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Planners' perceptions of their communicative roles in the implementation of local comprehensive plans: a Q-methodology study

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PLANNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR COMMUNICATIVE ROLES IN THE

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS:

A Q-METHODOLOGY STUDY

By

William Scott Hatcher

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This research, by utilizing the descriptive aspect of the communicative planning model, examined the opinions of surveyed public planners to understand their perceptions concerning their roles in the implementation of comprehensive plans. The research developed a Q-methodology design to uncover a typology of opinion concerned the perceived roles played by participants throughout the planning process in counties within the state of Georgia. The research contributes to the literature by developing this typology and by using it to assess the opinions of public planners. Through the use of Q-methodology, the research analyzed 34 usable Q-sorts from Georgia planners. Based on analysis of these sorts, four distinct types of opinion were found. The planning participants appear to be communicating opinions that represent the following: mostly positive roles on structural issues, such as budgeting, coordinating, and plan complexity; two roles that are positive of public participation; and two roles that are negative of public participation and focused on economic development. The research's typology shows that the planning participants view planning in two dimensions: political (opinion

concerning the public) and functional (opinion concerning what leads to successful

planning).

DEDICATION

To my family, who are unconditionally supportive;

to my friends, who are constantly entertaining; and

to Jessica, who is both of these and so much more to me.

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service are helping to make their communities better.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

Over the past three decades, a group of communication-orientated public planning

scholars have greatly influenced the study of public planning. These scholars describe the

planning process as one of communication among multiple and diverse planning actors[1]

(Forester, 1993 & 1995; Healey, 1992 & 1997; Innes 1995; Sager, 1994). This school of

planning thought is often referred to as communicative planning. This research owes its

foundation to this focus on communication. The research seeks to determine how public

planners communicate their views on plan implementation and how their perceptions of

those roles compare to the findings in the scholarly literature on the implementation of

local governmental comprehensive plans.

The focus of inquiry, therefore, is the subjective viewpoints held by public

planners. The research assumes that plan implementation is largely a social construct of

reality based on the communication among actors involved in process. Public planners,

one of these actors, are a crucial part providing expert guidance and helping facilitate

communication among the other planning participants. Given this, the theoretical aspects

of the communicative planning model are applied to study the problem of comprehensive

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[1] In this research, planning actors are defined as the individuals who perform a role in the implementation
of comprehensive plans with the most crucial being the public, public planners, and elected officials. The
Q-methodology section of the research is particularly concerning with the perceptions of planners regarding
the efficacy of comprehensive plan implementation.

plan implementation as a descriptive lens to understand the perceptions of public planners.

The lens of communication is, therefore, utilized to understand the following three literature streams of plan implementation determinants: structural factors, public participation mechanisms, and economic development goals.[2] To achieve this, the research develops a Q-methodology design to uncover a typology of communicative roles played by participants throughout the planning process in Georgia counties.[3] The research contributes to the literature by developing this typology and by using it to assess if and how the surveyed planning participants view structure, public participation, and economic development as important determinants of plan implementation.

The communicative roles of planning participants have a significant impact on the drafting, adoption, and implementation of plans (Sager, 1994; Innes, 1995 & 1996). Given the importance of communication in planning and the scholarly attention paid to communicative actions, research on plan implementation ought to focus on understanding the communicative roles that planners perform during the process because these roles will influence plan implementation. Applying this theoretical approach, the research attempts to answer the following questions: *What communicative roles do public planners perform during the implementation of comprehensive plans? What are the important relationships between public planners that affect plan implementation? And do these roles and*

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[2] It should be stressed again here that these are not the only factors affecting comprehensive planning, but based on the researcher's review of the literature, these three factors represent a large part of the scholarly discussion on the subject.

[3] These counties are divided into the categories of basic, intermediate, and advanced, which are their levels of planning requirements based on the counties' populations. See chapter 4.

relationships resemble the planning literature's findings that implementation is affected by structure, participation, and economic development?

These are important research questions because there is a lack of scholarly knowledge on plan implementation, and because the findings in the available literature are inconsistent. Research has not produced a clear understanding of local comprehensive plan implementation. This represents a significant unexplained area in the public planning literature. As Brody and Highfield (2005) wrote, "The lack of empirical studies measuring the efficacy of plans and degree of local plan implementation subsequent to adoption represents one of the greatest gaps in planning research" (p. 159). This is not a recent criticism of public planning, but one that has been leveled at planning since widespread local planning in the United States started to develop after World War II (Altshuler, 1965; Forester, 1971; Talen, 1996; Taylor, 1998). One reason for this void in the literature is that there is a lack of theory explaining the implementation of local comprehensive plans. By understanding the communicative roles of planning participants, the knowledge of plan implementation can be increased. In addition, the current literature is unclear over which determinant—structural factors, participation mechanisms, and economic development goals—has the most influence. The communicative role typology can be used to find what determinant planning participants perceive as the most influential.

This research seeks to achieve its objectives by studying plan implementation through the following process. First, a Q-methodology instrument is developed based on a review of the relevant literature. Through the use of the factor analysis component of the Q-methodology, a typology of the communicative roles expressed by planning

participants is constructed. Second, this typology is compared to the findings in the plan

implementation literature that the process is affected by structural factors, public

participation mechanisms, and economic development goals.[4]

Statement of the Problem

Governmental comprehensive planning is a tool used by public organizations and

their communities to outline future goals and the strategies to achieve these objectives

(Hoch, Dalton, & So, 2000). This type of planning takes a systematic approach to

planning for future governmental services. In drafting a comprehensive plan, a

community seeks to construct systematic strategies for most of its services for a time

period of usually 20 years. A comprehensive plan is intended to be the foundational guide

for all future public decisions. Levy (2000) defined a community's comprehensive plan

as "the most basic plan prepared to guide the development of the community" (p. 100). A

comprehensive plan "covers the entire community" and has "time horizons in the range

of 20 years" (p. 100). According to Levy (2000), the typical comprehensive planning

process contains the following steps: the research phase; the creation of community

goals; the drafting of the plan; the implementation process; and the consistent evaluation

of the plan.

This research is interested in the various types of planners who are involved in the

process of comprehensive planning at the local government level. It should be noted that

comprehensive planning is just one example of the many different types of planning done

at the local government level in this nation. There are numerous examples of local

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[4] See, Table 1 for an overview of the research and Figure 4.1 for an overview of the research's
methodology

planning that is more specific than the general comprehensive planning, such as emergency management planning, environmental planning, economic development planning, transportation planning, arts planning, etc. Additionally, it should be stressed that public planners involved in these types of planning come from numerous backgrounds, based on their training and on their jobs. These backgrounds include policy planning, environmental sciences, architecture, landscape management, and so forth. This research is concerned with the particular comprehensive planning—a type of general planning that often includes aspects of the planning work from other areas. For example, the typical comprehensive plan will include land-use planning but also economic development planning, transportation planning, natural resource planning, and housing planning. Comprehensive planning is the focus of inquiry for this research for two main reasons. First, it is a holistic form of planning at the local level. Comprehensive planning includes planners from all different subfields of planning. Second, many states require their local governments to perform this holistic form of planning (DeGrove, 2005).

Comprehensive planning is more than just the drafting of documents by communities. Successful comprehensive planning is putting planned strategies into action (Hoch et al., 2000, p. 4). This putting policy into action is implementation, and according to large degree of contemporary planning theory, this process is done through communication among multiple actors. As Hoch et al. (2000) wrote, "Planners advise, negotiate, and otherwise communicate among property owners, developers, citizens' groups, technical specialists, and elected and appointed officials to translate planning promises into reality" (p. 4). Yet, research has not developed an understanding of how participants communicate their views concerning the implementation of local

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comprehensive plans. This leaves planning scholarship with a problem for both theory and practice: If comprehensive planning is to work as a function of government, then the communities that draft plans should use them in a meaningful way. But scholars and practitioners have been without theoretical guidance of the plan implementation process, therefore, unable to build robust knowledge on the subject to direct future theory and practice.

Given implementation difficulties and for planning to be a viable tool, practitioners need this guidance from planning scholarship. Additionally, if planning is a process of communication among actors, then the communicative planning model is ideal for this theoretical guidance.

Theory

The theory of this research is elaborated in chapter 3, but a brief overview is necessary at this point. The theory underlying this research, as discussed, is rooted in the argument that planning is essentially a process of communication (Forester, 1995; Healey, 1997; Innes, 1995). As Innes (1998) wrote, "What planners do most is talk and interact; it is through communicative practice that they influence public action" (p. 52). In contemporary planning theory, this view of planning as communication is embodied in the communicative planning model. The communicative planning model represents the mainstream of contemporary planning theory, but it has not been used to determine the communicative roles that actors play in the implementation process. This research seeks to extend the communicative planning model's focus on communication to the implementation process by using it as a lens for the collection Q-methodology's Q-

sample of statements. Through this process, the research seeks to describe the communicative roles of the actors involved.

Based on the communicative planning model, implementation is determined partially by the viewpoints of the actors involved, such as planners, elected officials, and the public. The research defines implementation based on how the planning participants perceive the process. The actors form opinions of plans and past implementation struggles, and then they communicate these opinions to other actors in the process. This communication will affect how plans are viewed, which in turn will determine the implementation of these strategies. This research is interested in the perceptions' of public planners concerning the communicative roles that they bring the process of comprehensive plan implementation

Actors express their viewpoints on plan implementation in the following ways. First, the viewpoints will be negative, neutral, or positive concerning the viability of planning. For example, a positive statement would be: "I think this economic development strategy in the plan should be followed." While a negative statement of plan implementation would be: "The economic development strategy is unrealistic and complicated." A critical view of comprehensive planning is related to the arguments of Altshuler (1965), who argued that comprehensive planning is too complex to be a legitimate function of government. On the other hand, a positive view of planning is associated with the arguments of Kent (1964), who argued for comprehensive planning to be a mechanism for communities to discuss future problems and to develop a guide to deal with these issues.

Second, the actors will communicate their viewpoints on what factors affect plan implementation. There are three broad streams of determinants in the plan implementation literature. It should be stressed that these are not the only influences on plan implementation, but they are some of the ones discussed the most in the scholarly literature. One stream in the literature on comprehensive plan implementation focuses on structural factors that affecting planning, such as linking budgeting and planning, state sanctions, and multiple jurisdiction coordination. The structural literature is concerned with the influence of formal legal mechanisms on comprehensive planning. Another stream in the literature is concerned with the influence of public interaction on comprehensive planning. This literature discusses the role and the benefits of public involvement in the process. Lastly, there is a stream in the literature that focuses on economic development as a goal of planning.

The communicative plan model offers the theoretical tool needed to understand what viewpoints planners hold and how these communicative roles affect the planning process.

<div align="center">Data and Methods</div>

The state of Georgia's planning process is used as a case study. In the federal system of United States, some states require more comprehensive planning than other states. Given this, many of the studies in the literature have examined single states or states that share some type of overall commonality (DeGrove, 2005). The state of Georgia is a valuable case to study local comprehensive planning because of the following reasons. First, Georgia has a robust state-mandated planning process. The state

of Georgia through its Planning Act of 1989 has put in place a statewide comprehensive

planning process for all its 159 counties and 583 cities (DeGrove, 2005). In order to be

eligible for state grants, local governments must construct comprehensive plans based on

state guidelines. The other southeastern states, except for Florida, do not require their

local governments to conduct this level of comprehensive planning. Second,

implementation can be isolated at the local level. In the Georgia comprehensive planning

process, there are detailed state requirements during the preparation and adoption stages

of the planning process, but implementation is largely a local matter (Georgia

Department of Community Affairs, 2005). Since implementation is a local matter, it can

be isolated from the effects of state sanctions. Local governments in Georgia do not face

adverse actions from the state if they fail to follow their comprehensive plans. Lastly,

there is diversity among the Georgia counties between planning in urban areas and

planning in rural ones. This allows for the studying of plan implementation in numerous

communities, strengthening the contributions of this research.

In Georgia, most local plans are countywide consolidated documents. Given this,

the units of analysis are participants in Georgia counties. The Q-methodology portion of

this research elicits the subjective opinions of the elected executive official (i.e., the

chairperson for a county) and administrative personnel responsible for planning (i.e., state

designated planning contact for the county). The contact information, include e-mail and

mailing addresses, for these officials is available through the state's Department of

Community Affairs (DCA). These participants are important actors in the implementation

of comprehensive plans. These are the two of the most important actors in the formal

mechanism of local government. The subjective views of these actors concerning plan

implementation affects how the other actors behave in the process. In other words, these participants set the communicative tone for the implementation of plans. Given this, they are the focus of inquiry in this research.

Q-methodology

The methods used in this research where developed by researchers to analyze communication. The research constructs a Q-sample of statements concerning plan implementation based on the review of the relevant literature in chapter 2. The Q-methodology was developed by Stephenson (1939) to study the subjective opinions of individuals rather than the objective opinions gathered from standard survey questionnaires (Edgens, 1997). Durning (1999) described the Q-methodology in the following manner:

> …the research obtains insights into the sorters' [participants'] minds.
> Through analysis of the Q-sorts, a research can map how the participants
> understand the topic that is being researched; that is, the researcher
> examines each participant's operant subjectivity. (p. 404)

The method elicits the ranking of subjective statements from interviewees. From this ranking, the Q-methodology uses factor analysis and the z-scores for each statement to quantify the subjective opinions into typologies. It should be noted that this analysis lacks external validity, but the knowledge gained concerning the opinion of the research's participants can be used to further refine the study's model, which can then be tested through R-Methodology and large-N analyses in future studies. The Q-methodology is a means to *discover* phenomenon not *generalize* across a large population.

For this research, the Q-methodology design follows these procedures. First, the instrument or the ranking statements for the Q-methodology, based on the research's review of the literature and theoretical assumptions, is developed. Second, the planning participants from the Georgia counties are contacted in a first wave notice asking them to participate in the research. Third, the Q-methodology is administered through *FlashQ*, a program that allows the respondent to do the Q-sorting over the Internet. This option allows for the analysis of a large number of cases, and makes the Q-sorting easier for the participants than the traditional index card method. Lastly, the data is analyzed and used to develop a typology of opinion concerning plan implementation. After developing this typology of communicative roles, the Q-sorting can be compared the findings in the literature on local comprehensive plan implementation. Additionally, this approach allows for comparisons to be made among the participants involved in public planning. For instance, planning participants in rural communities can also be compared to participants in urban communities. Given the method's focus on subjectivity in opinion, the Q-methodology is an ideal tool to understand and to compare the subjective communicative roles performed by participants throughout the comprehensive planning process.

Importance of the Research

The communication-orientated theory of plan implementation in this research goes beyond the past research on the efficacy of comprehensive planning (Talen, 1996; Brody and Highfield, 2005). Previous studies on the efficacy of plan implementation have examined the mechanics of the process. For instance, Talen (1996) reviewed the

literature on the use of evaluation procedures in the implementation of plans. Additionally, Brody and Highfield (2005) sought to test the effectiveness of plan implementation in the state of Florida, not develop theory to describe implementation through the communication of the actors involved. As discussed and stressed again here, if planning is communication, it is important that the communicative planning model be applied to the problem of implementation. This research extends the communicative planning model to this problem.

This will benefit planning and public administration in the following ways. First, the research seeks to develop a clear theoretical understanding of comprehensive plan implementation through the lens of communication. The planning literature has been criticized for failing to build knowledge on the implementation process (Taylor, 1998; Brody and Highfield, 2005). This study attempts to fill this gap in the literature by constructing, examining, and refining a theoretical typology of the communicative views on plan implementation held by politicians and planners.

Second, by providing a theoretical guide to implementation of comprehensive plans, this research benefits both theory and practice. A well-developed theory of implementation will help future studies determine the efficacy of planning and how the process can be improved. Practitioners can use this information to strengthen the planning procedures in their communities.

Third, the research studies plan implementation in Georgia counties, and many of these are small to medium sized communities. The sample in this research allows for the study of these smaller communities. The efficacy of planning in small to medium sized communities is an understudied subject in the public administration and public planning

literature. These small to medium sized communities are faced with a number of planning constraints, such as the lack of resources—in particular less professional planning advice than larger communities. Furthermore, many small to medium sized communities may be experiencing growth. These are often communities that have maturing cities, not cities in advanced development stages as in larger communities. Given these possible growth demands, the need to plan for future consequences is crucial in these communities. In other words, these communities are more likely than matured communities to be at the development stage where planning can have a robust effect on future development.

Lastly, the research adds to the scholarly dialogue concerning the efficacy of comprehensive planning. There has been a scholarly dispute over the efficacy of local comprehensive planning since the mid-1960s when Alan Altshuler (1965) declared it unviable as a governance tool. Another stream in the literature, starting with T.J. Kent (1964) and more recently Innes (1996), have argued that comprehensive planning is important and can be a viable tool for local governments. This research's communicative model attempts to add a piece to the literature seeking to answer the challenge by Brody and Highfield (2005) to measure the efficacy of plan implementation.

Outline of the Research

This research is divided into the following chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the comprehensive plan implementation literature. The statements for the Q-sample are derived from this review, and theoretical assumptions on the communicative roles typology are made.

Chapter 3 develops the communicative planning model used in this research. This chapter briefly discusses the major planning theories. But the main focus is on extending the communicative planning model to the study of plan implementation. A model based on the implementation literature is presented.

Chapter 4 details the methods of this research. The workings of the Q-methodology are covered, along with the details on how the method is used in this research. In this chapter, the protocol for data collection and analysis is discussed.

Chapter 5 analyzes the results from the Q-methodology inquiry. The typology produced by the Q-sorting is presented and interpreted. This typology is compared to the literature and theory in order to develop a better understanding of comprehensive plan implementation.

Lastly, conclusions about the research are made in chapter 6, and its importance to planning theory and practiced are enumerated. Implications for future research on public planning are also considered. In this chapter, the Q-methodology results are used to derive hypotheses for future research into the efficacy of local comprehensive planning.

Conclusions

Comprehensive planning is an important tool for local governments; however, research has yet to develop a robust understanding of plan implementation. This is partially due to the lack of a theory describing the implementation of local plans. The objective of this research is to develop a typology of the communicative roles that participants play throughout the process of public planning. By knowing how participants

communicate their viewpoints on implementation, a typology of opinion on

comprehensive planning can be developed.

Table 1

An Introduction to the Research

Overview of the Research	
Problem	*Planning has not developed extensive knowledge on the implementation of local comprehensive plans, and the studies on this topic present unclear and inconsistent findings.*
Solution	*Understand the problem of implementation through the lens of communication and compare the findings to the literature on comprehensive plan implementation.*
Theory	*The communicative planning model. The plan implementation process is partially determined by how participants communicate their viewpoints concerning planning.*
Research questions	*What roles concerning the implementation of comprehensive plans do participants communicate? What are the important relationships between participants that affect plan implementation? And do these roles and relationships resemble the planning literature's findings that implementation is affected by structure, participation, and economic development?*
Methodology	*The Q-methodology with the Q-sample of statements based on the plan implementation literature.*
Units of analysis	*Planning participants in Georgia counties.*
Research contributions	*The research contributes to public planning by expanding the communicative planning model to the study of plan implementation and by comparing the viewpoints of participants to the findings of previous plan implementation studies that the process is affect by structural factors, public participation mechanisms, and economic development goals.*

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Introduction

Local comprehensive planning is not just the drafting of plans, but also the

successful translation of these plans into action (Forester, 1971). This research defines

implementation as the process by which comprehensive plans are put into action—the

degree to which these planning documents serve as a guide for a community's

governance decisions. The translation of plans into action occurs during this

implementation process. Public planning and public administration has stressed the

difficulties of achieving the implementation of public policies. In *Implementation,*

Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) argued that the process often fails due to the complexity

of the system, the numerous actors in the system, and a lack of faith in achieving a

program's goals. As Pressman and Wildavsky described,

> When a program is characterized by so many contradictory criteria,
> antagonistic relationships among participants, and a high level of
> uncertainty about even the possibility of success, it is not hard to predict or
> explain the failure of the effort to reach its goals. (p. 90)

This chapter builds the foundation for this research's theory by reviewing the

relevant literature on plan implementation. Second, given this research's focus on

communication in implementation, scholarship's treatment of this topic is reviewed.

Lastly, there is in-depth review of the contemporary literature on the implementation of

comprehensive planning. Based on this review, three streams of literature on the

determinants of comprehensive plan implementation are identified. These streams are

used to develop theoretical assumptions concerning the communicative role typology.

Comprehensive Planning in Scholarship and Practice

In planning scholarship, there are two competing views of comprehensive

planning. First, there is the critical view of comprehensive planning attributed to Alan

Altshuler (1965). According to Altshuler, comprehensive planning is not a legitimate

function of government because there is too much information involved in the process for

participating groups to adequately plan. In other words, the process is too comprehensive

for politicians, planners, stakeholders, and others actors to have a communitywide

discussion to draft a plan and to implement it. Furthermore, there is too much political

disagreement during the process to make it a viable one. Innes (1996) described

Altshuler's critique in the following manner,

> …comprehensive physical plan is neither practically feasible nor
> politically viable… Meaningful public debate on comprehensive planning
> is virtually impossible, he claimed, because of such planning's scope and
> generality. (p. 460)

Second, there is the ideal view of comprehensive planning articulated by T.J.

Kent (1964). According to Kent, comprehensive planning is a mechanism through

which a community can have a meaningful discussion on community problems

and develop potential solutions to these issues (Innes, 1996). It is comprehensive

but also flexible. The plan should contain broadly defined goals and be used as a

guide in the future implementation of specific programs (Innes, 1996). These two

opposing views of planning can be seen in the various periods of comprehensive

planning in the United States: early planning, the industrial revolution and

progressive movement, the focus on instrumental rationality in planning, and

lastly, the move toward communication in planning.

Since the colonial era, cities in America have been constructed through master

planning, similar to the building of cities in Europe. Washington D.C. was a planned

capital. Throughout the states, there were also planned capitals on a smaller scale. The

city of Milledgeville, capital of Georgia from the early 1800s until the Civil War, was a

planned city. Thus, master planning is not a function of government born completely out

of the Progressive movement. However, the planners of the Progressive movement,

through their advocacy, gained broader support for planning as a function of local

governments.

In the United States (U.S.), planning increased during the Industrial Revolution.

With the urban growth produced by the Industrial Revolution, political and social groups

embraced planning, already used widely in European nations, as a tool for government.

Cities were filled with congestion, dirty tenant housing, and blighted landscapes. Seeing

the decaying cities around them, community leaders started to advocate major urban

improvements. The City Beautiful movement and the larger Progressive movement

pulled together some of the nation's most able civic reformers, and during the 1893

Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Daniel Burnham and Olmstead, a proponent of urban

design, constructed an urban fairground that was "a carefully integrated combination of

landscaped areas, promenades, exposition halls, and other buildings" (Levy, 2000, p. 33).

First, some urban areas, in particular New York City and Chicago, began using the tools

of zoning and master planning as attempts to control the negative effects of population growth, scarcity, and economic development. The early local planning throughout this period focused largely on land-use and utilized the practice of zoning. Zoning models, such as the State Standard Zoning Enabling Act of 1922, were disseminated by civic groups to local governments as templates for them to conduct land-use planning. In 1926, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld zoning in *Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.* as a legitimate tool of local governments to ensure the health, safety, and public welfare of their citizens (Levy, 2000).

Burnham and his colleagues held that urban areas could be restored through the use of rational planning, and one of their tools to achieve this rational decision making was the "master plan" (Schlereth, 1981). The master plan, exemplified by the Chicago Plan of 1909, presented a holistic strategy for urban areas to drastically change. After World War II, master planning become grander. Social scientists, following a positivistic view of the social world, ambitiously proclaimed that universal theories of the social and political world could be developed. Positivism holds that universal theories can be derived through a process similar to the natural sciences (Bernstein, 1995). According to positivism, social science can achieve this through the use of objective measures of reality. The social sciences can mimic the natural sciences by generalizing these findings across populations. The rational comprehensive model of planning is based on this ambitious, positivistic view of the social sciences.

In the rational comprehensive model, the following steps are applied to a problem: goals are discussed and clearly defined; the problems associated with obtaining these goals are enumerated; the alternatives or solutions to these problems are fully

discussed; and all of these alternatives are analyzed, usually through a cost-benefit analysis, to determine the most appropriate solution to the problem (Hoch et al., 2000, p. 23). Throughout this process, efficiency is the main "criterion of decision-making" (Simon, 1997). In the analysis of alternatives, individuals seek to maximize their utility, and pick the most efficient solution to perceived problems. The model has been criticized for assuming that decision makers are "all-powerful" actors with full access to information and the cognitive ability to analyze all alternatives (Etzioni, 1967; Lindblom, 1959; Simon, 1997).

Proponents of the rational comprehensive model are often referred to in the literature as rationalists (Taylor, 1988). Anomalies with the rationalist approach to planning started to be seen. For instance, a foundational work from the rationalists' perspective was *Politics, Planning and the Public Interest* by Meyerson and Banefield (1955). The authors studied planning and decision making in the Chicago Housing Authority where they argued for planning resembling the rational comprehensive approach; however, they also found that politics greatly influence the supposedly scientific rational planning. Planning, in this case, could not be kept completely void of politics. It was the approach to planning that pushed ambitious federal programs, such as urban renewal.

Also starting in the 1950s, a series of attacks were leveled on the rationalists from incrementalists (such as Lindblom, 1959), critical theorists (such as Forester, 1971; Habermas, 1979), and social justice advocates (such as Jacobs, 1961). These critiques have led to the development of contemporary comprehensive planning. First, incrementalists criticized the rational model from a descriptive standpoint. According to

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incrementalists, the rational comprehensive model did not accurately describe how humans make planning decisions. Individuals are not able to fully analyze all possible alternatives because they face resource, political, and cognitive limitations. In this bounded environment, individuals *satisfice* rather than maximize (Simon, 1997). Since individuals are limited, they use previously made decisions as a guide for current choices. Given this, individuals make decisions from a base, and change is incremental.

Planning choices are, therefore, decisions around policy margins (Lindblom, 1959). These policy margins are comprised of previously made policy decisions. These marginal decisions are the product of numerous groups "fighting" over their "fair share." Due to the presence of groups with their own influence, the decision-making process, described by incrementalism, is highly decentralized and political. But there is a cooperative incentive among the groups for each to achieve as much as possible of their "fair share." This seemingly cooperative decision making process over previously made policy choices produces small or incremental changes to current policies (Lindblom, 1959; Braybrooke and Lindblom, 1970). Incrementalism has been attacked because it does not provide a comprehensive guide for decision makers (Etzioni, 1967), it does not describe rapid policy change (Kingdon, 2003), and it does not allow for policy innovation (Dror, 1964).

The postmodernists attacked positivism as relying too much on the role of the expert, as maintaining the status quo and current power structures, and as failing to be a tool for social justice (Bernstein, 1995). For example, Forester (1971) criticized comprehensive planning in the U.S. for not relating knowledge to action. Political forces, such as the numerous actors involved in the comprehensive plan process, make this

implementation—or knowledge to action—extremely difficult. He called for a process allowing for "mutual learning" among the various participants to ensure that plans are used as meaningful guides (p. 320).

Additionally, the planning of Progressives and the rationalists has been criticized by writers, such as Jane Jacobs (1961), for not being participatory and inclusive. This lack of inclusion as Jacobs (1961) discussed in *The Life and Death of Great American Cities* allowed the federal urban renewal program to demolish entire urban neighborhoods. This produced a host of negative externalities, including a lack of housing for the needy and a decline in the community fabric of urban areas.

Influenced by these various theoretical sources, the nature of comprehensive planning has changed greatly over the past 50 years. Burgess (1996), in an extensive review of planning history, identified important trends in public planning during this period. For one, the magnitude of government planning has increased significantly, and with it, the number of public planners throughout the U.S. Between 1960 and 1980, the planning profession grew significantly, exemplifying the growth of public planning throughout the states (Hoch et al., 2000, p. 4). In 1995, there were 20,000 members of the American Planning Association, up from just a few thousand in the early 1960s (Hoch et al., 2000, p. 4). This can be attributed to growth in government, and communities turning to planning as a tool to deal with complex public problems. Also, in 1991, the federal government through transportation legislation mandate planning in cities with 50,000 or more people through Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) (Kelly and Becker, 2000). Burgess (1996) discussed how modern public planning has increased in scope but

also has faced problems in the form of demands for efficiency and in the constraints of implementation.

Based on the critiques of the comprehensive planning model and the changes in planning practice of the past 50 years, contemporary comprehensive planning is drastically different than the master planning of the past. Incrementalism linked to pragmatism has led to a more limited and practical view of comprehensive planning, compared to the master planning of the Progressives and rationalists. In the pragmatic planning, there is a focus on social learning through public participation mechanisms (Jamal, Stein, and Harper, 2005). Critical theory, through Habermas' (1979) communicative rationality, has also contributed by focusing comprehensive planning on the need for public participation mechanisms in the process. Additionally, postmodernism and social justice advocates have argued for comprehensive planning to be more participatory than the master planning of the past. As can be seen in the discussion above, comprehensive planning in theory and practice has evolved from an expert-based process to a more participatory one. To the Progressives and rationalists, comprehensive plans should be grand, and public approval should be sought after the plan is written.

Contemporary comprehensive planning is more limited and more focused on participation than planning of the past. Planners work in conjunction with other major stakeholders in an inclusive manner during the drafting of plans and the implementation of these documents; however in practice, this often does not occur. The research on public participation in local government decision-making describes the process as flawed with uninterested citizens and public officials who often do not respect them (Brody, Godschalk, and Burby, 2003). According to Innes (1996), comprehensive planning in

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order to be successful needs to be based on consensus building techniques that create

general and flexible plans. These guides (Kent, 1964), not blueprints, are more likely to

be implemented with this consensus building than planning in communities where

important actors are not included in the process. This consensus building is done through

communicative acts in planning.

The Role of Communication in Plan Implementation

The early Progressive planners recognized the importance of communication.

These planners sought to inject rationality in public decision making by having plans first

developed by experts and then approved by the public. The ideas of the Progressives

were well articulated in a manuscript that was used to promote Burnham's plan for

Chicago. Walter Dwight Moody, as head of the Chicago Plan Commission, was tasked

with the role of educating the public about the master plan. To Moody and Burnham,

experts or a knowledgeable few should draft comprehensive plans, and after the

document is prepared, officials should appeal for public support. Moody believed that a

plan needed to gain public support in order to enjoy implementation success (Schlereth,

1981, p. 70). But as Taylor (1998) noted, the communication of this early master

planning was not "*interpersonal* activity" but rather a "one way process *from* the planner

to politicians and the public" (p. 122). In many planning environments, this one way

relationship of participation is still the case (Brody, Godschalk, and Burby, 2003).

However, contemporary planning scholarship recognized that communication is

not this linear step-by-step action. Communication occurs in a fluid and complex

environment, which lacks control. As Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) argued,

coordination is needed for policies to be implemented, but the process of coordination is not as simple as most people think. Coordination is extremely difficult to achieve—as the authors wrote, coordination "means creating unity in a city that is not unified" (p. 134). Coordination involves an individual or group seeking to simplify implementation by bringing the multiple actors involved together around some type of common agreement. These multiple actors include the public, public planners, elected officials, interest groups, and other individuals who participate in the process of plan implementation. These planning actors may reach a commonality on the big picture, but disagree about the particulars, which will lead to breakdowns in implementation. In this maze of diverse opinions, communicative acts of mediation and negotiation are necessary to achieve some level of agreement for planning decisions. Hence, coordination is reached through negotiation, communication, and other *interpersonal* communication skills.

Communication in plan implementation was first considered as a top-down process through which planners communicate to their political superiors and the public. But as defined in the works of *Implementation* (1984) and *Street-Level Bureaucracy* (1980) along the contemporary literature on networks in policy making (Berry et. al, 2004; O'Toole, 1997; Provan and Milward, 2005; Rhodes, 1996; Sorenson and Torfing, 2005), implementation is not this simple top-down process. Rather, implementation is a fluid process. In this chaotic environment, communication cannot be treated as simply a means for planners to persuade the public. Communication has to be considered as necessary to drafting a plan and then to achieving implementation of a plan.

This is what Innes (1998) meant when she wrote, "What planners do most is talk and interact; it is through communicative practice that they influence public action" (p.

52). Contemporary planning theory has recognized this, and today the communicative planning model comprises a large portion of planning scholarship (Taylor, 1998). The development of this model and its application in this research is discussed in greater detail in chapter three, but before this, the current studies on comprehensive plan implementation are reviewed.

The Implementation of Local Government Comprehensive Plans

The topic of implementation and evaluation has received significant attention in the public administration literature (Matland, 1995; O'Toole, 2000). Scholars in other fields, such as political science, policy analysis, management, etc., have also dedicated their energies toward developing a better understanding of policy implementation, but in the public planning literature, "there has been a curious lack of parallel inquiry into the implementation processes" (Talen, 1996, p. 248). This is indeed curious since public planning is an attempt to develop strategies to achieve public action of public policies. Over the past few decades, planning research has attempted to deal with this void in the literature and to understand the implementation of local public plans; however, there are only a few studies examining the implementation of local comprehensive plans in particular—for example, Talen (1996) and Brody and Highfield (2005) are two of the main studies investigating this topic.

Given this, the following paragraphs will review the research that has been done on the implementation of public plans, with emphasis on comprehensive planning, to gather insights into factors affecting implementation. Most of these studies examine the implementation of comprehensive plans, but there is also research reviewed that deals

with the implementation of more specific planning, such as environmental planning and economic development planning. While there is diversity of planning types included in this review, the main issue is the same, and that is: How are public planning documents implemented by the communities that develop these strategies? Nevertheless, to abate confusion, it should be stressed again that some of the literature reviewed in these sections deal with specific types of planning other than comprehensive planning. However, these reviewed studies on specific planning discuss that type of planning in relation to comprehensive planning. For example, the studies reviewed on economic development deal with that specific planning in the context of overall comprehensive planning of a community.

The research on the implementation of local public plans can be divided into three streams. First, there has been a focus on the structure of local governments and the mechanisms of service delivery (Berman and Korosec, 2005; Burby and Dalton, 1994; Deyle and Smith, 1998; English, Peretz, and Manderschied, 2004; Gunyou, 1991;; Wheeland, 2003; Norton, 2005; Smith and Kohfield, 1980). Second, there has been a focus on the public participation features of local plan development, adoption, and implementation (Berman, 1996; Brody, Godschalk, and Burby, 2003; Burton and Hildreth, 1993). These studies have examined the efficacy of public participation and the benefits of these mechanisms for implementation. Lastly, there is a unique stream in the literature focused on the implementation of economic development plans in communities (Blair 1998 & 2004; Garcia, Merrifield, and Senge, 1991; Halachmi, 1993; Pammer, 1998). This stream encompasses some of the components of the first two, but there is a foundational concern with the single goal of economic development. These studies have

emphasized the importance of affluent groups in the planning process, and the ability of localities with more resources to better plan and implement, compared to communities with fewer resources.

The Structure of Local Community Planning

Based on the literature, local governments restructure their planning and decision making processes through coordination, unified systems, service delivery agreements, and other such processes to help abate implementation difficulties. In restructuring services, local governments have attempted to work together with neighboring governmental units, nonprofit organizations, and private companies to coordinate planned solutions to community problems. This combined effort helps abate resource limitations, and presents a united front against the perceived problems facing a community (Berman and Korosec, 2005). Furthermore, it recognizes the networked characteristic of policy implementation. Thus, this structural stream of the literature focuses on the formal and legal procedures that affect comprehensive planning. Based on the review of the literature, these structural features include: coordination agreements by local governments, state mandates, degrees of detail in planning documents, and evaluation procedures in local planning.

First, the structure feature of coordination has been shown to influence the efficacy of local planning. For instance, Berman and Korosec (2005) defined planning coordination as "the intentional, cooperative planning by both public and private entities that seek to collaboratively resolve problems going beyond jurisdictions or communities" (p. 381). According to the authors, planning coordination is a regional process that seeks

the involvement of multiple stakeholders. From their mail survey to public managers in cities with populations over 50,000, the authors found that 40 percent of the local governments conducted planning coordination, and 78.7 percent of public managers agreed or strongly agreed that coordination is crucial. As the authors learned, the most common forms of coordinated planning deal with "safety, traffic congestion, transit planning, and economic development" (p. 397). This type of planning is "less common in areas of public health and social services" (p. 397). Based on their findings, the authors argued that the following key factors affected coordinated planning: "the perceived effectiveness of other organizations and a revitalized management work culture that encourages departments to think outside the box and rewards them for innovation and initiative" (p. 397).

Wheeland's (2003) case study of Rock Hill, South Carolina is an example of another study that emphasized the importance of the structural features of community cooperation. During the late 1980s, the community of Rock Hill was successful at implementing a two-year strategic plan and beginning the first stages of a 10-year plan (p. 46). Wheeland measured this success by applying the following criteria:

> (a) the effective management of uncertainty by promoting learning, especially about environmental (i.e., contextual) conditions; (b) the resolution of conflict by facilitating goal agreement among participants; (c) the continued participation of citizens representative of the community; (d) the achievement of tangible and intangible results; and (e) the establishment of a governance network for the community, which remains operational for at least the duration of the planning period (i.e., 10 years in Rock Hill's case). (p. 49)

According to Wheeland, the community was able to meet these objectives because: the political leadership and city management was able to adjust to problems with innovative

ideas; these leaders were able to work together with other stakeholders in the community; and these leaders consistently "championed the use of community-wide strategic planning" (p. 65 - 66).

Second, along with coordination of plans, other structural factors in the literature are the impact of detailed procedures within plans along with state mandates for implementation and evaluation. For instance, Brody and Highfield (2005) analyzed the implementation of local government environmental planning in Florida. The authors compared the comprehensive plans of localities with growth patterns in their municipal boundaries. Plans with more detailed procedures for environmental protection were more likely to be successfully implemented. Local governments in the panhandle region and coastal portions of Florida were the least likely to conform to their environmental plans, while the southern portion of the state contained the most plan conformity. According to the authors, "strict sanctions for failure to implement required policies and monitoring plan effectiveness" increases plan conformity (p. 170). In other words, plans were more likely to be implemented when a higher level of government enforced guidelines and regularly evaluated the process.

Conversely, research has also found that state mandates also fail to influence the implementation of local comprehensive plans. In another study on Florida[5], Berke and Conroy (2000) analyzed the comprehensive plans of 30 localities on the basis of how these documents enhanced sustainable development. According to the authors, these localities did not achieve sustainable development principles. In another state setting, Norton (2005) found that state mandates on local planning do not always produce

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[5] In the planning literature, some states, such as Florida, are overrepresented. One reason for this is because states, such as Florida, require more local planning than other states.

conformity or effective strategies. The author analyzed the coastal planning process during the mid-1990s in 20 counties and 72 municipalities in North Carolina. From this, the author found that "the plans were weak analytically and substantively, providing limited guidance for growth management" (p. 55). Lastly, the study by Deyle and Smith (1998) on coastal storm hazard planning in Florida showed that state mandates may not achieve desired implementation goals. The authors investigated 18 Florida communities that conduct coastal storm hazard planning to determine whether these localities follow state mandates. They found mixed results concerning the efficacy of state mandates, but overall, the authors, based on their analysis, argued that state mandates are not the driving force behind local comprehensive planning for coastal disasters. The authors argued, "the extent to which storm hazard planning is included in local plans cannot be attributed solely to the content of the state's planning mandate" (p. 457). Therefore, according to the literature, there are mixed findings on the impact of state mandates and of plan detail in the planning process. It appears that state agencies are often just a single player, while albeit a powerful one, in a multiple player process of implementation.

Rabinovitz's (1989) study of the Los Angeles' comprehensive plan process emphasized the importance of multiple actors. As the author discussed, there has been a debate in the literature over the efficacy of using state mandates in conjunction with local zoning regulations. The case of Los Angeles shows that multiple players are involved in the planning process. These players include other levels of government, such as state and federal mandates, politicians, business leaders, community activist, etc. Additionally, the courts, especially in land-use decisions, can be involved in the planning process. In the case of Los Angeles, the decisions made by the city's planning commission were often

appealed in state court. When these cases are adjudicated, courts in their rulings are in effect writing portions of the community's comprehensive plan.

Third, the structural feature of evaluation has been one of the main targets of research on local plan implementation. The work of Talen (1996) and Brody and Highfield (2005) found that robust evaluation procedures are some of the most important predictors of plan implementation.

Lastly, research on structural features has found that multiple legal and procedural characteristics affect local plan implementation. In a robust study, Burby and Dalton (1994) analyzed the natural disaster planning process in 176 local governments throughout 5 states, and their findings show that the use of rational methods—such as state mandates and land-use regulations—can "produce tangible community benefits" (p. 229). Other influences, such as the community's population and resources, did not have a large effect on the implementation process. However, the authors found that local political action had the most effect on the demand for hazard planning. Thus, the political characteristics of a planning environment matter a great deal.

Structural factors have been shown by the literature to influence the implementation of plans. These factors include unified systems, mandates, evaluation procedures, and regional coordination among units of government, but as Burby and Dalton (1994) found, political factors have the most significant effect. The studies on the structural features of implementation emphasize the effect of state mandates on the process, the type of planning systems in individual localities, and the existence of multiple actors throughout the process. The public participation stream of literature seeks to understand how these multiple actors affect the implementation process.

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Public Participation

In public administration, there is a wealth of literature examine the issue of public participation in administrative decisions. When it comes to the function of public planning, a consistent finding in the plan participation literature is that citizen involvement, which is meaningful and representative, will improve plan implementation (Kelly and Becker, 2000). However, research has found it difficult for local governments to achieve this standard of meaningful and representative public participation (Brody, Godschalk, and Burby, 2003). This section reviews the literature concerning the impact of public participation on local public planning by focusing on how citizen involvement is argued normatively to be a benefit for planning but also how studies have found empirical evidence that it is difficult to achieve effective public participation.

First, scholars have argued that increased citizen involvement produces an increase in the quality of a community's public planning processes. For example, Brody, Godschalk, and Burby (2003) argued that participation mechanisms that allow for citizen involvement in each stage of the process would produce comprehensive plans that are more likely to be implemented than in planning processes that did not allow for this level of inclusive involvement. The authors argued that there are six planning choices for public participation in the planning process: administration, objectives, stage, targeting, techniques, and information (p. 248). The authors analyzed the regulations in 10 states, which require their local governments to conduct comprehensive planning, to assess the public participation mechanism in these mandates. Next, the authors conducted an in-depth investigation of the planning process in Florida and Washington, and found that

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Washington's process emphasizes public participation more than Florida's process. One of the reasons is because Washington had a process where the public could participate in the early stages of the planning process—e.g., the preplanning stage. Washington's process also targeted relevant stakeholders to ensure that they were invested in the plans. Lastly, Washington's process required public participation that was interactive rather than merely informative. Based on these findings, communities with more

Innes and Booher (2004) argued that these top-down public participation mechanisms do not produce meaningful public participation. The authors argued that bottom-up participation mechanisms, such as neighborhood focus groups, may improve public participation in government decision-making. This is the case because relevant stakeholders are included directly in the planning process.

Given this, it can be asserted that plans are more likely to be implemented if there are mechanisms that ensure the involvement of relevant stakeholders. Burton and Hildreth (1993) found that the construction of a stakeholder team in the planning process makes it more likely that the plan's goals will be implemented. The inclusion of stakeholders, it can be argued, produces communities with more social capital. English, Peretz, and Manderschied (2003) argued that quality participatory planning could improve the efficacy of the process and the overall social connectedness of the community. According to the authors, the public should be involved in all five stages of the process. First, the public should have input during the goal-setting stage of the planning process. For example, in Georgia, the planning process calls for a community statement, which is supposed to be based on the public's desired governance goals. Second, the public should have some role in the drafting of the document, which goes

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beyond merely being informed about the process. Third, the public should be involved in the specifying of alternatives to deal with perceived challenges. Fourth, the public should have a voice in the selection of the alternatives or solutions. Lastly, the public should hold planners and elected officials accountable by closely monitoring the implementation of the plan. According to English and her colleagues, public participation in each of these five stages is the key ingredients of a successful planning recipe (English et. al, 2004).

Economic Development

The literature on plan implementation shows the importance of economic development as a goal for planning to be successful in a community. As a whole, this literature views economic development as a binding goal for a community and robust evaluation of plans as a means to achieve this goal. For instance, Blair (1998) constructed a model, based on Denhardt's cycle of public administration, to improve the implementation of strategic plans for economic development. This model emphasized quality evaluation structures in the planning process. This evaluation framework should attempt to identify goals, select criteria, design research tools, and measure the outcomes of planned programs (p. 340 – 341). As with the structural literature, there is a focus on evaluation for economic development planning with a holistic approach.

Pammer (1998) also advocated a systematic framework for economic development planning implementation. According to the author, the following "issues" should be considered when implementing economic development strategies. First, a "marketable" comprehensive plan is a positive feature or a plan that advertises the economic benefits of a community. This is the most basic feature of the process—as the

author wrote, "without a written plan, there is no implementation" (p. 293). Second, an "entity" that supervises implementation of the plan is needed. This department should periodically evaluate the process and hold officials to the goals in the plan. Lastly, the implementation should be fully financed. Budget constraints often cause the implementation of plans to breakdown. Because of this fiscal reality, communities with more resources are better equipped to properly implement their planned strategies.

Garcia, Merrifield, and Senge (1991) also focused on the structure of local government planning for economic development. The authors, in particular, analyzed the coordination mechanisms, and for a plan to be successful, the authors argued for a coordinated plan to be based on the following phases: a community discussion about the perceived problems and possible solutions; the development of a strategic plan; the selection of the appropriate policy or alternative; and a combined strategy based on the solutions developed from the other phases (p. 85 – 91).

Based on the economic development planning literature, there is a focus on the following. First, strong evaluation measures improve plan implementation. Second, authors argue, from a normative standpoint, that economic development plans should be holistic documents including detailed marketing strategies and advertisements. Lastly, coordination among neighboring jurisdictions is a focus in this literature.

Conclusions: Implementation Statements for the Q-sample

The purposes of this chapter were as follows: to discuss the comprehensive plan implementation literature, to show the importance of communication in implementation,

and to review the comprehensive plan implementation literature in order to build the statements for the Q-sample of this research.

From the review of the literature on planning at the local level, the following categories can be constructed for the Q-sample on comprehensive planning. It should be stressed that these are not the only influences on comprehensive planning, but there are ones discussed in great detail throughout the literature. First, there are statements on the importance of structural factors in local plan implementation. These statements deal with formal procedures of planning, such as coordination, evaluation, and budgeting. For example, plans are more likely to be followed when planning and budgeting are performed together. Second, the sample includes statements on the importance of public participation mechanisms in local plan implementation. These statements deal with the influence of the public on comprehensive planning. For example, plans are more likely to be followed when there is more (or less) public involvement. Lastly, the sample includes statements on the importance of economic development goals in local plan implementation. These statements are based on the idea that communities are often drive by the goal of economic development when they plan. For example, plans are more likely to be followed when they deal with improving the local economy.

Some theoretical assumptions on the typology can be made. The following is the perceived possible typology: *structrualists, participantionists,* and *developmentists.* The *structuralists* communicate a structural view of plan implementation—for example, they may hold that the process is improved through structural changes, such as unified budgeting and planning systems and/or evaluation. The *participantionists* communicate a public participation view of plan implementation—for example, they may hold that the

process succeeds or fails based on the public participation forums and stakeholder involvement. Lastly, the *developmentists* communicate an economic development view of plan implementation—for example, they may hold that the process is linked to the economic well-being of a community. The local planning literature is rich. The studies included in this review have to differing degrees covered the topic of comprehensive planning. These streams, structure, participation, and development, are some of the most numerous avenues in which comprehensive planning has been explored.

Table 2

The Literature on Plan Implementation

Plan Implementation Literature Streams			
Stream	Definition	Sources	Communicative Roles
Structural factors	*The plan implementation process is viewed from a structure standpoint. There is a focus on structure features, such as service delivery agreements, zoning, and other tools of local governments. There are arguments for how structural reforms may improve planning.*	Smith and Kohfield, 1980; Deyle and Smith, 1998; Gunyou, 1991; Burby and Dalton, 1994; Wheeland, 2003; English, Peretz, and Manderschied, 2004; Berman and Korosec, 2005; Norton, 2005	*Structuralists* communicate a structural view of plan implementation— for example, they may hold that the process is improved through structural changes, such as unified and planning systems and/or evaluation.
Public participation mechanisms	*The plan implementation process should include meaningful and representative participation opportunities. There is a focus on the efficacy of public participation forums. There are arguments for how public participation reforms may improve planning.*	Burton and Hildreth, 1993; Berman, 1996; Brody, Godschalk, and Burby, 2003	*Participationists* communicate a public participation view of plan implementation— for example, they may hold that the process succeeds or fails based on the public participation forums and stakeholder involvement.
Economic development goals	*The plan implementation process is considered a means through which communities can improve their economic situations.*	Garcia, Merrifield, and Senge, 1991; Halachmi, 1993; Blair 1998; Pammer, 1998	*Developmentists* communicate an economic development view of plan implementation— for example, they may hold that the process is linked to the economic well-being of a community.

CHAPTER III

THEORY

Introduction

The mainstream planning theory of the 1950s to the 1980s was largely rooted in

the concept of instrumental rationality, which is "a series of calculations about the best

means to the desired ends" (Innes, 1996, p. 464). Today, planning theory has experienced

a shift away from this complete focus on instrumental rationality to the realm of

communication. This turn toward communication has been described by scholars, such as

Innes (1995), as a Kuhnian paradigm shift in public planning theory. Contemporary

planning theory rooted in this perspective describes the planner as not just an expert, but

also as a communicator (Taylor, 1998). This collection of theory has often been labeled:

communicative planning.

This research does not seek to test the communicative planning model, or to

contribute to the debate in the literature concerning this role of a planner as an active

communicator in many value-laden decisions. The research relies on the communicative

planning model's assumption that planning is a series of communicative acts, and since

this is planning process as described by this dominant model, the research attempts to use

the lens of communication to understand the perceptions of public planners concerning

their roles in the implementation of comprehensive plans. To achieve this, the model is

used as a guide in the construction of a Q-methodology instrument to uncover these perceptions.

Within communicative planning, there are numerous ideas, as shown, concerning public planning. However, this diversity of ideas exists within two poles. On one side, there are the ideas of Jürgen Habermas that focus on democratic discourse and communicative rationality in planning. On the other side, there are the ideas of scholars such as Judith Innes (1996) that view communicative planning more in terms of negotiate and mediation in the planning process. To communicative theorists on all points of the continuum, planning is a process in which all actors make value-based decisions, whether they are politicians or planners. In this value-laden environment, planning is not a linear process where expertise flows up to political officials. Instead, politics and expertise intermingle in a complex web of multiple actors linked by communication (Forester, 1993 & 1995; Healey, 1992 & 1997; Innes 1995; Sager, 1994). The knowledge to action process that is public planning, as described by Forester (1971), is achieved through communicative acts, such as: negotiation, bargaining, and mediating. Given this, the implementation of comprehensive plans should be viewed through the lens of communication. This research does this by applying the communicative planning model to the problem of comprehensive plan implementation.

This chapter presents the theory for this research, a communicative planning model of implementation. First, the chapter traces the antecedents of the communicative planning model. Next, the chapter reviews the contemporary literature on the model in planning practice. Lastly, the communicative planning model for plan implementation is presented, and its role in this research is discussed.

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Antecedents of Communicative Planning

The underlying assumptions in the communicative planning model can be traced to two antecedents: the communicative rationality of Jürgen Habermas and the pragmatism of John Dewey (Fainstein, 2000). These philosophical traditions attacked modernism planning's view of instrumental rationality, which follows a means-ends structure of planning with economic-based measures as decision making criterion (Forester, 1985). The instrumental rationality of planning theory from the progressives to the rationalists and the height of the rational comprehensive model in the 1950s viewed policy development as a linear process, and assumed that planners can be politically neutral. The planners practicing this theory, such as Burnham and Olmstead, were not always politically neutral, it can be argued, in practice, but they described their job as if they were political neutral. The antecedents of communicative planning deconstructed this means-ends, linear, and non-political definition of planning, and replaced it with a communicative, non-linear, and political approach to planning. Communicative rationality, in particular, added a focus on public discourse to planning scholarship, and through this public discourse, the social learning component of pragmatism can be achieved.

Communicative Rationality

The modernist approach to planning, conceptualized in the rationalist arguments for planning, was based on a positivistic approach to the social sciences, which held that the social world would be studied objectively through quantifying phenomenon

(Friedmann, 1987). In critiquing positivism, Wittgenstein and later Habermas argued that reality is a social construct expressed through the language that people use (Bernstein, 1995). According to Habermas (1979), how individuals perceive the world around them is based on their personal context. Individuals define their context through communication, especially its most readily used method, language. Accordingly, language is no universally objective in nature, but rather subjective in its formation. This means that social inquiry is neither objective nor universal; rather, social inquiry, involving human communication, is both subjective and contextual.

Based on the arguments of Habermas (1979), social action is the product on "conflict, competition, strategic action" through communication between individuals (p. 1). And to conduct these actions in meaningful way, the "validity basis of speech" must be achieved through proper public discourse (p. 3). This is a communicative situation that includes "reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord" among the participants involved in public decision-making. To Habermas, the ideal speech situation is rational decision making, or communicative rationality as opposed to instrumental rationality which calls for objective analysis of means and ends. When there is reciprocity, trust, and shared knowledge, participants can voice their opinions, analyze these views, and arrive at a mutual agreement. In other words, a community achieves the ideal speech situation when it can come together to consider viable options for policy alternatives and reach a consensus for action.

Habermas (1979) used the term "universal pragmatics" to describe the research method needed to obtain this validity basis of speech (p. 1). Through the universal pragmatics, speech can be analyzed in its verbal and nonverbal form to understand

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strategic actions, communicative actions, and symbolic actions (Habermas 1979, p. 40). To simplify, Habermas argued that communicative rationality is achieved when there is inclusion of diverse groups, not just elites, in a decision setting. Through these groups communicating their viewpoints with one another, there can be democratic discourse, or the ideal speech situation.

Based on Habermas' views, planners, political officials, and scholars need to understand the subjective nature of communication when performing their various roles. For example, a planning actor's communication is subjectively formed based on that person's context, which includes socialization, norms, values, etc. (Howe, 2000). The communicative planning model is based on using communicative rationality rather than instrumental rationality in analyzing a community's consequences and in making public choices, and through the discourse produced by communicative rationality, practical social learning occurs.

Pragmatism

Pragmatism is rooted in the writings of John Dewey, who argued that reality is understood through practical knowledge. To put it differently, learning occurs through doing (Schon, 1991, p. 64). Dewey was a prolific writer applying his perspective of pragmatic learning to education and democratic discourse. Through democratic discourse, Dewey believed that social learning could occur (White, 1973). Friedmann (1987) described Dewey's pragmatism in the following way: "All valid knowledge, declared Dewey, comes from experience, by which he meant the interaction between human subjects and their material environment" (p. 189). When it comes to planning,

pragmatism views plans as social experiments from which learning occurs (Friedmann, 1987, p. 190). Social learning is when a society or a community adapts from experiencing successes but also failures. Knowledge or truth, therefore, is acquired through experiencing reality, and it is only validated through experience (White, 1973).

In contemporary planning literature, there has been a resurgence of pragmatic thought, which has been labeled as neopragmatism (Fainstein, 2000). This literature has offered neopragmatism as a third way approach to the debate between modernisms and postmodernism (Harper and Stein, 1994). Neopragmatism advocates decisions on a case-by-case basis not being attached too much to a particular view, whether it be modernism's focus on technical expertise or postmodernism's focus on values. Additionally, a neopragmatic approach to planning has been advocated as a solution for planning environments that are highly contentious (Jamal, Stein, and Harper, 2002). In policy areas that produce a high degree of ideological conflict, such as environmental and land-use issues, a pragmatic approach to planning, based on a "fluid" definition of processes, can abate ideology gridlock and lead to planning results (Jamal, Stein, and Harper, 2002, p. 164). This approach, also, can be used to develop meaningful public participation mechanism where crucial stakeholders actively participate in planning, or a collaborative model of planning.

Communicative rationality and pragmatism are the philosophical foundation of the contemporary communicative planning model. The focus of communicative rationality in using communication throughout a community to make public decisions is adapted in the communicative planning model's assertion that planning is communication or as Healey (2003b) described it "communicative argumentation" (p. 238) Pragmatism's

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emphasis on social learning is found in the communicative planning model's assertion

that planning can improve through taking a practical approach where the entire

community learns and adapts from experience. The following section defines the

communicative planning model and discusses its place in public planning literature.

The Communicative Planning Model

The communicative planning model is based on the ideal that public planning

occurs in fragmented political systems with numerous layers of intergovernmental

relations and shared decision-making processes where collaboration is necessary to

achieve results. The model asserts that planning is this communication among multiple

actors, and the communicative roles that these actors play significantly affects the

outcomes of the process. The following expands on the model through examining how it

describes the planning environment and its role in planning scholarship and practice.

The Model's View of the Planning Environment

The communicative planning model describes a planning environment that is

complex where connections are made through communicative acts, and this complex

environment should be studied based on a critical theory view of the political world. As

has been discussed in chapter 2, contemporary scholarship has described implementation

as occurring in a complex environment comprised of multiple players interacting in

numerous jurisdictions. In such complexity, there is a need for coordination to achieve

goals. Public planning, as a function of government, occurs in this complexity, and for it

to be successful, there needs to be a model that achieves coordination. Healy (2003b)

described the challenges that public planning faces in such a fragmented environment:

> …urban regions have become containers within which coexist a diversity
> of social and economical relations, linking people in a place with those in
> other places, but not necessarily with those in the same place. The results
> in urban regions are tensions and conflicts, as the dynamics and values of
> different relational networks jostle together. The actions of one may
> consciously or unwittingly undermine the opportunities of another. (p.
> 237)

In this fragmented public sphere, planning, as noted, is held together by

communication. Policy is made through bargaining, negotiating, logrolling, storytelling,

and other communicative acts (Innes, 1995). However, communicative acts can either

advance or hider the planning process. On one hand, the communicative acts of the actors

involved in the planning process lead to coalition-building to gain support for planned

strategies. But on the other hand, actors also participate in communicative acts, such as

lobbying against plans. Policy is made and implemented through these positive or

negative communicative participants. In the planning process, planners navigate through

this sea of communication. The attitude within the communication or their advice is just

as important as the manner in which they convey it. Planners' advice is not the only

communication of importance, but they serve as the coordinating voices in a sea of

planning communication.

The communicative planning model holds that this complex environment should

be studied based on a critical theory view of the political world. In critical theory,

rationality, as discussed, is viewed through the lens of communication, which takes into

account social relations, such as political bargaining, conflict over bureaucratic orders,

and other communicative interactions, that are not captured by other methods (Forester,

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1993). In his work *Critical Theory, Public Policy, and Planning Practice,* Forester (1993) argued that social critical theory realizes the limitations of instrumental rationality (i.e., a means-ends calculation) and social engineering in public planning (p. xi). To Forester, decision making based on what he labeled "critical pragmatism" is a mixture between Herbert Simon's (1997) bounded rationality and communicative rationality. It is one that recognizes the importance of politics and situational factors. As Forester (1985) described this scholarly mixing, "Simon and Habermas… point to similar problems and new directions: the analysis of situated practical action" (p. 48). Thus, Forester's view of communicative rationality takes a practical, situation-by-situation approach to planning decision making. According to Forester, communicative rationality is a logical evolution of bounded rationality.

Critical theory is constructed upon the foundational idea that the manner in which the social and political world is studied should be consistently challenged (Bernstein, 1995; McNabb, 2002; Morrow and Brown, 1994). Through this continual challenging, scholars have examined questions of epistemologically and ontology. These topics on the study of knowledge and the nature of reality are important to planning scholarship and planning practice. According to this view of the planning environment, the definition of the function is not merely procedural but also governmental. This means that planning and its environment are described, by communicative planning, as "a mode of governance" (Healey, 2000, p. 918). The study of planning, therefore, is more than just process and spatial arrangements. It involves approaches to governance. The follow conceptualizes communicative planning and how the model describes planning practice.

The Model Conceptualized

      The communicative planning model describes the planning process as being connected by the following concepts: *public discourse, cooperation, communicative skills,* and *social learning.* First, the model, at its core, is based upon the need for public discourse in planning. It holds that policy making in planning comes from "communicative argumentation" (Healey, 2003b, p. 238). This argumentation is based on Habermas' intellectual influence of communicative rationality. But it should be stressed the communicative rationality is a "grand theory" that serves a foundation to the model (Innes, 2004, p. 16). The communicative model in practice, which has been labeled as collaborative planning or consensus building, is based more on the concepts of negotiation and mediation than the abstract features of Habermas' communicative rationality (Innes, 2004). Communicative rationality is the overarching framework that seeks describes the importance of public discourse, but in practice, this public discourse in planning is achieved through negotiation and mediation.

      Second, communitywide cooperation and inclusion are necessary to achieve this public discourse. Planners serve as mediators between the multiple participants involved in the planning process to ensure inclusion. As Fainstein (2000) wrote, the communicative planning model "emphasizes the planner's role in mediating among 'stakeholders' within the planning situation" (p. 452). In order to mediate between actors, the communicative model of planning is based on "appreciation of the power of ideology to structure the imagery and vocabulary of discourse" (Healy, 1992, p. 12). Thus, communicative planning theorists are interested in these ideological interactions

(Forester, 1993). Making the unit of analysis communication, which "focuses on the fine detail of planning work" (Healy, 1992, p. 12).

Third, communication and communicative skills are the focus of inquiry. Given this, communicative planning theorists have employed qualitative methodology tools to examine communicative work that planners do, and they have found that communication skills are important to aid public discourse and inclusion. For example, Healy (1992) observed the communicative acts of planners in a large metropolitan area in England to undercover what types of knowledge is being used and how this knowledge is being communicated (p. 10). The types of knowledge were communicated through acts of negotiation. Agendas were restructured. And power was exercised through symbolic imagery. From this analysis, Healy found that communication was a key feature in service delivery, an implementation process. Planners, who possessed communication skills, were contributors to service delivery.

Lastly, social learning occurs through public discourse, inclusion, and communication skills. Social learning builds "social and intellectual capital" (Healey, 2003b, p. 240). This feature of the communicative planning model is rooted in pragmatism's focus on experiential learning. To communicative planning theorists, public discourse works in conjunction with social learning to improve community decision making. Planners help facilitate this social learning by focusing on the analysis of possible consequences from public decisions. In current planning theory, social learning is encapsulated in the ideas of social capital theorists (Putnam, 2000).

Contemporary planning theory has included a focus on communication in the negotiation and compromise among planners, politicians, stakeholders, and other key

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actors (Taylor, 1998). Communicative planning theorists have confirmed that a large part

of a planner's job involves participating in communication rather than just purely

technical analysis (Healey, 2003b). The communicative interactions between participants

and the subjective opinions of these actors influence the outcome of comprehensive

planning.

The Model in Planning Practice

    In practice, the concepts of the communicative planning model can be founding in

a number of planning approaches that seek to achieve coordination in planning and to

involve the public directly in planning decisions. The normative public participation

stream in the planning literature relies heavily on communicative rationality and public

discourse as tools to achieve consensus around plans and successfully implement these

plans. An early example of this literature is Godschalk and Mills (1966). The authors

argued that for planning to be effective there must be a link between planners and the

public through meaningful participation mechanisms in the planning process. In another

foundational work on the subject, Arnstein (1969) constructed a practical guide for this

participation in her "ladder of citizen participation" (p. 216). She made a normative

argument that communities that offer more public participation mechanisms in their

planning processes are more likely to produce effective plans, compared to communities

that are less inclusive.

    Contemporary planning scholarship has developed this argument for public

participation further with more emphasis on linking communicative rationality to

planning than the earlier public participation literature and more direct public

involvement in the process, compared to earlier scholarship arguments. This literature has been referred as communicative planning (Forester, 1993; Sager, 1994), collaborative planning (Healey, 1997), and consensus building (Innes, 1996). According to their supporters, these practical models, which are rooted in communicative planning, offer a means to deal with conflict, to harness the power of communication, and to make adaptable communities through successful planning processes.

For instance, Innes (1996) and Margerum (2002) have argued that the concepts of the communicative planning, in particular negotiation and mediation, model can be utilized to achieve consensus building and planning success. The key to this success is an ideal public discourse among stakeholders, where most players are included and their opinions are considered. As Innes (1996) wrote, "It is a method of group deliberation that brings together for face-to-face discussion a significant range of individuals chosen because they represent those with differing stakes in a problem" (p. 462). If the participants can come together in a manner of respect, then the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders ensures that plans will be based on a community's true needs, and that plans are likely to be followed. This occurs because there is greater involvement throughout the process. There is a sense of ownership in the plans. Plans are drafted with inputs from multiple actors, including the public and important stakeholders. Since the large portions of the community are active in the preparation of plans, then the strategies are more likely to be implemented, compared to plans written in seclusion, because there is more connection to the planned strategies. Thus, consensus building, through public discourse, as it is argued makes it more likely that implementation of plans will occur, but it should be stressed that there are other influences that lead to successful implementation.

Innes (1992 & 1996) has examined comprehensive planning practice through a number of empirical studies on planning in California and New Jersey. According to Innes, these studies are more linked to actual planning than historical studies because they seek to understand what planners actually do. As she argued, the communicative theory is more rooted in planning practice than historical models, such as the rational comprehensive approach (Innes, 1995). According to Innes (1995), "These new planning scholars [communicative planning theorists] do grounded theorizing based on richly interpretive study of practice" (p. 183). In one of these richly interpretive studies, Innes (1996) studied 14 cases of conflict over growth and environmental planning in local comprehensive planning in the state of California, and found that properly designed tools, such as stakeholder groups, can produce ideal consensus building situations. However, there are numerous factors keep locales from achieve consensus building and planning success. As Innes (1996) described these constraints,

> Multiple local agencies and interests engage in either conflict or simply uncoordinated action about the physical development and management of infrastructure, growth, and environmental resources. Individual players often have little power to achieve their missions without the cooperation of others. Yet, on the whole, municipalities seldom use consensus building for comprehensive planning. Usually, state laws already mandate procedures for public involvement, and planning commissions and public hearings are the accepted forms of public review of plans. Many stakeholders, such as residents or businesses from neighboring jurisdictions, and state and federal regulatory agencies representing environmental or economic interests have little legitimacy as participants in local decisions about land use. Accordingly, local plans can be difficult to implement because these other stakeholders do not cooperate. With plans often lacking influence, public involvement dwindles, because the stakeholders stand aside until specific projects are on the table. That dynamic, in a vicious circle, delegitimizes the plan as a meaningful document—precisely as Altshuler contended. (p. 462)

But when constructed to achieve consensus building, local planning can lessen these problems of non-coordination and get beyond Altshuler's (1965) critique that comprehensive planning is not a legitimate function of government. It should be noted that Innes (2004) rooted her approach to consensus building in more "interest-based negotiation and mediation" than in "Habermas' concept of communicative rationality" (p. 5).

In another empirical inquiry, Margerum (2002) detailed findings from cases in the United States that utilized collaborative planning techniques in environmental planning, and compared these findings to similar case studies from Australia. In these cases, collaborative planning found the following obstacles to consensus building: selection and composition; context; operation; organizations and interests; ideology; and power and capacity (p. 244). These findings validated similar results throughout the literature that discuss the obstacles to collaborative planning. During the implementation stage, collaborative planning faces perhaps the most constraints, compared to the other stages of the planning process. As Margerum (1999) found in his exploratory studies of cases in Wisconsin and in Australia, implementation faces the following weaknesses: poor communication; problems with resolving conflicts; personality differences; extremely difficult problems; long histories of antagonism; and inadequate funding to support implementation (p. 184). The author, along with Innes, hold that the communication problems can be overcome through properly crafted public discourse mechanisms based on the normative aspects of the communicative planning model.

Criticisms of the Communicative Planning Model

The communicative planning model has been criticized based on a number of points. As the reviewed empirical evidence in the last section showed, the model faces numerous obstacles in planning practice, such as resource limitations, ideology, and organizational constraints. Moreover, the empirical work on the model, whether it is under the name of collaborative planning, consensus building, or the other variations of the communicative planning approach, has found it is difficult to achieve the needed level of public discourse (Innes, 1996; Margerum, 2002). In their critique of Habermas' influence on communicative planning, Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger (1998) argued that the model "fails to incorporate adequately the peculiar political and professional nuances that exist in planning practice" (p. 1975). In other words, the model fails to take into account the difficulties of achieving public discourse in environments with a great deal of political conflict. For instance, it could be asserted that it would be difficult for the ideal of public discourse to work in a community where the local governments are in consistent conflict with one another. On the other hand, supporters of the model hold that the public discourse features can help abate this political stalemate among local governments.

Second, there is confusion over core concepts of the model. To some scholars, such as Sager (1994), the model is more rooted in communicative rationality, compared to other scholars, such as Innes (2004), that view the model as based on negotiation and mediation and communicative rationality is only a philosophical influence. The lack of conformity in the literature concerning the model can be seen in how many titles are

present for this focus on communication, such as communicative planning, collaborating

planning, collaborative planning, etc.

Lastly, the communicative planning model has been attacked for focusing solely

on the planner "doing the right thing" rather than on the object of planning, or the design

of communities (Fainstein, 2000, p. 455). The communicative planning suffers from the

problem in planning scholarship in how descriptive theory and normative theory are not

easily separated. The normative aspects of the communicative planning model hold that

planners *ought to* behave in the public interest by serving as mediators in the planning

process (Fainstein, 2000). However, as Innes (1995) argued, communicative planning

theorists worry more about describing planning in action than the instrumental rational

planning theorists of the past—as she wrote, "The communicative action theorists find

out what planning is by finding out what planners do, rather than postulating what

planning ought to be" (p. 184).

While recognizing the limitations of the communicative planning model, this

research asserts that it is a useful theoretical lens to construct a knowledge base of how

participants view comprehensive plan implementation. The following applies the

communicative model of planning in a limited fashion to the problem of comprehensive

plan implementation.

A Communicative Model for Plan Implementation

The communicative planning model offers a theoretical lens to understand how

the communicative roles of participants compare to the literature's findings on plan

implementation. This research, as stated, relies on the communicative as a theoretical

guide to understand the perceptions held public planners regarding the communicative roles that they perform in the implementation of comprehensive plans. This descriptive component of the communicative planning model is found in the model's assertion that planning is communication. Accordingly, research should be focus on how actors communicate throughout the planning process. This research uses this descriptive component of the communicative planning model as a lens to study plan implementation. The underlying assumption is: *If plan implementation is a social construct of reality based on the communication among actors, then a model seeking to understand the subject must be rooted in trying to uncover the communicative roles that actors play.* Thus, if more is known about participants' communicative viewpoints or roles, then there will be increased knowledge on plan implementation.

Given this, the research posits a communicative model of plan implementation to create this descriptive guide for the Q-methodology, which is discussed in the next chapter. The following conceptual model of plan implementation is based on the implementation literature reviewed in chapter 2 and the communicative planning model. The work of the planner and politicians involves the communication of ideas, and how these ideas are communicated affect the outcomes of the process. The planning process can be simplified to three parts: drafting, adoption, and implementation. If the planning process is one in which the actors are communicating in a form of coalition-building, the implementation stage, given the need for coordination to achieve results, is filled value-laden communication like the other stages. For example, the development stages are value-laden in that they are negotiations of ideas and compromising around an agreement

for the community, and as stated, how public planners express their viewpoints on a plan will significantly affect how that plan is followed.

If public planners express *positive* viewpoints of the comprehensive planning process, then the plan is more likely to be used as a community guide, compared to when actors express *negative* viewpoints.[6] In the implementation of plans, the literature holds that there are three roles that planning public planners may communicate. These are *structuralists, participationists,* and *developmentists.* Of course, these are three different forms of functions in planning. This is why they serve as the dividing categories for the collection of the Q-sample statements. In each one of these roles, there are communicative acts that resemble the findings in the communicative planning theory. Taking these assumptions about how public planners communicate during the planning process, the typology in Table 3 can be constructed. Where a planner falls in this typology chart will influence the implementation process. Based on the communicative planning model, it can be assumed that participants that are considered positive-participationists are more likely than the other types to view comprehensive planning as a meaningful tool and to hold to an idea of planning as described by contemporary planning theory. Thus, Table 3 displays the conceptual model of this research. This is used in chapter 4 as a guide to narrow the concourse of implementation statements into a manageable Q-sample.

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[6] It should be noted here that this research follows Kent's (1964) view of comprehensive planning, which asserts that comprehensive plans should be guides for community decision making not strictly followed blueprints.

Table 3

Categories for the Q-sample

The Q-sample		
	Negative Viewpoint Altshuler (1965)	**Positive Viewpoint** T.J. Kent (1964)
Structural Characteristics		
Public Participation		
Economic Development Goals		

Conclusions

The communicative planning model recognizes that communication and

negotiation are necessary components of plan implementation (Taylor, 1998). This

research is based on this perspective. It asserts that the subjective opinions of planning

participants determine implementation outcomes. These subjective opinions can be

communicated based on two dimensions: (1) positive or negative and (2) structuralists,

participationists, or developmentists. The next chapter discusses how the Q-methodology

is an ideal tool to analyze these communicative roles, or subjective opinions, of the actors

involved in plan implementation.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Research Design

The purpose of this research is to develop a better understanding of local

government comprehensive planning, in particular the implementation of these plans. To

achieve this goal, the theoretical lens of communicative planning is used to construct a

research design that uncovers the communicative viewpoints of participants concern the

implementation of local comprehensive plans. The research seeks to follow Innes (1995)

purpose for planning theory "to document what planners do" (p. 183). It focuses on what

planners do by understanding what participants say and how that affects implementation.

Given this, the research design uses the Q-methodology, which was constructed to study

communication.

The Q-sorting, based on previous studies on plan implementation, is utilized to

build a typology of the subjective opinions held by two important groups of actors

involved in plan implementation, participants. The Q-sorting is the factor analysis of

respondents' subjective rankings of statements from the literature. Through the Q-sorting,

individuals, who share opinions, are grouped together. The units of observations in this

portion of the research are the participants in Georgia counties. The counties are divided

into three groups based on population size: basic, intermediate, and advanced. This

research's purpose is not to generalize across populations rather to construct a theoretical typology explaining the attitudes of participants concerning the implementation of comprehensive plans and to compare that typology to the literature's findings on plan implementation.

This chapter presents the research's design by first discussing the objectives of the research, including the research questions. Second, the Q-methodology is introduced, along with a review of relevant studies that utilized the method. Third, the Q-sample for the research is presented, and the process through which it was derived is detailed. Fourth, the research's methodology is discussed. Lastly, possible results from the research are enumerated.

<div align="center">Objectives of the Research</div>

In Q-methodology research, hypotheses are "implicit" and not formally stated because the method is used as a tool for "discovery" (Edgens, 1997, p. 10). This research uses the Q-method to discover the opinions of participants on comprehensive plan implementation and how these opinions relate to literature's findings on implementation. It is guided by the formal research questions stated in chapter 1 and restated here: *What roles concerning the implementation of comprehensive plans do participants communicate? What are the important relationships between participants that affect plan implementation? And do these roles and relationships resemble the planning literature's findings that implementation is affected by structure, participation, and economic development?* From this research, the following can be understood about the

communicative roles that participants play in the implementation of comprehensive plans:

- How these roles affect the structure factors, public participation mechanisms, and economic goals of local plan implementation.

- How the roles of participants on implementation differ and are alike.

- How the roles of the participants in urban counties differ from the roles of participants in rural counties.

Understanding these features will increase the knowledge base of research on local comprehensive planning.

Q-methodology

The Q-methodology is used to classify the opinions of elected officials and planners concerning the implementation of comprehensive plans. The method is used to understand the subjective opinions of respondents, and how they communicate these opinions. The method is more than a distinct analytical tool. The Q-methodology is a philosophically different approach to social science than traditional surveying techniques, or R-Methodology (Durning, 1999) Through the Q-sorting, the method correlates participants rather than answers on surveys. This categorizes participants into particular groupings of subjective opinions (Edgens, 1997).

The Q-methodology was developed by Stephenson (1939) to examine the subjective opinions of individuals rather than the objective opinions that are gathered from standard survey questionnaires (Edgens, 1997). He developed the methodology to have a rich understand of subjective opinion. The subjective opinions are obtained by

forcing respondents to rank statements about the topic being studied. This ranking is referred to as Q-sorting. The Q-sorting can be factor analyzed to produce typologies of opinion (Durning, 1999). The sample of participants is not obtained through traditional sampling techniques. Instead, the "Q-method typically employs small numbers of respondents and the in-depth study of single cases is not uncommon" (McKeown and Thomas, 1988). Given this, the Q-method is inductive in nature, and differs from standard surveying, which uses sampling methods that attempt to generalize findings across populations. Furthermore, the Q-method assumes subjectivity rather than attempting objectivity in research. In fact, it is constructed to understand subjectivity. This combination of inductivity and subjectivity is what Stephenson intended for the Q-methodology.

Stephenson developed the method to study psychology, and later in his career, he used the Q-methodology to study communication (Esrock, 2005). As stressed, he developed the methodology in response to tradition surveying methods, or what has been termed "R-methodology." These two methods differ in the following ways: their treatment of objectivity and subjectivity; their sampling procedures; and their type of research validity (McKeown and Thomas, 1988; Durning, 1999).

In the Q-methodology, subjectivity is treated as a "*person's communication of his or her point of view*" (McKeown and Thomas, 1988, p. 12). Based on this definition, subjective is "self-referent." Therefore, statements in a Q-methodology study are not validated as survey questions in an R-Methodology instrument. Since they are self-referent, a participant's answers to a Q-methodology statement are on face valid. Given this, while R-method attempts to be objective in questioning, the Q-method does not

attempt objective rather seeks subjectivity. To uncover this subjectivity, the Q-method relies on the questioning of a relevant sample in an in-depth manner; whereas, the R-method attempts to construct a sample representative of a given population in order to generalize findings. The Q-method, therefore, compares the people not survey questions to form typologies of opinion. As Durning (1999) wrote,

> In R-methodology, traits (any quantitatively measurable characteristic) are correlated across a sample of persons. In contrast, in Q-methodology persons are correlated across a sample of statements that they have ranked in some order. The correlations reflect the degree of similarity in the way the statements have been sorted and the factor analysis of the correlations identifies groups of like-minded individuals. (p. 404)

The Q-method forces respondents to rank their opinions, and by using factor analysis of the Q-sample of these statements, typologies of "like-minded individuals" on a particular subject are constructed. These features have been attractive to numerous opinion researchers seeking to understand subjectivity concerning a particular issue. For example, the Q-methodology has been used in over 2000 published papers (Peritore, 1990). The method is an established tool in the social sciences, and it has also been used in numerous studies on topics in public administration and planning.

Research in Public Administration and Planning

The Q-methodology has been exported to most of the social sciences, with a significant number of studies in communication, sociology, political science, and public administration (Durning, 1990). Researchers have found the Q-methodology useful because the method has been described as a bridge between qualitative data and quantitative analysis. In addition, the Q-methodology has been viewed as a pragmatic

approach to studying public policy that does not tie researchers completely to the

dichotomous philosophical debate between positivism and postpositivism (Durning,

1999). Durning (1999) described these methodological virtues in the following manner,

> The paper proposes Q-methodology as a leading candidate to be added to
> the toolbag of policy analysts. This methodology has quantitative rigor but
> solidly reflects a subjectivist epistemology, one of the main elements of
> postpositivism. It offers analysts insights and understanding that can assist
> them in their analytic task while it subverts many of the values and habits
> of the positivist practice of analysis. (p. 407)

In other words, Q-methodology, according to Durning, offers the researcher the

quantitative tools for the analysis of subjectivity without being too closely associated

with one of the philosophical perspectives.

Political scientists have used the Q-methodology as an alternative to traditional

surveying (Brown, 1980). And in public administration, the methodology has become

increasingly useful, especially for researchers trying to understand the behavior of public

employees. For instance, public administration researchers of organizational theory have

used the Q-method in studies on work motivation, leadership, and organizational culture

(Brewer, Selden, and Facer II, 2000; Brown, Durning, and Selden, 2007).

Planning researchers have used the method to gauge the opinion of actors

involved in the planning process. First, the method has been used to understand the

opinions of the general public. Coke and Brown (1976) used the Q-method to develop a

typology describing public attitude toward land-use policy in Ohio. The authors found

two attitude groups: "the Environmentalist stress the impact of negative developmental

externalities and favor broader review of land use decisions; the Localists are concerned

with accountability and local control of decision-making" (p. 97). In another example,

Ellis, Barry, and Robinson (2007) employed the Q-method to study the opinions of people in Northern Ireland on wind farm proposals.

Second, the method has been utilized to develop typologies describing the opinion of politicians and community activists. In an unpublished dissertation, Edgens (1997) employed the Q-methodology to develop an understanding of the opinions held by two Michigan township boards concerning property rights and land use decisions. He found that township boards held opinions that could be classified into groups that where cautious over restricting private property rights and groups that where more willingly to exercise land use controls.

Lastly, researchers have applied the Q-method to understand the viewpoints of planners. Webler and Tuler (2001) examined the opinions of watershed management planners and activists concerning the efficacy of public participation in planning. From this analysis, the authors were able to identify groups for people who were more willingly to have public participation and actors who were less supportive of these mechanisms in the planning process.

This research builds upon these studies in the literature by using the Q-methodology to develop a typology of opinion held by planning participants, in particular Georgia planners, concerning plan implementation. The Q-method planning studies have failed to examine this topic. Therefore, this research contributes to the growing Q-methodology research in public planning.

Q-sample and P-Sample

In Q-method research, the Q-sample is the sample of statements on the subject being studied from the overall population of statements. The population of statements is referred to as the concourse. Through using some type of structured means, the concourse is narrowed into a representative Q-sample of statements. The Q-sample is presented to the participants through the condition of instruction to collect their subjective viewpoints concerning each statement.

It is important to first construct an operational rule for the subject being studied. In this research, the implementation of comprehensive planning is operationalized in the following manner: *comprehensive planning is a general guide for a community to anticipate future consequences.* This definition is based on T.J. Kent's view of comprehensive planning. Comprehensive planning, therefore, is not defined as a "blueprint" that is completely implemented, but as a flexible guide for future decisions (Healey, 2003b). This operational rule for comprehensive planning guides the collection of statements for the Q-sample.

In the Q-methodology, the research supplies respondents with a list of statements, referred to as the Q-sample. First, respondents place the statements into one of the following groups: disagree, neutral, or agree. After this step, respondents are asked to identify what statements they agree with the most, what statements they feel the most neutral about, and what statements they disagree with the most. From this, groups are made: strongly disagree, disagree, mildly disagree, neutral, mildly agree, agree, and strongly agree. Within each category, there can only be a certain number of statements. For example, a respondent can only place two statements in the strongly agree category.

Based on these subjective ranks, factor analysis can be used to construct typologies of opinion on a topic, which is referred to as Q-sorting (McKeown and Thomas, 1988).

The Q-sample can be based on qualitative interviews and/or previous studies in the literature on the topic (McKeown and Thomas, 1988). There are two methods to collect the Q-sample of statements: *naturalistic Q-samples* and *ready-made Q-samples*. The naturalistic Q-sample is based on particular information learned from another method, such as open-ended interviews. In the naturalistic process, the researcher constructs the Q-sample based on the information validated by the interviewing of relevant respondents on the topic being studied. The researcher is developing the Q-sample based on primary data, not their personal decisions. The ready-made Q-sample is often based on findings in the literature on the topic being studied (McKeown and Thomas, 1988).

This research's Q-sample is ready made in that it relies on the literature. The Q-sample is comprised of 20 statements (N = 20). In the Q-methodology, the Q-sample is based on a representative collection of statements concerning a particular subject (McKeown and Thomas, 1988). Whether it is collected through the naturalistic approach or the ready-made approach, the Q-sample should represent the general statement population on a subject, just as a sample of participants represents its population in standard R-Methodology. The large population of statements are on a subject are referred to as a concourse of communication (McKeown and Thomas, 1988). The Q-sample comes out of this concourse based on some type of criterion. In this study, this criterion is based on the two dimensions: (1) the positive or negative viewpoints of planning as articulated by Kent (1964) and Altshuler (1965), respectively and (2) the three streams of

plan implementation identified in the literature, which are structural factors, public

participation mechanisms, and economic development goals. The research's hypotheses

are implicit in this Q-sample framework.

The categorization of the statement concourse is found in Table 4. It should be

stressed here that these categorizations are based on the literature and theoretical

assumptions, and are meant to organize the statements into a meaningful Q-sample. The

statements are collected through this theoretical lens. It is through this categorization that

the communicative theory is applied to the research. The statements in the Q-sample are

assigned a number. The placement of these statements in how they are administered to

the participants is random.

Table 4

Q-sample (Statements = 20)

The Q-sample		
	Negative Viewpoint	**Positive Viewpoint**
Structural Characteristics	*(1) Fiscal limitations make it difficult to implement comprehensive plans.* *(2) Comprehensive planning is too costly.* *(3) Plans are not based on local concerns but on the goals of state government.* *(4) Comprehensive plans are too complicate and too long to have a meaningful effect.* *(5) Nobody evaluates our comprehensive plan so it is not followed.*	*(6) Planning is more likely to be useful in a community that links its budgeting decisions with its comprehensive plan than in one that does not.* *(7) Planning and budgeting are related.* *(8) State involvement in comprehensive planning helps the process.* *(9) Regional Development Centers are beneficial to the comprehensive planning process in my community.* *(10) Working with nearby communities benefits the planning process.* *(11) Service delivery agreements with neighboring jurisdictions help implement comprehensive plans.*
Public Participation	*(12) There is too much political conflict in many communities for planning to work.* *(13) Public participation in the comprehensive planning process fails because the public is not included in the early stages of the process.* *(14) The general public lacks the needed information to contribute to the comprehensive planning process.*	*(15) The general public makes an effort to be involved in the comprehensive planning process.* *(16) The planning process can be used to start a communitywide discussion of public problems.* *(17) Public hearings improve a community's comprehensive plan.*
Economic Development Goals	*(18) Comprehensive planning is too focused on economic growth at the expense of other issues, such as historical preservation or environmental protection.*	*(19) Comprehensive planning can be used to improve a community's local economy.* *(20) A comprehensive plan should advertise the economic benefits of a community.*

In administrating the Q-sample, participants were asked: *What is your opinion on these statements?* This is the condition of instruction to guide the administration of the Q-sample (Edgens, 1997). Note how the phrase "your opinion" is in the condition of instruction. This is a small, but important feature of a Q-methodology design. It is places an emphasis on subjectivity not objectivity.

The P-sample is the collection of participants who perform this Q-sorting. Unlike traditional survey research, this sample is not derived through randomized selection techniques. Instead, participants are selected based on the possible opinions that they may hold. In this case, public planning participants were selected in order to analyze their viewpoints on the issue of comprehensive planning, to refine a typology of opinion, and to determine if these opinions resemble the literature. Given this, samples in Q research are often small because the focus is on the opinion held by the participants not their counterparts outside of the research. For example, Brewer et al. (2000) used the Q-methodology to examine the public service motivation held by 74 public officials in various states. Again let it be stressed, Q-methodology is intended to help build theory, to revise theory, and to help devise future survey instruments not generalize or test theory across populations. This research has used the Q-methodology to add to comprehensive plan theory and to provide insights for future large-N studies that do attempt a large degree of external validity.

The Research Methodology

The research design seeks to quantify the communicative roles of participants in the state of Georgia through the Q-methodology into a theoretically meaningful typology.

Data

Georgia Planning Process: In 1989, the state of Georgia, in particular the city of
Atlanta, faced a number of growth constraints. Georgia's statewide comprehensive
planning process was largely a response to the rapid growth throughout the Atlanta metro
area. DeGrove (2004) enumerated the reasons why Georgia, a politically conservative
state, would implement a progressive comprehensive planning process. First, the state
experienced an explosion of population growth during the 1970s and 1980s, with sprawl
around Atlanta leading to significant traffic congestion. Second, the political power of the
urban areas increased, and these areas were able to politically achieve a comprehensive
planning process. Third, policy makers argued that comprehensive planning would help
abate the state's water issues. Lastly, the process was constructed to help mediate
interjurisdictional issues. The state has a multitude of local governmental units. For
example, the state has more counties than any other state in the U.S. besides Texas
(DeGrove, 2005, p. 214).

Georgia has 159 counties. These communities are diverse with some being large
urban centers and many others being rural areas. Given this diversity, these units have
differing planning demands. Accordingly, these units do different types of planning.
However, when it comes to comprehensive planning, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989[7]
requires all municipalities and counties, whether they are urban or rural, to draft
comprehensive plans. There are four variations of plan requirements: minimal (a
population less than 500 with a growth rate of less than 2.5 percent or population less

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[7] For an overview of comprehensive planning in the state of Georgia, see: www.georgiaplanning.com.

than 300), basic (a population between 15,000 and 19,000 with a growth rate less than 2.5 percent or a population less than 15,000), intermediate (a population between 25,000 and 49,000 with a growth rate of less than 1.5 percent, a population between 20,000 and 24,999 with any growth rate, or a population between 15,000 and 19,999 with a growth rate of 2.5 percent), and advanced (a population of 50,000 or more or a population between 25,000 and 49,999 with a growth rate of 1.5 percent or higher). Given this, Georgia presents with the researcher with the ability to study both urban planning but also rural comprehensive planning (Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 2005). It should be noted that no county falls in the minimal planning division. Thus, the divisions of basic, intermediate, and advanced are the only ones applicable to a study on Georgia counties.

The 1989 planning act designated the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to regulate the comprehensive planning process of the state's localities. Today, as discussed, these rules have divided the county into four planning levels based on a locale's population. At all levels, these regulations call for comprehensive plans that include the following planning elements: economic development, natural and cultural resources, housing, land-use, intergovernmental, and community facilities (Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 2005). As Dorfman (1993) noted, the comprehensive plans of local governments in the state of Georgia seek to answer the following questions:

What do we have now? (Inventory and assessment)
What do we need and want for the future? (Needs and goals)
How are we going to get where we want to be in the future?
(Implementation strategy)

These questions are used as a guide throughout elements of the plan (Dorfman, 1993).

Evidence has shown that Georgia has been successful at getting almost all of its

approximately 700 local governments to draft comprehensive plans, but there is concern

on whether or not these localities are using these plans as meaningful guides (DeGrove,

2005). In 2005, the DCA implemented new regulations of the comprehensive planning

process, which call for more public participation in the drafting of the plans. This

participation seeks to identify stakeholders and to involve them actively in drafting plans

and implementing these documents. This research can be used to gain insights on the

efficacy of implementation based on the current Georgia planning process.

COUNTY PLANNING LEVELS

Advanced Level
Intermediate Level
Basic Level

2000 Population Size and Average Annual Growth Rate 1990-2000

Map prepared by Georgia Department of Community Affairs, January 1, 2004
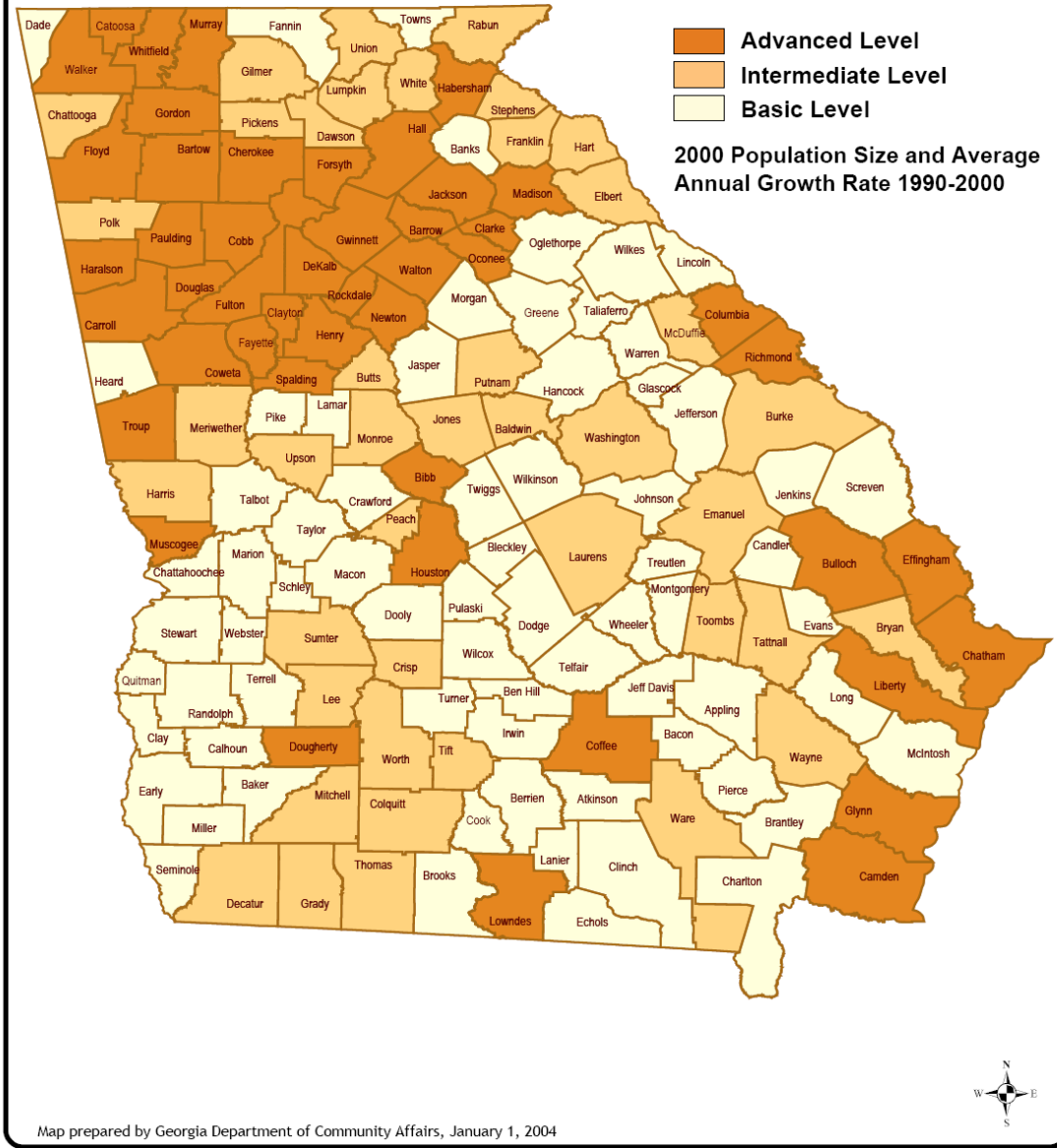
Figure 1

Planning Levels for Georgia Counties

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, www.georgiaplanning.com.

Units of Analysis: The units of analysis are planning participants in Georgia counties, in particular planners and elected officials. Since the Q-methodology does not seek to generalize across populations, these communities were not selected through traditional survey techniques, but on the basis of cases being beneficial to the discovery of the topic being studied. This is a nonrandom technique of sampling. The participants selected are referred to in Q-methodology as the P-sample. As discussed in chapter 1, Georgia serves as an interest case to study the implementation of comprehensive plans because implementation can be isolated to the local level. Furthermore, of the Deep South states, only Florida requires its local governments to do more comprehensive planning than Georgia. In addition, the planning process in Georgia has not been as heavily studied as the process in Florida, which has been the focus of numerous studies. Lastly, the local governments in Georgia are diverse.

The participants are taken from the actors involved in the countywide planning process in Georgia. These participants are operationalized in the follow way:

- Planners are operationally defined as the public administrator in the county that does most of the planning related tasks, and therefore, the official designed by the state DCA as the planning contact for their county. The contact information, including e-mails and telephone numbers, are available from DCA in Excel format.[8]

- Politicians are operationally defined as the county's highest elected official, which in Georgia is the county commission chairperson. The contact information,

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[8] For access to this information, please contact the planning division of the Georgia DCA at www.georgiaplanning.com.

including e-mails and telephone numbers, are available from the Association

County Commissioners of Georgia in Excel format.[9]

[9] For access to this information, please contact the Association County Commissioners of Georgia at www.accg.org.

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                                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                                    │  A Communicative    │
                                    │  Planning Model for │
                                    │  Local Plan         │
                                    │  Implementation     │
                                    └─────────────────────┘
                                              │
        ┌──────────────────────┐              ▼
        │ How do the findings  │    ┌─────────────────────┐
        │ relate to the theory?│    │  Statements from    │
        └──────────────────────┘    │  Literature Review  │
                                    └─────────────────────┘
                                              │
   ┌──────────────────────────┐               ▼
   │ Implementation           │    ┌─────────────────────┐
   │ Typology (structuralists,│    │      Q-sample       │
   │ participantists, and     │    └─────────────────────┘
   │ developmentists)         │               │
   └──────────────────────────┘               ▼
                                    ┌─────────────────────┐
        ┌──────────────────────┐    │  Administer the Q   │
        │ How do the findings  │    │  Instrument to      │
        │ relate to the        │    │  Georgia            │
        │ literature typology? │    │  Participants       │
        └──────────────────────┘    └─────────────────────┘
                                              │
                                              ▼
                                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                                    │     Q-sorting       │
                                    └─────────────────────┘
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                                              ▼
                                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                                    │ Findings from the Q │
                                    │ Instrument          │
                                    └─────────────────────┘
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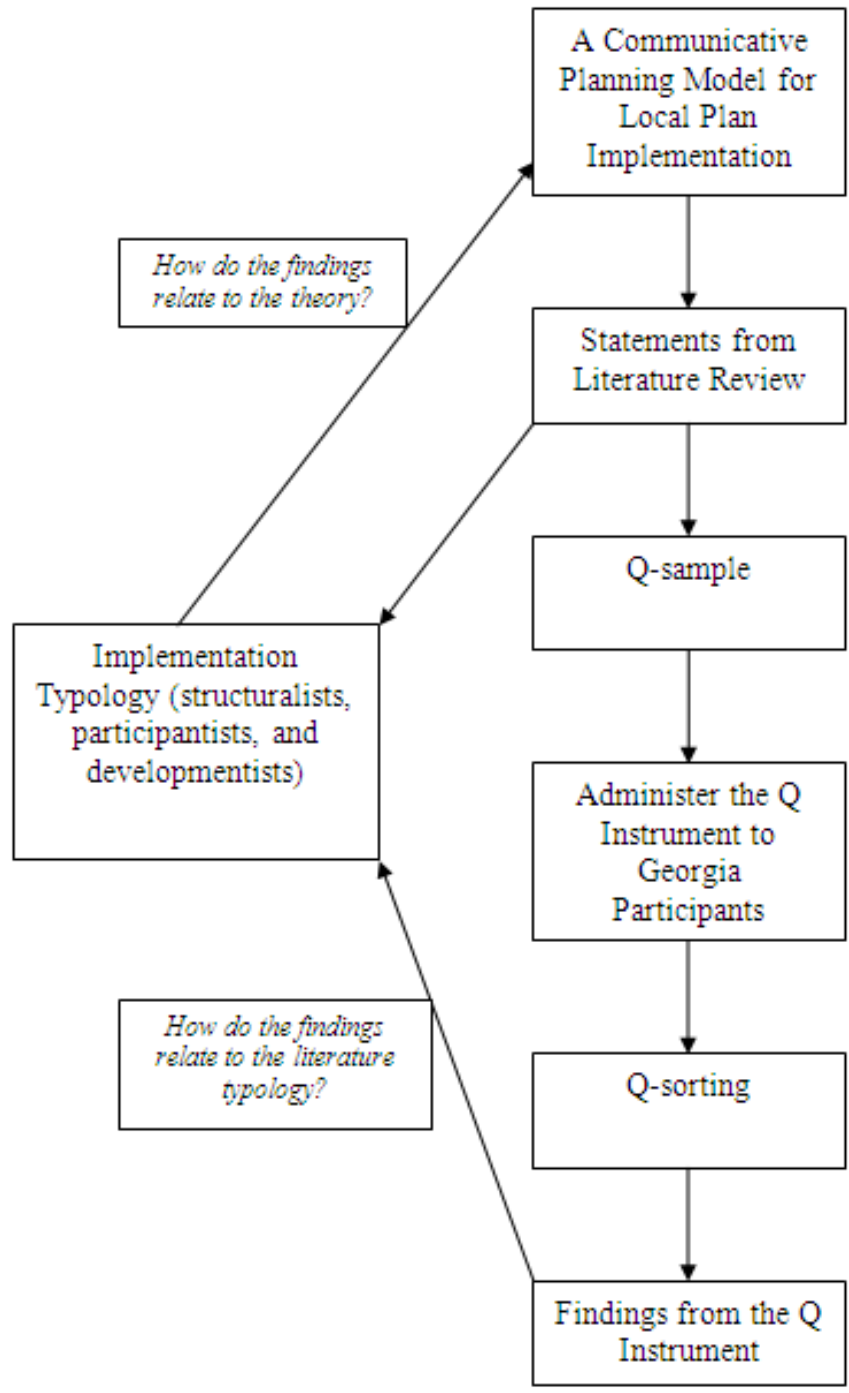
Figure 2

Research Methodology

Research Protocol

Figure 4.2 displays the protocol for this research's methodology. The research design follows these steps. First, the Q-sample is developed through the concourse of the literature. Second, the participants are contacted in a first wave seeking their cooperation in the research.

Third, after the first wave of contact, the participants are e-mailed the hyperlink to perform the Q-sample over the Internet. The Q-sample was administered to respondents via the Internet with *FlashQ*. Reponses are mailed to the researcher. The Q-sorting is analyzed through factor analysis and with the software, *PQMethod* (Atkinson, 1992). See Appendix 1 for a step-by-step demo guide of how the Q-sample is administered through *FlashQ.* In the sort, the respondents are presented with the statements from the Q-sample. They are asked: *What is your opinion of these statements?* They are ask to put them group them based on disagree, neutral, or agree. After doing this, participants place 1 statement in a strongly agreed box, 2 to 3 in a agreed box, 2 to 3 in a mildly agreed box, 4 to 5 in a neutral box, 2 to 3 in a mildly disagreed box, 2 to 3 in a disagreed box, and 1 in a strongly disagreed box. From this sorting, factor analysis is used to correlate groups of opinions. After the Q-sample, *FlashQ* allows participants to make comments on the subject being studied and for researchers to include other questions, such as what level of plan is mandated for your community. Additionally, the demographic information of the participants can be collected. Table 5 displays the Q-method instrument to be administered through *FlashQ.*

Table 5

The Q Instrument

<u>Q-sample</u>[10]

(2) Comprehensive planning is too costly.
(15) The general public makes an effort to be involved in the comprehensive planning process.
(18) Comprehensive planning is too focused on economic growth at the expense of other issues, such as historical preservation or environmental protection.
(11) Service delivery agreements with neighboring jurisdictions help implement comprehensive plans.
(3) Plans are not based on local concerns but on the goals of state government.
(6) Planning is more likely to be useful in a community that links its budgeting decisions with its comprehensive plan than in one that does not.
(16) The planning process can be used to start a communitywide discussion of public problems.
(5) Nobody evaluates our comprehensive plan so it is not followed.
(4) Comprehensive plans are too complicate and too long to have a meaningful effect.
(13) Public participation in the comprehensive planning process fails because the public is not included in the early stages of the process.
(19) Comprehensive planning can be used to improve a community's local economy.
(17) Public hearings improve a community's comprehensive plan.
(1) Fiscal limitations make it difficult to implement comprehensive plans.
(20) A comprehensive plan should advertise the economic benefits of a community
(14) The general public lacks the needed information to contribute to the comprehensive planning process.
(9) Regional Development Centers are beneficial to the comprehensive planning process in my community.
(8) State involvement in comprehensive planning helps the process.
(12) There is too much political conflict in many communities for planning to work.
(10) Working with nearby communities benefits the planning process.
(7) Planning and budgeting are related.

<u>Supplement Questions</u>
- Please enter the year of your birth (YYYY, e.g., 1980).
- Are you an elected official?
  - Yes
  - No
    - If you are not an elected official, are you a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners?
      - Yes
      - No
    - Please detail what type of planning work you do the most.
- What is your highest level of education?
  - Less than high school
  - High school / GED
  - Some college
  - 2-year college degree (associates)
  - 4-year college degree (bachelors)
  - Master's
  - Doctorate
  - Professional degree (JD, MD)
- What level of planning requirements does your county have to satisfy?
  - Basic
  - Intermediate
  - Advanced
- How would you describe your county?
  - Rural
  - Urban

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[10] The order of the statements was randomly generated.

Lastly, the results from the Q-sorting are analyzed through the software *PQMethod.* This software was created for factor analyzing Q-method data and presenting the factor arrays for each Q-sample statement. From the software, the data are factor analyzed, and the factors for each question are reported.

Analysis of the Data

The data produced from the Q instrument is analyzed in the following manner. After participants complete the Q-sorting through *FlashQ,* the data is factor analyzed through the *PQMethod* software. Factor analysis organizes data into meaningful typologies based on their factor loadings. Traditional factor analysis often is used to organize questions of a survey. In the Q-method, the factor analysis groups participants, rather than survey questions, based on commonality of opinions. For example, participants in this research that give structural answers (i.e., the Q-sample statements 1 through 11 in Table 4) should have factor loadings that place them in a typology representative of a structural perspective on comprehensive plan implementation. Factor loadings are basically correlation coefficients (McKeown and Thomas, 1988, p. 50). These coefficients are used to determine the participants that hold similar views on the Q-sample statements. A factor loading of +/-.33 or more can be considered statistically significant (McKeown and Thomas, 1988, p. 50). Robust factor loadings, statistically, are greater than +/-.70.

This factor loading process is used to identify the participants' subjective opinions concerning the Q-sample statements. After which, the z-scores for the Q-sample statements are analyzed to understanding the opinion makeup of each typology. This

process is used, as discussed earlier, to develop an understanding of the subjective opinions that participants hold on each statement in the Q-sample. These opinions are placed in theoretical meaningful typologies.

McKeown and Thomas (1988) described how the Q data is analyzed in the following way, "each respondent's factor 'loading' indicates the degree of association between that person's individual Q-sort and the underlying composite attitude or perspective of the factor." In this research, the factors are based the participants' views on structural characteristics, public participation, and economic development goals along with whether or not participants hold positive or negative views concerning the function of comprehensive planning. This theoretical categorization (discussed in chapter 3 and shown in Table 3) is tested through the participants' factor loading. If the loadings are statistically significant, it can be assumed that the literature's findings, that structure, participation, and economic development influence comprehensive planning, are also the opinions of participants in Georgia counties.

The data from the additional questions are used to compare the answers of different groups, such as the planners, the politicians, the urban participants, and the rural participants. This part of the analysis is used to undercover important differences in opinion between participants, but also between these two actors in development environments and rural environments. A key assumption concerning the difference between participants is that they may communicate different stories concerning comprehensive plan implementation. Planners, focused on long-term goals due to their professional development, are more likely to view long-range planning as a positive tool of government, compared to politicians, who are focused on short-term electoral

incentives. Insights about this assumption are found through the comparison of the Q data

and the participants' answers to the additional questions in the instrument.

In the factor analysis component of the Q-method data, it is important to

determine that the factor loadings are also theoretically significant (McKeown and

Thomas, 1988). This is done by determining, as discussed, if the factor loadings match

the typologies developed from the literature.[11] Additionally, the theoretical significance

of the factor loadings is tested by inspecting the factors for the individual Q-sample

statements. These factors are weighted z-scores (McKeown and Thomas, 1988, p. 18).

These scores show how participants that were loading into a particular group (for

example, A, B, or C) answered each individual statement. For example, the statement

from the Q-sample that "comprehensive planning is too costly" is shown to have the

following weighted z-scores for each factor: A is 0, B is +2, and C is -1. Given that the

condition of instruction ask the participant to rank their opinion on the statement from

strongly disagree to strongly agree. The hypothetical z-scores show that participants in

factor loading B strongly agreed that comprehensive planning is too costly, while

participants in factor loading A had a neutral opinion and participants in factor loading C

disagreed that comprehensive planning is too costly.

Validity and Reliability

The Q-methodology is used to develop an understanding of participants'

subjectivity toward a particular subject. The method analyzes how participants

communicate these opinions through sorting. Thus, the Q-methodology is an ideal tool

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[11] See, Chapters 2 and 3.

for recording participants' communicated opinions and organizing them into statistically meaningful classifications, or typologies.

Given this, the Q-methodology holds the following strengths for this research. First, the method has been used in numerous published social science studies, including important research in political science and public administration. But public planning researchers have failed to take full advantage of the methodology. This research contributes to the literature by using the Q-methodology to understand communication in plan implementation. Second, the method analyzes subjectivity through a robust mathematical procedure. Lastly, the method offers robust internal validity for the topic being studied. Accordingly, the Q-methodology is appropriate to analyze how participants communicate their subjective opinions concerning the factors of plan implementation. Given that subjectivity is self-referent, the method is valid at face value.

The Q-methodology, as stated, has a long and productive history in the social sciences, but it has also been heavily criticized. First, the methodology lacks external validity. Supporters would argue that is how the method was created and ensures its intended purposes of analyzing subjectivity of opinion. Second, the methodology often is criticized for being time consuming, therefore, leading to error on part of the respondent or refusal to finish. This research attempts to alleviate this problem with the methodology by administering it via the Internet through *FlashQ*.[12] The program allows for a simple presentation of the Q-sample, which does not take long for the participant to complete, especially compared to the compiling of the Q-sample through note cards, and it lessens the chance of researcher error because the program compiles the responses. Given the

[12]For a demo on how *FlashQ* administers a Q-sample, please visit this site:
http://www.hackert.biz/flashq/demo/

large number of studies that have employed the Q-method, it is a reliable tool for examining the research questions concerning plan implementation. It is also a reliable method for the analysis of communication, which is the focus of this study.

Conclusion

Planning implementation is a process of communication among the actors involved. Given this, theory on the process must first be based on an understanding of the implementation communication within the plans and how the actors communicate their subjective opinions concerning implementation. The methods used in this research were developed to analyze communication in the plans and among the actors. This analysis of communication is used to develop a typology held by participants on the opinions concerning plan implementation.

The categorization of the Q-sample in this research is used to determine if participants view planning in a positive manner or a negative one. The other dimension of the Q-sample categorizations is used to determine the type of communicative roles that participants play in the comprehensive planning processes. On top of finding the roles through factor analysis of the data or the Q-sorting, this research is used to compare the opinions of participants. Additionally, the opinions of urban actors and viewpoints of rural actors can be compared.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This research found that the participants involved in local comprehensive

planning in the state of Georgia expressed four types of opinion concerning what factors

influence the implementation of their comprehensive plans. These types represent two

dimensions of opinion: the opinion participants hold concerning the efficacy of the public

and the opinion participants hold concerning what functions lead to successful

comprehensive planning. The goal of the research was to uncover what roles planning

participants perform in the communicative process that is public planning (Healy, 1992).

To achieve this objective, the research solicited the opinions of key planning participants

through a Q-methodology instrument. This instrument was based on the scholarly

literature on comprehensive planning. The literature has described comprehensive

planning as affected by many factors with some of the most influential being: public

participation (e.g., hearings, focus groups, and ballot measures); structural features (e.g.,

state and federal mandates, local requirements, and evaluation procedures); and

community development goals (e.g., economic growth).[13] The literature on

comprehensive planning is also divided into two schools of thought concerning the

efficacy of planning—a positive one (Kent, 1964) and a critical one (Ashulter, 1965).

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[13] It should be stressed again here that these are not the only factors affecting comprehensive planning, but
based on the researcher's review of the literature, these three factors represent a large part of the scholarly
discussion on the subject.

In chapters 2 and 3, a theoretical typology of the communicative roles held by planning actors was constructed based on these streams in the literature. The theoretical typology hypothesized multiple roles of opinion, and the results of the analysis found multiple roles of opinion. This empirical typology appears to be a mixture of the theoretical typology. The four opinion types from the empirical results are more complex with a division among the types along two dimensions of public participation and functionality, and often the viewpoints within types demonstrate a mixture of political and technical factors in the opinion of the participants.

This chapter details the research's analysis and explores its results in the following manner. First, the data collection process is discussed. Second, there is a step-by-step discussion of the Q-methodology analysis. From these processes, the research's participants are divided into four groups of opinion. Third, the participants' opinions on the individual statements (Q-sample) are enumerated to describe the composition of each type of opinion. Fourth, other results of the research are discussed based on the primary analysis, the Q-methodology and also the secondary antidotal analysis, the participants' open-ended comments. This section presents these additional patterns in the data, discusses the implications for the scholarly literature, and reviews the empirical evidence to support the claim of a trend. Fifth, the limitations of the research are discussed. Lastly, the study's research questions are considered based on the typology findings and the trends of the research.

Data Collection

This research produced 43 Q-sorts from planning actors involved in local comprehensive planning in the state of Georgia. As discussed in chapter 4, these Q-sorts were taken from planners and politicians involved in countywide comprehensive planning in Georgia. The Q-method instrument was administered through *FlashQ,* a program that allows for Q-sorts to be completed over the World Wide Web, via e-mails sent to participants in Georgia counties. The e-mails were sent in four waves between August 18, 2009 and November 1, 2009.[14] The Q-method instrument was sent to participants in all of Georgia's counties except for counties where contact e-mails were missing.

For the planner group, e-mails were sent to the chief planning official in 154 counties. Six counties did not receive a survey because the e-mail addresses were not obtained or were invalid. Of these 154 officials, 34 usable Q-sorts were completed. This is a response rate of 22 percent. This response rate is similar to a recent survey of planners nationwide conducted by Edwards (2007). She obtained a response rate of 26 percent. It should be stressed again that the Q-methodology is intended for small N studies. In conducting a Q-method study, responses rates are important, but the main concern is ensuring that the Q-sample of statements is representative of the subject being studied. The issue of representation, therefore, is concerned with the structure of Q-sample not the participants. The focus is on developing an understanding the layering of opinion among these statements. For the politician group, emails were sent to the chairs

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[14] The first wave introduced the research and the researcher to the participants. The second wave contained the letter of consent and the link to the research's instrument. The third and fourth waves were reminders attempt to solicit more participation in the process.

of the county commission in 131 counties. Twenty-eight counties did not receive a survey

because the e-mail addresses were not obtained or were invalid. Of these 131 officials,

nine usable Q-sorts were obtained (6.8 percent response rate).[15] Given this extremely low

response rate, the politician sorts were dropped from the Q-methodology analysis, but

their open-ended comments on the instrument's statements were utilized as an antidotal,

secondary analysis to compare the opinion of these elected officials with the opinion of

the planners. Because of this, the Q-method analysis was based on the 34 Q-sorts

performed by the planner strata of the P-sample.

Before the Q-method analysis is detailed, the descriptive features of the P-sample,

which is the collection of participants sampled, should be reviewed. In the United States,

local planners come from a variety of training backgrounds (landscape architecture,

public administration, business schools) and perform a multitude of planning duties

(land-use planning, environmental planning, economic development planning) (Hoch et.

al, 2000). This research is interested in the various types of planners who are involved in

the process of comprehensive planning at the local government level. The planning actors

in this research differ in some respects from planners nationwide. According to the

American Planning Association's (APA) 2008 salary survey, the typical public planner is

43 years old, works in community development, is highly educated, and is from an urban

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[15]The lack of participation by the elected officials is discouraging to say the least. A few reasons may
explain their lack of involvement. First, these officials, on average, tend to be older in age than the planner
group, which may make them less Internet savvy and less likely to complete the web-based survey. These
officials are also less educated than the planner group, which also make them less computer proficient.
Additionally, these officials are presented with numerous surveys, and this oversaturation could be driving
down response rates. Lastly, the collection of e-mails obtained from the Georgia county association may be
the culprit. These e-mails may be dated, or they may not be the primary addresses for these officials. The
decision to remove the politicians was a difficult one, but due to the anonymous nature of participation and
limitations of the research, it was necessary to remove them for this project. Future research should include
elected officials to compare them with nonelected planners.

environment. The planners in this research are more likely to be older and to be from a rural planning setting, compared to the planners in the APA survey. For example, in the APA survey only 3 percent of nationwide planners reported working in a rural setting while a large majority of the participants in this research claimed to be from a rural area (American Planning Association, 2008). Most of the officials classified themselves as being from rural communities.[16] Lastly, these officials appear to be in the advanced stage of their careers. Among the participants, the average age was 58 years old, which is 12 years older than the typical planner nationwide.

Similar to the nationwide planners, the planning participants in this data are also highly educated with 60 percent holding a bachelor's degree or higher, and a majority of the participants hold a master's degree. A majority of planners in the United States (65 percent) have master's degrees (Hoch et. al, 2000). Among the planners in the research, 12 participants are certified by the American Planning Association (i.e., American Institute Certified Planners). This means 35 percent of the planners in the sample have achieved this rigorous certification. Clearly, it is an educated group, but there are a few participants with some high school, only a high school education, and some college. Next, the research's analyses are reviewed. After which, the results are derived by: examining the Q-method produce typology of planner opinion, examining the descriptive statistics, comparing the participants, and analyzing the content of the open-ended comments.

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[16] It should be stressed that there appears to be a disconnect between what the planners classify as rural or urban and the planning requirements of their community, which are based on population. Eighteen of the officials come from communities that fall under the most detailed planning requirements. These planning requirements are based on a community's population. This means that they are from counties with more than 50,000 people. While most participants report living in rural community, it appears that many overestimated their community's "ruralness."

Data Analysis

The Q-method, as discussed, differs from standard surveying done through R-methodology. The Q-methodology seeks to understand the subjectivity of the subject through refining the opinions of a small group that hold some defining characteristic, in this case public planners, instead of analyzing survey questions administered a large sample of participants, which merely construct a surface understanding of a topic. As Stephenson (1939) proclaimed, Q-methodology correlates people not test. The opinions are refined through the following process, which was discussed in chapter 4 but presented again here for the reader. First, data is collected through the Q-sorting, which forces subjective ranking of opinion. Next, the data are refined through a two types of factor analysis: unrotated factor analysis and rotated factor analysis. The unrotated factor analysis is done to identify possible typologies of opinion or develop a "first glance" of the data. In this research, the principal component method was utilized. After potential types are identified through the unrotated first glance, the possible groupings of opinion are identified and refined further through rotated factor analysis. This study used varimax factor analysis, which maximizes the grouping of opinion into preconceived types. From the unrotated factor analysis, four types or factors were identified. Given this, the rotated factor analysis was based on identifying four factors.

The participants with significant loadings on the rotated factor analysis (> .50) are flagged to produce a standardized measure of their opinions on each statement in the Q-sample. Z-scores are the standardized measure produced for each statement based on the flagged participants. From these z-scores, factor arrays are produce for each statement based on the opinions of a factor's participants on these statements. These factor arrays

represent the scale of the Q-sort. In the case of this research, this scale is: -3 to 3. The

factor arrays show how most of the participants in the group viewed each statement

(McKeown and Thomas, 1988). For example, a factor array of 3 on a statement means

that most of the participants within that group of opinion strongly agreed with the

statement; therefore, a -3 would show that the group tended to strongly disagree with the

statement. These factor arrays, which are the converted z-scores, are used to develop a

description of the opinion in each group (or factor). The following sections detail the

actual analysis of the data. The DOS program, *PQMethod,* was used to perform this Q-

methodology analysis.

Factor Analysis of the Data

As discussed, Q-methodology relies on a two step factor analysis process, but the

researcher has options concerning what type of factor analysis to use. For the unrotated

factor analysis, the principal component method produced the results found in Table 6.

This method was selected because it is the standard unrotated factor analysis used

(McKeown and Thomas, 1985). In unrotated factor analysis, all eight factors of opinion

are included. This produces an unstructured representation of the data, one that is

necessary to start uncovering the underlying structures of opinion in the data. At this

stage, the factor analysis is probing the data for information on underlying structure of

opinion. A participant is said to be a loaded onto a factor group when they have a score

greater than .50 (McKeown and Thomas, 1988). As can be clearly seen in Table 6, there

is one strong grouping of opinion represented in factor one.

Based on this factor's Eigenvalue[17], it is explaining 42 percent of the variation, which is by far the largest among the factors. This factor holds 27 of the participants. However, there also appears to be three other small factors with significant loadings. Together these three factors hold seven of the research's 34 participants. This result is reason for further factor analysis through the varimax procedure based on a possibility of four factors. At first glance, it would appear that there is homogeneity of opinion among the participants, but having seven participants significantly load on other factors means that further structuring of the data may lead to more diversity of opinion, which the research found.

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[17] In factor analysis, Eigenvalues are used to describe how much variance in the data is being explained by a factor of opinion (McKeown and Thomas, 1988). In the case of Q-method studies, they show the amount of variation explaining a factor of participants.

Table 6

Principal Component Factor Analysis

	Factors							
Sorts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Planner 1	0.72	-0.12	-0.05	-0.06	-0.20	0.19	-0.22	-0.31
Planner 2	0.75	-0.06	-0.15	-0.29	-0.26	0.07	0.34	-0.18
Planner 3	0.57	0.04	0.25	-0.30	0.52	-0.01	0.09	0.04
Planner 4	0.65	0.26	-0.16	0.44	-0.01	0.00	-0.08	-0.11
Planner 5	0.82	0.34	0.07	0.07	0.15	0.01	0.20	0.06
Planner 6	0.62	0.13	-0.30	-0.27	-0.16	0.13	0.11	0.41
Planner 7	-0.08	0.68	-0.01	0.47	0.31	-0.01	-0.12	-0.04
Planner 8	0.67	0.09	0.02	-0.21	0.56	-0.05	-0.20	0.22
Planner 9	0.50	-0.22	-0.49	0.02	-0.12	-0.17	-0.36	0.22
Planner 10	0.61	0.11	-0.47	-0.28	-0.01	0.40	0.09	0.07
Planner 11	0.73	-0.30	-0.13	0.12	0.18	0.14	0.07	-0.16
Planner 12	0.81	-0.30	-0.18	-0.11	-0.07	-0.05	-0.04	0.09
Planner 13	0.72	0.11	0.20	-0.24	0.04	0.06	-0.31	0.36
Planner 14	0.84	0.08	0.14	0.01	-0.12	0.09	0.19	0.00
Planner 15	0.76	0.07	0.21	-0.18	-0.19	0.10	-0.34	-0.32
Planner 16	0.79	-0.28	-0.04	0.15	0.39	0.04	0.14	-0.01
Planner 17	0.71	-0.14	0.10	-0.01	-0.30	0.16	-0.25	0.20
Planner 18	0.53	-0.08	-0.10	0.41	0.32	-0.24	-0.20	-0.09
Planner 19	0.18	0.28	-0.05	0.47	-0.31	-0.22	0.52	0.27
Planner 20	0.49	0.13	-0.13	-0.54	-0.09	-0.38	0.31	-0.24
Planner 21	0.69	0.09	-0.07	0.43	-0.18	0.27	-0.19	-0.26
Planner 22	0.79	-0.19	0.38	0.15	0.08	-0.10	0.07	0.00
Planner 23	0.02	0.65	-0.46	-0.13	0.26	-0.12	0.04	-0.15
Planner 24	0.81	-0.23	0.11	0.07	-0.05	-0.21	0.11	-0.26
Planner 25	0.51	0.47	0.25	-0.25	-0.38	-0.31	-0.27	-0.08
Planner 26	0.81	-0.25	0.30	-0.02	0.08	-0.17	-0.04	0.14
Planner 27	0.71	-0.03	-0.45	-0.06	0.28	0.28	0.16	-0.03
Planner 28	0.59	0.31	-0.28	0.18	-0.33	-0.24	-0.16	0.15
Planner 29	-0.12	0.39	0.42	-0.02	0.06	0.70	-0.03	0.04
Planner 30	0.40	0.29	0.69	-0.05	-0.15	0.12	0.24	-0.04
Planner 31	0.76	0.16	-0.10	0.27	-0.21	0.21	0.14	0.24
Planner 32	0.48	0.58	0.08	-0.23	0.17	-0.26	-0.10	-0.07
Planner 33	0.82	-0.12	-0.08	0.19	0.03	0.02	0.10	-0.29
Planner 34	0.74	-0.25	0.42	0.20	0.07	-0.22	0.07	0.23

*Significant load = > .50

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Table 7

Varimax Factor Analysis

Sorts	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
Planner 1	0.54	0.35	0.33	0.12
Planner 2	0.44	0.55	0.41	0.01
Planner 3	0.46	0.51	-0.02	-0.08
Planner 4	0.36	0.21	0.21	0.70
Planner 5	0.49	0.57	0.06	0.47
Planner 6	0.20	0.58	0.42	0.12
Planner 7	-0.28	0.03	-0.33	0.71
Planner 8	0.42	0.54	0.17	0.09
Planner 9	0.23	0.14	0.67	0.15
Planner 10	0.12	0.57	0.57	0.13
Planner 11	0.63	0.15	0.46	0.16
Planner 12	0.62	0.34	0.55	0.03
Planner 13	0.53	0.59	0.03	0.06
Planner 14	0.64	0.48	0.12	0.28
Planner 15	0.59	0.55	0.05	0.09
Planner 16	0.71	0.16	0.40	0.19
Planner 17	0.63	0.30	0.20	0.11
Planner 18	0.45	-0.02	0.26	0.44
Planner 19	0.07	-0.05	-0.04	0.57
Planner 20	0.13	0.68	0.24	-0.15
Planner 21	0.51	0.14	0.22	0.59
Planner 22	0.87	0.20	0.00	0.16
Planner 23	-0.53	0.47	0.14	0.38
Planner 24	0.76	0.25	0.27	0.14
Planner 25	0.23	0.68	-0.22	0.18
Planner 26	0.84	0.29	0.11	0.03
Planner 27	0.30	0.41	0.63	0.25
Planner 28	0.19	0.37	0.29	0.54
Planner 29	-0.06	0.16	-0.56	0.08
Planner 30	0.49	0.39	-0.57	0.10
Planner 31	0.48	0.32	0.25	0.53
Planner 32	0.09	0.72	-0.14	0.28
Planner 33	0.64	0.25	0.37	0.33
Planner 34	0.89	0.11	-0.02	0.14

*Significant load = > .50

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The results in Table 6 are used to guide decision-making for the rotated factor analysis. This research relied on the varimax method of rotated factor analysis because it seeks to maximize differences of opinion based on quantitative reasons rather than the subjectivity of the researcher as in the case of the manual rotation method. The varimax procedure recognizes mathematically structure in the data and attempts to emphasize these possible patterns. Based on the presence of one large factor and three smaller ones in the unrotated factor results, the varimax factor analysis was set to look for four factors of opinion. Again, this judgment call is guided by the first glance at the data given by the unroated factor analysis. Table 7 shows the results of the varimax factor analysis. After rotated factor analysis, there appears to be more diversity in the opinion of the planners. Four types of opinion start to emerge from the data.

The first two factors are the most significant holding a majority of the participants. Thirteen participants loaded onto factor one (38 percent of the participants), and 10 participants loaded onto factor two (29 percent). Based on these factors' Eginevalues, they are representing most of the variation in the data. Factor one is 26 percent of the variation, and factor two is 17 percent of the variation. The remaining two factors contained eight participants. Three loaded onto factor three, and five loaded onto factor four. This is where Q-methodology differs again from standard factor analysis. In standard factor analysis, the research would inspect the questions in each factor loading. Instead, Q-methodology develops a robust understanding of the composition in these factors through standardized measures of the opinions of each participant within their loaded factor. This is done by analyzing the z-scores produced by the participants' opinions concerning the Q-sample statements.

Z-scores and Factor Arrays

Tables 8 through 10 display the mechanisms used to understand the opinion composition of each factor. In Table 8, the Q-sample statements are numbered and presented again for the reader. The z-scores, as discussed, are used to standardize the participants' views on the statements. For each factor, the participants with significant loadings on that factor are flagged to be the only participants included in the z-score analysis for significantly loaded factor. The z-scores represent the merging of opinion for the participants in a given factor. For instance, the largest positive z-score means that the largest number of participants strongly agreed with that statement. Table 9 contains the z-scores for each statement divided into the four factors of opinion. The z-scores are converted back into the factor arrays to allow for simple analysis and comparison of the factor opinions. Again in this research, the factor arrays range from -3 to 3. This means the arrays represent the following: -3 = strongly disagreed; -2 = disagreed; -1 = mildly disagreed; 0 = neutral; 1 = mildly agree; 2 = agreed; and 3 = strongly agreed. Table 10 contains the factor arrays for each statement divided into the four factors of opinion.

Table 8

Q-sample Statements

1	Fiscal limitations make it difficult to implement comprehensives plans.
2	Comprehensive planning is too costly.
3	Plans are not based on local concerns but on the goals of state government.
4	Comprehensive plans are too complicate and too long to have a meaningful effect.
5	Nobody evaluates our comprehensive plan so it is not followed.
6	Planning is more likely to be useful in a community that links its budgeting decisions with its comprehensive plan than in one that does not.
7	Planning and budgeting are related.
8	State involvement in comprehensive planning helps the process.
9	Regional Development Centers are beneficial to the comprehensive planning process in my community.
10	Working with nearby communities benefits the planning process.
11	Service delivery agreements with neighboring jurisdictions help implement comprehensive plans.
12	There is too much political conflict in many communities for planning to work.
13	Public participation in the comprehensive planning process fails because the public is not included in the early stages of the process.
14	The general public lacks the needed information to contribute to the comprehensive planning process.
15	The general public makes an effort to be involved in the comprehensive planning process.
16	The planning process can be used to start a communitywide discussion of public problems.
17	Public hearings improve a community's comprehensive plan.
18	Comprehensive planning is too focused on economic growth at the expense of other issues, such as historical preservation or environmental protection.
19	Comprehensive planning can be used to improve a community's local economy.
20	A comprehensive plan should advertise the economic benefits of a community.

Table 9

Z-Scores for the Factors

Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3		Factor 4	
No.	Z-SCORES	No.	Z-SCORES	No.	Z-SCORES	No.	Z-SCORES
6	1.639	10	1.487	19	1.888	20	1.723
16	1.435	7	1.371	8	1.323	19	1.683
9	0.998	16	1.351	14	1.108	9	1.562
15	0.967	17	1.194	17	1.005	7	0.617
17	0.916	1	1.169	10	0.663	6	0.57
10	0.72	19	0.825	6	0.507	16	0.413
19	0.693	6	0.693	11	0.5	1	0.331
11	0.625	12	0.335	13	0.455	8	0.329
7	0.479	11	0.195	16	0.315	11	0.318
20	0.292	20	0.075	20	0.115	12	-0.01
8	0.165	9	-0.323	12	0.106	17	-0.037
1	-0.281	14	-0.353	18	0.01	10	-0.063
12	-0.783	3	-0.578	2	-0.228	3	-0.121
2	-0.833	15	-0.58	7	-0.465	5	-0.315
13	-0.918	8	-0.879	5	-0.615	4	-0.466
18	-1.049	2	-0.89	9	-0.71	18	-0.792
5	-1.181	5	-1.202	4	-1.343	14	-1.097
14	-1.287	13	-1.206	1	-1.356	2	-1.315
4	-1.296	18	-1.275	15	-1.572	13	-1.415
3	-1.302	4	-1.41	3	-1.705	15	-1.914

Table 10

Factor Arrays for the Statements

	Factor Arrays			
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Fiscal limitations make it difficult to implement comprehensives plans.	0	1	-2	1
Comprehensive planning is too costly.	-1	-1	-1	-2
Plans are not based on local concerns but on the goals of state government.	-3	-1	-3	-1
Comprehensive plans are too complicate and too long to have a meaningful effect.	-2	-3	-2	-1
Nobody evaluates our comprehensive plan so it is not followed.	-2	-2	-1	-1
Planning is more likely to be useful in a community that links its budgeting decisions with its comprehensive plan than in one that does not.	3	1	1	1
Planning and budgeting are related.	0	2	-1	2
State involvement in comprehensive planning helps the process.	0	-1	2	1
Regional Development Centers are beneficial to the comprehensive planning process in my community.	2	0	-1	2
Working with nearby communities benefits the planning process.	1	3	1	0
Service delivery agreements with neighboring jurisdictions help implement comprehensive plans.	1	0	1	0
There is too much political conflict in many communities for planning to work.	-1	1	0	0
Public participation in the comprehensive planning process fails because the public is not included in the early stages of the process.	-1	-2	1	-2
The general public lacks the needed information to contribute to the comprehensive planning process.	-2	0	2	-2
The general public makes an effort to be involved in the comprehensive planning process.	2	-1	-2	-3
The planning process can be used to start a communitywide discussion of public problems.	2	2	0	1
Public hearings improve a community's comprehensive plan.	1	2	2	0
Comprehensive planning is too focused on economic growth at the expense of other issues, such as historical preservation or environmental protection.	-1	-2	0	-1
Comprehensive planning can be used to improve a community's local economy.	1	1	3	2
A comprehensive plan should advertise the economic benefits of a community.	0	0	0	3

Primary Results

Four types of opinion are produced from the Q-methodology analysis. Given the possibility that these planners are from different backgrounds, it is not surprising that they hold multiple types of opinion. The empirical typology holds similarities to the theoretical typology proposed in Table 4 of chapter of 4, but there are significant differences. It appears that opinion is based on two dimensions. First, there are two groups with a positive approach to the public's input in public planning and there are two groups with a negative outlook concerning the public. Second, opinion is divided along the lines of what function planning participants viewed as important to achieve comprehensive planning success. For example, some participants viewed budgeting as the most important functional aspect of public planning; whereas, other participants viewed coordination of neighboring government units, such as counties and municipalities, as the most important. The division of opinion into four types based on these two dimensions provides a better understanding of how the participants are likely to communicate on the topic of comprehensive planning. Based on the analysis, the following types of opinion were identified: *positive-participation budgeters; positive-participation coordinators; negative-participation economic developers;* and *negative-participation economic advertisers.*

Table 11

Typology of Planning Opinion

	Description	Planning Participants[18]
Positive-Participation Budgeters	*These planners held a positive opinion concerning efficacy of public participation and linked budgeting with comprehensive planning success.*	1, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 26, 33, and 34
Positive-Participation Coordinators	*These planners held a positive opinion concerning efficacy of public participation and linked coordination of neighboring government units with comprehensive planning success.*	2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 20, 25, and 32
Negative-Participation Economic Developers	*These planners held a negative opinion concerning the efficacy of public participation and linked economic development with comprehensive planning success.*	9, 29, and 30
Negative-Participation Economic Advertisers	*These planners held a negative opinion concerning the efficacy of public participation and linked comprehensive planning success with economic advertisement of their communities.*	4, 7, 19, 21, and 28

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[18]See, Appendix 2 for the composition of the research's participants. Note that planners 7 and 31 did not have a significant loading onto any factor; therefore, they were excluded from the analysis of opinion types. Planner 31 was close to significantly loading onto factor one (.48). Planner 27 was close to significantly loading onto factor two (.41).

Type 1 Positive-Participation Budgeters: This type of opinion represents the

plurality viewpoint of the research's P-sample. Thirty-eight percent of the planners fall

into this type. They expressed an opinion of comprehensive planning that viewed the

public's input as positive and held that linking budgeting decisions with planning

decisions produce successful plans. This can be seen in the factor arrays for the

statements and the participants' open-ended comments to the statements. Most of the

planners in this group strongly agreed that planning is more likely to work in

communities that link their budgeting decisions and planning decisions than in

communities that do not link these functions (statement 6). Overall, these planners

answered positively the statements concerning the efficacy of public input (statements 12

through 17). The dynamics of this type's opinion can be seen in their answers on the two

statements below. The factor arrays for the four factors (shown as A through D instead of

1 through 4) are shown for comparison.

Factors				Statements
A	B	C	D	
3	1	1	1	Planning is more likely to be useful in a community that links its budgeting decisions with its comprehensive plan than in one that does not.
2	2	0	1	The planning process can be used to start a communitywide discussion of public problems.

One interesting finding is that most of the planners with in this type (eight) come

from communities with advanced planning requirements, which means that they work in

a planning environment that has a population greater than 50,000 people. In other words,

most of these planners do their jobs in urban areas. Could the possible higher levels of professionalism in these areas lead to a more positive opinion concerning the efficacy of public participation, compared to planners in rural communities? There is some evidence in the composition of this type to justify future research to answer this question. Additionally, most of the planners in this type held graduate degrees leading to the possible future research question: Could higher education be a factor producing a positive and structural opinion in planning participants?

Given that the search for linking budgeting and planning is a long sought goal of planning theory and practice, it is with little surprise that the research found a type of opinion among the participants based on the importance of having a strong linkage between comprehensive planning and budgeting decisions. Public policy is not made without the allocation of resources. Successful plans guide future budgeting decisions. Attempts have been made at all levels of the United States political system to merge planning and budgeting—for example, Programming-Planning-Budgeting and Zero Based Budgeting at the federal level, performance budgeting at the state level, and target-based budgeting at the local level. However, these attempts often fail due to complexity and politics.

The data shows that the participants recognize the need to link their budgeting decisions with their planning strategies. But the participants failed to discuss how they use planning to guide budgeting decisions in their communities. The locus for this linkage is most likely a community's capital budget; however, there is only a single mention of capital budgeting as a tool to bridge planning and budgeting. It appears that

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the participants, to use a cliché, are not "walking as they talk" when it comes to connecting their planning decisions with their budgeting ones.

The linkage of budgeting and planning opinion found in type one mirrors other research into the fiscal opinions of planning actors. In a nationwide survey of practicing planners, Edwards (2007) found that 94 percent of her sampled planners "believe that the local budgeting process is necessary for planners to understand" (p. 224). It can be assumed that the capital budget is the clear input locus for planning information, and in many surveyed communities in Edwards' data, the capital budget process mandated participation from planners. Nevertheless, only 20 percent of those surveyed felt that their planning staffs properly understood their local budget processes. This is the crux of the budgeting and planning linkage problem. Planners are claiming that budgeting is important, but conversely, they do not understand fiscal processes and are not articulating how to link these two functions.

The following statement in the Q-sample sought to understand this linkage of planning and budgeting in a more in-depth manner: *Planning is more likely to be useful in a community that links its budgeting decisions with its comprehensive plan than in one that does not.* In type one, the opinion tended to strongly agree with this statement. Planner 12 provided a detailed explanation of how he views the importance of this connection between budgeting and planning in the following:

> The Comprehensive Plan should identify and drive the infrastructure needs of the community, thereby influencing the budgeting decisions of the local government. Also, the Comprehensive Plan should recognize the needed balance between residential and commercial/industrial/office development. This affects the jurisdiction's tax base & revenues.

As the planner discusses, there is recognition that budgeting and planning affect a community's infrastructure situation, and how capital budgets are in effect planning documents—as another planner commented: "High dollar improvement projects are more likely to be realized when they are identified in the comprehensive plan." However, the other participants failed to provide such a specific explanation to why budgeting is crucial to planning leading to the assertion that they may not be walking as they are talking when it comes to using plans as guides for budgetary decisions.

While many of the participants failed to provide details of how budgeting is important to planning, there is still an understanding among them that linking planning with budgeting leads to a successful implementation process and shows that a community values its comprehensive plan. This can be seen in the comments of planners 17 who wrote the following: "Budget/Money is what allows plans to be implemented. The budget process is a priority setting tool." And as his brethren, planner 10, whose opinion loaded in type 2, wrote, "The link between planning and budgeting indicates a community that takes planning seriously."

Future research should use planner 10's comments as a rubric to determine plan effectiveness. The degree of plan implementation can be viewed in many circumstances in a community's budget. Communities that are serious about implementing their comprehensive plans will link its strategies to budgeting decisions. The question of implementation, therefore, can be answered in communities' budgets. Research has attempted to find empirical evidence for the

question of implementation by examining the plans and budgets of local

governments to determine their level of conformity. Liou and Dicker (1996)

applied this rubric by examining local growth management expenditures in

Florida to determine if these fiscal decisions confirmed to the localities'

comprehensive plans. Future empirical studies on the implementation of

comprehensive plans should go to the "lifeblood" of public policy, the budgets of

local communities, to determine the efficacy of the comprehensive plans in these

communities.

Type 2 Positive-Participation Coordinators: Twenty-nine percent of the planners

held a communitarian or coordinating approach to comprehensive planning. This group's

opinion is similar to the opinion held by the participants in type one. For instance, the

correlation between the two groups' factor scores is 66 percent meaning a moderately

strong association of opinion. The opinion in this type is generally positive concerning

the efficacy of public involvement; however, the opinion appears to be slightly less

enthusiastic about the public than type one. The commonality of opinion among type one

and type two can be seen in similar opinions concerning the public and the functions to

achieve planning implementation. On average, these planners viewed comprehensive

planning as a successful when communities work together with their neighbors or

coordinator their plans, and they held mostly positive views concerning the input of the

public in the process. This group strong agreed with the statement: *Working with nearby*

communities benefits the planning process. A contradiction in the data for this group

must be noted. While they agreed that coordination among communities is needed, they

were neutral concerning one of the main tools to achieve this cooperation, service

delivery strategies.[19] Either the planners do not understand the mechanisms in the state to achieve coordination or they are lukewarm concerning the efficacy of service delivery strategies. Future research on this issue would be beneficial to regional cooperation. When it comes to other structural features of comprehensive planning, this group held some interesting opinions. For example, the group, also, strongly disagreed that comprehensive plans were too complicated and disagreed that plans are not evaluated. The opinion on evaluation is investigated further later in the chapter.

Factors				Statements
A	B	C	D	
1	3	1	0	Working with nearby communities benefits the planning process.
2	2	0	1	The planning process can be used to start a communitywide discussion of public problems.
-2	-3	-2	-1	Nobody evaluates our plan so it is not followed.

Again, it appears that opinion may have some relationship with planning environment in this type as with positive-participation budgeters. Of the 10 planners in type two, there were four from communities with more than 50,000 people and four from communities with between 10,000 and 50,000. Education of the participants may also influence their opinion, especially on the efficacy of public participation. Five of the planners among the positive-participation coordinators held graduate degrees with two being American Institute Certified Planners (AICP). Based on this, there is some

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[19] See, statement 11 in Table 5.4

evidence, as with type one, to support the assertion that planning environment and planner education may have an influence on planning opinion.

Within this type, there is a focus on evaluation of plans. The participants claim to be evaluating their comprehensive plans. A significant finding in the local plan implementation literature is the empirical study by Brody and Highfield (2005) on local plan evaluation in Florida. The authors found that robust evaluation measures were shown to have a significant impact on the degree of plan implementation and plan quality. The overall planning literature heralds the importance of evaluation tools (Kelly and Becker, 2000). One of the important results of this research's type two is how participants insist that they do evaluate their planning procedures and discuss planning in terms of a process not a document. Within the literature on communicative planning, there is a theme that planning should be considered an interactive process not solely the completion of a document (Khakee, 2000).

Support for evaluating plans can also been seen in the participants open-ended comments. For example, planner 13 strongly disagreed with the statement: *Nobody evaluates our comprehensive plan so it is not followed.* In response, the planner commented:

> Evaluating the plan and its implementation is key to its effectiveness. With so many issues that arise, and arise so quickly, it is difficult for officials to stay focused on plan goals and strategies and it is difficult to staff to implement programs because of the lack of focus.

It appears that participants may be doing the same with evaluation and coordination as the planners in type one with budgeting that is claiming the importance of these functions for planning but not discussing how they communities incorporate budgeting, evaluation,

and coordination into their planning process. Even though his opinion was not included in the Q-methodology analysis, the open-ended comment of politician seven relates to the efficacy of evaluation. This elected official admitted a lack of regular evaluation, but recognized the importance of the practice and argued that his community should do more evaluation of their plans—as he stated: "While our plan is not reviewed on a regular basis, it is occasionally evaluated for compliance, but should be done more often."

One interesting trend in the data for communicative planning theory is that the *participants discuss planning as a process not a document*. This can be seen in their other evaluation comments. To these participants, plan evaluations are used to adapt strategies. One planner wrote, "Our staff evaluates the comprehensive plan and uses it regularly." Another participant described the efficacy of evaluation in his community by stating, "…the planning staff monitors comprehensive plan's progress and communicates the results with the administration." Thinking of planning as a process and not a document is a foundation component of how the communicative planning theory describes planning as an ongoing interactive process among diverse planning participants. The focus on evaluation in type two is a positive finding for planning practice—in particular the efficacy of planning implementation. As stated, the literature is clear on the necessity of consistent evaluation of planning documents (Brody and Highfield, 2005).

Type 3 Negative-Participation Economic Developers: A large amount of the literature on local planning is dedicated to economic development, and this literature largely describes public planning as a tool for communities to better their economic situation (Blair 1998 & 2004; Garcia, Merrifield, and Senge, 1991; Halachmi, 1993; Pammer, 1998). At the local level, government decision-making is often driven by this

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desire for economic development; therefore, planners, especially ones with an economic background, often focus their energies on this goal. The fact that planning is utilized for economic development in communities can be seen in the opinions held by the planners in type three and type four. Based on these types, it can be assumed that a focus on using planning for economic development is associated with a negative opinion concerning the efficacy of public participation in communitywide decisions. The data has some support for this assertion. The types associated with economic development on average held critical views concerning the efficacy of the public. The planners in this type approach comprehensive planning from an economic development standpoint focused on how planning can be utilized to improve a community. One explanation could be that these planners hold a background in economic development, trained in the field and performed task related to that function.

Factors				Statements
A	B	C	D	
1	1	3	2	Comprehensive planning can be used to improve a community's local economy.
2	-1	-2	-3	The general public makes an effort to be involved in the comprehensive planning process.

Again, it appears that planning environment and education may be a factor in the opinion of these planners. The three planners in this type come from a community with basic planning requirements, and they describe their communities as rural. Compared to the other planners in the research, they have lower levels of education. Once again, there

appears to be contradictory aspects of this opinion type. While they strongly agreed that

planning can improve a community's economy, the planners in this group were neutral

concerning the other statements on economic development (statements 18 through 20).

The next type also espouse an economic goal of planning; however, the planners in type

four are more focused on using plans as advertisement tools, compared to the planners in

type three.

Type 4 Negative-Participations Economic Advertisers: The remaining 14 percent

of planners held, on average, an opinion of planning that is critical of the public and view

the function of comprehensive planning as a tool to advertise the economic opportunities

in their communities. As with the previous type, this opinion is focused on the economic

development aspects of comprehensive planning. The opinion type can be described in

participants' views on statements 15 and 20, which they strongly disagreed to the former

and strongly agreed to the latter. These planners are approaching comprehensive planning

similar to the economic development planning model discussed by Pammer (1998). They

view a plan as an opportunity to sell their community's economic options.

Factors				Statements
A	B	C	D	
0	0	0	3	A comprehensive plan should advertise the economic benefits of a community.
2	-1	-2	-3	The general public makes an effort to be involved in the comprehensive planning process.

The opinion breakdown in types three and four produce the interesting research question: Is there a relationship between opinion focused on planning as economic development and a distrust of the public? As can be seen below, the participants in type four were the most cynical of the public's ability to guide comprehensive planning. They strongly disagreed that the public even makes an effort to be involved in comprehensive planning. On the remaining statements concern public participation, these planners were negative regarding the efficacy of public input. It can be assumed, with caution, that the planners in types three and four may be focused on economic development because of the decision making processes in their communities. Research has shown that civic elites with a focus on economic development are able to capture decision making process at the local government level. For example, LeLand and Thurmaier (2000) found that the strength of a community's civic elite was one of the main reasons explaining why local governments consolidated, a political decision that is clearly more controversial than the average comprehensive planning decisions. If these civic elite have this level of influence, it could be assumed that these planners are from communities with an economic development minded civic elite.

Other community variables may be at play. The social capital composition of a community may influence the opinion of the public officials that represent this community during the planning process. The following sections piece together the results from the empirical typology and present other patterns with implications for future research found within the data.

Discussion

What are the implications of this research's typology results for planning

literature? What other patterns are found in the research's data that may have

implications for planning literature and practice? The next two sections attempt to answer

these questions by discussing the overall meaning of the research's results. In developing

possible trends from the data, the open-end comments from the politician strata, which

was removed from the Q-method analysis, is included in this secondary analysis. Before

those trends are discussed, the implications for the primary results, the typology of

opinion, are explored.

Previous inquiries into the thinking of planners have found that planning actors

hold a number of role orientations, but they often view their jobs as *political, technical,*

or as a *mixture* of these two features. In his review of the literature, Baum (1983) found

these three orientations. One of these studied reviewed was research conducted by Howe

and Kaufman (1979). These researchers interviewed a sample of American Institute

Certified Planners (AICP), and found that the dominant role was a hybrid one between

the two extremes of political roles and technical roles. This finding of mixed opinion

roles played by planners is also found in the empirical results of this research. Planning is

viewed by the participants in this research as a mixture of political and technical

characteristics.

This is seen in how some of the statements related to public participation describe

planning in a political manner and some of the statements related to structural features

present planning in technical manner. Among the four types, opinion is divided along two

dimensions with one being more political and the other being more technical. For

example, the largest number of participants strongly agreed with the statement: *Planning is more likely to be useful in a community that links its budgeting decisions with its comprehensive plan than in one that does not (statement 6).* This is a structural statement or a technical one in the research. Furthermore, the largest number of participants disagreed with three statements (4, 14, and 15). These statements deal with the length of the comprehensive plan document and the efficacy of public input in the comprehensive planning process—statements which are both political and technical in nature.

More recent scholarship on the roles planners perform has focused on how planners communicate their technical expertise through political means and communicative acts. Healy (1993) reported her findings from shadowing senior public planners. She found that planners spend most of their time doing communicative acts, such as arguing, negotiating, mediating, etc. These activities are more political than technical, but they are rooted in the technical expertise of the profession because the communicative acts are expressions of this expertise. Planners argue, negotiate, and mediate based on their degree expertise or their technical knowledge.

Planning actors who view the function as both political and technical are in a manner descendants of their progressive era forefathers. Daniel Burnham and his progressive brethren held that planning was technical and political in the following way. Planners were the ones with the expertise. They drafted the plans based on this scientific knowledge. After the drafting of plans, planners educated the public about the plan and attempted to gain their support (Schlereth, 1981). This is a top-down approach. In the 1960s, planning took a more political turn toward viewing the planner as an advocate. The literature started viewing planning as successful and democratic when it was a

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bottom-up process based on the initiative of community groups (Davidoff, 1964). This evolution has led to the focus on communicative actions in planning research today. Along this evolution in the planning literature, one can trace the interconnectedness of political and technical aspects, and this interconnectedness can be also identified in this research.

Planning as a scholarly discipline and a professional practice has struggled to balance politics and expertise. It can be argued that planning theory focusing on advocacy has diverged from planning practice and its attention to technicality. Fainstein (2000) divided current planning theory into three streams: advocacy, new urbanism, and just city. All of these streams call for the planner to function more like a politician than a technical adviser. Planning theory by calling for planners to behave as political actors has moved too far toward the political side of the continuum at the expense of technical expertise, and created a gap between the thinking of planning scholars and planning practitioners. This research sees signs of this gap. In open-end comments to statements, the planning participants do not discuss their role as advocates rather they *communicate an assisting role for the public*. Planner 34 (a member of type one), for instance, disagreed with the statement: *The general public lacks the needed information to contribute to the comprehensive planning process.*[20] The planner followed up by saying:

> I think the public is very knowledgeable, and sometimes needs some assistance (a more common language) in relating to others through understanding/realization of alternate thought processes/methods.

Planner 34's mention of "common language" is telling. It shows how participants view planning and their interactions with the public as communication.

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[20] Each participant was given the opportunity to leave an open-ended comment for their strongly disagreed and strongly agreed statements. These statements can be found in Appendix 3 of this research.

Patterns in the Data

Based on interpretation of the factor arrays for each opinion type and the

secondary analysis of open-end comments, the following patterns emerge from the data.[21]

First, it appears that education level and a community's development level may influence

opinion. The planners in types one and two, who tended to have a positive viewpoint of

public participation, were more educated than the planners in types three and four, who

tended to have a negative viewpoint of public participation. Urban planners were also

more positive of planning, compared to their rural counterparts. Second, there appears to

be mixed and contradictory opinions, even in the positive participation types, toward the

efficacy of public involvement in comprehensive planning. Lastly, across all four opinion

types, there tends to be positive viewpoints concerning structural features of planning,

such as state and regional coordination, plan complexity, and as discussed early

budgeting and evaluation.

It can be asserted that education leads to planning actors who have a more

positive opinion of the public. This can be seen in the opinion of participants in types one

and two. The effect of education as it relates to community development and public

planning also must be considered using the theoretical lens of social capital and it relates

to the theoretical underpinnings of this research. Social capital theorists (Grisham, 1999;

Putnam, 2000) have held that education often produces citizens that are more actively

engaged in the affairs of their community. As Putnam (2000) found, more education

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[21] It should be stressed that these are mere patterns that emerge from the analysis. They are not confirmed findings that can be generalized to describe the opinion of other planning participants. Instead, they are used as the foundation to construct hypotheses for future research, which are discussed in chapter 6.

coupled with volunteering activities produces higher levels of social capital. These socially active and happy citizens are the ones that the planning participants view as being able to have a meaningful input in the comprehensive planning process. Some of the planning participants in this research recognized the effect of an active public. As planner 17 argued, "Some of the best ideas come from regular citizens." Planner 21 echoed this sentiment by stating: "Citizens are taking a much more active involvement in their local government and are much better informed." Both of these planners hold master's degrees. There is an impression from the data that education leads to a better appreciation for the public's input in comprehensive planning.

Education is a two way street though. Citizens should make educated decisions concerning their communities, but for planning to be truly meaningful, planning actors must also allow themselves to be educated by their citizens (Innes and Booher, 2004). Interestingly, it appears that planners, who are more educated, recognize the importance of the public while citizens who are more educated appreciate the importance of civic engagement for their communities. Thus, education is a remedy, it can be argued, to improve community development on both the government side and the public side. However, there is also a trend running through the data, in particular the open-ended comments, that public often falls short of delivering meaningful participation in the process.

Next, there is evidence that there are relationship problems between the public and their planning officials. There is a *"love-hate"* relationship with the public—the need to have them active in a plan but the view that they are often not equipped to contribute— runs throughout the data, especially the open-ended comments of the participants. A

functional relationship in terms of public participation is one that leads to both *meaningful* and *representative* participation (Keller and Becker, 2000). The participation is meaningful when the public's input has an effect on planning decisions, and it is representative when the decisions are based on the input of the general public not just elites. A dysfunctional relationship would be, therefore, one that fails to meet one or both of these standards. Based on this research and a review of the literature, it can be argued that the relationship between the public and planning officials is dysfunctional due to the mechanisms in which they communicate with one another and the participants' views of the public, especially the planners in types three and four. Planning officials and their communities are experiencing a "failure to communicate," which leads to a breakdown in the necessary relationships for planning to function.

The problem is that public participation is important in determining plan quality (Brody, 2003). After reviewing the data, it appears that the planning actors are engaged in a difficult relationship with the public. The participants' view of the public is not black and white; it is complex. It is a relationship filled with frustration and contradictory feelings or, as Innes and Booher (2004) wrote, "anger and mistrust." Participants often contradict themselves when it comes to this question of the public. There is both positive appreciation for public involvement demonstrated in the opinion of type one and two participants but also frustration with the public shown in the opinion of type three and four participants and the open-ended comments of participants for all opinion types. This frustration is given voice in how one planner pointedly described his disappointment with the public: "We have repeatedly tried to get the public involved. No one seems to be interested."

This unease relationship with the public, as alluded to, may be linked to the ineffectiveness of the public participation mechanisms that many local governments employ to solicit public input in planning. These mechanisms include hearings, review sessions, and comment periods. As Planner 27 argued, "Better ideas [public participation methods] for public outreach are needed." It has been argued that these mechanisms do not produce meaningful and representative public participation (Innes and Booher, 2004). Instead these mechanisms frustrate both the public and their public servants leading them to hold contradictory opinions about the efficacy of public involvement. They recognize the need for it, but lack the tools to achieve this goal.

It appears that planner 5 has attended a series of disappointing public hearings, which led him to strongly disagree with the statement: *Public hearings improve a community's comprehensive plan.* In response, Planner 5 stated:

> The public is asked to be included in the process from early stages. Unfortunately, very few choose to participate in public meetings, unless it is a NIMBY [No In My Back Yard] issue.

But this same planner contradicts this critical view of the public by strongly agreeing with the statement: *The planning process can be used to start a communitywide discussion of public problems.* The planner stated: "The plan ideally should come from the people and reflect their concerns and desires for the future of a community." To planner 5, it may not be the public that she has problems with but rather the mechanisms, such as public hearings, to solicit the public's input. Contradictions and frustrations, appreciation and skepticism—these are hallmarks of a love and hate relationship between individuals. Feelings of contradictions and frustrations were also found among the politicians.

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The politicians appeared to be the most critical of general public. This is counterintuitive that the nonelected individuals in the sample are the ones that appear, on average, to be more supportive of the public. Given that they are the elected officials, it would appear that they would herald the virtues of public involvement in government, but it seems that they are giving their honest opinion on the difficulties of soliciting public participation—as one politician stated:

> "Public hearings in this community are not attended unless they are concerning an issue that the general public is angry about. They simply will not come and have input on community improvement."

Again, it can be seen that the frustration is not necessarily directed at the public but at the efficacy of participation mechanisms.

It may appear that the participants are directing their frustration completely at the public; however, further investigations shows there to be a dislike of public participation among the participants leading to contradictions in their opinions concerning the public. As can be seen in Table 10, the factor arrays for statement 17, which attempts to gauge opinion on public hearings, were not overly negative. There are other unclear parts of the data. For example, the contradictions resurface among the planners. This planner expressed a highly positive view of public participation and how it is important to the successful implementation of a community's plan by stating:

> Problems and issues are best addressed with public input and ideas. Comprehensive planning can present the problem, provide an assessment of its impact and help determine solutions.

The participants go back and forth on their opinion of the public. To stress again, they criticize the public's apathy, but they also realize the importance of getting the public involved to ensure a successful process.

These conflicting results on public participation mirror the literature on public participation in planning (Brody, Godschalk, and Burby, 2003). For example, Brody (2003) found empirical evidence that planning quality is affect by the degree of meaningful participation, but officials are often cynical about achieving this goal. More public involvement often does lead to better plans that are more likely to be implemented. But how do planning actors achieve this needed public participation? Local governments have recognized the need for bottom-up participation forums instead of top-down mechanisms that rely on public hearings. Savannah, Georgia, for example, has a comprehensive planning process that is largely bottom-up. Citizens can directly interact with community planners through focus groups and neighborhood work sessions. These advisory committees are comprised of neighborhood stakeholders, and there is an attempt to solicit more than just elite opinion. This input is at the start of the planning process not at the end, when the major decisions have already been made, so public input is more meaningful to the community.[22] This level of deliberative input has been viewed by scholars as an answer to the question of public input (King, Feltey, and Susel, 1998).

Innes and Booher (2004) perhaps provided the reforms to abate these participation issues. The authors constructed an argument based on public participation research on the use for more interactive methods between the public and their public officials. These mechanisms are similar to the ones employed in Savannah, Georgia. At their basis, the methods include dialogue instead of instruction. Public hearings can be considered a form of top-down instruction, not the give-and-take of dialogue. This dialogue leads to opinion construction, inclusion of the opinion in the plan, and education of the public and also the

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[22] For more information, see the website of the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission at http://www.thempc.org/index.htm.

planning actors. At the foundation of this argument is that public hearings and other

tradition public participation mechanisms employed in the United States have failed.

This, as seen in this data, leads to frustration, contradictions, and a dysfunctional

relationship between the public and their planning actors. The public hearing, in

particular, has been shown by the literature to be ineffective and to be the creator of a

hostile environment (Campbell and Marshall, 2000). The research, as stressed, finds

evidence that participants view hearings as ineffective. Among the planning types, there

appears to be a lukewarm opinion concerning public hearings when examining the factor

arrays, but as shown, the participants are more critical in their open-ended comments

concerning the efficacy of public hearings.

Based on this research's data, there are opportunities among the planning

participants to put in place effective public participation mechanisms. Overall, the

planning actors showed positive attitudes toward the public and an openness to include

the public. For example while participants espouse both negative and positive opinions

concerning the efficacy of public involvement, a plurality of participants strongly agreed

with the statements that argued the public does have a positive impact on comprehensive

planning. This lingering support for the public can also been seen in the data in how the

largest number of participants strongly disagreed with statements 14 and 15:

> Statement 14: The general public lacks the needed information to
> contribute to the comprehensive planning process.
> Statement 15: The general public makes an effort to be involved in the
> comprehensive planning process.

Public participation clearly matters—as one participant stated: *"Plans are useless*

without public input." The communicative planning model, the theoretical lens used by

this research, is built upon this argument that the public is the foundational component of public planning. One interpretation of the research's results on the question of the public can be that the public participation mechanisms are leading to a dysfunctional relationship between the public and their planners. For planning practice, this means future public participation mechanisms should seek to lessen this frustration by being more interactive and in doing so empower the public toward more meaningful participation. Since Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen involvement argument, the planning literature has called for practice to include more effective public participation mechanisms, but many locales still rely on traditional methods, such as the ones criticized by the participants in this research. Nevertheless, it appears that the participants, for the most part, are open to the interactive and deliberative participation changes proposed by Innes and Booher (2004). Only future research would determine the exact level of changes to public participation planning actors may accept to help their dysfunctional relationship with the public.

The difficulties of public participation may be due to the attitudes of planning participants as Innes and Booher described the relationship, "Planners and public officials may believe in democracy, but be skeptical about participation" (p. 421). This research shows that some of the participants held this sentiment toward public involvement in plan implementation. The relationship between planning officials and the public is dysfunctional because it is a marriage in which both sides are living in separate houses. Again, Innes and Booher described it best by saying, "Today we are trapped in seeing public participation as involving citizens on the one hand and government on the other" (p. 421). The reason for this separation lies in communication. It appears that flawed

public participation methods cause asymmetries of communication where the public and community planning actors fail to communicate in a meaningful manner causing both parties to be frustrated.

The discussion now moves away from the more political aspects of planning, such as public inclusion, toward the more technical features, such as state input and evaluation procedures. It appears that participants accept state involvement and the expertise held by the Regional Development Centers (RDCs). These are regional bodies that assist communities in a number of governance issues, including planning, and who partially represent the state's interest. The RDCs do the regional planning at the instruction of the state government. As with public participation, it appears that the participants are contradicting themselves in their comments throughout the data.

Given that most of the participants are from rural planning environments, it is understandably that they would value the expertise of outside commissions. However, this reliance on regional commissions for expertise may cause some local officials to lose (or perceive they have lost) autonomy over planning decisions. The contradictions of opinion concerning regional assistance and state involvement are found in the open-ended comments of the participants. In the Q-sample, the following statement attempted to gauge opinion concerning regional assistance: *Regional Development Centers are beneficial to the comprehensive planning process in my community.* There were no participants that disagreed with this statement. Two of the participants, who strongly agreed, left positive comments concerning the regional assistance. As planner 7 argued, "Without the assistance of our RDC, we would never get a plan completed." This planner is from a rural community, which relies on the staff assistance provided by the RDC.

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Another rural planner described his community reliance on their RDC staff in the following way:

> Because, they provide planning assistance to communities without adequate planning staff. They increase public awareness and provide the necessary information to communities for planning decision-making.

The data starts to become contradictory when the opinions on state involvement are considered. There also appears to be an independent trend concerning regional and state involvement in local planning. Politician 4 stated it bluntly:

> Regional development centers historically have produced a boiler plate plan based on their ideas, that the general public usually find amusing and impractical. It has never been used here as a truly productive community planning tool, but rather so meet a statutory requirement.

In other words, the expertise offered through regional assistance bodies, according to this participant, is not related to the needs of individual communities. This contradictory finding concerning state and regional involvement has the following implications for planning theory and practice.

First, Brody and Highfield (2005) found empirical evidence that state sanctions and local evaluations have a positive relationship with plan conformity or plan implementation and plan quality. This is important for the plan implementation literature. Based on it, states should encourage their communities to follow their plans through stronger sanctions because this will increase plan quality and the efficacy of planning as a tool for local governments to improve their communities. The rural participants seem to welcome assistance from regional bodies, but some of the participants are skeptical about the state involvement. For example, planner 30 viewed the state involvement as

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nonproductive. As he wrote, "I think the state just wants to "Check" a box and then consider the goal accomplished!"

However, as can be seen in Table 10, the four groups of opinion disagreed with the statement: *Plans are not based on local concerns but on the goals of state government.* In fact, types one and three strongly disagreed with this statement. And in their comments, a number of the participants voiced a positive opinion of their state government's role in local planning decisions. In response to the statement "*Plans are not based on local concerns but on the goals of state government,*" planner 12 wrote: "While the state may provide guidelines of areas to be covered, the plan must reflect the concerns, issues and goals of the local citizenry. Goals must be locally based in order for appropriate buy-in and implementation." This planner recognized that local priorities must be included in a community's plan for it to be implemented. Local support is what determines implementation. As planner 18 clearly stated, "Local concerns are always priority." This is a normative, positive finding for planning practice. The participants recognize the need for some state involvement while understanding that planning must be driven by local goals and concerns. This trend represents that coordinator sentiment found in type two of the planners.

Another overall positive opinion on structural features of planning was on the issue of plan complexity. Often stories are told of public officials and the general public criticizing comprehensive plans because they are too lengthy and not reflected of local concerns. The planners in this research would not agree with this negative structural viewpoint. All four types of opinion disagreed (one strongly disagreed) with the statement: *Comprehensive plans are too complicated and too long to have a meaningful*

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effect. Based on these structural opinions, it appears that on questions of plan process there appears to be a positive consensus, and an opinion that emphasizes local control in the same mindset as the arguments of Kent (1964).

Chapter 6 discusses how these results affect this research's theory and generates hypotheses for future research. Table 12 summarizes the research's results outside of the primary typology developed. The next sections discuss the limitations of this research and the answers of the findings for the research's questions of inquiry.

Table 12

Summary of the Data Patterns

Pattern	Evidence	Implications for planning theory and practice
Education level appears to have an influence on how participants viewed planning.	Q-method analysis Qualitative analysis of the open-end comments to the strongly agreed / strongly disagreed statements	Higher education may lead to a more positive opinion concerning planning and the efficacy of the public throughout the process.
There appears to be a *love-hate* view among the participants concerning the efficacy of public participation in local comprehensive planning.	Q-method analysis Qualitative analysis of the open-end comments to the strongly agreed / strongly disagreed statements	The public is viewed as important, but there is also skepticism about the public's ability to contribute to planning in a representative and meaningful way. The relationship between planning actors and the public is dysfunctional. This dysfunctional relationship can be attributed to miscommunication between formal planning actors and their publics.
Many of the participants view state involvement as beneficial to the planning process, but they also argue that plans must be based on local priorities.	Q-method analysis Qualitative analysis of the open-end comments to the strongly agreed / strongly disagreed statements	There is a desire for local autonomy, but a need for the expertise offered by the state and regional bodies.
Participants insist that they do evaluate their public plans.	Q-method analysis Qualitative analysis of the open-end comments to the strongly agreed / strongly disagreed statements	Evaluation improves planning. This is a positive finding in that it indicates how planning actors recognize the need for evaluation and attempt to do it in a meaningful way.
Participants recognize the importance of having a strong linkage between comprehensive planning and budgeting decisions.	Q-method analysis Qualitative analysis of the open-end comments to the strongly agreed / strongly disagreed statements	Budgeting is viewed as the implementation of planning.

Limitations of the Research

The results of this research should be considered based on a few limitations. First, the Q-methodology does not produced research that is generalizable across populations. This is because the P-sample is often collected, as with this research, through non-random means. The P-sample used in this research was a convenience sample based on the attempt to compare the opinions of key planning actors. In Q-methodology, the Q-sample of statements is the part of the research that holds external validity in that it is meant to be representative of the concourse of communications on the subject being studied. Q-methodology research is intended mostly for research that is hypotheses-generating not hypotheses-testing. This research has been largely descriptive in nature. It does not attempt to make inferences. The following chapter reevaluates the theory based on this finding and details some of the hypotheses generated by this research.

Second, the size of the P-sample is small; however, the research's methodology was selected because Q-methodology takes advantage of small sample sizes and low responses rates. The Q-methodology, as discussed, is constructed for research using small sample sizes with some studies consisting of only a few participants. This methodology is geared toward producing in-depth data on the subject being studied, which was done in this research by developing factor analysis results, individual statement results, and a collection of qualitative comments.

Lastly, the data were taken from a single state, but much of the literature is based on case studies of one state or a few states. (DeGrove, 2005; Innes, 1995). However, Georgia, as discussed in chapter 4, is a unique case to study comprehensive plan

implementation. And one of the goals for this research was to produce findings, based on a case study, which can be utilized for future large-N research.

Conclusions on Research Questions

Based on the theoretical typology constructed in chapters 2 and 3, the factor analysis was hypothesized to produce multiple types of opinion. After detailed analysis through the Q-methodology, multiple types of opinion did emerge, but these groupings were more intermingled and complex than the theoretical types. The officials in this research see planning as a combination of factors—i.e., a mixture of political and technical variables. What answers to the study's main research questions can be learned from the evidence collected? The following sections discuss these insights.

Research Question 1: What communicative roles do planning participants perform during the implementation of comprehensive plans? Planners perform multiple roles. The research found empirical evidence that these roles are divided along two dimensions: view of the public and opinion on the tools and goals needed to achieve planning success. The differing opinion on these two dimensions produced four types of planners: positive-participation budgeters; positive-participation coordinators; negative-participation economic developers; and negative-participation economic advertisers. During the process, planners are, therefore, communicating either a positive or negative outlook concerning public involvement and a budgeting, coordinating, or developing opinion concerning the goals of planning.

Research Question 2: What are the important relationships between participants that affect plan implementation? Based on the empirical typology and the secondary

analysis of qualitative statements, it appears that education and planning environment (i.e., urban or rural) are having an effect on opinion. What does this mean? Basically, participants with higher education levels were more likely to view planning in a similar manner, compared to participants with lower levels of education. This manner viewed the public in a positive light and focused on structural tools, budgeting and coordinating, to achieve plan implementation. Rural participants in types three and four were more likely to communicate an opinion that questions the effectiveness of planning than their urban counterparts. As discussed, this may be related to the lack of development pressures in their communities; however, rural areas are often the ones best suited for comprehensive planning because they may face development pressure in the next 20 years, and the comprehensive planning process is the method through which to address these future governance demands.

Research Question 3: And do these roles and relationships resemble the planning literature's findings that implementation is affected by structure, participation, and economic development? While the typology was more complex than the theoretical one, the empirical results do show that structure, participation, and development are aspects of the opinion that planning participants are communicating. It should be stressed again that these three factors are not the only determinants of plan implementation found in the literature, but based on the review on chapter 2, the factors are some of the most discussed. The opinion types all speak of planning in terms of structure, participation, and development. Types one and two strongly agreed with structure features of planning—in particular, the positive influences of budgeting to plan and coordinating to plan. Types three and four saw planning as an economic development tool.

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At first glance based on the unrotated factor analysis of the data, it appears, as discussed, that there is homogeneity of opinion among the research participants. But upon more detail analysis, diversity of opinion developed. The variation produces ambiguous opinion, but from this murkiness patterns in the data emerge. There are important insights for public planning theory and practice within these patterns. The following chapter attempts to synthesize the results, and from this, generate hypotheses for future research.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A Q-sample of statements concerning comprehensive plan implementation was constructed through the guidance of a theoretical typology—based on the literature and communicative planning theory. This Q-sample was administered to planning participants in the state of Georgia. From this Q-method analysis, a typology of opinion was developed in chapter 5. This empirical typology of opinion contains elements of the theoretical typology merged into four groupings of opinion: positive-participation budgeters; positive-participation coordinators; negative-participation economic developers; and negative-participation economic advertisers. These types differed on their attitude toward the public and their views on what leads to successful planning.

The study's research questions sought to uncover the communicative roles that these planning participants perform throughout the comprehensive planning process. The empirical evidence pointed toward multiple roles focused on political and technical features. These roles are complex and contradictory in their views of planning. Based on inspection of these roles, there is some evidence, which demands further research, supporting the assertion that planning environment (i.e., urban or rural) and planner education may be influencing planning opinion. Overall, the planning participants appear to be communicating opinions that represent the following: mostly positive roles on

structural issues, such as budgeting, coordinating, and plan complexity; two roles that are

positive of public participation; and two roles that are negative of public participation and

focused on economic development. Within all the opinion types, there is a concern for

local control of comprehensive planning. Lastly, the research's typology shows that the

planning participants view planning in two dimensions, political (opinion concerning the

public) and functional (opinion concerning what leads to successful planning).

This chapter elaborates on the research's results by reevaluating the study's

theoretical typology, by adding to the communicative planning model, and by generating

hypotheses for future research. Lastly, there is a discussion on how the findings relate to

planning practice.

Revaluating the Research's Theoretical Typology

This research hypothesized multiple types of opinion held by planning

participants concerning comprehensive planning, and found four types of opinion.

However, these opinion types appear to be more complicated than the theoretical

typology. The assumption of multiple types of opinion was based on a review of the

literature, which was used to develop a theoretical typology found in chapters 2 and 3.

This typology included the major literature streams concerning comprehensive planning.

The Q-sort analysis showed that the opinions of the planning participants do not fit within

this typology. Instead, the participants' opinion can be categorized, as discussed, into four

groupings divided along a political dimension (their opinions concerning the efficacy of

public participation) and a technical dimension (their opinions concerning what structural

feature, such as budgeting, coordinating, economic development, etc., lead to plan

implementation).

The Results' Contribution to Planning Theory

This research utilized the communicative planning model as descriptive guidance

into the opinions that public planners hold and the roles that they perform. The literature

on communicative model is both normative and descriptive. Scholars—for example,

Innes (1995)—hold that planning functions ideally when it includes meaningful

communication within a community. The model is also descriptive in that it calls for

communicative acts of planning actors as the focus of inquiry in empirical research on

public planning (See, Healy, 1992). Planning practice is communication, and for planning

scholars, communicative acts should be the "material of their inquiry" (Innes, 1995, p.

183). Olsson (2009) described communicative planning as "an umbrella term for any

number of planning processes emphasizing discourse, communication and consensus-

building" (p. 263). In communicative planning, there is "more attention paid to dialogue

than decisions" (p. 266).

This research has relied on this descriptive aspect of the communicative planning

model by calling for a focus on the opinions espoused by surveyed public planners to

understand their perceptions of their roles in the implementation of comprehensive plans.

Furthermore, the communicative model was used as the theoretical guidance in

constructing the research's Q-sample. The research did not seek to test the model, but

refine it by using the results of the Q-sample to develop hypotheses for future inquiries

into the perceptions of public planners and possibly other planning participants, such as

the public and elected officials. In the communicative planning literature, the model is often used for grounded theorizing, as is the case in this research. For instance, Innes (1995) argued that communicative "planning scholars do grounded theorizing based on richly interpretive study of practice" (p. 183). To communicative planning theorists, planning practice is planning communication. The results from this research provide a richly interpretive study of comprehensive planning, and the empirical data can be used to contribute to theory and practice in the following manner.

Given that the communicative planning model focuses on discourse, what types of roles are planners communicating? This research has sought to answer this question by examining the opinion of public planners. As stated, the roles being communicated and performed are a mixture of political and technical aspects. The majority of the planners play a positive role toward the public and view functions, such as budgeting and coordinating, as the means to achieve planning success. On the other hand, a smaller, but notable, number of planners play a negative role toward the public and view planning as economic development. What does this typology of opinion mean for communicative planning theory?

If planners view comprehensive planning in terms of political and technical factors, then the line between politics and administration is blurred. Planning as a function is not located in a particular institution, such as a local government's planning department. Communicative planning agrees with this finding. According to model, planning occurs across multiple institutions (e.g., planning departments, elected boards, activists, private firms, etc.) where the lines of separation between groups are blurred. Innes (1995) argued that communicative planning changes the institutional focus found in

previous planning theory, which discuss the function of planning as occurring in separated institutions such as planning departments, elected officials, the public, and so forth. Communicative planning views the process of planning as a mixture of these institutions. The model calls for "consensus-building" among these institutions instead of planning directed by "bureaucracy and elected officials" (Innes, 1995, p. 187). Planning, according to the communicative model, is thought of as a "collective action" (Olsson, 2009). Discourse occurs across many institutions that do not have clear lines of division. Communicative planning holds that this delegation should be extended even further to empower communities through deliberative decision-making processes.

There is evidence that the multiple roles found among the participants are based on common motivations. First, the planning work of the participants is influenced by their motivations toward the public. The participants are motivated to hold respect for needing the public, but there is also have skepticism among the planning participants concerning the efficacy of public input. Second, the planning work of the participants is influenced by their education level. Lastly, the planning work of the participants appears to be is influenced by their planning environment. Planners in urban areas tended to have a more positive opinion concerning the public than planners from rural communities.

As mentioned, according to Olsson (2009), comprehensive planning should be considered a "collective action" in the manner as described by Olson (1965). In a collective action, "actors estimate rewards and punishments for participation and defection" (Olsson, 2009, p. 266). These rewards and punishments (or benefits and costs) comprise transactional gains and losses for being involved in a planning process, and they are the motivators determining the actors' roles. In communicative planning, the

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"relational rewards" of forming social networks with other actors have a large influence on the behavior of planning actors. In other words, the relationships formed due to planning communication will drive the behavior of individuals involved.[23] Olsson's argument is focused on the network connections between planning actors; whereas, this research's findings describe actor motivation based on the characteristics of the planning actors' work. The motivations are based on planning content. The participants' opinion appears to be motivated by planning content, education, and planning methods, such as public participation mechanisms, evaluation procedures, and budgeting and planning conformity. Further investigation into what factors influence the roles of planning actors are now discussed.

<div align="center">Future Research</div>

Q-methodology research is often done in the hopes of building theory and generating future research hypotheses. The results from the 34 Q-sorts completed by planners and the antidotal evidence from analysis of the open-ended comments given by the politicians and planners present some interesting research questions and hypotheses for future inquiry into public planning.

Typology of Opinion

The typology produced by the Q-method analysis needs to be empirically investigated in more detail. This typology must serve as a guide for a survey to be administered to planners across multiple planning landscapes. This may include

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[23] Olsson (2009) argued that "communicative planning may incur higher transaction costs" than other forms of coordination.

quantitative studies, with representative samples and external validity strength, but also qualitative inquiries to further investigate the opinion of planning participations. A series of hypotheses can be constructed to investigate whether or not a similar typology of opinion can be found in the viewpoints of planners in other states.

Overall, the participants view concerning the efficacy of planning was positive, but there was a small group of participants from rural environments who held a negative opinion concerning comprehensive planning. While the evidence is limited, these rural skeptics can be the basis for future research into the differences in opinions between urban planners and their rural counterparts. It can be assumed that planning participants (as the ones in types three and four) from a rural environment are more likely to hold negative opinion concerning the efficacy of planning, compared to urban planning participants. This occurs because rural planners are not faced with the growth demands that occupy urban planners. It can be assumed that rural planners see planning as a required fiscal limitation, basically an unfunded mandate, and do not recognize the viability of the tool. This leads to a hypothesis on planning environment: *Rural planning participants are more likely to hold a negative view concerning the efficacy of public planning, compared to urban planning participants.*

Education and Planning

The research found limited evidence that education has an influence on attitudes toward public planning. Future research needs to explore this question of influence, and this can be done through some of the following routes. Based on this research, it appears that education produces a more sophisticated opinion of planning and its complexities.

The exact nature of this complexity can be learned through future research avenues. For example, the literature on social capital would suggest that planning participants (public officials and citizens) with more social capital would hold a more sophisticated opinion of planning. From a normative standpoint, it can be argued that increased levels of social capital would produce a more ideal planning environment where community members actively seek to reach collective goals and the plans to achieve them. Empirically, this can be examined by looking at the levels of social capital in a community and the likelihood that public plans are followed. The level of conformity of public plans can be measured, as discussed later, through local government expenditures. Simply, are the planning decisions correlating with budgeting decisions? This leads to the hypothesis: *Communities with higher levels of social capital are more likely to link their planning and budgeting decisions, compared to communities with lower levels of social capital.*

In another area, education leads to a greater understanding of public participation's effects on public planning. This finding leads to the hypothesis: *Planning participants with higher levels of education are more likely to advocate direct public participation mechanisms over traditional methods, such as public hearings, compared to planning participants with lower levels of education.* The other results in the data concerning public participation are fertile for future inquiry.

Public Participation in Planning

A constant theme throughout the research's data was a contradictory opinion held by the participants concerning the efficacy of public involvement in comprehensive planning. For the most part, participants hold a positive outlook toward the ability of the

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public to contribute, except for the planners in types three and four; however, in their open-ended comments, the participants tended to be more critical of the public than in their Q-sorts. This negative opinion toward the efficacy of citizen involvement may be linked to the participants' dislike of tradition public participation methods. Thus, the relationship problems between the public and planning officials possibly are rooted in communication issues.

Based on this interpretation, it can be assumed that communities with traditional participation methods are likely to hold this dysfunctional relationship between the public and planning officials; whereas, communities with more interactive participation methods are likely to hold a more functional relationship. From this assumption, the following hypothesis can be derived and merits further research: *Planning participants from communities with solely public hearings are likely to hold critical opinions concerning the efficacy of public participation in planning, compared to planning participants from communities with more interactive participation methods.*

Evaluation in Planning

There is empirical evidence in the literature that public planning is more effective when localities include robust evaluation mechanisms in their planning processes (Brody and Highfield, 2005). This finding is commonsensical; plans, which are consistently reassessed, are more viable tools for local governance. This research found that participants agree with this statement, and they claim to be evaluating their planning documents. This finding points toward some interesting research questions. What variables cause planning participants to view evaluation as important? What communities

are more likely to evaluate plans? These questions deal with the level of plan conformity. Based on these questions, it can be hypothesized that: *Local governments with evaluation procedures are more likely to implement their comprehensive plans, compared to locales without evaluation procedures.* One obvious location to examine plan conformity is, as stated, the budgets of local governments.

Budgeting and Planning

Plans, as discussed, are not put into action until money is allocated; therefore, local budgets are ideal units of analysis for the level of planning conformity within a community. This research found that planning participants agree with this statement. They recognized a link between budgeting and planning. Again, as one planner stated, if budgeting and planning are not related then "what is the point" of planning. From this finding a host of research questions can be developed. The fundamental research question would be: Are communities linking their planning decisions with their budgeting decisions? As discussed, this can be used to examine plan conformity. Other research questions could include: What factors make some communities more likely to link their planning and budget decisions? From a normative a standpoint, are these communities more likely to follow their plans, compared to communities who fail to like their budgeting and planning decisions?

When it comes to the opinions of planning participants, it can be assumed that participants that work within communities where planning and budgeting are liked are likely to hold positive opinions concerning the efficacy of comprehensive planning. From this assumption the following hypothesis can be derived: *Planning participants in*

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communities that link planning and budgeting decisions are more likely to hold a positive

view concerning the efficacy of comprehensive planning, compared to planning

participants in communities that fail to link their planning and budgeting decisions. From

this typology, these series of hypotheses were developed for future inquiry in order to

better understand the opinions held planners as they perform their communicative.

Conclusions for Planning Practice

This research derived a typology of planner opinion comprised of four groups.

The roles that they communicate in planning practice are complex, but overall there

appears to be a positive outlook toward the function of comprehensive planning.

Altshuler (1965) criticized comprehensive planning as being too complex, a devastating

critique for comprehensive supporters, such as Kent (1964). But the planning participants

in this research did not agree with Altshuler's "too comprehensive" argument. They view

planning as not being too complicated, and agree that planning documents are not too

lengthy. Furthermore, they espouse a community-centered view of comprehensive

planning, one that is related to Kent's argument for comprehensive planning to serve as a

guide for a community to deal collectively with governance issue (this is seen in

statement three's factor arrays for all four groups). These are positive findings for

planning practice. The opinions of the participants show that comprehensive planning is

still a viable tool, but one that does need retooling.

It appears that the planners recognize the importance for some of the reforms to

planning found within the normative literature of the communicative planning model

(Innes, 1992, 1995, & 1996; Innes and Boohner, 2004). The participants criticized

traditional public participation methods. One assumption for future research is that these

mechanisms are one of the main reasons why there is an uneasy relationship between the

public and planning officials. The planners, also, saw the importance of evaluating plans,

linking planning with budgeting decisions, and coordinating with neighboring

communities.

This research sought to examine the major streams of the comprehensive planning

literature through the theoretical lens of communicative planning. This lens was used as a

guide to develop a Q-methodology inquiry to better understand the perceptions of public

planners on the roles that they perform during the implementation of local comprehensive

plans. It was found that these acts hold a multiple types of opinion concerning planning;

however, all the espoused an opinion that viewed comprehensive planning as a

community process. Implementation of a comprehensive planning requires a community

to be vested. Of this research's participants, Planner 15 described this communitywide

view of comprehensive planning best by stating the following:

> Our plan is a new approach to coordinating key County government
> responsibilities for growth management, transportation, housing and
> related social services, public utilities, economic development, open space
> and recreation. Our unified plan is not just about government or
> development. It has the ability to affect how all of our residents,
> employees and employers will carry out much of their everyday business.

This community viewpoint is a positive result for future comprehensive planning, and

holds hope for master planning to be the process as envisioned by Kent (1965).

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APPENDIX A

FLASHQ DEMO

Step 1: Code Login
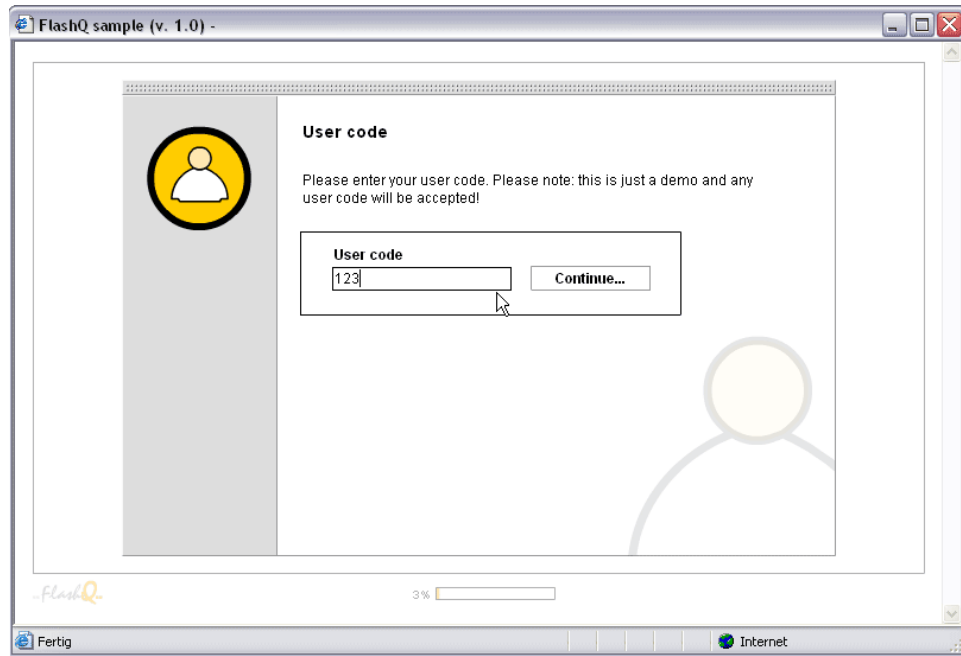
Step 2: Presort Statements
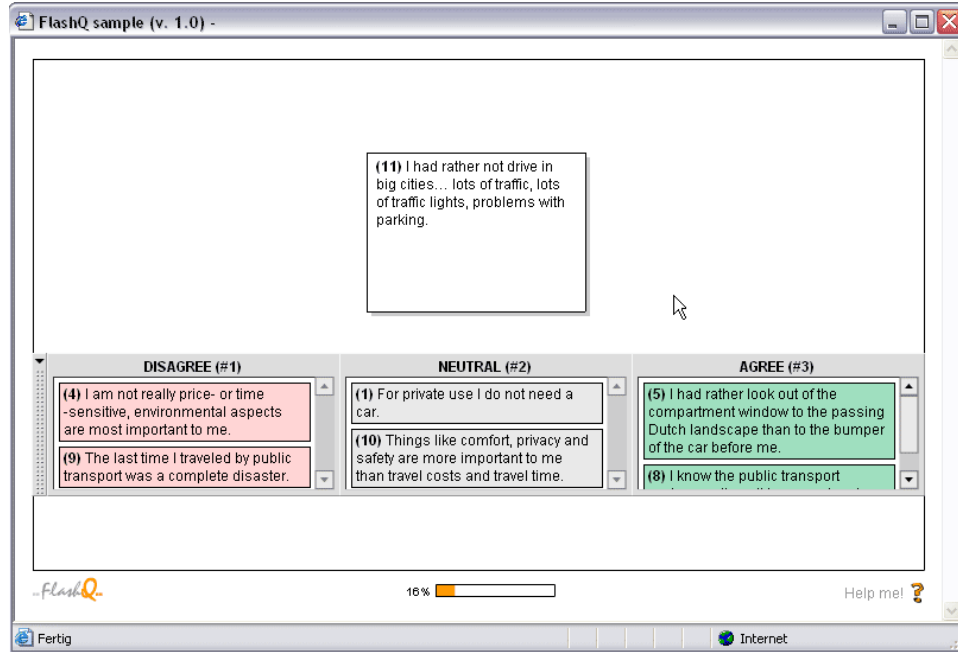
Step 3: Sort the Statements

Step 4: Revise Sort

Step 5: Add Comments

Step 6: Demographic Data and other Indicators

Step 7: Transmission of the Data to the Researcher
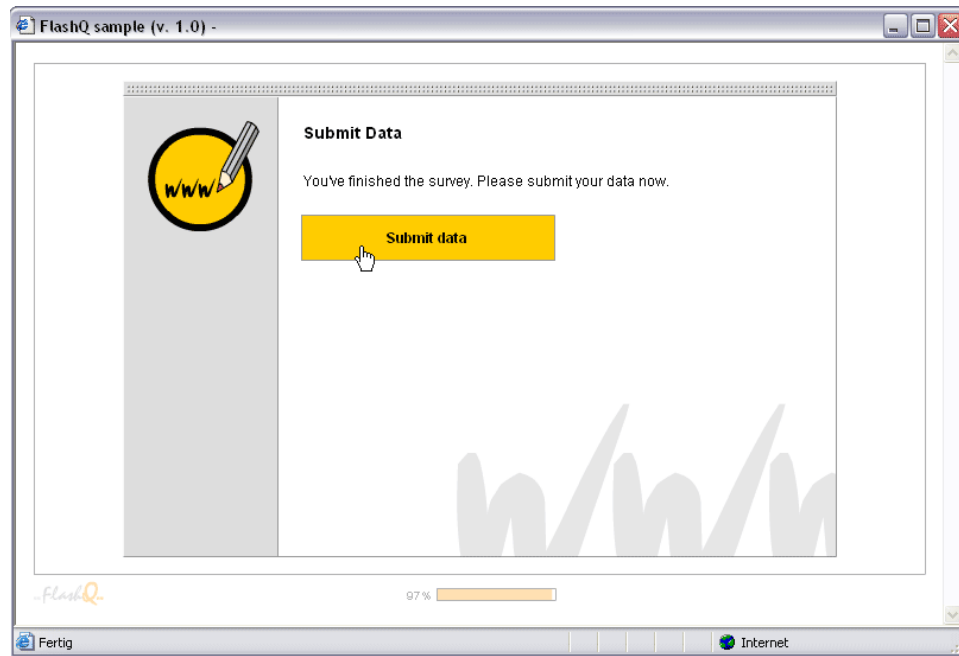
APPENDIX B

THE COMPOSITION OF THE P-SAMPLE

	Age	Elected	AICP	Education	Plan Requirements	Rural or Urban
Planner 1	43	No	No	Master's	Advanced	Urban
Planner 2	65	No	Yes	Bachelor's	Advanced	Urban
Planner 3	47	No	No	Master's	Intermediate	Rural
Politician 1	68	Yes	No	Associate's	Advanced	Urban
Planner 4	30	No	Yes	Master's	Intermediate	Rural
Planner 5	33	No	Yes	Master's	Advanced	Rural
Planner 6	40	No	No	Master's	Advanced	Rural
Politician 2	36	Yes	No	Bachelor's	Advanced	Rural
Planner 7	54	No	No	Some college	Intermediate	Rural
Planner 8	46	No	No	Master's	Intermediate	Rural
Politician 3	56	Yes	No	Master's	Advanced	Urban
Planner 9	34	No	No	Bachelor's	Basic	Rural
Planner 10	65	No	No	Bachelor's	Advanced	Urban
Politician 4	42	Yes	No	Bachelor's	Basic	Rural
Planner 11	49	No	Yes	Some college	Advanced	Rural
Politician 5	40	Yes	No	Associate's	Intermediate	Rural
Planner 12	56	No	No	Master's	Advanced	Urban
Planner 13	47	No	No	Bachelor's	Intermediate	Rural
Politician 6	55	Yes	No	High school	Basic	Rural
Planner 14	55	No	Yes	Master's	Advanced	Rural
Planner 15	37	No	Yes	Master's	Advanced	Urban
Politician 7	66	Yes	No	Master's	Advanced	Rural
Politician 8	43	Yes	No	Some college	Intermediate	Rural
Planner 16	59	No	No	Bachelor's	Basic	Rural
Planner 17	62	No	No	Master's	Basic	Rural
Planner 18	59	No	Yes	Master's	Advanced	Urban
Planner 19	50	No	No	High school	Basic	Rural
Planner 20	67	No	No	High school	Basic	Rural
Planner 21	53	No	Yes	Master's	Advanced	Urban
Planner 22	40	No	No	Associate's	Basic	Rural
Politician 9	63	Yes	No	Bachelor's	Intermediate	Rural
Planner 23	67	No	No	Some college	Advanced	Rural
Planner 24	56	No	Yes	Master's	Advanced	Urban
Planner 25	25	No	No	Master's	Intermediate	Rural
Planner 26	63	No	No	Bachelor's	Intermediate	Rural
Planner 27	38	No	No	Bachelor's	Basic	Rural

	Age	Elected	AICP	Education	Plan Requirements	Rural or Urban
Planner 28	62	No	Yes	Bachelor's	Basic	Rural
Planner 29	56	No	No	Bachelor's	Basic	Rural
Planner 30	64	No	No	Bachelor's	Basic	Rural
Planner 31	67	No	No	Bachelor's	Basic	Rural
Planner 32	57	No	No	Bachelor's	Basic	Rural
Planner 33	62	No	Yes	Master's	Advanced	Urban
Planner 34	48	No	Yes	Master's	Intermediate	Rural
N = 43	Mean = 52			Mode = Master's	Mode = Advanced	Mode = Rural

APPENDIX C

OPEN-END COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

(1) Fiscal limitations make it difficult to implement comprehensive plans.
Strongly disagreed comments:
None
Strongly agreed comments:
Planner 15 said, "While comprehensive plans can be developed to promote and support a community\'s economic capabilities and its overall quality as a place to live, many of these decisions relate directly to the fiscal health of a jurisdiction and its abilities to provide a full range of high quality services to its citizens."
Planner 25 said, "Every action, even non-actions, have monetary ramifications. No portion of the Comprehensive Planning process is divorced from the government\'s budget restraints. Right now, more so than ever before, the fiscal limitations that have been enacted to keep us afloat are impeding the implementation of Comp Plan activities."
Planner 29 said, "No money makes implementation difficult."
(2) Comprehensive planning is too costly.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Planner 4 said, "I believe that not using the comprehensive plan as a tool can be more costly than doing so. Let\'s say for example that the a community has an area of vacant property adjacent to a major interstate that is being saved for commercial development and a developer comes in and wants to turn it into a residential subdivision there. If the Commissioners do not use the Comprehensive Plan the community has adopted and allows a zoning change to residential, that community may become more of a bedroom community, verses a community with a good balance of retail, industry, etc."
Planner 31 said, "planning is never costly because you plan to succeed or by not planning you plan to fail."
Strongly agreed comments:
Planner 18, "Counties struggle with their budgets."
(3) Plans are not based on local concerns but on the goals of state government.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Planner 2 said, "Our plans were totally dirven by our issues and concerns. The form of the plan is State driven."
Planner 12 said, "While the state may provide guidelines of areas to be covered, the plan must reflect the concerns, issues and goals of the local citizenry. Goals must be locally based in order for appropriate buy-in and implementation.."
Planner 18 said, "Local concerns are always priority."
Planner 24 said, "Our state provides general guidelines for the development of the Comprehensive Plan, but local needs and concerns dictate the goals, objectives, strategies and implementation measures in the Plan."
Planner 25 said, "The fact that they rooted in more than political propaganda and superficial problems negates that statement to its core."
Strongly agreed comments:
Politician 4 said, "Regional development centers historically have produced a boiler plat plan based on their ideas, that the general public usually find amusing and impractical. It has never been used here as a truly productive community planning

tool, but rather so meet a statutory requirement."

(4) Comprehensive plans are too complicate and too long to have a meaningful effect.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Politician 2 said, "these plans are meant for envisioning \"long term controlled growth\", unless of course you wish for your community to look like NewJersey."
Planner 25 said, "The fact that they rooted in more than political propoganda and superficial problems negates that statement to its core."
Planner 26 said, "Comp plans are lengthy because of the many aspects that have to be included. They can, however, be written in rather simple language and establish guidelines that will control growth in those areas where you want growth to occur."
Strongly agreed comments:
Planner 9 said, "Most comprehensive plans can be analyzed by sections."
(5) Nobody evaluates our comprehensive plan so it is not followed.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Planner 8 said, "Our staff evaluates the comprehensive plan and uses it regularly."
Planner 13 said, "Evaluating the plan and its implementation is key to its effectiveness. With so many issues that arise, and arise so quickly, it is difficult for officials to stay focused on plan goals and strategies and it is difficult to staff to implement programs because of the lack of focus."
Politician 7 said, "While our plan is not reviewed on a regular basis, it is occasionally evaluated for compliance, but should be done more often."
Planner 16 said, "Because the state government reviews the Short Term Work Program, which is a part of comprehensive plan, at the end of each time period and quantifies its level of achievement. Additionally, the planning staff monitors comprehensive plan\'s progress and communicates the results with the administration."
Planner 32 said, "plans are evaluated."
Strongly agreed comments:
Planner 19 said, "Administrations have changes so here, it seems other concerns take priority."
(6) Planning is more likely to be useful in a community that links its budgeting decisions with its comprehensive plan than in one that does not.
Strongly disagreed comments:
None
Strongly agreed comments:
Politician 2 said, "strategies for growth and land use plans are very much linked to current and future tax digests and budgets."
Planner 10 said, "The link between planning and budgeting indicates a community that takes planning seriously."
Planner 12 said, "The Comprehensive Plan should identify and drive the infrastructure needs of the community, thereby influencing the budgeting decisions of the local government. Also, the Comprehensive Plan should recognize the needed balance between residential and commercial/industrial/office development. This affects the jurisdiction\'s tax base & revenues."

Planner 17 said, "Budget/Money is what allows plans to be implemented. The budget process is a priority setting tool."
Planner 21 said, "Links between comp plans and budget are essential if the comp plan is a description of what you want your jurisdiction to be in 20 years."
Planner 24 said, "Implementing some elements of a Comprehensive Plan always involves public and private expenditures, especially on capital items. Having a strong link between community planning and budgeting demonstrates the benefits of planning for the long term and the usefulness of public projects in guiding and directing growth."
Planner 27 said, "High dollar improvement projects are more likely to be realized when they are identified in the comprehensive plan."
(7) Planning and budgeting are related.
Strongly disagreed comments:
None
Strongly agreed comments:
Planner 8 said, "If they aren't related what is the point?"
Planner 28 said, "Funding for local improvements thru the budgetary process effects items that are in the comprehensive plan."
(8) State involvement in comprehensive planning helps the process.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Politician 4 said, "Regional development centers historically have produced a boiler plat plan based on their ideas, that the general public usually find amusing and impractical. It has never been used here as a truly productive community planning tool, but rather so meet a statutory requirement."
Planner 30 said, "I think the state just wants to "Check" a box and then consider the goal accomplished!"
Strongly agreed comments:
(9) Regional Development Centers are beneficial to the comprehensive planning process in my community.
Strongly disagreed comments:
None
Strongly agreed comments:
Planner 7 said, "Without the assistance of our RDC, we would never get a plan completed."
Planner 16 said, "Because, they provide planning assistance to communities without adequate planning staff. They increase public awareness and provide the necessary information to communities for planning decision-making."
(10) Working with nearby communities benefits the planning process.
Strongly disagreed comments:
None
Strongly agreed comments:
Planner 2 said, "It is only through cooperative planning that all communities can appropriately plan. You cannot plan in a vacuum."
Planner 6 said, "Working through growth issues with neighboring communities helps

to ensure that all are focused on the same goals and objectives and reduces conflict.
Politician 4 said, "Much more can be accomplished when communities pool their resources and take advantage of economy of scale. When we plan to grow together, we can do so much more effectively."
Politician 6 said, "need to have priorities aligned."
(11) Service delivery agreements with neighboring jurisdictions help implement comprehensive plans.
Strongly disagreed comments:
None
Strongly agreed comments:
None
(12) There is too much political conflict in many communities for planning to work.
Strongly disagreed comments:
None
Strongly agreed comments:
None
(13) Public participation in the comprehensive planning process fails because the public is not included in the early stages of the process.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Planner 5 said, "The public is asked to be included in the process from early stages. Unfortunately, very few choose to participate in public meetings, unless it is a NIMBY issue."
Strongly agreed comments:
(14) The general public lacks the needed information to contribute to the comprehensive planning process.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Planner 17 said, "Some of the best ideas come from regular citizens."
Planner 19 said, "Ads and word of mouth (concerned citizens group) usually get the word out."
Planner 21 said, "Citizens are taking a much more active involvement in their local government and are much better informed."
Planner 28 said, "The average person for the most part is not equipped with the information and will not understand it from an internal perspective and will have preconceived conception for the need of the comprehensive planning and the use of the comprehensive plan."
Planner 34 said, "I think the public is very knowledgeable, and sometimes needs some assistance (a more common language) in relating to others through understanding/realization of alternate thought processes/methods."
Strongly agreed comments:
None
(15) The general public makes an effort to be involved in the comprehensive planning process.
Strongly disagreed comments:

Planner 6 said, "It is very difficult to get the general public involved. Special interests groups do get involved if a topic is related to their specific interest."
Planner 7 said, "strategies for growth and land use plans are very much linked to current and future tax digests and budgets."
Planner 10 said, "The general public finds it very difficult to get invloved in early planning - such as comprehensive planning."
Politician 4 said, "Public hearings in this community are not attended unless they are concerning an issue that the general public is angry about. They simply will not come and have input on community improvement."
Planner 27 said, "The general public makes no effort even when comprehensive plan updates are advertised by local news stations. Better ideas for public outreach are needed."
Strongly agreed comments:
None
(16) The planning process can be used to start a communitywide discussion of public problems.
Strongly disagreed comments:
None
Strongly agreed comments:
Planner 1 said, "The entire purpose of a comprehensive plan is to uncover the issues in a community. The comp plan establishes the vision for the future of the community created by the citizens. Goals are then established and benchmarks created to determine if the actions of the community are helping attain the vision."
Planner 3 said, "A public discussion of community problems and more importantly ways to solve them is a very crucial part of the comprehensive planning process."
Planner 5 said, "The plan ideally should come from the people and reflect their concerns and desires for the future of a community."
Planner 11 said, "Getting the public involved can get them to better understand our community and the growth pattern that we need to implement to help with that growth."
Planner 13 said, "Problems and issues are best addressed with public input and ideas. Comprehensive planning can present the problem, provide an assessment of its impact and help determine solutions."
Planner 34 said, "If done properly, the public is strongly encouraged to start thinking about their community, evaluate where they are, where they want to go, and how they can get there. Without this process, decisions have no direction, and thus, little impact."
(17) Public hearings improve a community's comprehensive plan.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Planner 26 said, "A comp plan should be a reflection of what the citizens want for their community in the future. It would be extremely difficult to describe that future without their input."
Strongly agreed comments:
Planner 14 said, "Public hearings are a necessary part of the planning process. Plans are useless without public input."

(18) Comprehensive planning is too focused on economic growth at the expense of other issues, such as historical preservation or environmental protection.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Planner 1 said, "The Comprehensive plan is just that Comprehensive. It should cover all issues and the interrelationships of the issues upon one another. For instance, a community may desire a low density residential development pattern, however such development pattern will have a significant impact on the environment by gobbling up more land than were a more diverse pattern of development chosen."
Planner 14 said, "The focus of a comprehensive plan is on the whole community not just on one segment."
Planner 15 said, "Our plan is a new approach to coordinating key County government responsibilities for growth management, transportation, housing and related social services, public utilities, economic development, open space and recreation. Our unified plan is not just about government or development. it has the ability to affect how all of our residents, employees and employers will carry out much of their everyday business."
Politician 6 said, "if done properly, the comp plan process definitely will address all broad based community topics."
Strongly agreed comments:
(19) Comprehensive planning can be used to improve a community's local economy.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Planner 29 said, "I've yet to see it hardly acknowledged let alone benefit."
Strongly agreed comments:
Planner 4 said, "When a comprehensive plan is utilized correctly it can serve as a very important tool for development. The comprehensive plan we have developed for our community has assigned character areas, or areas subject to be used for a specific use in the future. By not following the comprehensive plan a community takes the risk of not being very organized and it also makes a planners job more difficult in both administrative and enforcement matters."
Planner 9 said, "Best growth practice can be laid out in the comprehensive plan."
(20) A comprehensive plan should advertise the economic benefits of a community.
Strongly disagreed comments:
Planner 3 said, "I don't think that a comprehensive plan should advertise anything. It is not a marketing tool. Hopefully the concrete actions that come from the planning process improve the community and that can be advertised."
Strongly agreed comments:
Politician 7 said, "Having a good plan should assist economic development efforts in the long run."
Planner 31 said, "without comprehensive planning being understood and agreed to the plan is meaningless."