed a central goal and a sense of purpose.

The first case illustrates that even by the spring of 1975, when the group had been in operation for about two years, it had developed sufficient locality backing to take on the officials by producing a plan of its own. However, the case also demonstrates that there was, and still is, a poor sense of understanding and lack of communication between residents and officials even in face to face situations. This was largely,

from the councillors' point of view, a result of the committee being unwilling to operate within the formal set of rules defined by local government.

The second case is a good example of the persistence that is needed if a participating group is to achieve a reversal of any policy which has already been decided. The NORA committee had also to resort to a crude strategy in order to accomplish their task and win the support of the councillors. The case also throws a large question mark over the attitudes of the councillors and planning officers towards public participation. The overwhelming opinion of the North Ormesby residents, as expressed in public meetings and through a petition, was that a supermarket was needed and not another social club. Yet repeatedly the planners put forward a social club in the face of this opposition. It would seem that to change their policy for this site would have upset the format of their well worked out plan for North Ormesby, and this was to be avoided at all costs.

The third case shows the distrust felt by the committee members of the North Ormesby councillors. The group members realized that the group had, over the three years it had been in operation, developed skills in the participation process and were becoming a force to be reckoned with. They were also aware of the fact that the councillors were suspicious of the group and found it difficult to handle. The group therefore became sensitive to any move which it regarded as an attempt by the councillors to stem its development. This kind of situation typifies the strain under which the participation exercise is often carried out.

While observing events in North Ormesby, it became apparent that the councillors, in general, appear to rely heavily on the professional officers, and were not totally aware of what was actually planned for the area. The usual pattern at public meetings was for the councillors

to leave all the explaining about plans and development to the officers; and the councillors used the meetings for personal or party political legitimation. Thus, the North Ormesby councillors, who are supposed to be informed about the needs, problems and aspirations of the local people were very poor representatives of local feelings.

What has often been depicted as a two way relationship between local people and local government is in fact a three sided relationship, between people, officers and councillors. The councillors, who in theory are the crucial group, in fact played an ambiguous and sometimes negative role. They were often obstructive to the residents association in its efforts to be heard. In theory, councillors are supposed to represent the people and make decisions about policy. Neither task was effectively carried out, or at least appeared to be carried out, by the North Ormesby councillors. They did not give the impression at public meetings that they had participated in the decision making which affected North Ormesby and were unaware of the feelings and attitudes of the local population.

The role played by the North Ormesby councillors was a major cause of the residents association having difficulty in transmitting its views. On the one hand there was no way the councillors could really know the feelings of the North Ormesby population for none of them, except Mary Harrison, visited the place other than for public meetings. This is not to say that the councillors had no contact with North Ormesby people. They did see many of their ward constituents. But these were individuals who visited them with personal problems about housing or home improvements, etc. These problems were direct personal tasks which the councillors were able to deal with efficiently. However, they were much less comfortable in their role as initiators and monitors of the public participation exercise. They were uneasy about dealing with a group such as NORA which often had views inimical to those of their own. Because they were reluctant to exchange views with the residents association, they were very ineffective

at articulating the needs of the North Ormesby consumers.

On the other hand, their familiarity with the bureaucratic machine which they are supposed to control seemed slight. They appeared content to allow the appointed officers the freedom to draw up their plans and present them in the way they themselves wished. The leading North Ormesby councillor seemed to be drawn more to city and county government politics rather than fulfilling his task as a North Ormesby councillor.

In People and Planning (1969) the authors saw the major defect in the planning system as being the failure to communicate. They therefore asserted that publicity should be given a great deal of attention. They also stated that there was a need for open debate, culminating not in dispute but in cooperation. The yeast of the community, their term for the active institutions and organizations within the community, should combine to create a community forum. This community forum should work in close co-operation with the authorities and relate aspects of development plans to the non-participators. The object of the whole exercise would obviously be a smooth and conflict-free passage of the plans.

This kind of attitude is very much reflected in the way the North Ormesby councillors went about monitoring the participation exercise and the outcome which they anticipated. Their main aim was to achieve a co-operative reaction from the North Ormesby residents, a general consensus that the policies in action were the best. To the councillors, an organized channel through the NORA committee was a useful way of persuading the residents that their interests were being looked after. But with the development of the group and their tendency to seek an independent existence, the councillors tended to recoil. They seemed reluctant to negotiate with a group which would not operate in terms of the rules set out by local government for public participation. This is not a situation peculiar to North Ormesby which is evident from the evidence of a Manchester

University Report (197) used by Cox (1976, p.186). He notes:

> Councillors were the only direct link between town hall and people. They were pretty poor conductors. They frequently proved incompetent to answer technical questions. Most disliked pressure groups and residents' associations in their wards. (There is indeed a fairly widespread distrust of non-party organizations among local councillors, stemming partly from resentment at the growth of rival non-party, community politics, and in part from genuine puzzlement and scepticism about the new activists' motives - or political sense.)

Similar findings are presented in the work of J. G. Davies (1972) and Dearlove (1971).

The NORA committee therefore was presented with somewhat of a Hobson's choice. They could conform and use the councillors as channels of communication on the councillors' terms. In other words rely totally on the councillors and stick to the rules of the game. This obviously was unsatisfactory for it not only made their position impotent, it was not participation in the true sense of the word. They could, on the other hand, continue to break the rules and use unofficial means of responding. This would probably lead to their ostracization by the councillors.

The participation exercise which was carried out in North Ormesby was not really participation in decision making. The councillors and officers were seeking approval of their policies and the councillors used the speaking opportunities for political self-justification. I am sure that the criticisms which I have made of the participation exercise in North Ormesby have a much wider significance in Britain. There seems to be little basis for optimism that "public participation" will ever be more than "public persuasion". Real participation will not be arrived at until officers and officials alike realize that participation is not about achieving consensus, it is a means whereby varied and often hostile views are put forward in order to procure the most widespread and acceptable formula for action.

CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of this thesis has been to develop an alternative framework for the study of 'public participation' and variations in responses to planning. I pointed out deficiencies in the existing literature which has focused on the participation problem. I have given close attention to the 'internal factors' which shape the responses of a locality and also to the functions of mediating roles. I also suggested that there were important 'external factors' to take account of, but these were beyond the scope of the present thesis.

Several writers have employed an 'improvement approach' which seeks ways of refining the present methods of publicity and consultation and creating smoother channels of information exchange. They do not, however, envisage any radical changes in the present system. Other writers have been far more critical of the conduct and operation of planning departments and have advocated a more radical appraisal of the role of the planner. In particular, they have pointed to the widening gulf between professional planners and those who are planned for, and attention has been drawn to their attitudinal propensities which predispose them to an evangelistic or paternalistic approach, particularly towards the poorer urban areas.

Another line of debate has revolved round the question of who participates and who does not. Many surveys have demonstrated that those who attend public meetings concerning planning issues are likely to be 'middle class' and belong to one or more voluntary organizations. This leads some writers to suggest that middle class individuals are more likely to be 'subjectively competent' in their dealings with government bodies. In other words they have a greater sense of efficacy in their ability to influence policy decisions. The predeliction of the middle class individual to join a smaller or greater variety of voluntary associations is thought to influence the decision to participate in public

affairs relating to planning matters, particularly through joining residents associations, tenant groups or civic societies. But as Pickvance has rightly pointed out (1975, p.29) 'the social implications of organizational membership are inferred, not studied explicitly.' Thus, he suggests that voluntary associations should be studied intensively to establish the functions of membership. I believe my study of the North Ormesby Residents Association has, in part at least, been a study of this kind.

In Chapter 2, I argued that the existing literature on public participation in planning had failed to provide an adequate framework within which the variety of responses to participation exercises, not only between localities but within them, can be analysed. Previous studies have also neglected a crucial dimension, that which concerns the social structural and interactional characteristics of localities.

In presenting the data from North Ormesby, I attempted to move away from the kind of analysis which sees variations in responses in terms of such gross variables as socio-economic class or which gives attention to the way in which local government orientations shape the nature of responses. I also argued that existing studies have over-emphasised the importance of the political and economic resources available to would be participators as being paramount in determining the effectiveness of a response. Consequently, important social resources are overlooked. These may include such aspects as the associational structure of a locality, the availability and quality of local leadership, and the content and span of local networks.

So, to develop a more adequate analysis I proposed a three dimensional framework. Firstly, I suggested that certain external factors needed examination, factors whose sources are outside the locality but influence the way in which a population will respond. These factors included the

regional structure, the administrative and political structure and the orientations of local and national government policies. The second dimension included the internal factors or those factors emerging from within the local population which actively shape the type of response and its intensity. These include the kinds of issues which emerged, the stakes involved, patterns of local leadership and social network characteristics. The third part of my framework involved the study of individuals and groups who articulate the locality with the wider political and socio-economic system.

These, then, were the kinds of factors which I proposed to examine in order to analyse the response from North Ormesby an inner urban district of Middlesbrough. I also proposed to use the concept of social network as a useful integrating construct. The main concern of my study was to examine the initiation, development and activities of the North Ormesby Residents Association committee. By examining the group as a bounded social network, I was able to show in detail how the group members as individuals or a set of interacting individuals, have responded to the public participation exercise and the planning process generally.

From Chapter 3, it emerged that North Ormesby could be characterised as a well established working class neighbourhood. The historical development of North Ormesby was dominated by its proximity to Middlesbrough. But even after its envelopment by Middlesbrough's urban growth, North Ormesby retained a fairly high degree of physical distinction. This had nurtured a feeling of independence from Middlesbrough.

In terms of socio-economic groupings, the North Ormesby population is predominantly working class, containing many families with long residential histories in the locality. Physically, the neighbourhood had experienced considerable urban decay, which had prompted the local authority to instigate a policy of clearance and development during the 1960's.

North Ormesby was still in a period of transition when the public participation exercise for the Teesside Structure Plan was initiated in 1973. The council had adopted a policy of stimulating residents groups as a means of public participation, and as a result the North Ormesby Residents Association was formed led by a committee of eleven.

In tracing the development of the group in Chapters 4 and 5, I argued that the early members of the committee, while vigorous and aggressive in their response to planning issues, lacked the necessary skills to transmit their energies into a cohesive and effective response. Furthermore, most of them had been drawn into involvement because of personal 'backdoor threats', and therefore in the early months there was an absence of an overall commitment and goal. I called these the 'limited interest participators'. With the introduction of four community leaders into the group, its effectiveness and cohesion was increased and an overall sense of purpose was achieved. Seen diachronically, then, the group was able to improve its skills as a participating body and a vigorous and well organised response emerged from a locality which was basically working class and did not seem to have much confidence in its ability to influence decisions.

The issues at stake

In the case of North Ormesby there were various kinds of stakes involved for the participators. In some respects, the existence of the community as they knew it was at stake. For many participators, there was a desire to see the community through its physical transformation without deleteriously affecting the social fabric. On a personal level, home owners had an economic and emotional investment in their houses, and several individuals felt threatened by ongoing developments. It could be said, then, that there were important social stakes which were just as important as economic considerations. As a well integrated and established working class community there was a well developed system of ties linking individuals in the locality to each other. Thus, to many individuals, the

demolition and recent developments threatened the 'status quo'. This was particularly true of those individuals who had significant numbers of kin in the locality. The majority of the active participators in North Ormesby were individuals who had long residence there, kin relations in the locality, strong local associational ties or all three. This suggests a correlation between emotional attachment to a neighbourhood and the desire to become a participator in situations where the neighbourhood is threatened. This may also partly explain the significant numbers of middle aged housewives amongst the most active. It is the women who seem to be most sensitive to changes in the social fabric since they are likely to spend more time in the community than their men-folk and often have much more extensive local networks.

Local institutional and associational structure

From Chapter 4 it became clear that the institutional and associational structure of North Ormesby was amenable for use in the participation exercise. The individuals who became involved on the NORA committee were able to utilise their associational links in various ways. Most importantly, these links were a valuable resource in the effort to attract large audiences of support for the NORA committee in the public meetings where they faced the local councillors and local government officers. These links also assured an adequate circulation of information. The composition of the audiences for public meetings reflected the close ties of several of the committee members to local religious organizations. From the successful way that NORA was able to use these associational links, it may be that local government officers can gainfully pursue a policy of stimulating participation through established organizations or could promote links between residents groups and other community organizations.

Patterns of local leadership

The individuals who emerged from the North Ormesby population to take part on the committee can all be regarded as local leaders. However, I did make a distinction within the group between two types of leaders.

On the one hand, there were the mobilizers with their extensive local contacts, both associational and informal, which could be activated to draw support for public meetings or could be used to disseminate information or test out local feeling. On the other hand, there were four individuals, the community oriented participators, who were important in other respects. They became the main sources of ideological motivation giving the group a sense of purpose and legitimation for participating in local affairs. It was also these individuals who were particularly crucial in linking not only the group, but the locality as a whole, to the local government structure in the participation exercise. These individuals had the necessary skills to relate local problems to the authorities, to question proposed developments and to debate when given the opportunity the future of North Ormesby.

Community leaders have an important influence on the nature and outcome of issues and generally on the path that participation takes. The ways that they define issues and the methods they employ in their attempt to influence decision-making will ultimately affect the success of the group. It is clear from the North Ormesby data that participation, and in particular the process of interaction with local government personnel, requires certain kinds of skills or talents. As can be seen in the case of Ron Clayton, the ability to speak 'on their terms' and access to the media proved to be very important. The success with which the four community oriented leaders were able to articulate the problems, views and attitudes of the North Ormesby population was a crucial factor in making the group a success.

Roberts (1973, p.290) in his discussion of the organization of a neighbourhood in Guatemala City, suggests that one important determinant of activism in local political life is the degree of commitment to the neighbourhood. He also argues that commitment to a neighbourhood varies

in two basic ways, firstly according to the concentration of relationships and secondly according to stage in life cycle. This would appear to have some relevance for our discussion of public participation. Many of the individuals who have become active in local affairs in North Ormesby had a strong commitment to the locality. They were also drawn from a relatively narrow age group and have children who are grown up. This allows them time to become involved in local affairs. Individuals with young families are unlikely to become participators unless they have very strong feelings about an issue. Thus, in addition to commitment to neighbourhood, availability is a crucial factor determining who will participate and who will not.

The popular ideologies and value orientations

There were two important ideological injections which shaped the response of the NORA committee to the participation exercise. Firstly, there was a strong christian ethic which interpreted participation in local affairs as an essential extension of religious participation. There was a general feeling that participation in local affairs was a service to the community, a service which was crucial in an area such as North Ormesby. Secondly, there was a strong commitment to the neighbourhood ideal and the notion of 'community spirit'. These orientations provided the group with the rationale for pursuing particular courses of action. According to Roberts, "orientations are defined as those dispositions to act that emerge from the conscious effort of individuals to make sense of their past experiences, and to mould their futures in accordance with these interpretations" (1973, p.296). So the activities of individuals within the NORA committee is partly influenced by their interpretations of various situations, and these interpretations are influenced by past experiences. These interpretations undergo changes along with changing circumstances and as the individuals have new experiences as participators. Some of the

dominant orientations of the group as a whole were clearly emanating from the community oriented leaders of the group. Thus, the other individuals who had previously been drawn in to involvement to defend private interests increasingly talked in terms of community ideals.

Social network and the organization of community response

In analysing the response from North Ormesby, I utilised the network concept in two ways. Firstly, I focused on the committee as a bounded network in itself and secondly I discussed the nature of the personal networks of the various committee members. The most striking features of the group as a bounded network included the multiplexity of several of the interpersonal links, their historical depth, the frequency of interaction between several members and the dramatic rise in the density of social relationships over the time the group had been in operation. I argued that the network characteristics gave the group durability and cohesion which were essential if they were to participate effectively. There was also a high degree of reachability which meant that information flowed fairly quickly from member to member. In examining the personal networks of individual committee members, it was apparent that there were significant variations in the span and content of their networks. Personal networks have a dynamic quality in that they are continually changing as new relationships are initiated and old ones made redundant. At the inception of the group, many old relationships became politically relevant and were utilised accordingly. Over the time the group has been in operation, new relationships have been forged outside the group in both formal and informal contexts which are relevant to the ongoing operation of the group. Several of these links are with people of influence in local government circles. Through these other contacts, the group members receive information, assistance, support and advice. It can be concluded that the kinds of personal networks which are created by members of the public attempting

to influence decision making in local government are crucial to the type of response, its intensity and degree of success.

Certain individuals were seen to have much more locality oriented networks with extensive ties of kinship, neighbourhood and friendship. These were crucial as links for mobilizing support and for gauging the feelings of the North Ormesby population. Other individuals had networks which were more 'cosmopolitan' in orientation and gave the group valuable external links with individuals of influence in other districts of Middlesbrough and Cleveland. These variations were interpreted as a source of strength for the group since it had an extensive basis in the locality but was also in increasingly forging links with individuals involved in similar activities elsewhere. These links were made particularly through the efforts of the committee chairman.

Pickvance (1975, p.41) has made a useful distinction between 'horizontal' and 'vertical' integration. If a voluntary association, such as NORA, is to achieve support and some kind of success it needs to be integrated 'horizontally', in other words with other social systems in the community. As we have seen, NORA achieved horizontal integration relatively easily through pre-existing associational links. Vertical integration, which would appear to be crucial for effective participation, was much more difficult to achieve. By modifying the hypothesis of Pickvance, I would posit that associations which lack a degree of vertical integration will find effective participation extremely difficult. It is noticeable that NORA's increasing influence in local affairs was paralleled by a development of vertical links.

NORA vs. Authority

In Chapter 6, we saw that there was a discrepancy between the way the councillors and officials conceptualized public participation and the way that the residents association saw it. For the councillors, public

participation was to have several functions. It would serve as a good public relations exercise through which votes might be secured; it would prove a useful way of informing North Ormesby people of the council's intentions and hence legitimate the policies they were pursuing. They might even receive support for those policies. The councillors therefore visualized a structured channel of communication through the residents association which would allow for information and views to be exchanged. However, they did not seem to anticipate that the views of the local people might contradict their own, nor that the NORA committee might want to operate as something more than a channel of communication. The attitude of the councillors, then, made it difficult for the NORA committee to participate effectively. The councillors felt that they were the right and proper channels of communication and in situations where the NORA committee utilized other channels, the councillors reacted strongly. Situations of confrontation were the usual result at meetings between the councillors and the NORA committee and meaningful open debate was precluded.

The significance of the data from North Ormesby is that they demonstrate graphically that an effective and durable response <u>is</u> possible from an area which can generally be regarded as working class. I have attempted to show that it is not only middle class individuals who will take up the opportunity to participate. Participation in local affairs is not the simple outcome of socio-economic status or education. What is needed from the authorities in areas such as North Ormesby is a somewhat different approach. More effective use of existing associational structures could be made to encourage local leadership to extend its interest into the field of planning. There should also be a much greater willingness for open debate. It is this latter factor which was conspicuously absent from the participation exercise in North Ormesby. As J. Clarence Davies has rightly pointed out,

> To give vitality to planning and reality to plans that are produced, one must infuse the planning process with the realism brought by political engagement.

Future research in this field should turn attention to the so-called 'apathetic majority'. I believe my own study has pointed to some of the factors which are important in producing participators, but has not been able to deal with the problem of why many individuals faced with the same threats failed to show any interest in public affairs at all. But the study has provided an alternative perspective for the study of public responses to planning and I hope the study raises points of interest for people actually involved in policy making and implementation.

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